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HIGH MUSEUM OF ART COMMISSIONS NEW PIAZZA INSTALLATION

Site-specific work will be the sixth in a series to activate the High’s outdoor piazza; delayed April opening now slated for mid-July

ATLANTA, June 16 — In July, the High Museum of Art will unveil “Murmuration,” a soaring, stunning installation by the internationally renowned architecture and design firm [SO – IL](#) and partners Jing Liu and Florian Idenburg. Presented on The Woodruff Arts Center’s Carroll Slater Sifly Piazza, the installation continues a multiyear initiative to activate the High’s outdoor space with site-specific commissions that engage visitors of all ages.

On view from July 17 through Nov. 29, 2020, “Murmuration” speaks directly to the architecture of the Piazza and more broadly to the city of Atlanta and its relationships with the natural world as viewed through the lens of bird migrations. Featuring a foliage-filled mesh canopy suspended over the Piazza by a steel framework, the installation will envelop guests, evoking tree canopies throughout the city and region. SO – IL was inspired by Atlanta’s reputation as the “city in a forest” and by the High’s proximity to the city’s largest greenspace, Piedmont Park, to guide the design of this installation.

Along with its many trees, the metro area is home to hundreds of bird species. The canopy’s perches will aim to draw birds to the site. Beneath the canopy, guests can use the space as a shaded respite and participate in their own “nesting and perching” by using benches and “pods” suspended from the upper structure. “Murmuration” will serve as a welcoming atmosphere for rest and recreation, as well as a place for families to connect and create memories at the Museum.

“Our guests will enjoy the opportunity to relax and reflect as they lounge underneath the beautiful canopy of ‘Murmuration,’” said Rand Suffolk, Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr., director of the High. “As with all of our previous Piazza installations, this latest project welcomes visitors of all ages to enjoy some fun, or take a quick break, in our outdoor space before heading into the Museum.”

The installation’s design is Atlanta focused but also explores broader themes related to nature, the environment and human-animal interactions.

“SO – IL’s belief that connecting communities with their physical environment coupled with a thoughtful approach to engaging with the Museum’s architecture, makes ‘Murmuration’ relevant for our visitors and the community at large,” said Monica Obniski, the High’s curator of

decorative arts and design. “It is incumbent on the art museum to create spaces that challenge traditional ideals of where art should be. SO – IL’s socially-driven installation can help generate public discourse about the intersection of architecture and nature, but let’s not stop there.”

The project was originally slated to open in April but was delayed due to COVID-19. To ensure the safety of guests gathering outside under the canopy, the Museum will provide a hand-sanitizing station.

This project builds on the success of the five previous Piazza commissions: Japanese designer Yuri Suzuki’s [“Sonic Playground”](#) (2018), Spanish designer Jaime Hayon’s [“Merry Go Zoo”](#) (2017) and [“Tiovivo”](#) (2016) and 2014–2015’s [“Mi Casa, Your Casa”](#) and [“Los Trompos” \(“The Spinning Tops”\)](#) by Mexican designers Héctor Esrawe and Ignacio Cadena.

About the High’s Piazza Activation Initiative

The High’s Piazza activation initiative launched in 2014 to explore how engaging with art and design can extend beyond the Museum’s walls. Varied programs, art-making activities and other interactive features enliven these dynamic outdoor installations.

The High commissioned Esrawe and Cadena to design the first two installations for the project, “Mi Casa, Your Casa” and “Los Trompos” (“The Spinning Tops”), followed by Hayon’s “Tiovivo” and “Merry Go Zoo” and Suzuki’s “Sonic Playground.” For each of these installations, the High worked with local arts organizations and Woodruff Arts Center partners to present live performances and art-making activities themed around the structures. The Piazza projects have so far been enjoyed by a total of nearly 700,000 visitors.

The High’s Piazza activation initiative is sponsored by a grant from the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation, which is part of the family of foundations that includes the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation. The Lettie Pate Evans Foundation is an independent private foundation that invests primarily in education, arts and culture.

About SO – IL

SO – IL is the New York-based joint practice of architects Florian Idenburg and Jing Liu, which they founded in 2008. Their studio is recognized for its imaginative and thoughtful ideas that range in scale from furniture to urban masterplans.

SO – IL believes that through genuine collaboration, architects can reconnect communities to their physical environments. It has developed an architectural approach that incorporates the fluidities of a hyper-digitized world not as a formal trope but as an approach toward process and experience. SO – IL produces innovative material solutions that follow the particular scale and conceptual grounding of each project. As such, it creates urban space, homes and public buildings and also writes, participates in, and designs exhibitions and events and collaborates with a wide range of artists and creatives on projects.

Liu, a Chinese native, brings an intellectually open, globally aware and locally sensitive perspective to architecture. Through building practice and interdisciplinary research projects, Liu has led SO – IL in engaging with the sociopolitical issues of contemporary cities — in projects such as the Artists Lofts in North Omaha and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library in Cleveland. In the past couple of years, Liu has been working on projects ranging from artistic collaborations with contemporary choreographers and visual artists to master planning in cities such as Melbourne and Indianapolis.

Idenburg, who was born and raised in the Netherlands, combines a conceptual drive with a hands-on approach. He has a strong intuition for the orchestration of form, material and light and employs his talent in the design of cultural venues and housing. Idenburg led the office on projects such as Kukje Gallery, the Manetti Shrem Museum of Art at UC Davis and Amant, an arts campus in Brooklyn.

Exhibition Organization and Support

“Murmuration” is organized by the High Museum of Art. Generous support has been provided by the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation. This exhibition is made possible by Premier Exhibition Series Sponsor Delta Air Lines, Inc. and Invesco; Exhibition Series Sponsors Northside Hospital and WarnerMedia; Premier Exhibition Series Supporters the Antinori Foundation, Sarah and Jim Kennedy, and Louise Sams and Jerome Grilhot; Benefactor Exhibition Series Supporter Anne Cox Chambers Foundation; Ambassador Exhibition Series Supporters Tom and Susan Wardell and Rod and Kelly Westmoreland; and Contributing Exhibition Series Supporters Lucinda W. Bunnell, Marcia and John Donnell, W. Daniel Ebersole and Sarah Eby-Ebersole, Peggy Foreman, Robin and Hilton Howell, Mr. and Mrs. Baxter Jones, Margot and Danny McCaul, Joel Knox and Joan Marmo, and The Ron and Lisa Brill Family Charitable Trust. Generous support is also provided by the Alfred and Adele Davis Exhibition Endowment Fund, Anne Cox Chambers Exhibition Fund, Barbara Stewart Exhibition Fund, Dorothy Smith Hopkins Exhibition Endowment Fund, Eleanor McDonald Storza Exhibition Endowment Fund, The Fay and Barrett Howell Exhibition Fund, Forward Arts Foundation Exhibition Endowment Fund, Helen S. Lanier Endowment Fund, Isobel Anne Fraser–Nancy Fraser Parker Exhibition Endowment Fund, John H. and Wilhelmina D. Harland Exhibition Endowment Fund, Katherine Murphy Riley Special Exhibition Endowment Fund, Margaretta Taylor Exhibition Fund, and the RJR Nabisco Exhibition Endowment Fund.

About the High Museum of Art

Located in the heart of Atlanta, the High Museum of Art connects with audiences from across the Southeast and around the world through its distinguished collection, dynamic schedule of special exhibitions and engaging community-focused programs. Housed within facilities designed by Pritzker Prize–winning architects Richard Meier and Renzo Piano, the High features a collection of more than 17,000 works of art, including an extensive anthology of 19th- and 20th-century American fine and decorative arts; major holdings of photography and folk and self-taught work, especially that of artists from the American South; burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, including paintings, sculpture, new media and design; a growing collection of African art, with work dating from prehistory through the present; and significant holdings of European paintings and works on paper. The High is dedicated to reflecting the

diversity of its communities and offering a variety of exhibitions and educational programs that engage visitors with the world of art, the lives of artists and the creative process. For more information about the High, visit www.high.org.

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