

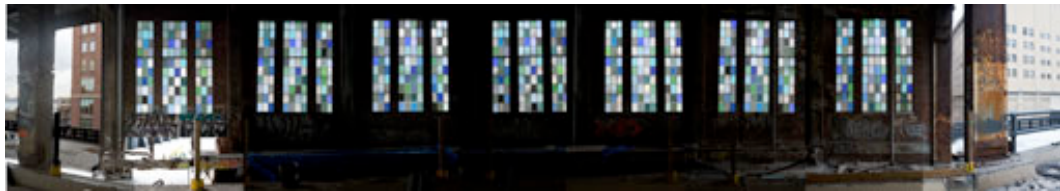
CREATIVETIME

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**CREATIVE TIME, FRIENDS OF THE HIGH LINE, AND THE NEW YORK CITY
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION ANNOUNCE:
SPENCER FINCH
THE RIVER THAT FLOWS BOTH WAYS
THE FIRST PUBLIC ART COMMISSION ON THE HIGH LINE, NYC
SUMMER 2009–2010**



Spencer Finch, *The River That Flows Both Ways*, rendering, 2007

(May 12, 2007 New York, NY) Creative Time, Friends of the High Line, and the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation are pleased to announce the inaugural art commission by Spencer Finch for the opening of the first section of the High Line as a public park in June 2009.

Inspired by the light and the water of the Hudson River, *The River that Flows Both Ways* will transform an existing series of windows with 700 individually crafted panes of glass representing the water conditions on the Hudson River over a period of 700 minutes on a single day. The installation will be placed in a semi-enclosed former loading dock where the High Line runs through the Chelsea Market building, between 15th and 16th Streets, viewable from the street and on the High Line. The work links the movement of the river, viewable from the site, with the historic movement of the railway and the atmospheric conditions of its location on Manhattan's West Side. The piece, with its varied levels of color, translucency, and reflectivity, addresses the impossible search for the color of water.

The title of this work comes from the original Native American word for the Hudson River, *Muhheakantuck*, which means "the river that flows both ways." This flow in two directions is analogous to the way both water and glass work optically, as both windows and mirrors, allowing a view into depth as well as a reflection of the surrounding environment.

To create the colors of the glass, Finch fastened a camera to the railing of a tugboat, and used an intervalometer to photograph the Hudson River 700 times, once a minute

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for 700 minutes. The boat began the trip at the 79th Street Boat Basin and floated upriver with the current to 120th Street, reversed direction with the tide and traveled down to New York Harbor, and lastly back upriver. The boat flowed naturally with the river in both directions, rather than relying on its engines to propel it. After recording the same moment in 700 different points in space and time, Finch carefully selected the exact color of a single point of each photograph to produce a uniquely printed film to be laminated into glass. The glass is organized to correspond with the pictures chronologically, starting from the top left (if one's back is to the Chelsea market). The "minutes" progress to the right for 70 panes, and continue from left to right on the next row down.

"This project is deeply connected to the values of Creative Time," said the organization's president and artistic director Anne Pasternak, "including the transformation of public space, a critical engagement of site, and an interconnectedness with residents' and visitors' experience of place."

"Ever since Joel Sternfeld first photographed the High Line's overgrown landscape, art has been an essential and vibrant part of this project," said Robert Hammond, Co-Founder of Friends of the High Line. "At once rhythmic and unpredictable, Spencer's piece responds adeptly to the central juxtaposition of the High Line— the interplay between the ex-industrial built environment and the High Line's living landscape."

"In addition to being one of the most exciting park projects in generations, the High Line will also be one of the city's best outdoor art museums," said Parks & Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe. "Spencer Finch's *The River that Flows Both Ways* is a wonderful way to connect the opening of the park to the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson's voyage to New York. I would like to thank Creative Time and the Friends of the High Line for bringing this exciting exhibition to the High Line."

"The Rockefeller Foundation is delighted to support Spencer Finch's extraordinary expression of New York City's environment," said Judith Rodin, the Foundation's president. "We fervently believe that there is a connection between creative innovation and the City's cultural future. By working with Creative Time, The Friends of the High Line, and New York City, the Foundation is proud to help strengthen both."

Spencer Finch will be included in the 53rd Venice Biennale, in the Arsenale this summer. This is his first major public project in New York City.

THE ARTIST

Spencer Finch, born 1962 in New Haven Connecticut, lives and works in Brooklyn. He received a BA in comparative literature from Hamilton College, and a MFA in sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design. In his installations and works on paper, Finch attempts to depict the most elusive of subjects and continually explores the nature of color, light, memory and perception. Often employing industrial means to a poetic end, the works operate in the gap between the objectivity of scientific data and the subjectivity of creative expression.

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Recent major exhibitions include a mid-career survey *What Time Is It On The Sun?*, MASS MOCA, North Adams, M.A., May 2007– spring 2008, accompanied by a 192-page monograph; *Artificial Light*, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, V.A., 2006, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami, 2006-2007; and *Light x Eight*, The Jewish Museum, N.Y., 2006-2007; as well as numerous exhibitions worldwide. His work is in the collections of the High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC.; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main; and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; among others. The artist is represented in the U.S. by Postmasters Gallery, NY and Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago. For more information on the artist go to <http://www.spencerfinch.com/>

THE HIGH LINE

The High Line is a 1.5-mile-long historic elevated rail structure on the West Side of Manhattan. Friends of the High Line, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization, was founded in 1999 to save the historic structure from demolition and transform it into a public park. The park is now under construction and the first section, between Gansevoort Street and West 20th Street, is expected to open in fall 2008. The High Line is owned by the City of New York and under the jurisdiction of the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation.

The High Line was originally built to lift dangerous freight trains off the streets of the West Side. It ran through many industrial buildings, delivering goods to third-storey platforms. The Chelsea Market building, originally a National Biscuit Company factory, includes a semi-enclosed loading dock space through which trains once ran. This cavernous industrial space, one of the most dramatic locations on the High Line, is where Finch's work will be located.

CREATIVE TIME

Creative Time, a cultural partner of The Friends of The High Line, inaugurates the public art commission program for the High Line Park with Spencer Finch's project *The River Runs Both Ways*. Since 1974, the non-profit organization has presented the most adventurous art in the public realm and changed the notion of what public art can be. From its base in New York, it works with artists who ignite the imagination and explore ideas that shape society. It initiates dynamic conversations among artists, sites, and audiences in projects that enliven public space. Creative Time's recent, signature projects include Mike Nelson: *A Psychic Vacuum*; Doug Aitken: *Sleepwalkers* (in collaboration with MoMA); *Playing the Building* by David Byrne; and *Tribute in Light*. The organization recently began a national public art program, with Paul Chan's *Waiting for Godot in New Orleans* in 2007; *Democracy in America* in 2008; and Jeremy Deller's *It Is What It Is* in 2009.

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION

Since 1967, Parks & Recreation's public art program has consistently fostered the creation and installation of public art in parks throughout the five boroughs. They consider the parks to be "open-air art museums," and they strive to create a collection of permanent and temporary art that can compete on the international stage. With over

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1,300 works, the parks are the largest municipal outdoor art museum in the United States. The design of the High Line, itself a work of art, makes it an ideal location for temporary public art installations. The 22-block-long High Line, owned by Parks & Recreation, tells of an era when ships, trains, factories and warehouses dominated Manhattan's West Side and illustrates how in recent years New York City has come to appreciate the value and potential of its unused industrial infrastructure.

FUNDING

Funding for this project is provided, in part, by a major award from The Rockefeller Foundation's New York City Cultural Innovation Fund. The Fund celebrates innovation and the creative sector through grants for trailblazing initiatives that strengthen the City's cultural fabric. The New York City Cultural Innovation Fund builds upon the Rockefeller Foundation's tradition of support for the arts.

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