ArtBridge and Battery Park City Authority Announce Two Artists Selected to Create 1,100 Linear Feet of Public Art Adjacent to Battery Park City and The Battery

Exhibition is part of the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs' City Canvas program that turns construction sites into art exhibitions



Davina Hsu, *Blessing Transmission,* 2023 (proposal) at Battery Place. Digital rendering by Davina Hsu.

May 15, 2024 — Manhattan, NY — ArtBridge, in partnership with the Battery Park City Authority (BPCA), today announced the artists selected to turn approximately 1,100-linear-feet of construction fencing along Battery Place in downtown Manhattan into two-dimensional public artworks. Artists Davina Hsu and Michelle Weinberg were selected by Jurors Natalie Kates and Sadaf Padder in coordination with leadership at Battery Park City Authority (BPCA), NYC Parks, NYC Economic Development Corporation, The Battery, and ArtBridge. The artworks, to be installed later this spring, will be located along Battery Place in front of Wagner Park and the northern edge of The Battery as BPCA implements the South Battery Park City Resiliency Project (SBPCR), one of three resiliency projects undertaken to protect Battery Park City and adjacent parts of Lower Manhattan from threats of storm surge and sea level rise.

“Installing *River Semaphore* and *Blessing Transmission* together along Battery Place offers both a metaphorical and physical frame in which to view this historic public park,” said **Rebecca Pristoop, ArtBridge’s Curator and Senior Program Manager**. “Both artworks signal, through sigil graph and semaphore, a confidence in our collective ability to create resilient and healthy spaces for people and our environment. As downtown undergoes a coastal resiliency transformation, these artworks maintain a connection to the area’s creative heritage while prompting us to raise our vision toward the future.”

“As construction on the South Battery Park City Resiliency Project advances, we’re pleased to partner with ArtBridge to enliven the project’s perimeter fencing with art that’s educational and inspiring to residents and passersby alike,” said **BPCA President & CEO Raju Mann**. “The incredible talents of Davina Hsu and Michelle Weinberg deserve a large canvas, and we’re happy to provide it with a project that helps protects Lower Manhattan for the next generation.”

“Public art plays an important role in our city by giving a voice to artists, beautifying our surroundings, and changing the way New Yorkers interact with their parks and other shared spaces,” said **NYC Parks Commissioner Sue Donoghue**. “This artwork will highlight the importance of sustainability and resilience, which are integral to the goals of the South Battery Park City Coastal Resiliency Project. Just as Mayor Adams works to make our subways and streets safer, this project adds to the advancement of coastal protection for lower Manhattan neighborhoods in response to the threat of storm surge and sea level rise.”

“Creativity comes to the rescue once again at The Battery,” said **Warrie Price, President and Founder of The Battery Conservancy**. “For centuries, it has served the needs and aspirations of all people, which is embodied in the work of Hsu and Weinberg.”

The selected artworks were chosen from 92 proposals received by ArtBridge over a three-week open call period. They were reviewed for relevance to SBPCR’s sustainability and resiliency goals, consideration of the site and scale of the construction fences in Lower Manhattan, and overall aesthetic uniqueness of the work.

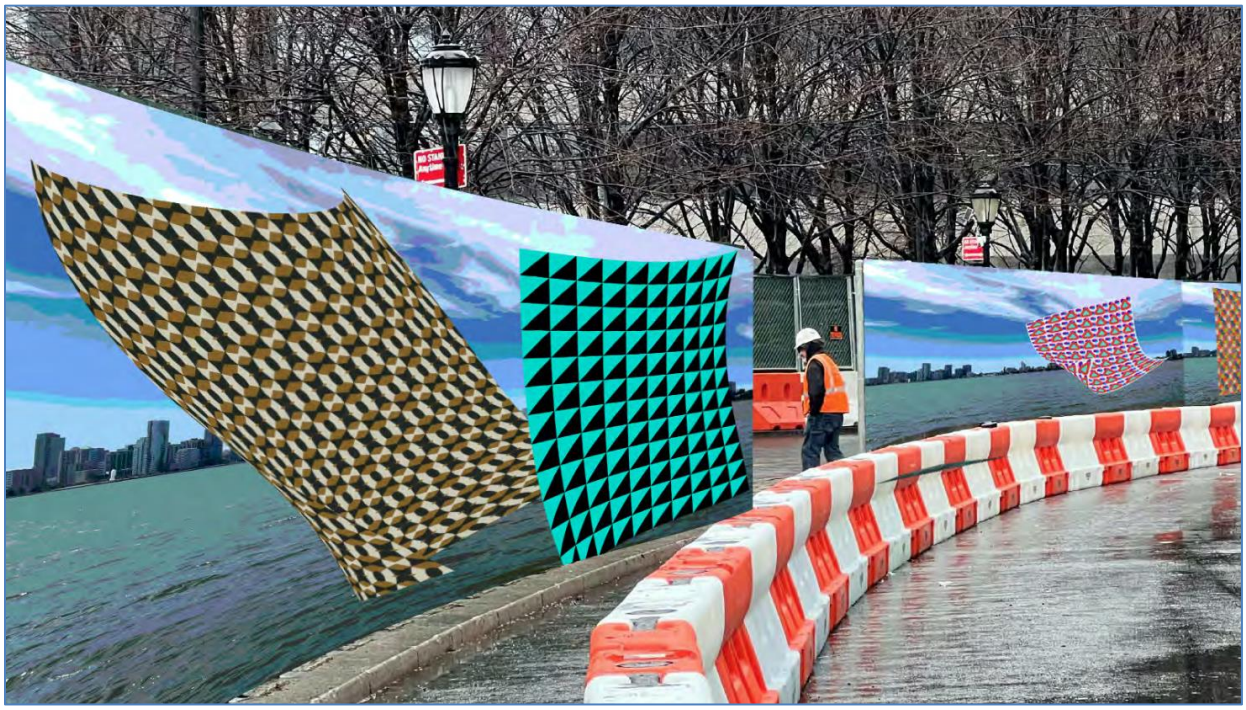
Davina Hsu was selected to install her proposal, *Blessing Transmission*, on 360-feet of construction fencing along Wagner Park. *Blessing Transmission* will transform the artist’s eco-friendly, fiber paintings into large-scale vinyl canvases. Presenting imagery that portrays digitally generated frequency patterns, the vinyl canvases will echo Hsu’s original soft sculptures. The artworks emphasize the integration of material and energetic realms, utilizing sigil graph creation to invoke resiliency and harmony for our inner and outer environment. They embody blessings and integration through vibrant talismans and kaleidoscopic visuals that subliminally connect passersby to environmental consciousness, creating an emotive, energizing atmosphere that reinforces care for our earth and social cohesion.

“The inspiration for *Blessing Transmission* is focused around the idea of resiliency – resiliency both for the environment and for social well-being,” said **artist Davina Hsu**. “I always want to create a sense of hope, curiosity, and magic, and this project gave me the opportunity, in a digital format, to recreate my work in a way that has no size restraint. Public art is a different territory; it allows me to think bigger than life, about something that is more monumental, to engage with more audiences.”

Hear more from Davina Hsu about *Blessing Transmission* here.

“Davina Hsu's works are energizing, vibrant and playful,” said **curator Sadaf Padder**. “Drawing from various mystical influences, the works prompt us to pause, contemplate, and appreciate the various pathways by which our ancestors and our intuition have guided us. This work will be a welcome presence as the gardens and lawns of Wagner Park are being rebuilt.”

Hsu is a New York-based transdisciplinary artist from Taipei who works primarily in fiber and socially-engaged practice to cultivate self-awareness and foster social intimacy. She conducts energy readings and utilizes fiber to explore the interplay between material and spiritual integration, translating her energetic visions of vibrational ascent and spiritual realization into tangible expressions. Hsu has exhibited internationally in both solo and group shows. She holds a BFA from Parsons School of Design and an MFA from the School of Visual Arts.



Michelle Weinberg, *River Semaphore,* 2023 (proposal) at Battery Place. Digital rendering by Michelle Weinberg.

Michelle Weinberg’s proposal, *River Semaphore*, will be installed on Battery Place along 760-feet of The Battery’s northern boundary. *River Semaphore* seeks to bring attention to New York City’s built environment in relation to the rising tides of the Hudson River. The artist will layer imagery of floating banners in front of river views. The patterned banners will appear to billow in the wind, taking on the function of semaphore, a system of sending visual signals. These signals will urge the passing pedestrians, workers, and drivers to consider how each of us might participate in crafting a sustainable coastline.

“The thing I love most about public art is that I get to address an audience of people who are not expecting to interact with art,” said artist **Michelle Weinberg**. “It’s a great challenge to create work as vivid backdrops for human activity that reflect back the city’s energy, while also inserting a new possibility for a trip that’s memorable and joyful. I was born in and love the history of New York City, and I’m really honored to layer my own impression on this big part of the map of Lower Manhattan.”

Hear more from Michelle Weinberg about *River Semaphore* here.

In reference to her proposal, **curator Natalie Kates** commented, “Michelle Weinberg is a multi-disciplinary artist who breathes modernity into her practice through painted surfaces, interiors, architecture, and public spaces. Her usage of color, shapes and active abstractions will bring a sense of wonder and joy to all those at The Battery who encounter her installation.”

Weinberg received her BFA from School of Visual Arts in NYC and her MFA from Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia. She is the recipient of numerous awards, fellowships, and residencies, and has exhibited in galleries and museums throughout the United States. Commissions include art for lamp posts in Lower Manhattan produced by ArtBridge and Downtown Alliance, NYC, murals for The Wolfsonian Museum-FIU, Facebook offices in Miami and Young at Art Museum in Dania, FL, public art projects for Miami-Dade County, Miami International Airport, City of Tampa, and others. Weinberg is Creative Director of Girls’ Club in Fort Lauderdale, and a consultant to museums and non-profits, developing exhibitions, education programming, and more.

In reviewing the proposals for these commissions, jurors Natalie Kates and Sadaf Padder selected three additional artists as finalists. The named finalists and the titles of their proposals include:

David Opdyke, *Higher Ground*
Peggy Cyphers, *Heirs to the Sea*
Neige Borges, *Larger than Life*

Battery Park City Authority has a storied history of presenting art from a diverse range of artists that transform public space, encourage social cohesion, and promote awareness about cultural, environmental, and civic challenges. Since hosting Agnes Denes’ *Wheatfield – A Confrontation*, in 1982 (commissioned by Public Art Fund), BPCA has invested in environmental literacy and stewardship. Among the artworks commissioned by the Authority to address environmental consciousness are *Sunrise, Sunset (Revolution)*, 2017 by artists Autumn Ewalt and Dharmesh Patel, and *South Cove*, 1988 by artist Mary Miss in collaboration with landscape architect Susan Child and architect Stan Eckstut. These artworks, in addition to numerous others, are a central foundation of this 92-acre neighborhood. Engaging the public with *Blessing Transmission* and *River Semaphore* during this stage of SBPCR will maintain BPCA’s commitment to environmental stewardship and enhancing public space through art. Learn more about BPCA’s resiliency projects on its website, and specifically about SBPCR here: https://bpca.ny.gov/sbpcrp/.

About ArtBridge
Founded in 2008 by artist and designer Rodney Durso, ArtBridge empowers emerging artists to transform construction sheds and fencing into a canvas for art. ArtBridge works with communities and artists to develop large-scale exhibitions that represent local narratives and cultures. ArtBridge’s exhibitions have provided prominent public exposure for more than 200 artists, and have covered over 50,000 square feet of public space.

About City Canvas
City Canvas allows for the installation of large-scale, temporary artwork on protective construction structures – namely construction fences and sheds – throughout the five boroughs. City Canvas is a collaboration between NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, the Office of the Mayor, and the NYC Department of Buildings designed to improve the city’s visual landscape, while giving artists and organizations opportunities to bring their work to public space.

About Battery Park City Authority
The Hugh L. Carey Battery Park City Authority is a New York State public benefit corporation whose mission is to plan, create, coordinate, and sustain a balanced community of commercial, residential, retail, and park space within its designated 92-acre site on the lower west side of Manhattan. Established in 1968, the Battery Park City Authority was charged with developing and maintaining a well-balanced community in place of where deteriorating piers once stood in the Hudson River. bpca.ny.gov.

About the Jurors

Natalie Kates is a curator and gallerist based in New York City. She founded KATES-FERRI PROJECTS Contemporary Art Gallery in the LES of NYC. There, she inspires and reimagines the future of art creation and collaboration while promoting a more inclusive and sustainable arts ecosystem. katesferriprojects.com

Sadaf Padder is a Brooklyn-based independent curator, writer, and community organizer who is focused on excavating under-recognized contemporary art movements and histories related to the South Asian and Caribbean diaspora. She has curated across the country, from Philadelphia to Los Angeles to Martha's Vineyard, focusing on themes of social justice, futurisms, mythology and ecology to weave connections between various communities. sadafpadder.com

Media Contacts:
ArtBridge: press@art-bridge.org, 646-450-1463
BPCA: press@bpca.ny.gov, 212-417-3194

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