



 **IMAGINERY**
giving voice to the people's visions
a project of the Municipal Art Society
December 2003

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Imagine New York III is a Beyond 16 Acres event. "Beyond 16 Acres" is a series of workshops, exhibitions and public forums to draw attention to and build political commitment for the expedient rebuilding of all of Lower Manhattan in an equitable and sustainable way. The series aims to reestablish Lower Manhattan as an economic engine, a regional hub and a series of interconnected local neighborhoods. "Beyond 16 Acres" is an initiative of the Civic Alliance to Rebuild Downtown New York in partnership with Imagine New York, Labor Community Advocacy Network (LCAN), Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development (PICCED), Rebuild Downtown Our Town (R.Dot) and the Regional Plan Association.

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Foreword

Six months after the attack on Lower Manhattan, thousands of New Yorkers came together in Imagine NY workshops in the city and surrounding counties. These sessions gave people young and old a chance to reflect on what we had lost and what, both in a broad and local sense, our hopes were for rebuilding.

The words spoken in many languages revealed a changed city, devastated by the loss and vulnerable, but resolved to fashion a future that lived up to New York's very high expectations for itself.

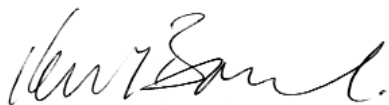
Last December, when alternate site plans by leading architects were unveiled, the public had only a month to offer comment, so Imagine NY organized a combination of workshops and created an extremely sophisticated website which collected thousands of detailed reactions.

Three weeks ago, a distinguished jury selected eight plans from among the 5,201 proposals they had received in the competition for a memorial at ground zero. In the original round of workshops in 2002, the public had been very interested in an appropriate memorial but we could not have anticipated the over 15,000 responses summarized in this report.

We hope the highly nuanced comments of people who obviously care deeply will assist the jury in its task of choosing an artist to work on the memorial. We also believe they will be of value to the artist selected as the hard work of moving an idea from paper to an affecting physical reality proceeds.

For years it has been an article of faith in some circles that New Yorkers were incapable of productive participation in shaping the city's future. It is especially heartening, living in a time when democracy is threatened by foes and friends, to see clear and repeated evidence to the contrary. The tone and the intelligence of the vast majority of citizens who participated in Imagine NY over the last two years suggest an under-appreciated opportunity, which must be nurtured as much as good design and sound planning.

Building a city takes vision, a strong sense of purpose and a good set of ears. Hearing respectfully what people have to say increases the likelihood that we will create better places and, now most critically, places to which people are better connected.



Kent Barwick
President, Municipal Art Society

IMAGINE NEW YORK
Toward the People's Memorial
Summary Report

A project of the Municipal Art Society of New York



PART I - Introduction and Methods

INTRODUCTION

While the site planning for the World Trade Center site generated intense public interest and involvement, it is the memorial that truly captures the imagination of the public. While the Municipal Art Society believes that the memorial competition jury should have the ultimate authority with regard to the final selection, it also believes that it is essential to the integrity of the memorial process that the public's response to the eight designs informs the jury's decision.

When the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation announced the eight design finalists on November 19, Imagine New York created a series of workshops and a dedicated website to provide a forum for gathering public feedback. In a six-day period beginning November 20, over 300 people participated in six workshops in New Canaan, CT; Elizabeth, NJ; and Pace University and September Space in New York City. For the website, Imagine New York partnered with NY1 News, Gotham Gazette and the New York Daily News to post the designs online and ask visitors their responses to three questions. As of December 12, 2,800 people have participated in Imagine New York, leaving more than 15,000 comments.

This report contains a summary of the workshop and website results. It has been submitted to the LMDC and the memorial jury as an impartial, nuanced and qualitative report on the public's response to the eight designs.

Through this process, we found that the public considers the memorial to be the core of the World Trade Center site and is deeply concerned with its design. The six workshops were planned and promoted in less than a month; nonetheless, participation in the workshops and online was very strong. As you will find in this report, workshop participants and website respondents provided focused and thoughtful feedback that can inform the final selection, as well as guide further refinement of the concepts.

History

Imagine New York was conceived in Spring 2002 to give all those affected by September 11 an opportunity to voice their ideas and concerns for the future of the World Trade Center site and their own communities. The Municipal Art Society and its partners sponsored 230 facilitated public workshops throughout the tri-state region, plus an interactive website, which resulted in 49 vision statements articulating the public's top priorities, from an onsite memorial to an inclusive regional planning process.

In December 2002, Imagine New York II: The People's Response was launched to give the public an opportunity to study and weigh in on the Nine Innovative Designs for the World Trade Center site. In early January 2003, more than 300 people took part in two workshops in Lower Manhattan and over 5,000 comments were received via the www.imaginewyork.org website. These results were summarized in a report issued later in January and given to the LMDC as a valuable and insightful record of public feedback on the plans.

METHODS

Our goal with the workshops and website was to provide the jury and other decision-making bodies specific feedback on the eight designs and also to have a broader conversation about what the essential relationship of the memorial to the tragedy, the memorial to the neighborhood, and what the memorial should communicate to future generations. The workshops consisted of an informal, roundtable discussion, guided by a trained facilitator. Participants on the website answered the same questions, as well as a simple yes/no question.

Introduction and Methods

Workshops

Imagine New York held two-hour workshops on November 20, 21 and 22 at Pace University in Lower Manhattan. We invited all participants to join us at the design exhibit in the Winter Garden immediately before attending a workshop. We also gave attendees a summary of the eight designs. Additional workshops took place on November 21 at the Historical Society of Elizabeth, NJ; November 22 at the New Canaan Public Library in Connecticut; and November 25 at September Space, in New York City. Discussions occurred in 21 groups with approximately 10 to 20 people in each. Each group was led by a trained facilitator, some of whom also served as scribes to record comments. More than 300 people attended the workshops.

Facilitators led participants through the discussion by using a series of three questions focused specifically on the designs, but they also allowed for more general comments. Participants were also urged to write additional comments and hand them in to the facilitator at the end of the workshop. The three questions were:

- What is it about this particular design that appeals or does not appeal to you?
- How well does each design interact with the Libeskind site plan and the surrounding neighborhood(s)?
- How might this memorial design be perceived and understood by future generations?

Website

We partnered with NY1 News, *Gotham Gazette* and the *New York Daily News* to post descriptions, pictures and videos of the eight designs and their designers on our website. Visitors could learn about the designs and express their opinions in the same place. Neighborhood America designed and programmed the site. Each visitor was presented with the following five questions about each design:

- Does this design appeal to you? (yes/no)
- What do you like most about this design?
- What do you like least about this design?
- How well is this design integrated with the Libeskind Plan and/or the surrounding neighborhoods?
- How do you think this design will be perceived and understood by future generations?

While the first question allowed only a yes or no answer, the other four required that participants express themselves in their own words with as much detail as they chose. Respondents could answer as many or as few questions as they liked.

The results of the first question are given below. "Dual Memory" and "Passages of Light: The Memorial Cloud" had a higher rate of appeal than the other designs did. "Garden of Lights" received the most negative votes; "Inversion of Light" appealed at the lowest rate.

Design	Total Like	Total Dislike
Dual Memory	560	572
Passages of Light	530	546
Lower Waters	431	588
Suspending Memory	423	629
Reflecting Absence	382	633
Garden of Lights	371	642
Votives in Suspension	347	619
Inversion of Light	263	631

Introduction and Methods

As of December 12, approximately 2,500 people have submitted more than 13,000 comments on the designs via our website. Imagine New York staff and volunteers read all the detailed responses and attempted to find the dominant themes of the replies.

“Garden of Lights” is the first design visitors see on our website, which may explain why it garnered such a high number of comments. Apart from that, it seems that certain designs - “Dual Memory,” “Passages of Light,” “Suspending Memory” and “Lower Waters” - provoked a stronger response in people than the others did.

Design	Website Comments
Garden of Lights	2,037
Dual Memory	2,006
Suspending Memory	1,714
Lower Waters	1,673
Passages of Light	1,623
Reflecting Absence	1,551
Votives in Suspension	1,394
Inversion of Light	1,205
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Total	13,203

DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Of the more than 300 workshop participants, 152 returned the optional exit questionnaire. We asked about gender, race, age, household income and educational attainment. We also asked people to identify how they were connected to 9/11 and the World Trade Center site.

Nearly 60% (89) were female, as opposed to a little over 40% (60) male. The vast majority of participants - 84% (127) - were white. In addition, 4% (7) described themselves as African American, 4% (6) as Latino or Hispanic, 3% (5) as Asian or Pacific Islander, and 3% (5) as “Other.” Participants were predominantly middle-aged; 7.5% (11) were under 30 years old, 26.5% (39) were 30 to 44 years old, 51% (75) were 45 to 64 years old, and 15% (22) were 65 or older.

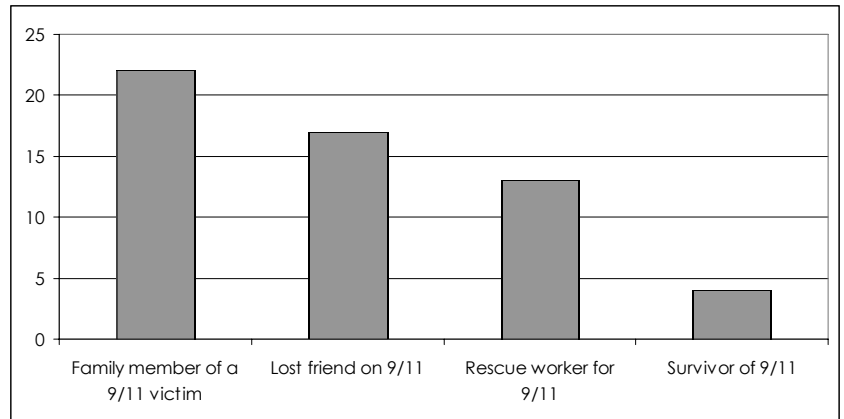
Participants had relatively high household incomes. Slightly more than 13% (18) make more than \$150,000. Nearly 30% (41) earn between \$75,000 and \$149,999, and over 25.5% (35) make from \$50,000 to \$74,999. Equal percentages - 15% (20) - have an income of between \$35,000 and \$49,999 as between \$15,000 and \$34,999. Just 2% (3) reported a yearly income under \$15,000.

Participants were also very well educated. Nearly 49% (73) had done some post-graduate study, while 35% (52) had a college degree. In addition, 12% (18) had attended some college. Only 4% (6) had only a high school diploma or less.

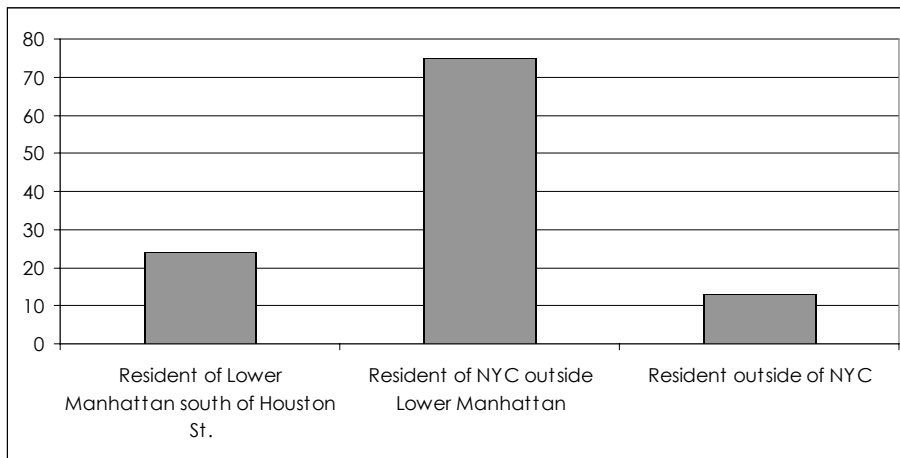
The workshops attracted many people who seemed to have little direct connection to the World Trade Center site, but also a significant number of people who live or work in the area, or who knew someone who died on 9/11. We set out a list of groups relating to 9/11 and New York City, asking people to select all those that they belong to. Nearly half (75) said they live in New York City, but not in Lower Manhattan (which we defined as Manhattan south of Houston Street). Another 18 live in Lower Manhattan, while 16 work there. Six live and work in Lower Manhattan. Twenty lost a family member on 9/11, and 15 lost a friend. Two said they lost both a family member and a friend. Full results are in the charts below.

Introduction and Methods

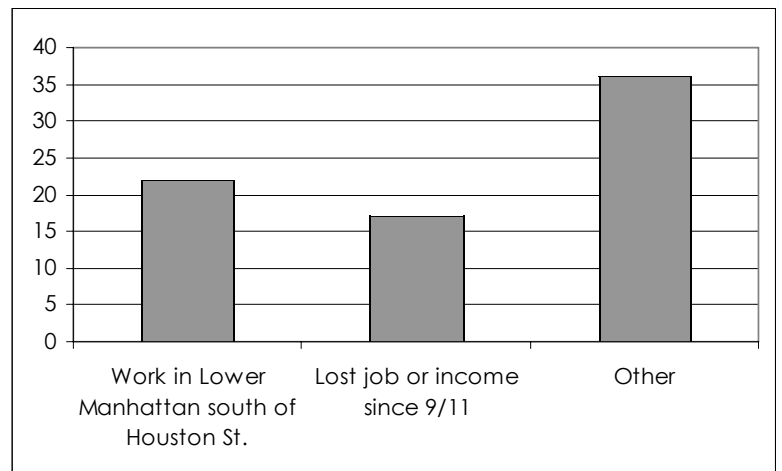
Imagine NY III Workshop Participant Demographics Based on 152 Exit Questionnaires*



Personal Connection to 9/11



Place of Residence



Other Relationships to 9/11

* The figures in the charts represent absolute numbers, not percentages.

PART II - The Memorial Designs

SUMMARY RESPONSES ON THE EIGHT DESIGNS

Imagine New York sought to gather specific, detailed and qualitative feedback on the eight memorial designs from the broad public. We were not interested in finding out which was their favorite design; rather we wanted to find out how the designs made them feel, what elements were particularly powerful and most importantly, why. Our goal was to explore how the designs fulfilled the plurality of the public's needs.

What we heard was that the designs as a whole adequately respect and honor the victims of the February 26, 1993, and September 11, 2001, attacks in New York City, Shanksville, PA, and Washington, D.C.; however, they lack a vivid connection to the impact of the attacks beyond the victims.

Participants liked elements within each of the designs, but there is no single design that completely fulfills their expectations. They felt that each design succeeds in embodying some aspect of what they envision to be a good memorial. There were some lively debates about mixing-and-matching ideas from each.

This report provides a valuable record of public discussion about the overall design concepts and individual elements within the designs that resonate, both positively and negatively, with the public. It is our understanding that after the jury has selected a winning design, a process of revision may be necessary in order to help the design complete itself and reach its full potential. It is our hope that the information in this summary report can help shed light on the potential within each of the designs and to help to move the process toward our common goal: creating a memorial with an appropriate tone and universal significance.



The Memorial Designs

Passages of Light: The Memorial Cloud

"[I like] that it's not tomb-like. The names and arrangement of the cloud make you look upward into the sky, and toward light, rather than down in a darkened room. I also like the way it activates and lightens the plaza - it seems more inspiring than morbid, and a beautiful, reflective memorial that can also fit into the middle of a vibrant city."

"Very meaningful and innovative. I have never seen anything like it before. The towers made you look up to the sky and this will make you do the same. It leaves the tower footprints alone. [This is] the most poignant [design] and the only one to address the issue of uniformed services. It doesn't place them on a pedestal but merely groups them together."

"Too complicated. The cavernous enclosed space makes me feel claustrophobic. Also, would all the lights be an unnecessary expense and use of manpower (replacing all those bulbs all the time)?"

"I'm not sure the impact of 9/11 will be understood by this design. [It] comes across as more of an attraction than a memorial."

A majority of the responses to the signature design concept in Gisela Baurmann, Sawad Brooks and Jonas Coersmeier's "Memorial Cloud" were positive. Participants who favored the design found its signature cloud form to be "spiritually uplifting," "ethereal," "inspiring" and "unique." The public reacted well to the use of light within and underneath the cloud, and they particularly liked how the design draws the attention of the visitor upward, toward the sky and the 1776' Tower. For many, this recalled the intensely vertical experience of looking up at the original World Trade Center towers. Participants also had an overwhelmingly positive response to the ribbon of rescuers and the groupings of the victims.

There was a mixed reaction to the pedestrian connections available across the top of the cloud. Those who liked this aspect of the design thought that it positively addresses the need for northeast-southwest connectivity, but those who did not felt that the increased traffic would have a detrimental effect on the memorial area.

Most criticisms of the "Memorial Cloud" focused on practical issues, such as maintenance and structural integrity. Some participants doubted that the structure could even be built. With regards to maintenance, the public perceived that a key element of the memorial cloud is its translucent purity and ethereal form and wondered whether it would be possible to keep the glass clean. Some critics of the design did not find the signature element appealing, saying that they found it to be a "hulking cavern" or a claustrophobic space. Some participants were offended by the thought of being able to "step on" the individual victim's glass lights, which are set in the ground beneath the cloud at the main memorial level. Others felt that the footprint treatments - grass squares - are not meaningful and difficult to maintain in good condition due to the large crowds that would gather at the memorial.

Many participants saw a powerful connection between the profound loss of life that occurred on or near the footprints and the memorial cloud that "hovers" above and between them. People thought that future generations would perceive a positive message of hope and inspiration and felt that the cloud form would instill a sense of peace. Others thought that the ribbon of names that weaves through and among the victims would communicate effectively the relationship between rescuer and civilian. Negative comments regarding future generations generally stated that the cloud design is too abstract and that the meaning of September 11 could be lost over time.

The Memorial Designs

Reflecting Absence

"Out of all the designs, this was the only one that inspired a true emotional response. This design intuitively relates the essence of grief and loss. The flow of water over the footprints reminds [us] that after loss, there is hope and healing."

"At the very least, this feels like a memorial where most of the others do not. It does not feel 'forced.' It feels like a natural memorial to what happened."

"The image of waterfalls falling into the pit of the footprints symbolizes the towers falling over and over again. Also, the awkward placement of the free-standing wall. The underground area is perhaps one of the most depressing, cold, and lonely places I've ever seen - not a place I'd ever want to go."

"I think the sense of loss created by these huge voids does not have a counterbalancing element of hope and transcendence. The effect on future generations, I think, will be to emphasize the tragedy and not the transformation."

The aspect of Michael Arad's design, "Reflecting Absence," that respondents favored most was the way that the design respects and highlights the footprints. For many people, this gesture vividly recalls the former World Trade Center and strongly connects the memorial to the site's past. A number of people commented that they liked the design's direct "use of the void," and that the design was simple, clean and the "most memorial-like." They found "Reflecting Absence" to be respectful, contemplative, peaceful and solemn. Participants appreciated being able to leave candles and artifacts near the walls of names. The water features and the trees were favorably received, and a few people also mentioned the West Street sound barrier as a positive element.

The most frequent criticisms were that the design feels cold, bleak, angular, stark, dark and barren. Some thought that "Reflecting Absence" has "no life," that it is too desolate and neither comforting nor uplifting. Some respondents felt that the design is too generic, lacking in emotion and impersonal, and does not draw up any notions of a "memorial message." On the other hand, a few people felt the design to be too realistic or evocative. Two website respondents specifically pointed out that it felt "defeatist" in attitude. Other comments found fault with the West Street sound barrier, either in its appearance or in its creation of a confined space. A few people thought that "Reflecting Absence" leaves too much open space, creating an unwelcoming, wind-swept void. There were concerns with the everyday use of the design at street level; participants worried that the site would be used as a meeting place for people doing business or as a backdrop for walking the dog. In general, there was a concern about the mixing of activities between memorial visitors and the everyday public at street level.

Responding to the question of how future generations might perceive this memorial, some thought that the meaning of 9/11 would be clearly understood because of this design's use of the voids and emptiness. To them, this would clearly indicate a sense of great loss. However, a few people felt this might not be enough to bring visitors back to the site or to evoke much beyond sadness. Others considered it to be another "dead plaza" that doesn't reach beyond anything but the tragedy itself. A few respondents wondered if this memorial would simply lose relevance over time.

The Memorial Designs

Garden of Lights

"I think this design is beautiful. From the street you look at a beautiful garden - not a stark and depressing scene. You can chose your level of participation in the memorial, by going in the garden, or submerging inside for more personal remembrance. I think this design has the most personalized design-allowing the family to pay tribute to their loved one by inscribing their names. No one else does this. Also, I appreciate the names/altars are random and not hierarchical. Being from Australia originally, I appreciate the effort to allow gardeners from different countries to participate, making this an international site."

"I like its simplicity and aura of peace. It gives a feeling of respect to those lost and remembrance."

"This design is too cold and absent. I understand the motivations for creating a memorial which reflects our loss and pain, but I also think it is important to assert our growth as individuals and a nation. Remembrance needs not be stark and unfeeling. Most people would agree that if anything the tragedy that occurred on September 11th made us feel too much."

"As an open field, it does not physically conflict or embrace Libeskind's plan and the neighborhood. In the fall and winter, it will be a dark, desolate place with a contrasting surrounding as a backdrop."

Participants who favored Pierre David, Sean Corriel and Jessica Kmetovic's "Garden of Lights" referred to the "simple," "elegant," "minimal" and "subtle" drama of the design in its lower level. They felt that the lights serve as powerful symbols that are "inspiring to the soul" and "ethereal" in quality, and that when looking at them as a whole, the lights "made tangible the number of lives lost." Some participants liked the individual plinths for each victim and the family members' ability to interact and, in a sense, create each victim's memorial through the signatures and by adding personal effects. People mentioned the street-level orchards as a particularly attractive touch and liked the notion of a different gardener tending to the orchard each year. Those who liked this particular feature of the design felt that it reflects the international impact of September 11.

However, people thought that the orchard's limited hours of access would make it a barrier for the community and surrounding neighborhoods. Adding four-plus acres of nature to Lower Manhattan was an asset, but many felt that it would be an inefficient use of memorial space. Residents, family members and the general public alike wanted better access to the design at street level.

While some participants found the darkness on the lower level to be appropriate, many more felt that it is "too dark," "cemetery-like," claustrophobic, depressing, gloomy, hopeless, sad, morbid and vault- or crypt-like. In addition to those criticisms, others thought that the design is too "outer-spaceish," "New Agey" or "like Star Trek," and that the plinths look like jewelry displays. Many people reacted poorly to the fact that the orchard would only be open for two hours each day, and others felt that the footprints are not adequately marked. For some, the orchard recalled the American West or upstate New York and simply doesn't belong in New York City. People saw maintenance as a problem (e.g. light outages, vandalism, or shadows blocking the plinths).

Many people felt that "Garden of Lights" would not have a lasting impact on future generations mainly as a result of their lukewarm impressions of the design concept in the lower level memorial room. Although the orchard and prairie concept would communicate a "life from death" message to future visitors, for the most part people felt that this design as a whole is not connected conceptually with September 11.

The Memorial Designs

Votives in Suspension

"The design is very soothing and seems like it would facilitate remembrance and thoughtfulness. One light for every person is a very nice idea and the high ceiling keeps it from seeming too close in."

"The power of light in the face of darkness is a universally recognized symbol. It has elegance, simplicity, and respect all wrapped up into one."

"The execution is poor. I was hoping for a more powerful representation beyond the votives. The rest of the memorial is bland."

"I think future generations will find this display moving but there is nothing that says 'WTC/9-11.' It could be a memorial anywhere."

Comments in favor of Norman Lee and Michael Lewis' "Votives in Suspension" primarily focused on the peaceful and serene nature of the sanctuaries and the power and effectiveness of light to set a reflective, meditative, reverent and solemn tone. People found the votives to be beautiful, elegant and moving, and responded well to the role of victims' families in lighting them. Many participants specifically noted that this design has benches to sit on. The slurry wall treatment was another positive element of this design for some people.

On the other hand, many respondents felt that this plan is too plain, mundane and generic, and that it is not "interactive" enough. People responded poorly to going underground in order to experience the memorial. The sanctuary rooms were described as "tomb-like," "claustrophobic," "cave-like" and like "catacombs." To others, the walkways descending into the sanctuaries seemed too narrow to accommodate large numbers of visitors. Many also felt that the oil-fueled votives would be difficult to maintain and therefore impractical. People were also dismayed by the lack of a specific connection to the victims as individuals and by the alphabetical listing of names. They found it arbitrary and not reflective of the way people died and, by extension, the tragedy itself. The street-level space was criticized as bland, not thought-out and without clear use.

Respondents were divided as to whether this design would withstand the test of time. People felt that the eternal flames would have a lasting significance in the future, but many felt that "Votives in Suspension" fails to make a powerful enough statement to capture the true meaning of September 11.



The Memorial Designs

Dual Memory

"It puts a face with the names, helps you to relate to the human loss."

"This design is more human than listing names. [It's a] reminder of the real lives lost."

"I think this memorial should stand for more than just the individuals - it should represent how NYC copes, how humans have hope beyond tragedy. Limiting it to just these faces is exactly that - limiting."

"I think the design hardly considers future generations. But rather [it] feeds into the desperation of loss of the victims' immediate families. This might be a very appropriate memorial to have now, but I think it will appear very cold to those who come to ground zero in the long years to come, to try to understand what our country went through on that day, and how it changed everything."

The signature element of Brian Strawn and Karla Sierralta's "Dual Memory," the images of the victims in the North Tower footprint, generated a strong positive response for many Imagine New York participants. People said that seeing the images provoked reflection, sadness, and a sense of the tragic loss of innocent lives. Many participants said that seeing the victims' faces creates a strong emotional connection and makes this memorial concept "more personal" than the other seven designs. Many found the concept reminiscent of the "missing" posters that were so prevalent in the city after 9/11. In addition to the images of the victims, participants felt drawn to the grove of 92 sugar maple trees and its symbolic reference to September 11th's worldwide impact.

"Dual Memory" also provoked a strong negative response. Many people criticized the concept, calling it "creepy," "ghoulish" or simply "too overwhelming." Some warned that the technological dependence of the design would result in a "dated" look after a few years or that there would be technical or maintenance problems. Some people thought it to be too cold and "slick," "like an exhibition," "tacky," in bad taste, or more suited to the museum. Many participants were uncertain as to whether the images of the faces would be temporary or constant - people felt that the faces should stay in the same place so that family members would not have to "run around chasing the image" of their loved ones.

Regarding the legacy of this memorial concept over time, many felt that it would be understood well and provide a strong connection to those who died. However, some participants were divided on the legacy of this memorial, saying that it might be an appropriate memorial in the short term but in years to come it would lose its impact. In addition, people wondered how the technology, pictures and memories would hold up in a few generations.



The Memorial Designs

Lower Waters

"The serenity of water. The respectful design - not too showy."

"The view of the slurry wall was very moving. You could feel the pain. I also liked the plan because it specified a place for the unidentified remains. Also like the openness of the entire design."

"It is far too artful and does not speak at all to the energy of New York life. The footprints have been turned into separate exhibitions here, out of touch with what happened and how people feel about it. The memorial should be absolutely visceral. If you were here on 9/11/01 and witnessed what happened, it was radically different from experiencing it as a televised event. This does not come across here at all."

"[It interacts with the Libeskind plan and surrounding neighborhoods] a little too well. The memorial needs to be perceived as a distinctly unique area, not an extension of an office park."

Most positive comments dwelled on the slurry wall, bedrock access, open space and conceptual simplicity of Bradley Campbell and Matthias Neumann's "Lower Waters." They mentioned the design's "spaciousness" and "airiness," especially compared with the rest of Lower Manhattan. Respondents felt that the street-level space would be an attractive addition to the neighborhood and could evolve over time to incorporate more community-oriented activities. The water features - mostly the reflecting pool, less so the room of water - were also cited numerous times as the elements that people liked best about this design. The design was noted for its peaceful, calm, quiet and meditative properties, and was described as "not depressing." The steel columns and exposed footings on the North Tower footprint, the slurry wall and the overall access to bedrock were cited as elements that lent this design historical authenticity.

Critics of "Lower Waters" found the design to be boring and uninspired. Many stated that the plan is too simple or ordinary ("it's just a park"); that it is impersonal and does not adequately represent the victims; that it is not a memorial; and that it is "emotionally flat" (neither iconic nor spiritual). This design "could be anywhere," one said. Some participants objected to the removal of Studio Daniel Libeskind's September 11 Museum, saying that it is an integral part of the master plan's overall concept. Others took particular issue with the listing of victims' names - some wanted rescuers to be indicated separately; others questioned the point of an alphabetical listing.

Regarding this memorial design's relationship to future generations, some participants said that future visitors would not know "what to think" and that this design does not reflect the loss, scope and gravity of September 11 and does not engage on an emotional level. Others felt that the slurry wall and bedrock treatment in this design were far superior to the other seven designs and that the ability to interact with those historically authentic elements would be lessons in themselves for future generations.

The Memorial Designs

Inversion of Light

"It's vast, minimalist, and understated without being cold, because the whole thing emanates a warm light."

"I think they will feel the absence, the emptiness, the loss. When they enter the footprint, open to the sky, I think they will eventually look up and feel some hope for the future. They will see the new construction and see that we must go on."

"It's underground, empty, and barren, no monument to the future, no brilliance here, no artistic theme, just absence, no future here."

"It doesn't really seem as imaginative when compared with some of the others. It does the job, but it doesn't go beyond that."

Participants who responded favorably to Toshio Sasaki's "Inversion of Light" commonly referred to the overall simplicity of the design and the play of the elements (water, light and shadow). They felt that the covered space invites them to reflect in peace, away from the hustle and bustle of the city around them. The unadorned minimalism of the Sasaki design made some participants feel as if their memorial experience would be unimpeded by the ego of the designer. This was an important element to many participants who strived for a memorial that "let each person have his/her own experience." Some participants mentioned the blue laser as reminiscent of the popular temporary memorial, the Tribute in Light.

As with many of the other designs, the very same qualities that some found effective were viewed as negatives by others. Many people found "Inversion of Light" to be too simple, to the point of their being bored by it. A few participants compared the design to a "parking garage" or other places that are decidedly not memorial-like. Similar to some other plans, many people found this design to be sterile, cold or "too architectural." Some respondents commented negatively on the design in saying that it is too similar to Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and that the design is unoriginal, dark, spare, stark and claustrophobic. People reacted poorly to the present layout of the street-level space, with some saying that it resembled a "putting green" or "golf course."

The broad perception of this design's minimalism led some to say that the memorial would not endure over time. Others also felt that it was too cold, empty, plain or boring to adequately address the meaning and impact of September 11.



The Memorial Designs

Suspending Memory

"A thoughtful memorial - each[victim is] represented. [It] reminds me of the Oklahoma City memorial, which I have always thought was simple, spiritual, and beautiful."

"This design not only memorializes those lost on 9/11, it celebrates life in general. The integration of soft space (vegetation) with the hard rigidity of the surrounding architecture creates a space that people will feel comfortable grieving and others will admire for its aesthetic beauty. In addition, it celebrates the victims' lives as well as memorializes them in death."

"The columns are fussy and too clever, just like the tubes [in] Garden of Lights. Keeping the columns good-looking when they're out in the open like that will be taxing."

"I think future generations will look at it as a graveyard. It centers too much on the past and does not at all look forward. A more successful design would do both."

People responded favorably to the concept of glass columns in Joseph Karadin and Hsin-Yi Wu's "Suspending Memory." People felt that having each individual represented by an object is more meaningful than having a simple list of names. Participants liked the notion of having a biography on each column and felt that that would give each victim "uniqueness" and teach future visitors about each person's identity. Many participants sympathized with the need of victims' family members to have a place to visit their lost loved ones. Many others said that this design recalled Arlington National Cemetery in a positive sense. Other elements of the design that received praise were the design's overall "openness," outdoor setting and use of natural elements (trees, water), and its peaceful, dignified atmosphere. People also found the bridge connecting the two footprints and its dedication to the victims in the Pentagon, Shanksville, PA, and the 1993 World Trade Center bombing to be a meaningful and fitting tribute. Many participants acknowledged that recognizing the rescue workers with a bronze helmet or a police cap was a positive gesture.

Although some people found the cemetery-like setting to be fitting, on the whole "Suspending Memory's" resemblance to a cemetery is its most striking negative characteristic. Many found it to be a morbid or gloomy design. Some residents thought that this design would be "depressing" to live near. Others thought that it is too similar to Arlington Cemetery, as well as to the Oklahoma City Memorial. A few complained that it is "too literal." Many people thought it would be prone to vandalism, while others questioned the ability to maintain the giant lake in the bathtub.

Participants thought that "Suspending Memory" would interact poorly with the surrounding neighborhoods in that its large pool would act as a barrier to pedestrian traffic. A significant number of people in the workshops and on the website pointed out that the memorial area is only two acres with a narrow bridge extending from one footprint to the other, thus making it difficult to accommodate large numbers of visitors at any given time. Also, they added, by making the individual glass columns part of both the family member's and the general visitor's experience, this design makes it difficult for family members to have any privacy when mourning their lost loved ones.

Despite the significant criticisms, many people thought that "Suspending Memory" makes a powerful statement about September 11 that future generations would easily understand. People thought that it does an excellent job of paying tribute to the individuals who died and that it is "memorial-like" and respectful of the tragedy. Many, however, thought it would be seen in the future as a cemetery and would be understood by future generations as "too backward-looking."

General Comments

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE MEMORIAL

Despite our carefully structured program of questioning focused on the designs and their specific interactions with the individual visitor, neighborhood context and future generations, our workshop participants felt the need to discuss issues that applied to all the designs as a group and the memorial as a whole. We found that these general comments fell into certain categories:

Connection to September 11

Time and again, participants stated that these designs are “too architectural” and could be anywhere or about anything. The designs were not specific to this site and that element needs to be emphasized more fully - Pearl Harbor and Oklahoma City were frequently mentioned as illustrative examples of site-specific authenticity. Although the footprints are clearly delineated in each design, for many participants this alone did not capture the magnitude of physical loss and devastation that occurred on the site. Participants expressed this sentiment in a multitude of ways: “There’s nothing here in any of these designs that says anything about what happened on that day” or “these designs don’t say anything about the spirit of community, brotherhood and sisterhood and compassion that held us together after September 11.” People felt that the designs, as a group, pay significant attention to the individual victims but not to anything else associated with September 11 and its aftermath. To that end, there was a lack of universal appeal in all the designs, especially for people who did not lose a family member but were expecting to see their emotional or spiritual loss embodied symbolically in the memorial.

Abstract Symbolism vs. Real Artifacts

People felt that the designs “tried too hard to make something beautiful out of something so horribly ugly.” Some people felt that real artifacts from the former World Trade Center site belong in the museum, to provide a historical context and background for the memorial experience. Many others felt that the artifacts should be included in the memorial because those relics possessed an inherent story-telling quality that could never be duplicated by abstract symbolism. A significant number of participants called for returning original World Trade Center artifacts to the site and integrating them within the memorial itself (not the museum) and thought that there should be some scar or some evidence at the World Trade Center site that the September 11 attacks happened there. Many participants asked, “What happened to the [Fritz Koenig] globe sculpture that they said they were going to bring back? It’s just sitting down at Battery Park when it belongs here [at the site].” Or, “I’ll always be reminded of that piece of the [WTC] façade that remained standing after 9/11. I thought they were saving it somewhere? Future generations will take one look at that steel and know what happened here.” Others, however, felt that they didn’t want to be reminded of the horror every day. In addition to the issue of relics, many people stated that the designs do not have a “soaring quality” to metaphorically represent both the former towers and our collective response after September 11.

General Comments

Ordering/Grouping of Names

Many people reacted positively to designs that identify the rescue workers and uniformed personnel who were lost on 9/11. Those designs included "Suspending Memory," "Passages of Light: The Memorial Cloud" and "Inversion of Light," but many participants mentioned that the other designs should be altered to reflect this desire. Some participants, however, were opposed to any separation of victims based on occupation. In addition to the issue of honoring the rescuers, people felt that the alphabetical or age-order listing of names would not be appropriate. Many favored having the victims listed according to where they were or who they were with when they died (e.g. South Tower victims should be with other people in the South Tower and the same for North Tower victims, fire companies ought to be together, families who lost multiple family members wanted their loved ones grouped together).

Maintenance

The eight designs rely heavily on the use of translucent glass, oil-burning votives, lights for each victim, grass fields, falling water, memorial trees and reflecting pools as central elements in their designs. Many participants called into question the various maintenance issues regarding these essential design elements. Vandalism was a common concern, as was degradation of memorial surfaces in high traffic areas or from the forces of the wind, water and temperature change. Participants worried about things like "What happens when my light goes out?" or "How will they keep all that glass clean?" or "What happens when the water freezes?" or "It's real windy down there; will the waterfall spray water all over the place?" or "Will the reflecting pool get moldy?" or "Those concrete ramps look ideal for skateboarders."

Relationship Between the Memorial and the Museum

There seemed to be a great deal of confusion about what would be embodied in the museum and what would be embodied in the memorial. Some people felt that notions of community cohesion and the display of actual artifacts should occur in the museum, to provide historical context, while others felt that these are integral components of the memorial itself. There was a desire on the part of many participants to have more information as to how the memorial and museum would interact with each other. Ideally, they said, the memorial and museum would act as one cohesive element that told the story of September 11.

Comments on the Process, the Mission and Program

There were a large number of comments that requested to see the other 5,193 submissions that the jury did not elect to promote to Stage II. A few participants spoke of their own designs that were submitted into the competition and attempted to use the elements of their designs as a springboard for discussion/analysis of the eight finalists. Many participants were simply disappointed in all of the designs and questioned whether the jury process, the mission and/or the program had failed. Others simply said that two years is not enough time to understand the meaning of September 11 and its impacts, and thus no memorial could, at this time, adequately address the loss and renewal that 9/11 has engendered.