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PRESS RELEASE

Artist Patrick Shearn of *Poetic Kinetics* brings *Firebird Descent* to New Holland
From June 3 until September 30, 2017

Starting June 3, a giant Firebird will unfurl its massive tail across the sky over New Holland Island, as part of the latest project from the world-renowned artist Patrick Shearn of *Poetic Kinetics*. Occupying over 10,000 square meters of space in total, this installation will mark the city's first public art work at this scale.

The gigantic plumage of *Firebird Descent* rises from a central point in the island's reservoir. The "tail" has been woven together from extra-strength monofilament fibers, festooned with hundreds of thousands of vibrantly-colored patches of parachute fabric. The installation is secured by cables tethered to seven pillars, each nineteen meters high. It took more than six months to produce the piece. During this time, engineers meticulously calculated the wind and weight limits, taking into account all the precise details of New Holland's location and the potential weather conditions.

According to Patrick's concept, this figure should recall the magical firebird from Eastern Slavic folklore, as captured through the sumptuous illustrations of Ivan Bilibin. *Firebird Descent* lives in harmony with the wind, which directly influences his behavior: a light breeze may ruffle the "feathers," while a mighty gust will send smooth ripples pulsing through the entire body.

As a genre, public art sees its primary task in catching the eye of the casual passerby, but its artistic objective lies in how that viewer perceives and reacts to the work.

In this case, the manner in which each of us sees and remembers *Firebird Descent* will depend on a variety of elements, from the sun's rays, dappling the plumage; to the reflection of the water; fleeting shadows; the company of captivated fellow observers; the austere brick façades of the warehouses; or even a steel gray sky. To immerse oneself even more in the experience of the work, a system of floating pontoons have been set up within the basin. You can also get a good look at the installation from every angle, thanks to the pedestrian bridges circling the water.

Poetic Kinetics's founder and chief ideologue, Patrick Shearn explains: "The inspiration comes from observing nature and the feeling that we are only aware on a very surface level of what is really going on around us." Through his installations, Shearn explores the possibility of identifying and amplifying the scientific principles underlying the forces of nature – both those which can be seen, and those invisible to us – always taking an unconventional and often immersive approach. A particular source of inspiration for *Firebird Descent* is Shearn's own personal experience watching the Northern Lights send streams of color rippling across the night sky.

The installation will be accompanied by a parallel exhibition in the Pavilion, documenting *Poetic Kinetics*'s creative process through a selection of sketches, models, photographs and video footage of previous projects.

This exhibition will be on view through June 18, 2017.

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Poetic Kinetics, co-founded by Patrick Shearn and Cynthia Washburn, is a Los Angeles-based artist collective made up of professionals from a wide range of creative and technical industries. Centered around the idea that everything in our man-made environment is designed, everything is a creative choice, why not make those choices as enriching and stimulating as possible? To that end, the Poetic Kinetics team is focused on creating interactive and experiential public art installations that are functional, sustainable, and specifically tailored for the immediate community where the art will live.

The group's history began in 2005, when they created the giant kinetic sculptures, *Hope Flower & Venus Flytrap*, for the famous *Burning Man Arts Festival*. Photographs of the sculpture against the color-soaked sunsets of the Nevada desert quickly circulated around the world, earning the group an invitation to participate in the 2008 Beijing Olympics with their debut piece, *Warrior and the Girl*. Based on an ancient Chinese legend involving a warrior, a girl, and a butterfly. The 22' tall terracotta warrior suspended from an 80 ton construction crane and a 15' tall Chinese girl rigged to a 40' boom forklift moved around the stage with the help of 40 choreographed puppeteers/dancers from China's National Opera.

Among *Poetic Kinetics*'s key installations are the kinetic sculptures created over the years for the *Coachella Music & Arts Festival*: *Mantis Temple* and *Helix Poeticus* in 2013, *Escape Velocity* in 2014, and *Caterpillar's Longing* in 2015. But perhaps the infamous piece is *Liquid Shard*, Patrick Shearn's 2016 installation in downtown Los Angeles's Pershing Square. Images of *Liquid Shard* literally circled the globe through the help of *Instagram* and *Youtube*, securing Patrick Shearn and his team the status as a collective capable of bringing the most extraordinary fantasies to life. It was under the inspiration of *Liquid Shard* that Patrick and his team set to work on New Holland's *Firebird Descent*.

New Holland: Cultural Urbanization

In 2010, *Millhouse*, LLC, won the tender for the restoration and renovation of New Holland Island. To help determine the concept and creative direction of the island's development, *Millhouse* turned to the *Iris Foundation*, a non-commercial initiative for the support and advancement of contemporary culture and art, launched by Daria Zhukova. This collaboration resulted in *New Holland: Cultural Urbanization*, a fresh approach to the restructuring and modernization of the territory, a monument of cultural and national historical significance. Following the success of the seasonal programs, the project investors decided not to proceed with the original plan to clear the territory to construct a new building. Instead, they chose to organize a full-fledged city park, complete with a modern and convenient infrastructure, which each and every person could find his or her place. The island continues to host cultural programs as well as grand-scale civic initiatives. Future plans for the development of the territory include not only commercial enterprises, but also cultural and educational institutions, research laboratories, and exhibition spaces, whose programming will be overseen by emerging specialists. In 2016, the first phase of the project came to completion. This encompassed the landscaping of park areas, with temporary pavilions along with a system of engineering solutions and networks necessary for the implementation of the project, as well as the public debut of the first restored buildings, *The Foundry*. For the first time in its history, the island was open to the public all year long. In the spring of 2017, the Commandant's House launched the *Mayak School of Creative Industries*, while this summer awaits the opening of *The Bottle*.

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