

The Municipal Art Society of New York

MASNYC

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For Immediate Release:

MAS ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 2009 AWARDS

***Brooklyn Flea, Theatre in the Subway, City's Sustainable Streets
Among Those Recognized for Helping to Define NYC's Character***

New York, July XX, 2009 -- The Municipal Art Society of New York, a non-profit membership organization that fights for intelligent urban planning, design and preservation, announced the winners of its Annual Awards honoring individuals and groups that help define the character of New York City. The awards were presented at the MAS annual meeting on Monday, July 13 at the Chelsea Art Museum, and were followed by a reception and a promenade on the neighboring High Line.

This year's awards were highlighted by the **Brooklyn Flea**, the flea market that is becoming an essential weekend activity for all New Yorkers and **IRT: A Tragedy in Three Stations**, an original play that actually takes place in the subway. This year's award-winners also included the **Human Rights Watch International Film Festival; Sustainable Streets Strategic Plan for the New York City Department of Transportation 2008 and Beyond;** and the **Center for New York City Law**.

"It is an honor for us to be able to recognize all of these unsung heroes and institutions that contribute to New York City's greatness and we are privileged to do so every year," said Vin Cipolla, president of MAS.

For 38 years, the Municipal Art Society has bestowed its Annual Awards on outstanding individuals, groups and events that help define the unique character of New York. Nominations were submitted by Municipal Art Society members and reviewed by an awards committee chaired by Carole Rifkind. Committee members included Thelma Golden, Hugh Hardy, Janet C. Ross and Alberto Vourvoulias-Bush.

Past MAS Annual Award winners include the City's 311 Service, Strand Bookstore, Katz's Delicatessen, Brooklyn Bridge Park "beach," the Brooklyn Cyclones, the 9/11 Volunteers, Louise Nevelson, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and many others.

In addition to the Annual Awards, MAS presented its fourth annual Yolanda Garcia Community Planner Award to **Frances Goldin**, 85, of Manhattan's Lower East Side. Goldin led the creation of the Cooper Square Alternate Plan, widely considered to be New York City's first community-based plan, and today continues to work with the Cooper Square Committee and the Frances Goldin Literary Agency.

MAS also presented the W. Allison and Elizabeth Stubbs Davis Award to a deserving employee of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. This year, MAS salutes **Brian Aucoin** for his achievements in conservation as director of GreenApple Corps and manager of the city's Million Trees Training Program.

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Below are detailed descriptions about this year's honorees:

Human Rights Watch International Film Festival

Twenty years ago Human Rights Watch launched its International Film Festival in New York City to heighten public awareness of the often-dire need for vigilance in safeguarding human rights around the world. Presenting documentary, fiction, and animated films, the festival brings the most elemental of rights issues to the attention of the people of our city, and makes all the more eloquent the organization's call for New Yorkers to stand up for the sanctity and security of every individual.

Brooklyn Flea

With its picturesque Clinton Hill-Fort Greene setting and savvy blogosphere personality, Brooklyn Flea is a happy manifestation of private sector spirit yielding generous public benefits. Attracting 20,000 visitors on its opening weekend, this alternative to big-box retail provides a venue for hundreds of small, local merchants and a destination for New Yorkers who are mingling, sampling gourmet treats, and finding great bargains.

IRT: A Tragedy in Three Stations

"Being a Play of Two Eras and One Glorious Subway System," as ye olde posters informed mass transit audiences, IRT: A Tragedy in Three Stations told the story of the building of the New York City subway system. Enlivening subway platforms from Downtown Brooklyn to Upper Manhattan for a mere six evenings, the play made ingenious use of the city as a stage and gave straphangers a serendipitous experience of their shared commute that was definitely out of the ordinary, if not off the beaten track.

Sustainable Streets Strategic Plan for the New York City Department of Transportation 2008 and Beyond

This strategic plan by the DOT shows a commitment to making the streets of New York a great collection of public spaces. Turning from the age-old tradition of intending streets as solely for vehicles, this new vision gives cyclists greater safety and a sense of belonging, and it transforms some of the city's dangerous and clogged intersections into public plazas. MAS celebrates these breakthroughs in dealing with city traffic, and eagerly awaits all the improvements that this vision promises for more enlightened and sustainable streetscape planning.

Center for New York City Law

Sir Francis Bacon said: Knowledge is power. The Center for New York City Law, at New York Law School, has bestowed both on the public by revolutionizing access to New York City's arcane world of administrative agencies. It has gathered tens of thousands of their rulings, decisions and opinions and placed them in a database where everyone can find them online, the better to understand municipal decision-making processes. Moreover, the Center's highly informative publications, CityLaw and CityLand, bring current administrative agency news to their subscribers. MAS salutes these herculean feats.

Frances Goldin, 2009 Yolanda Garcia Community Planner Award Recipient

Shortly after arriving on Manhattan's Lower East Side in 1944, Frances Goldin became a community organizer, working in solidarity with her neighbors on issues of daily survival, like housing and food prices. In 1959, Robert Moses proposed a massive urban renewal plan for the Lower East Side that would have displaced 2,400 tenants. Ms. Goldin organized neighbors to create the Cooper Square Alternate Plan, widely considered to be the first community-based plan created in New York City. The plan included public housing, Mitchell-Lama co-ops, other cooperative housing, resettlement and rehabilitation facilities, and artist housing and the City approved a modified version of it in 1970. Today, the Cooper Square Committee owns 23 buildings, and maintains their affordability in perpetuity in the rapidly gentrifying Lower East Side through the Cooper Square Mutual Housing Association. At 85, Ms. Goldin continues to work with the Cooper Square Committee, and to manage Francis Goldin Literary Agency, which represents authors of literary fiction and political non-fiction.

The Municipal Art Society of New York is a private, non-profit membership organization that fights for intelligent urban planning, design and preservation through education, dialogue and advocacy. The organization was founded in 1893. For more information, please visit www.mas.org