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PRATT PROFESSOR WILLIAM MENKING SELECTED TO CURATE THE UNITED STATES' PAVILLION AT THE 2008 VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE
Work by Pratt Professor Deborah Gans to be Featured in Exhibition

New York, N.Y., July 24, 2008 – William Menking, Pratt Institute alumnus, professor of architecture, and founder and editor-in-chief of *The Architect's Newspaper*, was recently selected as commissioner and curator of “Into the Open: Positioning Practice,” an exhibition selected by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to represent the United States at the 2008 Venice Architecture Biennale which runs from September 14 through November 23 in Venice, Italy. The exhibition was conceived with the assistance of architects Teddy Cruz and Pratt professor Deborah Gans, whose Gans Studio will be one of 15 firms to be featured in the exhibition.

The exhibition will highlight the means by which architects reclaim their role in shaping the community and the built environment to expand understanding of American architectural practice and its relationship to civic participation. Menking will co-curate with Aaron Levy, executive director and senior curator at the Slought Foundation, and Andrew Sturm, director of architecture for the PARC Foundation.

“Into the Open: Positioning Practice” will include installations, digital images, video projections, drawings, and artifacts of the American landscape of buildings, open spaces, parks, civic spaces, urban housing units, and other elements, to explore how architects are meeting the challenge of creating new work in light of contemporary design conditions. The exhibition will address factors challenging traditional methods of architecture, such as shifting socio-cultural demographics, changing geo-political boundaries, uneven economic development, and the explosion of migration and urbanization as it advocates for an expanded conception of architectural practice and responsibilities. The participants, all of whom actively engage communities in their work on various levels, will demonstrate architectural responses to social and environmental issues explored in the exhibition.

Menking has taught architecture, urbanism, and city planning in the Pratt Institute School of Architecture since 1992. He founded and edits *The Architect's Newspaper*, which is published in both New York and California. He has organized, curated, and created catalogs for exhibitions on architecture and urbanism for venues in the U.S. and Europe including “Forever Modern: Fifty Years of Record Houses” and “Shrinking Cities” at Pratt Manhattan Gallery. He is currently co-curating “The Art and Architecture of the Counter Culture,” an exhibition on the utopian community experiments of the 1960s and 1970s, with Professor Alessandra Ponte for the Canadian Center for Architecture. In the last year, his writings have appeared in various publications including *The Architect's Newspaper*, *Monocle*, *Il Giornale dell'Architettura*, *Architects' Journal*, *Newsday*, and *Time Out New York*.

Menking, who lives in New York City, has a bachelor’s degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and master’s degrees from the Bartlett School of Architecture and Planning University College, London, and Pratt Institute. He expects to receive his doctoral degree from the City University of New York in 2009.

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Gans Studio will exhibit work devoted to social and public issues, including a patented desk designed for the New York City School system that is included in the permanent collection of The New York Historical Society and a prototype for transitional housing that won an international competition and a subsequent grant for development. Gans Studio's executed projects include industrial and graphic design as well as architecture. The studio's built work and theoretical projects on displacement have been exhibited internationally.

Pratt professor Gans is an editor of *Bridging the Gap: Rethinking the Relation of Architecture and Engineering*, which was honored by the AIA International Book Awards, and of the recently released *The Organic Approach*, and author of *The Le Corbusier Guide*, now in its second edition. Gans is also in partnership with DArchitects/James Dar to design several hundred units of housing for the Lower Ninth Ward and New Orleans East through the non-profit organization, Acorn Housing. Gans, who has taught architecture at Pratt since 1987, has a bachelor's degree from Harvard University and a master's degree from Princeton. She is a resident of Brooklyn, New York.

U.S. proposals for the Venice Architecture Biennale were reviewed by members of the Federal Advisory Committee on International Exhibitions. The Cultural Programs Division of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs supports and manages the official U.S. participation at the biennale and other select international exhibitions to ensure that the excellence, vitality, and diversity of the arts in the United States are effectively presented to international audiences.

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Founded in 1887, Pratt Institute (www.pratt.edu) is one of the largest independent colleges of art and design in the United States, offering undergraduate and graduate degree programs in the schools of architecture, art and design, information and library science, and liberal arts and sciences. Pratt is located on 25 landscaped acres in the Clinton Hill section of Brooklyn and has a Manhattan campus in a large, newly renovated building on West 14th Street.