

**MONUMENTAL LAND ART/
ARCHITECTURE/PERFORMANCE**

**PROTOTYPE
180**

Press Release

Artist Mary Ellen Carroll Rotates
a Houston, Texas House in a Ground-Shifting Work
of Conceptual Art that will make Architecture Perform

Thursday, November 11, 2010 @ 11 am

Viewing location and Parking:

Harris County's Bayland Park, www.prototype180.com



The 180 degree rotation of 6513 Sharpview for prototype 180

(HOUSTON, TEXAS) Beginning at 11 am (weather permitting) *prototype 180*, the 180 degree structural rotation of $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre of land and the existing single family home will take place in the first-ring subdivision of Sharpstown in Houston, Texas. The rotation will be live streamed over the internet in high definition video at www.prototype180.com.

American artist Mary Ellen Carroll conceptualized *prototype 180* ten years ago as a work of art whose process will make architecture perform. It is a reconsideration of monumentality in performance, sculpture, architecture and technology. *prototype 180* expands the historical timeline of the land art projects from the 60s and 70s (The Lightning Fields, Spiral Jetty, The Sun Tunnels, etc.) through architecture's usurpment of art in the 80s and 90s (Bilbao, Burj Dubai, etc.) to the present political epoch where Houston's lack of land use policy has determined its location.

The only metropolitan area in the United States without a formal land use policy/no zoning, the city of Houston selected itself as the site for *prototype 180*, where there is an implicit freedom associated with Houston's 'free enterprise' development.

prototype 180 is, literally, a ground-shifting exercise, in that it structurally involves the rotation, back to front, of a house and its surrounding land. By rotating the house and land 180 degrees, Mary Ellen Carroll is calling for a total reorientation of thinking, of vantage point, and of day-to-day living. This process Carroll believes a complete, "about face" in standard operating procedure must occur to encourage new considerations of the urban, cultural, and the social. Post the structural rotation, Carroll will retrofit and rehabilitate the unoccupied structure and it will be reprogrammed architecturally.

The average stand-alone, single-family house is built on the same basic communal plans that has been in operation, and gone unquestioned, for the last century or more. Plumbing, heating, and electricity are all closed systems, obscured behind walls, and carefully hidden from fresh thinking. Having structural movers lift the Sharpstown house and its $\frac{3}{4}$ acre lot and rotating it a full one-hundred-and-eighty degrees, Carroll is overturning not just the house itself, but its operational systems, in expectation of discovering new, more innovative and sustainable ways of building and retrofitting existing buildings as a model and laboratory. Its goal is to make architecture and building systems in aging, first ring suburbs perform as a dynamic process. *prototype 180* is within the aging, first-ring suburb revitalization program of an *innovation territory* (www.innovationterritories.com). It will become a global model and laboratory for the development and application of innovative building and communication technologies and cultural programming.

The site for *prototype 180* is 6513 Sharpview, Houston, Texas. Located in the heart of Sharpstown's Section One, it is a "typical" postwar suburban property consisting of an unoccupied 1,304 sq ft "Ranch Style" home built in 1960. The home sits on a 15,340 sq ft lot flanked on each side by similar occupied residences. The catalytic moment will be the physical 180-degree rotation of this single family home and its surrounding property on November 11, 2010. This gesture will result in the site becoming a permanent cultural and architectural emblem that not only represents the consideration of how and why things are done, but fundamentally, what constitutes systems for revitalization and innovation. Sited locally, *prototype 180* will be broadcast globally. The roof of the structure will be wired with high definition video cameras that will simultaneously stream its process. This is being realized in conjunction with Rice University via internet 2 and Columbia University's School of Architecture. The broadcast system was developed by William Deigaard of Rice University.

Open to the public on November 11, 2010, beginning at 11 am, visitors will be invited to witness the one time, 180-degree rotation by Cherry Structural Movers from neighboring Bayland Park (<http://www.co.harris.tx.us/Pct3/parks/bayland.aspx>). Harris County's 70 acre Bayland Park that abuts the south property line of *prototype 180* (6513 Sharpview Drive, Houston, Texas). Following the rotation, the public will be able to continue to visit 6513 Sharpview to witness the evolving retrofitting and reconstruction of the single-family home that will begin in January of 2011 as a model/laboratory for the application of innovative building and communication systems.

prototype 180 is made possible by the generous support of Greg Feldman and Melanie Shorin, the Strypemonde Foundation, the Graham Foundation, OFPC, LLC, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation, Rice University Building Institute, William J. Hill Land and Cattle Company, David Hariton and Tod Lippy, Transart Foundation for Art and Anthropology, Healix, Inc. and Center-Point Energy.

David Joselit, Yale University, Carnegie Professor, History of Art, Modern Art and Culture, stated: "Mary Ellen Carroll practices land art in the city in her "prototype 180" where she projects a figure as powerful as Robert Smithson's Spiral Jetty onto the Houston suburbs: a house that has been lifted with its slab and rotated while looking out at the surrounding neighborhood from each of its facades with a permanent digital feed. This is art that is zoned for life."

For over ten years, *prototype 180* has engaged countless individuals from the public, private, corporate, educational, and institutional sectors. Carroll states: "The best questions always include a 'why.' Sometimes what is true is exactly the opposite of what you would expect, and to turn things around can make the invisible visible. This is what a successful work of art can accomplish. Presently, we are living in the political epoch and policy can be treated as a ready made material and is the foundation for *prototype 180*, a work of art that is similar to architecture, performance and film. It is only made possible and by which, 'in others count.' "

prototype 180 utilizes the temporal, and the expectation of simultaneity to capitalize on this moment when we are still self-conscious about the ease at which activities are being captured digitally, and viewable while they are happening. A high definition simultaneous video feed will be streamed from cameras atop the structure at the site of *prototype 180* and viewable at www.prototype180.com. A high performance wireless network developed for under-resourced communities will be put into practice in order for the community to talk back to the project. Carroll will continue to develop public programming that will model the future use of the structure *prototype 180*. This model for programming began with the 2009 electoral race for Houston's mayor and a public forum on land use that Carroll organized as a part of the exhibition *No Zoning* at the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston. A recent invitational charrette brought together twelve of the leading architecture firms in Houston to consider the revitalization of the Sharpstown Shopping Center as a part of her exhibition *Policy* at the Architecture Center in Houston in 2010. *prototype 180* is an aligned community initiative of the Rice University Building Institute.

Born in Danville, Illinois in 1961, Mary Ellen Carroll's career spans more than twenty years with a disavowal of any signature style, investigating the single, fundamental question: what constitutes a work of art? The resulting multifarious, provocative and often wry outpouring in art, architecture, performance and film interrogates the relationship between subjectivity, language, and power; at its core is a dedication to political and social critique. Carroll is the recipient of numerous grants and honors, including in 2010 a Graham Foundation Fellowship for *prototype 180* and the *innovation territory* and the AIA's Artist of the Year Award that included an exhibition at the Architecture Center in Houston. She has also been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Pollack/Krasner Award, a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship and a MacDowell Colony Fellowship. The Pennies From Heaven Fund, a part of the New York Community Trust, recognized Carroll for her contribution to New York City for work that is advanced, experimental, and 'socially' visionary. Carroll teaches in the architecture school at Rice University and is the Research Director of the Rice University Building Institute. Her work has been exhibited at numerous galleries and institutions around the world including the Whitney Museum-New York, ICA-London, Museum fur Völkerkunde-Munich, ICA-Philadelphia, MOMUK-Vienna and the Renaissance Society-Chicago, and it resides in numerous public and private collections. Her monograph was recently published by Steidl/MACK (London and Gottingen) and received the AIGA's Award for the Best Books in 2010.

For further information please contact: press@prototype180.com or 212.868.3459