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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Conversation Explores Intersection of Hartford's Built Structures and City Experiences

Tom Condon to Moderate Panel, Public Discussion on Art, Urban Planning, and Influence

HARTFORD, Connecticut (December 3, 2013) – We know how our surroundings are made - but in what ways do our surroundings make *us*? On Saturday, December 14, at 1:00 PM, Real Art Ways and Hartford Public Library will host a Community Conversation entitled, "*How Do Our Surroundings Shape Us?*" examining Hartford's built environment and how its imagery influences the experiences of community residents throughout the city. Moderated by **Hartford Courant Editor and Place Columnist Tom Condon**, a panel of artists, planners, and residents will help us look further into the power of urban planning to unite, define, or fracture our neighborhoods.

Inspired by the work of artist **Lourdes Correa-Carlo**, which depicts architectural features found in Hartford neighborhoods, the event will engage attendees and a panel of community respondents featuring **Hartford planner and activist Toni Gold, muralist and musician Carlos Hernandez Chavez, and North End resident and Trinity College alum Jamil Ragland**, in an open discussion surrounding the intersection of Hartford's physical and social structures. Carlo's exhibit, "Systemic Relation," is on display at Real Art Ways through January 5, 2014.

The event is free and open to the public. Light lunch will be available at 12:30 p.m. Seating is limited, please RSVP to info@realartways.org, or call 860-232-1006.

For more information, call Hartford Public Library at 860-695-6319.

ABOUT THE PANEL

Tom Condon is deputy editorial page editor, columnist and editorial writer at the *Hartford Courant*. Condon has won more than 30 journalism and community awards, including the New England Society of Newspaper Editors Master Reporter Award and most recently the 2007 American Planning Association Journalism Award and 2008 Allan B. Rogers Editorial Award from the New England Newspaper Association.

Lourdes Correa-Carlo (now based in Queens) began working on the pieces in her Real Art Ways exhibition when she moved to Hartford in the fall of 2009. Taking special notice of a pedestrian walkway crossing Interstate 91, her work pronounces a visual relation between this structure and theorist Jeremy Bentham's late eighteenth-century modernist design for prison architecture, the "Panopticon" or "inspection house." The resulting piece, *Vigilance Structure*, towers opposite the *Inverted Structure*, a similarly reconstituted site-specific sculpture derived in part from a photograph of a boarded-up house in Hartford's Frog Hollow neighborhood.

Toni Gold is a long-time Hartford planner, activist and advocate, with expertise in transportation for livable communities, historic preservation, waterfront projects, and commercial revitalization. In 2013, Ms. Gold was presented with the 2013 Connecticut Light and Power Company Award for Outstanding Contributions to Main Street Revitalization. She lives in Hartford's West End.

Carlos Hernandez Chavez is a Hartford artist and musician whose work tells the personal stories and struggles of immigrants and migrant workers in the United States and Mexico. One of Chavez's murals is currently on display in the main atrium of Hartford's City Hall.

Jamil Ragland is a resident of Hartford's North End who graduated in 2013 from Trinity College with a degree in American Studies. He works in the Registrar's Office at Trinity, and is particularly interested in improving Hartford for current residents by increasing accessibility to quality public services such as mass transit, education and housing.

About Real Art Ways

Real Art Ways is one of the leading contemporary arts organizations in the United States, with a record of linking artists, innovation and community. Programs include visual arts, with exhibitions, public art projects, and artist presentations; cinema, with independent and international films 7 nights a week; music; performance; literary events; community and educational programming. For more information or to see a calendar of events, please visit www.realartways.org.

About [Hartford Public Library](http://www.hplct.org)

The Hartford Public Library traces its roots to 1774. It operates 10 locations and a Library-on-Wheels in the City of Hartford. The Library receives more than 860,000 visits per year. Services include access to a large collection of materials for reading and research, as well as music and video. Programs provide education, information and enrichment to the people of Hartford in such areas as citizenship training, literacy, business skills and cultural awareness. The mission of Hartford Public Library is to provide free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration. Visit hplct.org and the library's new blog at blogs.hplct.org.

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