

# WHITNEY

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# PRESS RELEASE



Whitney Education Studio

## Whitney Museum Donates Education Studio to Socrates Sculpture Park

**New York, May 15, 2014**—Socrates Sculpture Park and the Whitney Museum of American Art announced today that the Whitney's freestanding educational studio, designed by the innovative architectural firm LOT-EK, will be donated to Socrates Sculpture Park.

"We are delighted to partner with the Whitney Museum and LOT-EK to reuse and adapt this unique structure," said John Hatfield, Executive Director of Socrates Sculpture Park. "Rarely does a win-win situation arise that offers such a remarkable opportunity to repurpose architecture, and we look forward to working with our partners at NYC Parks to explore ways that it may be reused and adapted to benefit the community here in Long Island City. The structure will be moved temporarily to a storage facility while plans are developed for its possible reuse. By offering Socrates the 472-square-foot pop-up studio, the Whitney Museum has generously presented us with an opportunity to explore the possibility of our first indoor space, which may be used to expand the park's longstanding free arts education program. Other possible adaptable uses may include a gallery, visitor area, or administrative space."

"The LOT-EK studio we commissioned in 2012 has provided much-needed space for hundreds of educational programs over the last two years," said Adam D. Weinberg, the Whitney's Alice Pratt Brown Director. "As we prepare to open the Whitney's new downtown building in 2015—designed with dedicated education facilities—we are thrilled that the structure has found a new home at Socrates Sculpture Park in Queens. This is a wonderful example of creative and multi-layered recycling. LOT-EK's project began with discarded materials and is now being repurposed for use at a once abandoned landfill that has itself been recycled into a leading NYC cultural destination."

The studio structure, commissioned by the Whitney and located for the past two years in the Sculpture Court of the Museum's building on Madison Avenue at 75<sup>th</sup> Street, will be de-installed this month and removed by crane in June. Its purpose was to provide desperately needed space for the Whitney's education programs—including classes, studio demonstrations, and art-making workshops—for adults, families, NYC public school students and teachers, teens, seniors, and visitors with disabilities.

LOT-EK's architectural concept employed six steel shipping containers stacked on two levels to form a single volume. Visible from Madison Avenue, the 472-square-foot studio was designed to fit into half of the Whitney's open Sculpture Court, on the south side of the entry bridge. A diagonal, continuous band of glass along two sides and across the roof of the structure provided natural light and offered museum visitors a glimpse of activities inside.

LOT-EK, headed by Ada Tolla and Giuseppe Lignano, has a long relationship with the Whitney, where its project *Mobile Dwelling Unit* was presented in 2004. "LOT-EK is delighted that the Whitney Studio structure will have a second life with Socrates Sculpture Park, particularly given its cultural background," said Ada Tolla, LOT-EK principal and co-founder. "We are very excited to work with Socrates to determine how this flexible space could best work for them."

### **About Socrates Sculpture Park**

For over 25 years Socrates Sculpture Park has been a model of public art production, community activism, and socially inspired creativity. Located on the industrial waterfront of Long Island City, Queens, Socrates is an epicenter of cultural programming, a producer of contemporary exhibitions, presenter of a multi-disciplinary performance series, and arts educator of more than 8,000 children and teens annually. The park is open, free of charge, 365 days a year from morning till dusk, and every program is FREE. For more information, visit [www.socratessculpturepark.org](http://www.socratessculpturepark.org).



### **About LOT-EK**

LOT-EK is an award-winning design studio based in New York and Naples, Italy. Founded in 1993 by Ada Tolla and Giuseppe Lignano, they've been involved with commercial, institutional and residential projects globally. In addition, LOT-EK has conceived and executed exhibition design and site-specific installations for major cultural institutions and museums, including The Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Walker Art Center, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Tolla and Lignano teach at Columbia University, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation in New York. They also lecture at universities and cultural institutions throughout the U.S. and abroad.

LOT-EK has achieved high visibility in the architecture, design, and art worlds for its sustainable and innovative approach to construction, materials, and space through the adaptive reuse of existing industrial objects and systems not originally intended for architecture. LOT-EK is also recognized for the use of technology as an integral part of architecture, for addressing issues of mobility and transformability in architecture and for blurring the boundaries between art, architecture, and entertainment. Their first monograph, *Urbanscan*, was published by Princeton Architectural Press in

2002. *LOT-EK Mixer*, by Edizioni Press, was issued in 2000, and *MDU Mobile Dwelling Unit*, published by DAP, was printed in June 2003.

## **About the Whitney**

The Whitney Museum of American Art is the world's leading museum of twentieth-century and contemporary art of the United States. Focusing particularly on works by living artists, the Whitney is celebrated for presenting important exhibitions and for its renowned collection, which comprises over 20,000 works by more than 3,000 artists. With a history of exhibiting the most promising and influential artists and provoking intense debate, the Whitney Biennial, the Museum's signature exhibition, has become the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in the United States. In addition to its landmark exhibitions, the Museum is known internationally for events and educational programs of exceptional significance and as a center for research, scholarship, and conservation.

Founded by sculptor and arts patron Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney in 1930, the Whitney was first housed on West 8th Street in Greenwich Village. The Museum relocated in 1954 to West 54th Street and, in 1966, inaugurated its present home, designed by Marcel Breuer, at 945 Madison Avenue on the Upper East Side. While its vibrant program of exhibitions and events continues uptown, the Whitney is constructing a new building, designed by Renzo Piano, in downtown Manhattan. Located at the corner of Gansevoort and Washington Streets in the Meatpacking District, at the southern entrance to the High Line, the new building, which has generated immense momentum and support, will enable the Whitney to vastly increase the size and scope of its exhibition and programming space. Ground was broken on the new building in May 2011, and it is projected to open to the public in spring 2015.

## **Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art**

2014 Whitney Biennial	Through May 25, 2014
American Legends: From Calder to O'Keeffe	Through June 29, 2014
Jeff Koons: A Retrospective	June 27–October 19, 2014

The Whitney Museum is located at 945 Madison Avenue at 75th Street, New York City. Museum hours are: Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., closed Monday and Tuesday. General admission: \$20. Full-time students and visitors ages 19–25 and 62 & over: \$16. Visitors 18 & under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 6–9 p.m. For general information, please call (212) 570-3600 or visit [whitney.org](http://whitney.org).

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