



Cats-in-Residence Program at WHITE BOX

Rhonda Lieberman: Concept/Curator/Cat Wrangler

John Lindell: Architect

Spring/Summer 2005

<http://www.cats-in-residence.org/>

Statement

Combining Art and Animal rescue, the Cats-in-Residence Program will transform the gallery space at White Box into an inter-species hangout area for people and cats. Visitors are invited to unwind, tune into the environment (artificial and natural) and even participate in some urban redemption, if they choose to rescue a kitty.

Cats-in-Residence will be tame strays rescued by B.A.R.C. Shelter that are neutered, screened and available for adoption thru that agency.

The main gallery will become a large, attractive, enclosed cat habitat - activating vertical space with steps/ramps/ladders (covered in sisal/carpet/corrogated cardboard/other climbable, scratchable surfaces) - and horizontally with catwalks. Animal-loving artists and designers will create elements of the habitat: from perches and cubbyholes for cats and seating for people to cat trees, cat toys, feeding stations and litter facilities - within an overall environment designed by artist/architect John Lindell in collaboration with Rhonda Lieberman.

NYC faces an animal overpopulation crisis. 7 out of 10 cats brought to shelters are destroyed (cf. ASPCA.org; Fund.org (The Fund for Animals); Neighborhoodcats.org). Providing appealing public outlets is a low priority for the overextended shelter infrastructure in NYC, but key to finding permanent homes for strays.

Art can play an integral part in the rescue process by providing attractive adoption outlets as part of its program. Cats at White Box uses Art to save lives, while raising awareness about the urban eco-system, and creative ways to mingle commercial, cultural, ecological, even spiritual practice.

The Cats habitat will include:

- Cat-tree structures (multi-level kitty hangouts with perches and cubbies for cats to chill).
- Seating for people.
- Litter facilities tastefully concealed in the design.
- Safety and Maintenance considerations will be handled through the design: including plentiful cubby-holes and perches (cats seek out enclosed spaces and alternately perches, where they can safely observe their surroundings and establish territory).
- The entire habitat will be contained by a large, attractive "cage" within the main gallery, with a safety gate designed to prevent "escapes".
- Litter areas and storage for supplies will be integrated into the design.
- Size and population of the habitat is flexible, according to the specifications of the site.
- Food, Water, Litter will be maintained by volunteers (art world cat lovers).



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Participating Artists

Jonathan Adler / Kent William Albin / Yorgo Alexopoulos / A.S Bessa / Kathe Burkhart / Dana Byerly / Carter / Renata Espinosa / Fischli + Weiss / Carina Gunnars / Jonathan Horowitz / Jane Kaplowitz / John Keenen / Anna Kindgren / Cary Leibowitz / Rhonda Lieberman / John Lindell / Marlene McCarty / Rob Pruitt / J. Morgan Puett / Ruth Root / Kay Rosen / Carolee Schneemann / Stig Sjolund / Marnie Weber / Sue Williams

Related Programming

First Chelsea White Box Short Video Festival

White Box invites artists, filmmakers, videographers - and cat freaks with camera equipment - to submit short Cat-related videos to kick off the first Chelsea White Box Short Video Festival. First prize will be 'The Boxer's D'Or,' a one of a kind gilded cast by a remarkable artist. Selected entries will be screened during the course of the Cats-in-Residence Program.

A program of cat-related presentations

Gallery Talks by Artists, Rescuers, Animal Empaths, Trainers, Shrinks, Behaviorists, etc.

KittyCatCam

An ongoing KittyCatCam will videotape activity in the habitat.

- Footage can be shown off-site (in other venues: Art, Shopping, Corporate) to promote the habitat at White Box.
- Documentation can be made into a video including interviews re: cat issues with Artists, Rescuers, Adoptors, Animal Empaths, Psychologists, etc.)

Web Site

Subsequent phases of the site will include pictures of Cats-in-Residence currently available for adoption. "Happy Endings" will document newly adopted kitties with their people.