



**MADISON SQUARE
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**MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY'S
MAD. SQ. ART
PRESENTS
LEO VILLAREAL: *BUCKYBALL***

***Site-Specific Monumental Light Sculpture
In The Form Of A Carbon 60 Molecule
Illuminates Madison Square Park***

Closing Date Extended to February 15, 2013

New York—Madison Square Park Conservancy's Mad. Sq. Art program presents a new, monumental sculpture by world-renowned artist Leo Villareal. Largely inspired by the work of Buckminster Fuller, Villareal's *BUCKYBALL* applies concepts of geometry and mathematical relationships within a towering 30-foot tall, illuminated sculpture. Originally scheduled to close February 1 following its October 25 premiere earlier this fall, the popular site-specific work will now remain on view daily through February 15, 2013 in Madison Square Park.

A commission of the Mad. Sq. Art program, Villareal's *BUCKYBALL* features two nested, geodesic sculptural spheres comprised of 180 LED tubes arranged in a series of pentagons and hexagons, known as a "Fullerene," referring to the form's discovery by Buckminster Fuller. Individual pixels located every 1.2 inches along the tubes are each capable of displaying 16

million distinct colors and are specifically tuned by the artist's own software, creating dynamic light sequences that enliven the natural landscape of the park. Relying on LED technologies driven by chance, *BUCKYBALL*'s light sequences create exuberant, random compositions of varied speed, color, opacity, and scale. *BUCKYBALL* triggers neurological processes within the brain, calling on our natural impulse to identify patterns and gather meaning from our external environment.

Through basic elements such as pixels and binary codes, Villareal allows for a better understanding of the underlying structures and systems that govern everyday function. As he builds these simple elements into a full-scale sculptural installation that moves, changes, and interacts, the work ultimately grows into a complex, dynamic form that questions common notions of space, time, and sensorial pleasure.

Villareal's light sculpture is surrounded by zero-gravity couches that allow viewers to recline below the artwork. These couches are built out of wooden slats that mimic the construction method of adjacent park benches just as the pedestal on which *BUCKYBALL* rests emulates support structures found within the park's neighboring sculptural monuments.

Artist Leo Villareal states, "I am thrilled to be presenting *BUCKYBALL* in Madison Square Park. My new light sculpture takes the form of a Carbon 60 molecule and expands it to monumental scale. It also explores self-similarity through the use of two identical nested spheres, the outer at 20 feet in diameter and the inner at 10 feet. Lined with LED tubes, these structures are activated through sequenced light driven by custom software. This public artwork reinterprets many of the traditional elements found in the park such as seating and historic monuments in a fresh and exciting way."

Madison Square Park Conservancy President Debbie Landau comments, "Leo's *BUCKYBALL* is apt for Madison Square Park's unique landscape. It shares much in common with the shifting colors and light of the fall season. It will animate the park throughout the fall and winter with its ever-shifting light."

About the Artist:

Villareal received a BA in sculpture from Yale University in 1990, and a graduate degree from NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Interactive Telecommunications Program.

Leo Villareal's recent exhibitions include a survey show organized by the San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA, which continues to tour several museums in the United States. He has completed many site-specific works including *Radiant Pathway*, Rice University, Houston, Texas; *Multiverse*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; *Diagonal Grid*, Borusan Center for Culture and Arts, Istanbul, Turkey; *Stars*, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, New York; and the recently installed *Hive*, for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority at the Bleecker Street subway station in Manhattan.

Among the projects Villareal is currently working on, The Bay Lights for San Francisco's Bay Bridge, will spectacularly light the bridge and glisten throughout the city. Villareal is also a focal point of the James Corner Field Operations design team that will renew Chicago's Navy Pier. He has also been commissioned for installations at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, and The Durst Organization in New York City. Villareal's work is in the permanent collections of prestigious museums including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Naoshima Contemporary Art Museum, Kagawa, Japan; Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, KS; and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Leo Villareal is represented by Gering & López Gallery, New York.

About Mad. Sq. Art and Madison Square Park Conservancy:

Mad. Sq. Art is the free, contemporary art program of the Madison Square Park Conservancy.

Since 2004, Mad. Sq. Art has commissioned and presented more than twenty premier installations in Madison Square Park by acclaimed artists ranging in practice and media. Mad. Sq. Art has exhibited works by artists including **Bill Beirne, Jim Campbell, Richard Deacon, Mark di Suvero, Bill Fontana, Ernie Gehr, Antony Gormley, Jene Highstein, Tadashi Kawamata, Mel Kendrick, Sol LeWitt, Olia Lialina & Dragan Espenschied, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Charles Long, Jacco Olivier, Roxy Paine, Jaume Plensa, Shannon Plumb, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Alison Saar, Jessica Stockholder, and William Wegman**, among others.

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For more information on the Madison Square Park Conservancy and its programs, please visit <http://madisonsquarepark.org>.

Join the conversation on Twitter and Instagram via the hashtag **#MadSqArt**

Image: Leo Villareal's *BUCKYBALL* (2012) in Madison Square Park. Photo by James Ewing/Madison Square Park Conservancy.

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