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## Art Review

### “9/11 Memorial: A Photo Essay”

Hwa Young Caruso and John Caruso, Jr.  
Art Review Editors

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The 9/11 Memorial in New York City is a national tribute of remembrance to the 3,000 culturally diverse victims of the terror attacks of September 11, 2001



South Memorial Pool  
*Photo by Hwa Young Caruso*

and February 26, 1993. The 8-acre Memorial Plaza contains two massive granite reflection pools, North and South; 400 swamp white oak trees; and a museum of 120,000 sq ft. scheduled to open in September 2012. Each pool contains an infinity waterfall surrounded by bronze parapets stencil cut with victims' names, including the unborn. The ambiance of the plaza is tempered by the ongoing reconstruction of buildings destroyed and damaged during the September 11 attacks.

Access to Memorial Plaza is limited

to 7,000 persons a day. Visitors can reserve and print out free entrance passes with set dates and times using the Memorial's website(<http://www.911memorial.org>). Security is omnipresent, including an airport-style personal search before entering the site. After the reconstruction is completed in 2014, access will be unfettered and the plaza will form an inner courtyard shielded on three sides by new structures. Visitors may prepare themselves for the experience at Tribute WTC (World Trade Center) Visitor Center on 120 Liberty Street

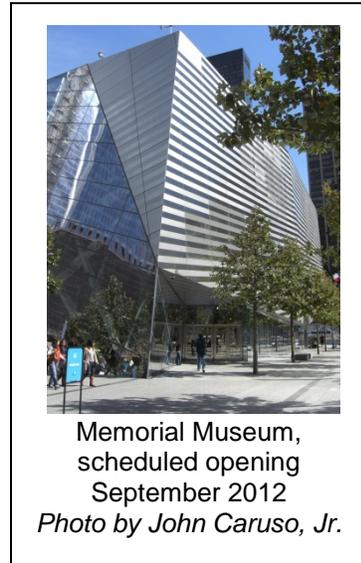


North Memorial Pool  
*Photo by Hwa Young Caruso*

(paid admission: <http://www.tributewtc.org>) or smaller 9/11 Memorial Visitor Center on 90 West Street (free admission: <http://www.911memorial.org/visitor-center>) adjacent to the 9/11 Memorial entrance on Greenwich and Albany Streets.

### Conceptualization

The architects and design firms who created the \$700 million Memorial Plaza and Museum include Michael Arad, Peter Walker, Handel, Aedas, Snøhetta, Studio Daniel Libeskind, and others. The contemplative confluence of Arad and Walker envisioned two reflecting pools, also known as voids, whose recycled waterfalls symbolize birth, life, and death. Sheets of articulated water cascade down 4,000 slabs of Virginia granite into voids where it is recycled up to the parapets. The North and South pools are situated in one acre footprints of the original WTC 1 and WTC 2 respectively. The architects hoped the spilling water would generate a liquid hush to drown out street noise and allow visitors to experience a sense of reflected absence. The contemplative emphasis is on what is missing—the people and the twin WTC towers.



The 3,000 victims are individually recognized and their names grouped in overlapping bronze panels using meaningful adjacency rather than alphabetical order, a concept that provides unity and equity. Each person remains eternally connected to others in their work group, association, or unaffiliated function as a valued individual who perished in the collapsing North and South towers. Digital technology makes the task of locating an individual a function of a website algorithm. Users can access onsite kiosks and search for a person or a group by name, birthplace, job, first responder unit, or aircraft flight.

There are numerous aesthetic and personal ways to experience the 9/11 Memorial. Here are four perspectives: (1) being at a location where you relive in memory a major human tragedy you witnessed or experienced; (2) viewing a contextualized landscape which informs you of a major human tragedy that occurred; (3) entering a foreboding dark tourism site and experiencing thanatourism (tourism related to sites associated with death or suffering) in a location of mass murder; and (4) the liquid hush of

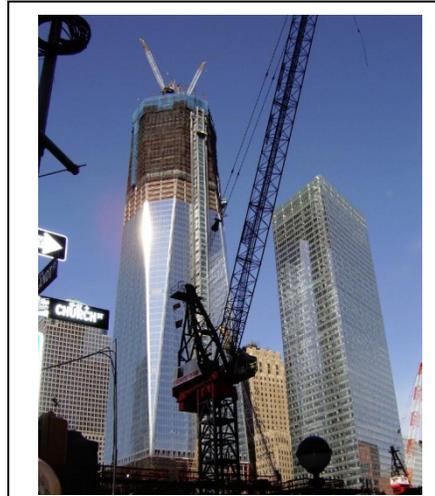
the reflective pools that moves you to contemplate an absence, a sense of loss, and emptiness in the tradition of the Ryoanji Zen Buddhist rock garden in Kyoto, Japan (<http://www.ryoanji.jp>).

(To see more photos, go to the [photo gallery](#)).

## Conclusion

The learning and emotional experience of visitors will change after the Memorial Museum opens in September 2012. A combination of permanent and temporary exhibit galleries on and below the plaza will articulate the events of 9/11 through artifacts, narratives, oral histories, and multi-media displays. Most of the underground museum shell is in the foundations of the twin towers. This area is buttressed by the slurry wall which keeps out the Hudson River and contains the WTC column bases, the Vesey Street survivor's stairs, two of the original steel tridents, and the massive Last Column covered in tributes from members of the construction trades, rescue personnel, and victims' family members.

Visiting the Memorial Plaza provided us an opportunity to reflect on the events of 9/11. It was a somber and surrealistic experience. Before 9/11, whenever we brought international guests to New York, they asked to visit the WTC for the view of the city to the north and the Statue of Liberty national monument to the west. The new structures surrounding the 9/11 Memorial, including the 1776 ft. tall 1WTC also known as Freedom Tower, will recapture that stunning vista while serving as architectural bandages soothing a painful wound.



Construction of 1776 ft. tall  
1WTC, aka Freedom Tower, 9/11  
Memorial plaza  
*Photo by John Caruso, Jr.*

## Educational Resources

The National September 11 Memorial & Museum, the New York City Department of Education, and the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education developed thematic 9/11 lessons for K-12 classrooms aligned to Common Core Standards. The learning plans include Social Studies, History, English Language Arts, and Art (<http://www.911memorial.org/lesson-plans>).

The Smithsonian National Museum for American History has lessons and activities for K-12 students and educators. Their website includes the 9/11

Archive with more than 150,000 digital items, including 40,000 emails, 40,000 personal stories, and 15,000 digital images (<http://americanhistory.si.edu/september11/education>).

The National Endowment for the Humanities maintains a website entitled *Launchpad: A Guided Exploration of the Events of 9/11*, which contains lesson plans organized by subject, theme, and grade level (<http://edsitement.neh.gov/launchpad-guided-exploration-events-911>).

### **Photo Credits**

Hwa Young Caruso & John Caruso Jr.