

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:***SITE PROJECTS WELCOMES RICK LOWE, VISIONARY ARTIST AND 2014 MACARTHUR FELLOW, TO NEW HAVEN FOR PUBLIC CONVERSATION SERIES*****CONTACT:****Selby Nimrod**

Senior Project Manager

SITE PROJECTS

selby@siteprojects.org

203.710.4702

NEW HAVEN, MARCH 16, 2016

Site Projects is pleased to announce the upcoming public program, ***RICK LOWE: IN CONVERSATION***, a lecture and event series with Houston, Texas-based artist and 2014 MacArthur Fellow Rick Lowe. Over the course of Lowe's two-day residency in New Haven this May 12 and 13, Site Projects has arranged four events that are free and open to the public. These include: **two artist lectures** by Rick Lowe, a **community lunch**, and a **roundtable discussion** with New Haven community organizers and artists, which Lowe will moderate.

Rick Lowe is the co-founder of Project Row Houses (PRH), a community-based arts and culture non-profit organization in Houston's northern Third Ward. Its mission is to transform community through the celebration of art and African-American history and culture. PRH is a unique experiment in activating the intersections between art, historic preservation, affordable and innovative housing, community relations and development, neighborhood revitalization, and human empowerment. Lowe's integrative process is accomplished through a holistic and multifaceted approach to community-building that is referred to as social practice art.

In the years since its 1993 inception, PRH has revitalized six blocks of a formerly blighted neighborhood into a vibrant creative beacon for the community. Projects include: renovating small "shotgun" homes built in the 1930s that had fallen into disrepair and repurposing them into studios for visiting artists, providing exhibition spaces for art related to African-American culture, and offering temporary housing for single mothers pursuing higher education. PRH, which has grown to include over 70 properties, also incubates initiatives like a food cooperative and a radio station.

"The long-term goal of the work that I do, whether it's in Houston or any of the other projects that I've worked on, is to try to empower people in their communities, or whatever social context that they're in, that they too are creative," says Lowe, noting that he fosters platforms where residents "can exercise their power as creative practitioners within their own neighborhoods."

"Rick goes into his work with an open mind and a light touch, no preconceived ideas," muses Site Projects' Executive Director Laura Weir Clarke. "He lets the people and the place show him the opportunities for artful engagement."

To quote a maxim of Project Row Houses, "Art feeds our community, and our community feeds art." Interdisciplinary and locally-driven, Lowe's visionary work will resonate with and inspire New Haven's diverse communities.

RICK LOWE: IN CONVERSATION is made possible by generous support from: First Niagara; Site Projects Board of Directors; Carol LeWitt; Elm City Post-Masters Program; New Haven Free Public Library; Fred Clarke FAIA; LEAP; Andrew Wolf, Director, Department of Arts, Culture + Tourism; Rebecca Bombero, Director, Department of Parks, Recreation + Trees; Garth Harries, Superintendent, New Haven Board of Education

RICK LOWE: IN CONVERSATION | SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

THURSDAY, MAY 12

10:30 AM–12:00 PM—Ives Public Program Room, New Haven Free Public Library, 133 Elm St.

RICK LOWE: AN INTRODUCTION [Live Stream]

The artist introduces his practice and work with Project Row Houses.

Available by live stream at SiteProjects.org

THURSDAY, MAY 12

6:00–8:00 PM—Auditorium at Co-Operative High School for the Arts, 177 College St.

RICK LOWE: COMMUNITY ENGAGED ART + SOCIAL SCULPTURE [Public Lecture]

Lecture followed by Audience Q&A

Free. Reservations strongly encouraged. Please make your reservation through EventBrite.

FRIDAY, MAY 13

11:00 AM–2:00 PM—Coogan Pavilion, Edgewood Park, Enter from West Rock or Whalley Aves.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Community Lunch + Roundtable with Rick Lowe

Join Rick Lowe for lunch, informal conversation, and a roundtable discussion with community organizers and artists.

Free. Reservations required. Please make your reservation through EventBrite.

ABOUT RICK LOWE

Rick Lowe is an artist whose unconventional approach to community revitalization has transformed a long-neglected neighborhood in Houston into a visionary public art project that continues to evolve, two decades since its inception. Originally trained as a painter, Lowe shifted the focus of his artistic practice in the early 1990s in order to address more directly the pressing social, economic, and cultural needs of his community. With a group of fellow artists, he organized the purchase and restoration of a block and a half of derelict properties—twenty-two shotgun houses from the 1930s—in Houston’s predominantly African-American Third Ward and turned them into Project Row Houses, an unusual amalgam of arts venue and community support center.

Lowe has initiated similarly arts-driven redevelopment projects in other cities, including the Watts House Project in Los Angeles, a post-Katrina rebuilding effort in New Orleans, and, most recently, a vibrant community market in a densely populated, immigrant neighborhood in North Dallas. Lowe’s pioneering “social sculptures” have inspired a generation of artists to explore more socially engaged forms of art-making in communities across the country.

Rick Lowe attended Columbus College and studied visual arts at Texas Southern University in Houston. He has been artist-in-residence at the Nasher Sculpture Center, a Loeb Fellow at Harvard University Graduate School of Design, a Mel King Community Fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and his work has been exhibited at such national and international venues as Houston’s Contemporary Arts Museum and Museum of Fine Arts, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, the Gwangju Biennale in South Korea, and the Venice Architecture Biennale. His other community building projects have included the Arts Plan for the Seattle Public Library, the Borough Project for the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina, and the Delray Beach Cultural Loop in Florida, among others. — *bio courtesy of the MacArthur Foundation*

ABOUT PROJECT ROW HOUSES

Project Row Houses (PRH) is a community-based arts and culture non-profit organization in Houston's northern Third Ward, one of the city's oldest African-American neighborhoods. Founded in 1993 as a result of the vision of local African-American artists wanting a positive creative presence in their own community, PRH shifts the view of art from traditional studio practice to a more conceptual base of transforming the social environment.

Central to the vision of PRH is the social role of art as seen in neighborhood revitalization, historic preservation, community service, and youth education. The programs of PRH are built around Five Pillars inspired by the work of internationally renowned artist John Biggers and his principles concerning the components of row house communities: Art and Creativity, Education, Social Safety Nets, Architecture, and Sustainability.

MISSION: The mission of Project Row Houses (PRH) is to be the catalyst for transforming community through the celebration of art and African-American history and culture.

HISTORY: PRH was founded in 1993 by artist and community activist Rick Lowe along with James Bettison (1958-1997), Bert Long (1940-2013), Jesse Lott, Floyd Newsum, Bert Samples, and George Smith. They sought to establish a positive, creative and transformative presence in this historic community. Inspired by both American artist Dr. John Biggers and German artist Josef Beuys, PRH is a unique experiment in activating the intersections between art, historic preservation, affordable and innovative housing, community relations and development, neighborhood revitalization, and human empowerment.

ABOUT SITE PROJECTS

Site Projects is a private, nonprofit 501(c) (3) organization that commissions world class public artworks, programming, and events on a project-by-project basis in partnership with local agencies and organizations that enhance New Haven's cultural heritage and diversity.

Public art is an essential part of a healthy, democratic society. It enriches, inspires, and educates, enhancing our sense of place, purpose, and potential. Site Projects commissions site-specific, world-class public art bringing cutting-edge 21st century art to historic New Haven, CT. By speaking in the universal language of art, we stimulate community conversations and interactions that embrace diversity and bridge social and economic differences. Site Projects creates and curates an ever-expanding collection of art that is free and open to all.

WEBSITE + SOCIAL MEDIA

For up-to-the-minute details and tidbits, follow us on social media, and visit the SITE PROJECTS website!

SITE PROJECTS WEBSITE: www.siteprojects.org

SITE PROJECTS EVENTBRITE: <http://siteprojects.eventbrite.com>

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/siteprojectsinc>

TWITTER: @siteprojectsinc <https://twitter.com/siteprojectsinc>

INSTAGRAM: @artsitesnewhaven <https://www.instagram.com/artsitesnewhaven>

PROJECT ROW HOUSES WEBSITE: www.projectrowhouses.org

RICK LOWE IMAGE SHEET [Google doc]:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LtMPWH4kXgkftl1IPRDmdoBEqu9dzkvQFZQwGfEfY98/edit?usp=sharing>

###