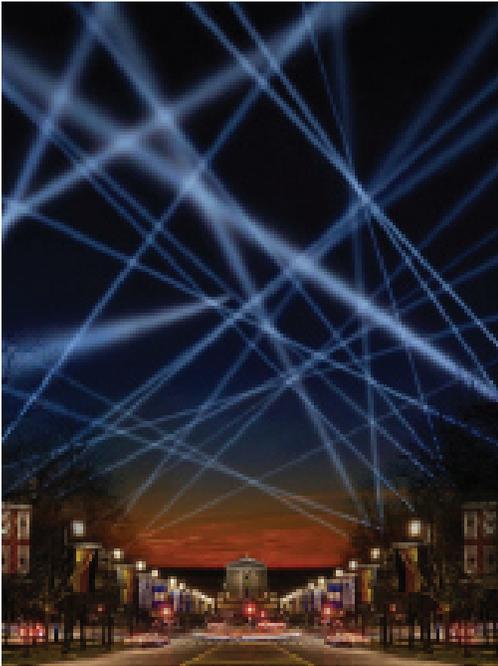




## 'Canopy of light' public art project to lighten up Parkway



Public art will truly be in the hands of the public this fall courtesy of a new work from internationally-renown artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer.

The piece, "Open Air," is a world premiere interactive work in which 24 searchlights will be placed around the Parkway. Every night, the lights will create "light sculptures" that will change based on the frequency of peoples' voices.

People can submit the messages that will eventually become light sculptures via a website ([openairphilly.net](http://openairphilly.net)) or an iPhone app. Passersby without iPhones can borrow one from stations around the Parkway. "Searchlights have a military and corporate history. How can we misuse these technologies for our personal use? How do we take ownership?" Lozano-Hemmer said. "We'll create a canopy of light ... controlled by people's voices."

The messages people send, that are a maximum of 30 seconds, can be heard at listening stations at Eakins Oval and Sister Cities Park.

The light show will take place every night from September 20 to October 14, from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. Light can be seen from a 10-mile radius around the city, but Lozano-Hemmer said that the environmental impact is at a minimum. The amount used to power the month-long exhibit is

the same amount used in one football game and Lozano-Hemmer and his team are working with the Pennsylvania Audubon so the lights don't impact the migratory patterns of bird.

"I wanted to make some thing free, inclusive and would empower Philadelphians," Lozano-Hemmer said today at a press conference. By interviewing various locals (historian, eccentrics, students, etc.), Lozano-Hemmer found that Philadelphians value free speech and have a relationship with openness (ya think?).

"We need to save public space to bring it back to the people," he added.

But giving Philadelphians an uncensored platform to send out messages can lead to some inappropriate content. But Lozano-Hemmer said that messages will only be censored through crowd-sourcing on the website "Moronic content is important because this is a public space," Lozano-Hemmer said. He added later, "If you trust the public, they will will surprise you every time."

"Open Air" will be brought to Philadelphia through a collaboration with Association for Public Art and the 2012 Live Arts Festival.