

**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Contact:

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**DiverseWorks and the UH Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts Present
Aaron Landsman's *City Council Meeting*
November 1 – 3, 2012**

Thursday, November 1, 2012

Palm Center
2nd Floor Courtroom
5300 Griggs Road, 77021
7:30 pm
FREE

Friday, November 2, 2012

Project Row Houses
Eldorado Ballroom
2310 Elgin Street, 77004
7:30 pm
FREE

Saturday, November 3, 2012

DiverseWorks – Midtown
4102 Fannin Street, 77004
7:30 pm
FREE

This is the city we make together by performing it. Who are you in it? Who represents you?

(Houston, TX, September 17, 2012) - DiverseWorks and the University of Houston Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts are pleased to announce Aaron Landsman's *City Council Meeting*. Presented over the course of three nights, November 1 – 3, in three different locations, *City Council Meeting* is a participatory theater event about empathy, democracy and power. Combining transcripts from government meetings in several cities, as well as original writing and a surprise ending, *City Council Meeting* reveals the city we make each night by performing it. This work is created anew in each city where it is presented, with the help of local actors, activists, politicians, and other citizens. The presentation in Houston over the final weekend leading up to Election Day marks the first stop in *City Council Meeting*'s four-city premiere, to be followed by Tempe, AZ, New York, NY, and San Francisco, CA.

Co-commissioned by DiverseWorks and created by playwright, performer, and teacher Aaron Landsman along with his collaborators director Mallory Catlett, and designer Jim Findlay, *City Council Meeting* is an exercise in performed participatory democracy that utilizes the procedures and processes of actual city council meetings to educate audiences, provoke empathy, and reframe local politics through the lens of art. *City Council Meeting* starts with the idea of politics as performance, and ends with a deeper set of questions: What makes us civilized? What makes us a community? What are the rules and situations that bind us? Who makes those rules? At each performance, audience members have the option to participate as Councilors who conduct the meeting; Speakers who are called on to give testimony; Supporters who stand in support of others; or as Bystanders who observe the proceedings. The performance is facilitated by Landsman, Catlett, and Findlay, along with a group of local artists and community organizers who act as Staffers. Those Staffers are Assata, Christa Forster, John Harvey, Maria Cristina Jadick, Autumn Knight, Husein Lokhandwala, and Nicola Parente.

The project was developed over the course of Landsman's Spring 2012 residency at the Mitchell Center. Karen Farber, Director of the Mitchell Center on *City Council Meeting* and collaborating with DiverseWorks:

We are thrilled to continue working with Aaron Landsman and partnering with DiverseWorks on this project. City Council Meeting is a deceptively simple creation – participants gather and enact something that looks like a banal, everyday gathering. Yet the project is layered with rich meaning about who we are and how we govern ourselves in the United States today.

Aaron Landsman says of his production:

Sometimes people wonder why we don't have actors do the show. What we like to say is that we DO have actors do it. You. And you are perfect. We have been working on City Council Meeting for almost three years now, and we are so excited that the first presentation is in Houston, through this partnership with DiverseWorks and the Mitchell Center for the Arts. Both of these organizations are at the forefront of the conversation on how art is part of our lives all the time, and Houston is lucky to have them both.

(more)

Schedule of Performances:

City Council Meeting will be presented in three very different locations over three evenings the first weekend in November. Post-show discussions will follow each performance. Admission is free.

Thursday, November 1, 2012

Palm Center
2nd Floor Courtroom
5300 Griggs Road, 77021
7:30 pm

Friday, November 2, 2012

Project Row Houses
El Dorado Ballroom
2310 Elgin Street, 77004
7:30 pm

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4102 Fannin Street, 77004
7:30 pm

About the Artists

Aaron Landsman is a playwright, performer, and teacher based in Brooklyn, NY and Urbana, IL. His work is often presented in places where people perform their lives - homes, offices, bars, and the street. His productions include: *Appointment*, an ongoing series of one-on-one performances in small offices; *Open House*, commissioned by The Foundry Theatre and presented in 24 New York City apartments; *Love Story*, a gallery performance and audio walk presented at Austin's FuseBox Festival; and *Desk*, presented by Chashama in New York City in an abandoned midtown workplace. His stage works have been presented in London, Cleveland, Minneapolis, New York, and Lund (Sweden). Landsman has performed with many directors and choreographers, most recently Elevator Repair Service, with whom he worked from 2004-2011. He has taught at Juilliard and New York University and guest lectured at Columbia University, Stanford University, and Parsons The New School for Design. More: thinaar.com

Mallory Catlett is a director/dramaturg who creates work with several theatrical entities in New York City including Banana Bag & Bodice, Latitude 14, Restless Productions NYC and Aaron Landsman. Her work has been seen in New York at HERE, Chocolate Factory, Ontological-Hysteric Theater, and PS122, among many other venues, and internationally: Western Front (Vancouver), Escales Improbables (Montreal), Exit (Cretiel, France), Kilkenny Arts Festival & Dublin Fringe (Ireland), Edinburgh Fringe (Scotland), and Noorderzon (Groningen, Netherlands). More: mallorycatlett.net

Jim Findlay was a founding collaborator in both Collapsible Giraffe and Accinoso/Cynthia Hopkins. He has been an associate artist in the Wooster Group since 1994 and is a frequent collaborator with Ridge Theater, Bang on a Can, and Ralph Lemon. Other recent work includes video design at Arena Stage and scenic design for Ralph Lemon at the Lyon Opera Ballet. Current projects include Stew's Brooklyn Omnibus at Brooklyn Academy of Music. Awards include the Hewes Design Award, Lortel Award, Princess Grace Award, 2001 and 2008 Obie Awards, and 1999 and 2008 Bessie Awards. More: jimfindlaynyc.com

City Council Meeting Resources

Website: citycouncilmeeting.org

Twitter: [@citycouncilmtg](https://twitter.com/citycouncilmtg) / [#citycouncilmtg](https://twitter.com/citycouncilmtg)

Facebook: City Council Meeting <https://www.facebook.com/pages/City-Council-Meeting/178233155534827>

Images: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/g0pk7n8sjvubt5/woQzn-NE2t>

Project Support:

City Council Meeting began development with a three-year residency at HERE Art Center in New York, through the HERE Artist Residency Program (HARP); HERE will act as co-producer for the New York City presentation of the piece. *City Council Meeting* was also made possible with funding by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Theater Pilot, with lead funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The project also received support from The MAP Fund, a program of Creative Capital supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. *City Council Meeting* is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation Fund Project co-commissioned by DiverseWorks Art Space, in partnership with HERE, Zspace and NPN. The Creation Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency). This project is made possible in part by support from the NPN Community Fund. Support for the Community Fund comes from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and MetLife Foundation. For more information: www.npnweb.org. The project also received support from the Puffin Foundation, Jerome Foundation, and many individual donors.

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About the Mitchell Center

The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts is dedicated to ground-breaking, transformative collaborations across the performing, visual, and literary arts. Based at the University of Houston, the Mitchell Center commissions and produces new works, presents public performances and exhibitions, offers curriculum and scholarships, and hosts residencies with renowned visiting artists from throughout the world. The Mitchell Center forms an alliance among five departments at UH: the School of Art, Moores School of Music, School of Theatre & Dance, Creative Writing Program, and Blaffer Art Museum. www.mitchellcenterforarts.org.

About DiverseWorks

DiverseWorks is a non-profit art center in Houston, Texas dedicated to presenting new visual, performing, and literary art. DiverseWorks is a place where the process of creating art is valued and where artists can test new ideas in the public arena. By encouraging the investigation of current artistic, cultural, and social issues, DiverseWorks builds, educates, and sustains audiences for contemporary art.

DiverseWorks is generously supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Texas Commission on the Arts, the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance, foundations, corporations, businesses, and individuals – including DiverseWorks Members.

DiverseWorks

1117 East Freeway

Houston, TX 77002

713-223-8346

Gallery Hours: Wednesday-Saturday, Noon-6pm or by appointment.

Admission is open to the public and FREE

Facebook: www.facebook.com/DiverseWorks

Twitter: @DiverseWorks

Web: www.DiverseWorks.org

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