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PRESS RELEASE

DEDICATION OF MARTIN PURYEAR'S *PAVILION IN THE TREES*

The Fairmount Park Art Association will host a dedication ceremony to celebrate the installation of sculptor Martin Puryear's eagerly awaited public amenity, *Pavilion in the Trees*, on Tuesday, October 26th from 12 NOON – 2 PM. *Pavilion in the Trees*, a wooden structure with built-in seating, rises from a natural basin in Lansdowne Glen on the Horticulture Center grounds in West Fairmount Park, former site of the 1876 International Centennial Exposition.

Pavilion in the Trees was originally conceived as part of *Form and Function: Proposals for Public Art for Philadelphia*. For this program, the Art Association invited a group of artists nationwide to propose projects which would consider form, function, and the environment. This landmark program, begun in 1980, was recognized as an important new direction for public art, resulting in the installation of several works, including Rafael Ferrer's *El Gran Teatro de la Luna*, Siah Armajani's *Louis Kahn Lecture Room*, and Jody Pinto's *Fingerspan*. "*Pavilion in the Trees* is an impressive addition to this series of projects and to Philadelphia's distinguished collection of public art, architecture, and landscape design," commented Penny Balkin Bach, Executive Director of the Art Association. "As a public amenity created by an artist, *Pavilion in the Trees* derives its form and meaning from all of these traditions."

Puryear's lifelong fascination with nature is reflected in his work which often utilizes and evokes natural materials and forms. *Pavilion in the Trees* developed out of the artist's recollection of the universal childhood dream of a tree house. Realizing the impracticality of building directly around a tree trunk, Puryear designed a latticed-covered platform on posts high enough to raise it to the foliage level of adjacent trees.

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The four main support posts become part of the landscape and blend with the nearby tree trunks. The durable woods used in *Pavilion in the Trees*—western red cedar, white oak, and clear heart redwood—are intended to weather naturally and will eventually turn a silver-grey color, creating a visual harmony with the surrounding environment. “We are delighted to have commissioned a work of such sensitivity and beauty for Philadelphia’s Fairmount Park,” announced Charles E. Mather III, President of the Fairmount Park Art Association.

A retrospective exhibition of Martin Puryear’s work, organized by the Art Institute of Chicago, was on view at the Philadelphia Museum of Art from November 1, 1992 – January 3, 1993 and also traveled to the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C. and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. In Philadelphia, the model for *Pavilion in the Trees* was included in the exhibition in anticipation of its installation in Fairmount Park.

Mr. Puryear’s work has been exhibited in museums and galleries throughout the world, and he is considered one of the most important sculptors of his generation. Robert Hughes in *Time* magazine referred to him as “one of the best sculptors alive,” adding that “he seems to be that contemporary rarity, a wholly integrated artist . . . the real thing, and a figure of undeniable importance in American sculpture.” Puryear has been honored by the MacArthur, Tiffany and Guggenheim Foundations, and the National Endowment for the Arts. He represented the United States in the 1989 São Paulo Bienale where he was awarded the grand prize, and he was recently inducted to the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

Pavilion in the Trees was commissioned by the Fairmount Park Art Association and supported by the Pew Charitable Trusts with planning grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. The Fairmount Park Art Association has supported public art in Philadelphia since 1872, when it was chartered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to commission and purchase sculpture to “promote and foster the beautiful in Philadelphia, in its architecture, improvements and general plan.” It is the nation’s first non-profit public art organization dedicated to the integration of art and urban planning.

Photographs available upon request.