



Association for Public Art

Association for Public Art
(Formerly Fairmount Park Art Association)
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FPAA Becomes the Association for Public Art (aPA) and Announces World Première of Sky-High Interactive Public Art Experience

*Association for Public Art presents Mexican-Canadian artist
Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's Open Air, Sept. 20-Oct. 14*

PHILADELPHIA — Fairmount Park Art Association, the nation's first private nonprofit organization dedicated to integrating public art and urban planning, has changed its name to the **Association for Public Art (aPA)**. The new name was selected to more clearly and effectively communicate the Association's mission to commission, preserve, promote and interpret public art in Philadelphia.

"We are at a crucial and exciting time in the Association's history," says executive director **Penny Balkin Bach**. "As our projects capture attention regionally and nationally, forge new territories in public art and technology, and invite Philadelphia residents and visitors to engage with the city's public art in new ways, it has become increasingly important to communicate a definitive identity about who we are and what we do."

When it was established in 1872 by a group of civic-minded individuals, the Association's initial purpose was to enhance Fairmount Park with sculpture, and its concerns soon expanded to the city as a whole. The Association continues to respond to developments in civic life, urban planning and artistic expression, working with artists, communities and civic leaders to make encounters with art a part of everyday life. With the support of the Board of Trustees and Association members, the organization has adopted the new name to reflect this wider mission.

The first major presentation under the organization's new name, **Open Air**, by Mexican-Canadian media artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, combines public art with mobile technology to create a spectacular, interactive experience that will illuminate the night sky from Philadelphia's Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Commissioned by the **Association for Public Art**, *Open Air* is presented in conjunction with the **2012 Philadelphia Live Arts Festival** and **2012 DesignPhiladelphia Festival**. This world-première public art project will be presented **Sept. 20-Oct. 14**.

Created specifically for Philadelphia, the project is designed for personal contribution. Using a **free mobile app** developed by Lozano-Hemmer's studio, participants' voices and GPS positions will control 24



**Simulated image of Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's
Open Air, from the steps of the Philadelphia
Museum of Art**

powerful robotic searchlights placed along a half-mile section of the Parkway — creating giant three-dimensional “light sculptures.”

A computer program will automatically analyze *Open Air* app users' GPS positions and voices for frequency, intonation and volume and will convert these characteristics into searchlight formations in the sky over the Parkway. The lights will react, both in brightness and position, to each participant's voice and words as they are being spoken. Tens of thousands of individuals will be able to participate live during the project's duration, and hundreds of thousands more will experience the project as viewers. Lozano-Hemmer's interest “is to create intimacy and not intimidation. While the project will be spectacular in scale, what matters to me is that individual participants can personalize their city with their contributions.”

Forming a canopy of light over the city, the project will be seen up to 10 miles away from the Parkway each evening from 8 to 11 p.m. A dedicated project headquarters, including app download and free mobile loan stations, will be located at Eakins Oval (24th Street and the Parkway).

Says Bach, “The Association is dedicated to creating opportunities for artists to respond to the issues of our time, while redefining public space and encouraging public engagement and interaction. Our interest in the potential of new media as a framework for public art on an urban scale led us to Lozano-Hemmer, who is recognized internationally as a major figure in the evolving understanding of technology as a creative force. We're excited to bring him to Philadelphia to create a work that will transform the skyline, engage the public in a unique experience and bring international attention to the city.”

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer (b. 1967, Mexico City) is an internationally recognized Mexican-Canadian artist currently living in Montreal. He has produced large-scale interactive art installations across the globe, including the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics, the 2010 Light in Winter Festival in Melbourne, Australia, and the 50th Anniversary of the Guggenheim Museum in New York in 2009. His work in kinetic sculpture, responsive environments, video installation and photography has been shown in museums and biennials in four-dozen countries. He also represented Mexico in the 2007 Venice Biennale. Concurrently with *Open Air*, Lozano-Hemmer's work will be exhibited in a solo show at New York City's bitforms gallery in September and October (Sept. 13-Oct. 13). For more on the artist, visit lozano-hemmer.com.

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC ART (aPA) (FORMERLY FAIRMOUNT PARK ART ASSOCIATION)

The Association for Public Art (aPA) commissions, preserves, promotes and interprets public art in Philadelphia. Since its founding in 1872, aPA has worked with artists, communities and civic leaders to

make encounters with art a part of everyday life, creating a Museum Without Walls that is free and accessible to residents and visitors. As the nation's first private nonprofit organization dedicated to integrating public art and urban planning, aPA has an unparalleled and pioneering history, characterized by artistic excellence, creative initiative, collaboration and civic engagement. Working closely with city agencies, aPA remains today a central resource and contributor to Philadelphia's enduring reputation as an important place to view and experience the evolution of public art.

Through free, interactive public programs, website and publications, aPA invites Philadelphians and visitors to experience civic spaces enlivened by artists and art; to discover the city's vast collection of public art; and to connect to a shared cultural legacy. To learn more about the Association for Public Art, visit associationforpublicart.org.

Partners and supporters of Open Air include: the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; the National Endowment for the Arts; Philadelphia Live Arts Festival and Philly Fringe; DesignPhiladelphia in partnership with the University of the Arts; the City of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation and the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy; Greater Philadelphia Tourism and Marketing Corporation (GPTMC); Center City District; Parkway Council Foundation; Canadian and Mexican Consulates; Park Towne Place Apartments - an Aimco Community; Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Rodin Museum; WHYY FM Radio; and Tierney.

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To request high-resolution images, interviews and more information on *Open Air* and other Association for Public Art programming, please contact:

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