



Contact: Tami Kelly, Brazer Communications

tami@brazercommunications.com

925-640-9997

THE BAY LIGHTS RETURNS WITH BRILLIANT PERMANENCE --Iconic Light Sculpture Gifted to the People of California

San Francisco (January 29, 2016)—Leo Villareal’s monumental work of public art, The Bay Lights, will return to the Bay Bridge as a permanent installation on January 30, 2016. ILLUMINATE founder Ben Davis, Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi and the artist will push the ceremonial button at 7:25pm. When the 25,000 LEDs are once again shining in the world’s largest light sculpture, Newsom and Pelosi will officially accept the gift of the installation on behalf of the people of California in exchange for ongoing stewardship of the artwork by the Bay Area Toll Authority and Caltrans.

“People have shown us they love The Bay Lights and want it to remain as a permanent part of their lives. I’m incredibly humbled and take that as a great compliment,” says Villareal. “I see The Bay Lights as something for the community that everyone can share. It’s the culmination of a tremendous amount of generosity and work by many people, and a digital campfire that draws us together. It brings out the best in people.”

“The re-lighting of The Bay Lights is the result of a courageous act by Caltrans and Bay Area Toll Authority officials who agreed to accept the artwork as a gift to the people in exchange for ongoing stewardship,” said Ben Davis, founder and chief visionary officer of ILLUMINATE, the non-profit arts organization that conceived and drove the project to success. “As a permanent work of public art, The Bay Lights is estimated to deliver over \$100 million a year to the regional economy. It is a great investment that is consistent with the Caltrans mission of creating sustainable, livable cities and economic vitality.”

“The Bay Lights is a beautiful tribute to our beloved city,” Congresswoman Pelosi said. “San Francisco has long served as a beacon of hope, welcoming people and ideas from around the world. With this brilliant work of public art, the Bay Bridge will shine even brighter. Thanks to the contributions of ILLUMINATE and the vision of artist Leo Villareal, this permanent display will continue to celebrate our rich heritage.”

“Now everyone can be part of The Bay Lights with ILLUMINATE’s new Shine It Forward program that lets people dedicate a light to someone they love,” said Davis. Donations will empower the non-profit arts organization to create future works of awe-inspiring public art. Personalized dedications can be made at www.illuminate.org.

Installation of the LEDs and infrastructure needed to make the return of The Bay Lights a reality was completed in late 2015. Saeed Shahmirzai of Zoon Engineering led the construction effort, which included technical design by Parsons-Brinckerhoff. Working at night to minimize impact on motorists, a dedicated crew of electricians from Bleyco Inc affixed the strands of LEDs to the vertical cables hundreds of feet above the water. The new, more robust LEDs are designed by Philips to withstand the harsh environmental conditions over time and can now be seen from much the southeast waterfront in addition to the original views from The Embarcadero and points north.

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The Bay Lights was removed from the bridge in March 2015 (per the original permit) to allow Caltrans to perform maintenance on the cables. ILLUMINATE raised \$4 million to ensure The Bay Lights re-installation, in time to shine for Super Bowl 50 in 2016. The final raise was made possible by Bay Area philanthropist Tad Taube, whose \$2 million challenge grant inspired other donors to give the remaining amount needed to re-install the sculpture.

“The Bay Lights enriches San Francisco’s beauty and majesty, as well as that of our extraordinary San Francisco Bay,” said Tad Taube, chairman of Taube Philanthropies. “I am proud of and grateful to our fellow citizens for joining us in ensuring this magnificent work of art remains a part of our city.”

The Bay Lights is a privately funded work of public art supported by individual patrons. The project has received extraordinary pro bono counsel from Morrison & Foerster.

The grand relighting event is sponsored by Heineken, LUMINA, Epic Steak, First Republic Bank, Hotel Vitale, Mozilla, Philips, PG&E, Salesforce/Heroku, San Francisco Travel, Super Bowl 50 Host Committee and Waterbar.

About Leo Villareal

Leo Villareal is known internationally for his light sculptures and site-specific architectural works. His work focuses on stripping systems down to their essence to better understand the underlying structures governing how they work. He is interested in lowest common denominators such as pixels, or the zeros and ones, in binary code. The visual manifestation of the code in light is at the core of the artist's interest.

Villareal’s recent exhibitions include a traveling survey organized by the San Jose Museum of Art as well as a presentation of Cylinder II at the Hayward Gallery in London, which is currently traveling to Auckland, New Zealand; Sydney, Australia, and Sharjah, UAE. Recent works include The Light Matrix at 1306 Market Street in Philadelphia, Buckyball, Dallas at Northpark Center in Dallas and Volume (Renwick) at Renwick Gallery in the Smithsonian in Washington DC.

His work is in the permanent collections of museums such as the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Naoshima Contemporary Art Museum, Kagawa, Japan; and the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC.

About ILLUMINATE

ILLUMINATE aims to alter the arc of human history through the creation of transformational works of public art. Its mission is to produce contemporary art with civic impact, social activation and global reach to stimulate a culture of generosity and collaboration. ILLUMINATE raised funds and produced both the original installation of The Bay Lights in 2013 and the permanent reinstallation in 2016. It is gifting The Bay Lights to the people of California so they will be maintained by Caltrans and will lift the gaze and spirits of Bay Area residents and visitors for generations to come.

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