



Parkway 100



Association
for Public Art

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**PARKWAY COUNCIL PRESENTS THE WINTER HIGHLIGHT OF PARKWAY 100,
JENNIFER STEINKAMP'S *WINTER FOUNTAINS* FOR THE PARKWAY**

Association for Public Art (aPA) Commissions Major Public Project

Pixels Rather than Paint Evoke the Fundamental Grandeur of Nature

Philadelphia, PA – From November 30, 2017 to March 18, 2018, sunset to midnight, the Parkway Council presents *Winter Fountains*, an installation by artist Jennifer Steinkamp, commissioned by the Association for Public Art (aPA) with major support from the William Penn Foundation. The new artwork is a centerpiece of Parkway 100, the yearlong centennial celebration of Philadelphia's grand cultural boulevard, the Benjamin Franklin Parkway.

"Parkway 100 is the result of an exceptional collaboration among the institutions that line Philadelphia's great cultural axis. We are especially proud that, with the support of the William Penn Foundation, this major new work of art will debut as a marquee event in an anniversary year filled with activities," said Gail Harrity, president and chief operating officer of the Philadelphia Museum of Art and chairperson for the Parkway 100 Committee. "Not only will *Winter Fountains* animate the Parkway Museums District at night during the coming winter months, but its themes will also serve to deepen appreciation for the Parkway's significant collections."

When Steinkamp was invited by aPA on behalf of the Parkway Council to consider an installation for the Parkway, she studied the historical significance of the city's grand boulevard, the collections of its art and science institutions, the architectural elements of the landscape including its landmark fountains, and the Parkway's more recent namesake – Benjamin Franklin. The resulting work draws on these investigations and is punctuated by Franklin's explorations into a form of energy that was little understood in his day – electricity.

"The aPA was involved in the earliest plans for the Parkway, so *Winter Fountains* is a logical extension of our vision to integrate public art and civic design by creating opportunities for artists to respond to the public environment. Here Steinkamp combines drawing and computer animation to reimagine the phenomenon of electricity through the language of media technologies," said Penny Balkin Bach,

executive director of aPA and chief curator for *Winter Fountains*. “Through a cycle of ice, sparks, steam, electricity, clouds, and water, the artist draws us into a mesmerizing universe of her creation.”

The result is *Winter Fountains* – four large-scale architectural domes, glittery by day and glowing by night, conceived specifically for the stretch of the Parkway between The Franklin Institute and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Using pixels rather than paint, the project is a technical feat achieved by projecting onto the surface of the 13’h x 26’w domes with eight different digital animations projected from 16 projectors. Each dome will feature phantasmagoric and dream-like imagery in its own distinct hue, whether cool green or blue, or warm red/pink or yellow.

“Anyone who’s ever observed water melting and glistening on a piece of ice will get my project,” says Steinkamp. She takes a universal observation in nature and magnifies it into an otherworldly experience. Layers of animations evoke tiny dust particles colliding to create lightning or to spark static electricity; others depict water combusting into gas and steam. Asteroid-shaped particles hurl forward in space and liquid droplets contract and expand in different colors, motions, and sequences. Imaginative constellations of shapes appear to be coming at the viewer, moving up and down or changing directions randomly. In one dome, steam seems to rise in disconcertedly real-looking puffs.

Yet ultimately, Steinkamp’s project is allusive. She slyly slips in inconsistencies like jagged bolts of lightning that appear to be drawn by hand and showers of bright, tiny, spring flowers that seemingly appear from nowhere. An attentive viewer may be startled to see cave-like paintings drawn on some of the particle forms. “To me, beauty in art and nature makes you consider the intense joy of looking and lets you experience a deep sense of existence,” she concludes.

“Jennifer Steinkamp’s installation beautifully combines art with science, past with future, and reflects the collections and connections that combine to make the Parkway Museums District an exceptional destination,” said Judi Rogers, executive director, Parkway Council. “We are excited to welcome visitors from near and far to experience the centerpiece of this once-in-a-century celebration of Philadelphia’s grand boulevard.”

“*Winter Fountains* will create a cultural experience that reimagines this familiar public space,” said Janet Haas, M.D., board chair of the William Penn Foundation. “Over the last 100 years, the Parkway has evolved into the centerpiece of Philadelphia’s cultural life, and *Winter Fountains* will offer a dynamic experience that will engage new and diverse audiences.”

The *Winter Fountains* domes will be installed at these sites along the Parkway:

- Aviator Park, at 20th Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, adjacent to The Franklin Institute, the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, and Moore College of Art & Design
- 21st Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, between the Rodin Museum and the Barnes Foundation
- 22nd Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, across from Park Towne Place Museum District Residences
- Spring Garden Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, near the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Public Opening

On Thursday, November 30, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m., the public opening will commence with a reception and remarks in the Fels Planetarium at The Franklin Institute at 20th Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. The first lighting is at 6:30 pm. The artist will be present.

The Artist

Jennifer Steinkamp (b. 1958) is an American installation artist who works with video and new media to explore ideas about architectural space, motion, and perception. In 1980, Steinkamp moved to Los Angeles to attend Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, studying with Mike Kelley, Gene Youngblood, and Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe. She then transferred to the California Institute of the Arts, where she studied experimental animation. In 1991, Steinkamp returned to Art Center to earn her BFA and MFA and in 2011 was recognized by the school with an Honorary Doctorate. She is currently a professor in the department of Design Media Arts at UCLA and is represented by Lehmann Maupin, New York and Hong Kong, and Greengrassi, London.

Jennifer Steinkamp has participated in such noted exhibitions as *Time Square Arts: Midnight Moment* (2016) and *Prospect. 2* in New Orleans (2013) and has executed a range of commissions, including the projection work *6EQUJ5* on the central dome of the Minneapolis Institute of Art. Her installation art has been the subject of exhibitions at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; and MassMoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts, among other venues; and has toured with the band U2.

About the Parkway Council

A coalition of cultural and educational institutions, businesses, and residences in the vicinity of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, the Parkway Council is dedicated to ensuring the Parkway Museums District realizes its potential as a truly unique cultural destination. The Council's members are committed to creating a distinctive, vibrant, and welcoming place for residents, visitors, and the institutions and businesses that share the Parkway. It works closely with the City of Philadelphia and other public and private organizations to identify the best strategies for enhancing and promoting the Parkway, and serves as a strategic partner and catalyst to ensure that those strategies are implemented.

Parkway Council members include: the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, Aimco/Park Towne Place, Association for Public Art (aPA), the Barnes Foundation, Brandywine Realty Trust, Cathedral Basilica of SS Peter & Paul, Center City District (Cret Park, Dilworth Park, and Sister Cities Park), City of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, College of Physicians/Mütter Museum, Eastern State Penitentiary, Fairmount Water Works, Fox Rothschild LLP, The Franklin Institute, Free Library of Philadelphia, Friends Select School, Independence Visitor Center, The Logan Hotel, Moore College of Art & Design, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Philadelphia Mormon Temple, Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Philadelphian, and the Rodin Museum.

About the Association for Public Art (aPA)

The Association for Public Art (aPA, formerly the Fairmount Park Art Association) commissions, preserves, interprets, and promotes public art in Philadelphia. The aPA is the nation's first private nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a "Museum Without Walls" that informs, engages, and inspires diverse audiences. Supporting originality and innovation while honoring the past, aPA advances opportunities for creative people to contribute to the city's places and spaces. Established in 1872, aPA

integrates public art and urban design through exemplary programs and advocacy efforts that connect people with public art.

Sponsorship

Winter Fountains for the Parkway is presented by the Parkway Council and commissioned by the Association for Public Art (aPA) for Parkway 100 in Philadelphia, with major support from the William Penn Foundation. Additional support is provided by the Association for Public Art (aPA); The Logan, Philadelphia's Hotel; and individual donors. In-kind support is provided by Visit Philadelphia, Pennoni, and The Franklin Institute. Our partners include the City of Philadelphia and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation.

Parkway 100 is also made possible through the generous leadership support of PECO, PNC Bank, and 6abc.

About the Benjamin Franklin Parkway

The development of the Parkway took place over decades, from the first proposal and signed petition received by City Council in 1891, to groundbreaking in 1907, and finally construction in 1917. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported the Parkway's October 26, 1918 completion in its story, "Parkway is Open From Hall to Park" (October 27, 1918, pg. 3). The one-mile Benjamin Franklin Parkway stretches from Philadelphia City Hall to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, connecting the city's business district to Fairmount Park, one of the largest urban green spaces in the United States. Known as the Parkway Museums District, the cultural destination is home to some of the city's most treasured museums, including the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, the Barnes Foundation, The Franklin Institute, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Rodin Museum. The picturesque *Swann Memorial Fountain* at Logan Square is among the Parkway's most scenic spaces and an example of the Parkway's abundant public art, with a unique interpretive program by the Association for Public Art (aPA). Locals and visitors like to gather at the Parkway's pocket parks, including Dilworth Park, Love Park, Cret Park, Sister Cities Park, and The Oval, or run the steps "Rocky" made famous. Trees and international flags line the boulevard, which is also known for its exceptional architecture. The Cathedral Basilica of SS Peter & Paul, Friends Select School, Moore College of Art & Design, and the newly completed Philadelphia Mormon Temple are also here.

For more information, the public may visit parkway100.org/winterfountains.

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