

## 72 Hour Urban Action: Real Time Architecture Festival Coming to Long Island City in 2012

Posted By [Will Giron](#) On September 21, 2011 @ 10:45 am In [Architecture](#),[Art NYC](#),[Green Space](#),[News](#),[Queens](#),[Sustainability Initiatives](#) | [No Comments](#)

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[72 Hour Urban Action](#) [6] - the world's first "real time" architecture festival - is coming to [Long Island City](#) [7] in 2012, and in preparation for this exciting event, Inhabitat - along with local residents, architects, artists and officials - was invited to participate in a brainstorming session at the [MoMA P.S. 1](#) [8], which included a guided tour of LIC, a fun public planning workshop, and an open discussion on the future of [Long Island City](#) [9] in light of gentrification.

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### *Hour Urban Action*

Founded by architect [Kareem Halbrecht](#) <sup>[25]</sup> and cultural planner Gilly Karjevsky, 72 Hour Urban Action was part of the [Bat – Yam Biennale of Landscape Urbanism](#) <sup>[26]</sup>, a collective debate centered around “urban experience and activities that have the power to transform the city into a higher quality, optimistic, and vital place.”

Dubbed “guerrilla architecture,” 72 Hour Urban Action brought 100 participants in 10 international teams for a three day competition to design and build various projects in different public spaces throughout Bat – Yam, Israel. The competition, which [first launched](#) <sup>[27]</sup> last year, was a huge success and spurred the creators to bring the next edition of 72 Hour Urban Action to LIC in 2012.

The day of preparation began with a brief introduction by Halbrecht and Karjevsky, along with a [short video](#) <sup>[28]</sup> of the 2010 event that took place in Bat – Yam. Next, presentations of what can be done in LIC were given, one of which was about [Holding Pattern](#) <sup>[29]</sup>, the MoMA PS1 installation by [Interboro Partners](#) <sup>[30]</sup>. To create Holding Pattern, Interboro asked PS1’s neighbors what they needed, and then incorporated those items into the installation. Everything from the trees to the benches to the ping pong tables found a new home after the installation’s dismantling.



Aurash Khawarзад of [DoTank: Brooklyn](#) <sup>[31]</sup> discussed “DIY urbanism,” a more creative idea, and “tactical urbanism,” making more permanent changes. DoTank: Brooklyn’s presentation focused on how tactical urbanism can transform a community by promoting green space. DIY urbanism, like [yarn bombing](#) <sup>[32]</sup>, while creative and interesting, is not what the community needs to promote long term change. However, tactical urbanism initiatives like widespread [chair bombing](#) <sup>[33]</sup>, [digital community billboards](#) <sup>[34]</sup>, and using light projectors to [improve building aesthetics](#) <sup>[35]</sup>, not only encourage community participation and green activism, but also prevent “cookie cutter high-rises” from changing the character and culture of neighborhoods going through gentrification.

[Nina Rappaport](#) <sup>[36]</sup>, an architectural historian, and curator, best known for her preservation of the Queens [Sunnyside Gardens](#) <sup>[37]</sup>, presented “LIC in Context.” Because LIC is a “hybrid scape” of commercial, industrial, and residential zoning, Rappaport proposes a collaborative effort between artists, local craftsman, and business to improve the local economy and create a new image for LIC. She also proposes making LIC more attractive to go to by emphasizing its proximity to Manhattan, improving transportation and infrastructure, constructing residential bridges, and creating welcoming billboards to give LIC a distinctive character.



We then took a tour of LIC, which included stops at prime examples of revitalization and preservation in the neighborhood. We visited the community garden, which had at one point been a dilapidated lot, and we visited to the world renowned [5 Pointz](#) <sup>[38]</sup> (a personal favorite). Dubbed a "graffiti museum" the tour was lead by [Meres One](#) <sup>[38]</sup> – artist, curator, and CEO of 5 Pointz. He discussed the need to preserve cultural landmarks like 5 Pointz in light of gentrification and talked about 5 Pointz historical significance to both Queens and the graffiti artist community throughout the world.

The tour was followed by a workshop at [Chashama](#) <sup>[39]</sup>, an organization based in LIC that promotes artistic creativity by repurposing vacant properties for use as artist space. We were split into groups, given a topic, and told to create a design using the principles of tactical urbanism. Our topic was "secret public garden," and after a half hour of drawing blueprints (not very professional ones) and brainstorming, we each presented our design proposals. We were even given awards!

The day ended with a roundtable discussion on the future of LIC and included a visit from Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer, representative of LIC, Astoria, Sunnyside, and Woodside. Nicholas Griffin of the [Flux Factory](#) <sup>[40]</sup> lead the discussion by proposing an economically viable solution that emphasized cultural regeneration through permanent artistic space. "People should be able to live in a city with sustainable, local economies that help maintain the cultural layers of the community's local identity," he said.

In light of the seriousness of the topics being discussed, the day was not only fun, but an interesting opportunity to hear the opinions and the initiatives of different artists, architects, and city officials on improving the local community and NYC as a whole. For those of us who were born and raised in Queens, it's a bit surprising that a once neglected area (with the exception of the industrial sector) is now an up and coming neighborhood.

The difference between LIC and other neighborhoods, however, is that there is an early effort in trying to change the negative connotations that gentrification brings by getting local residents and artists to work together in revitalizing the economic development through cultural and green initiatives. We can't wait to see what 2012 and the 72 Hour Urban Action initiative will bring to LIC!

[+ 72 Hour Urban Action](#) <sup>[41]</sup>

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- [7] Long Island City: <http://inhabitat.com/nyc/new-sustainable-development-plan-for-western-queens-waterfront-to-be-unveiled-next-week/>
- [8] MoMA P.S. 1: <http://www.momaps1.org/>
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