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Artist Is Giving Boat Rides at Frieze New York Art Fair

Marie Lorenz Made the Vessel From Plywood and Fiberglass; Show Is On Randall's Island

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By **ANDY BATTAGLIA**

May 7, 2014 9:48 p.m. ET



Marie Lorenz, in the craft that she made from plywood and fiberglass. *Mark Abramson for The Wall Street Journal*

In the open waters of the East River, Marie Lorenz came upon a mariner in a much bigger boat. He looked bewildered as she, in her handmade vessel, paddled on.

"We're going for a row," Ms. Lorenz said matter-of-factly.

Ahead of the Frieze New York art fair, Ms. Lorenz was giving a preview ride on an unusual mode of urban transport: the 13-foot rowboat that she built herself.

When not out on the water, the plywood-and-fiberglass craft hangs on the wall over her couch, but this weekend it will be taking fairgoers for rides around Randall's Island as part of her "Tide and Current Taxi," a project commissioned by Frieze; the other component is live video feeds of the action back to land.

Ms. Lorenz, 41 years old, will sign up passengers—three at a time—from her taxi stand (she made that, too) by the entrance to the fair. She'll have her oars in the water during Frieze's open hours Friday through Monday.

"I think New York should be the kind of place where you can row to work," the artist said. "This is our legacy—this is like your front yard. The project is about using New York the way you think it should be used."

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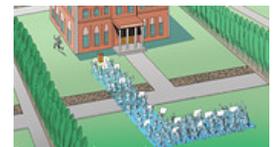
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The Flatiron to Frieze: New Space at Art Fair

and Current Taxi," though, struck at art school in Providence, R.I., during a spate of waterfront construction there.

"It was like this muddy pit in the middle of the city," she said, "so I started building boats to go around that. It was like a 'Goonies' playhouse. Now I realize I was going through the sewer."

Since then, she said, "Everywhere I've moved, that's what I look for—weird no-man's lands on the water. New York has that in spades."

Though she has been operating "Tide and Current Taxi" on her own since 2005, this weekend it is part of the "Frieze Projects" series, designed to give the fair—now in its third year and featuring close to 200 art galleries world-wide—a participatory edge.

"They're punctuation marks within the fair," Frieze director Amanda Sharp said of this year's seven projects, which include a pop-up music festival focused on female drummers and a temporary hotel inside the convention tent.

"They change the pace of the fair," Ms. Sharp said, "and they take it away from being a pure market experience into making it more of a cultural adventure."

For Ms. Lorenz, that adventure will be guided by volatile New York tides, which she has surveyed with maritime tidal charts. Because of the rivers on either side of Manhattan and the proximity of New York Bay and the Long Island Sound, the waters around the city change speed and direction so much over the course of the day that a smaller boat can be difficult to control.

"You have to paddle, but the tide will carry you completely around Manhattan in one direction and then completely around the other way," Ms. Lorenz said. "It's crazy. You're looking at buildings and there's this incredible force made by the planets that is zipping you all around."

What happens on the Frieze rides will be dictated by the preferences of her passengers, who will be required to sign up each day in person at her taxi stand.

"I think of it as a reverse tour," she said. "Instead of being a tour guide, I get information from people. I like to be told about people's experiences on the water. People will talk about the fair. I imagine it being a conversation."

Frieze New York expanded from a well-regarded event in London and has already established itself as a significant addition to the art world's calendar.

"Frieze in London is formidable and rigorous and programmatic, and that's crossed the pond effectively," said Alexander Gray, a Chelsea gallery owner who has shown at Frieze New York since its start in 2012. "It's a distinctive fair because of its location and the light in the tent"—250,000 square feet covered in translucent fabric—"is so beautiful."

Outside, the view from the water will offer its own vantage.

"In a boat, people have to respond to their balance and all kinds of practical considerations," Ms. Lorenz said. "Maintaining your balance slows you down and makes you look at things in a different way."

With her father in the Marines, Ms. Lorenz grew up boating in canoes and sailboats; her real inspiration for "Tide

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