

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Open House by Matthew Mazzotta

Location: 202 Main Street - Between the town post office and the main grocery store

**Transforming house unfolds new story for town in Alabama
Artist creates an unexpected public space from an abandoned house**

Please see the video of the full concept and context
<https://vimeo.com/70386286>

Also a link with photos <http://colemanarts.org/2013/06/open-house-matthew-mazzotta/>

York, AL - What happens when an artist is invited to use the resources of a small town to help transform its identity? Artist Matthew Mazzotta, the Coleman Center for the Arts, and the people of York Alabama have teamed up to transform one of York's most iconic blighted properties into a new public space. Open House is a house with a secret, it physically transforms from the shape of a house into an open air theater that seats one hundred people by having its walls and roof fold down.

One June 15 of this year, a ribbon cutting by the Mayor of York, Gena Robbins, inaugurated Open House. The symbolic gesture was followed with an invocation prayer to bless the project by Reverend Willie, performances by a gospel choir and the local R&B funk band Time Zone, as well as an outdoor film screening of Dr. Suess's The Lorax. For the town of York, this is the beginning of a series of free public events programed by the Coleman Center for the Arts. A screening of the film Madagascar 3 will be the next event of Open House scheduled for August 10th at 7:30pm. The theatre is free and open to the public.

How Open House came to be?

In January 2011, artist Matthew Mazzotta was invited by the Coleman Center For The Arts to organize an artwork with the people of York. During Matthew's initial visit to York, the artist asked people from the community to bring something from their living room so that they could recreate a living room outdoors in the middle of the street as a way to provoke discussion about what were on peoples minds and to generate ideas about what direction they might go in. From this conversation, they developed a project that uses the materials of an abandoned house as well as the land it sits on to build the transforming structure on the footprint of the old house.

How it works?

The metamorphosis of Open House is designed to require cooperation. It takes four people one and a half hours to unfold the structure. The foundation is made of used railroad ties which anchor the custom fabricated industrial hinges to five rows of stadium seating. The rows of seats fold down with the aid of a hand winch and enough manpower to counter balance the hefty, but agile structure.

Critical Impact

Through the project, the artist hopes to directly address the lack of public space in York, AL by providing a physical location that becomes a common ground for community dialogue and activities. The new structure carries the weight of the past through the materials that were salvaged and repurposed from the old structure, most visibly the original pink siding. When Open House is fully unfolded, it provides an opportunity for people to come together and experience the community from a new perspective. When it folds back up, it resembles the original abandoned house, reminding people of the history of what was there before.

Support for Open House provided, in part, by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Visual Artists Network, York Drug, the City of York, the City of York Fire Department and countless individual supporters of the Coleman Center for the Arts and Matthew Mazzotta. A special thanks to Jegan Vincent De Paul, Cory Vineyard, Curtis Oliveira, James Marshall, Elouise Finch, Brenda Carole and Lerene Johnson, Alpha Kappa Alpha of the University of West Alabama, John's Welding of Meridian, MS, Beany Green, Pam Dorr and CCA employees and Board of Directors.



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