

# ArtHouse

A SOCIAL KITCHEN

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Six Finalists Selected for ArtHouse: A Social Kitchen, Winner of the Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge**

*Artists chosen with input from selection committee of artists & business owners*

*Applicants include individuals & teams from Illinois, Indiana, Virginia, Canada, & Germany*

ArtHouse: A Social Kitchen is pleased to announce that six individual artists and teams have been selected to submit full proposals for temporary, original, site-responsive public artworks for ArtHouse. The ArtHouse project will transform a 15,000 square foot facility in downtown Gary into a cultural hub showcasing culinary and visual arts. The City of Gary will use this public space to help spur artistic and economic activity and to promote ethical redevelopment of the downtown district.

“We know that good food and public arts will bring life to our city’s downtown,” says Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson. “We see ArtHouse as a catalyst to provide economic growth and career opportunities for our residents, particularly our talented young residents pursuing careers in the food industry as chefs and business owners.”

In December 2015, ArtHouse issued a request for qualifications for two public art commissions: *Illumination*, a light-based sculptural work, and *Surface*, a work to enhance the façade of the building. These two works will transform the exterior of ArtHouse and help establish the re-imagined space.

“We are excited about ArtHouse,” says Theaster Gates, Artistic Director and lead artist of ArtHouse. “This is a fantastic opportunity to create a platform for such great artists who are both local and national.”

Over forty talented applicants from around the world submitted qualifications from which eighteen were chosen for presentation to an Internal Review Committee (IRC) composed of artists, business owners, and arts administrators. Gates notes that the process for reviewing artists is as integral to the ArtHouse project as the art work itself.

“Having selection committees that are thoughtful,” stresses Gates. “And committed to ensuring that great art happens alongside real engagement with the city has been an important aspect of this project so far.”

Submissions were evaluated on their contextual understanding of Gary, their capacity to realize complex public art, their commitment to local participation and diversity, and the quality of their portfolio of work. Following an exhaustive deliberation, the IRC short-listed six applicants to advance to the design concept proposal phase. The three semi-finalists for *Illumination* are Nadi Design, PIKE Projects / RAW Gallery Collaboration, and Jeana Ripple + Barbara Brown Wilson; the three semi-finalists for *Surface* are Felix “Flex” Maldonado, Jr., Chris Silva, and Riccardo Mariano.

“One of the elements I loved about these artists and design teams is that they seemed very interested in their work in relationship to people,” says Gates. “All of the submissions required the presence of others in order for the work to be completely successful, requiring the input of the artists, the community and our staff to ensure the work that emerges in this process is work that we all believe in.”

Each of the six applicants will receive a \$1,500 stipend to develop a full proposal. Teams will present their proposals in May 2016 to a jury that includes Gates and Mayor Freeman-Wilson. Artists, businesspersons, and citizens of Gary and Chicago who have assisted with ArtHouse’s community outreach and engagement activities, such as the popular Home Grown Meals series, will be invited to observe the presentations. Following jury deliberation, one individual artist or team will be selected for each public art commission.

“There is land and ample opportunity adjacent to the site for great things to happen. Artists always come up with solutions that are unexpected and ambitious,” says Gates. “I expect no less from this process.”

ArtHouse is one of four winning projects of the Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge. More than 230 U.S. cities submitted proposals that showcased ways in which local governments could work with artists to create public art that celebrates creativity, enhances urban identity, and inspires economic growth. Gary was selected as one of four cities. Other winning cities include Los Angeles CA, Spartanburg SC, and a joint project between New York cities, Albany, Troy and Schenectady.

The Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge grant is supporting development, execution, and project-related expenditures for the ArtHouse project. Additional support for ArtHouse is provided by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation through the Knight Cities Challenge.

Winners for *Surface* and *Illumination* will be announced in May. The final works will be unveiled in October 2016. Alongside these two external works, ArtHouse will also reveal the winning work of a privately commissioned designed object for the building’s interior.

Project leadership for ArtHouse includes Gary’s Economic Development Corporation and Department of Commerce, the office of Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson as well as lead artist Theaster Gates Jr., Place Lab and the Harris School of Public Policy both at the University of Chicago.

For more information and updates on ArtHouse: A Social Kitchen, please visit [arthousegary.com](http://arthousegary.com), find us on Facebook at ArtHouse: A Social Kitchen, and follow @arthousegary on Twitter and Instagram.

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### **ABOUT THE ARTISTS FOR PUBLIC ART COMMISSION - ILLUMINATION**

#### **Nadi Design – Chicago, IL**

Nadi Design is a boutique design practice providing meaningful service to its clients, environments, and communities. With a desire to leave a positive, sustainable, and memorable legacy in every environment it touches, Nadi Design strives to build a practice based on integrity, collaboration and trust, and believes that people and their daily interactions form the core of great public spaces. Specializing in interior design, urban design, planning, landscape architecture, and land art, Nadi Design seeks to enrich communities through innovative, thoughtful designs that generate civic pride.

#### **PIKE Projects / RAW Gallery Collaboration - Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada**

PIKE Projects / RAW Gallery Collaboration is a Winnipeg, Canada based team passionate about design for public benefit. With master's degrees from the Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba, Joe Kaltornyk of RAW and Colin Grover of PIKE are builders, artists and designers that have cut their teeth at many an architect's office, founded an architecture office, founded and operated an art gallery, won public art competitions, rebuilt a heritage hotel to house the homeless, are director and partner in a construction firm and run an annual pop-up restaurant on a frozen river. Published internationally, yet obsessed with the local and specific, we dig deep to find the critical elements of each situation and selectively amplify, contort and edit in search of *the story* - the shared spark that resonates.

#### **Jeana Ripple and Barbara Brown Wilson**

##### **of Ripple Architecture Studio and the University of Virginia – Charlottesville, VA**

Ripple and Wilson's combined backgrounds in award-winning architecture and community engaged design create a dynamic team to contribute art honoring Gary's manufacturing expertise, community pride, and future potential. Jeana Ripple is the founding principal of Ripple Architecture Studio. Her work uses manufacturing processes as a driver for design innovation. Ripple Architecture Studio has won multiple AIA awards and has been internationally exhibited and published. Dr. Barbara Brown Wilson is an urban planner, leader in the practice of community engaged design, and known for her ability to partner with local nonprofits to craft youth-led design initiatives. Her community-based work as a practitioner and an educator has produced projects and programs that are beloved by community and recognized for excellence in the profession. Wilson has won numerous local and national awards for her community engaged design efforts and is recognized as one of the "top 100 leaders in Public Interest Design."

### **ABOUT THE ARTISTS FOR PUBLIC ART COMMISSION - SURFACE**

#### **Felix "Flex" Maldonado Jr. – East Chicago, IN**

A native of East Chicago, IN, Maldonado is a self-taught artist with more than twenty-five years of experience in painting, drawing, and graffiti art. He received his BFA in Advertising with a minor in Graphic Design from the American Academy of Art in Chicago. He has worked with several ad agencies in Chicago, and has directed and produced commercials for companies like Culligan Water, Peoples Energy, Roto-Rooter, Head Tennis and ATA Airlines. In 2003, Felix helped form CISA Studio, LLC., a creative services company producing local and national work in

various disciplines, including murals, custom paint and airbrushing, advertising, design, and multimedia. Maldonado's history of solo and group art exhibitions include exhibitions at the South Shore Arts Center (Munster), CISA Gallery (Hammond), The Mexican Fine Arts Museum (Chicago), Art Expo (Chicago), Swope Museum (Terre Haute), SOMArts Museum (San Francisco), Armory's Fountain Art Fair (New York City), and the "Paint, Paste, Sticker"/ Street Art show at the Chicago Cultural Center.

### **Chris Silva – Chicago, IL**

Though born in Puerto Rico, Chris Silva's creative pursuits are firmly rooted in Chicago's urban culture. Since the late 80s he has been a prominent figure in Chicago's graffiti and skateboarding scenes, and building on this foundation proceeded to play a significant role in the development of what is now commonly referred to as "street art". Chris splits his time between working on large-scale commissions, producing gallery-oriented work, and leading youth-involved public art projects. A self-taught sound artist with roots in DJ culture, Chris anchors a collaborative recording project known as This Mother Falcon, and integrates these audio compositions into his installation work. Chris was the recipient of an Artist Fellowship Award from The Illinois Arts Council (2007), a 3Arts Award (2015), and is represented by Linda Warren Projects.

### **Riccardo Mariano – Berlin, Germany**

Riccardo Mariano is an artist, architect and designer based in Berlin, Germany. Trained as an architect, he earned a Master of Science in Architecture with honours from Accademia di Architettura di Mendrisio Switzerland. Following his graduation, Riccardo joined BIG, Bjarke Ingels Group in Copenhagen (DK) where he advanced his architectural practice working on a diverse range of projects worldwide. Since 2012 Riccardo is part of the design and development team at Studio Olafur Eliasson in Berlin. Collaborating with the Studio he has been working on the design and development of architectural experimentations, large-scale installations and sculptures. While working closely with Olafur Eliasson, Riccardo has been independently undertaking public art projects. In 2014 he has led an interdisciplinary team for the design "Herning Energy Promenade", awarded with the LAGI Green Cities Special Jury Prize. In 2015 he has been awarded for "Wonderland: East lake Tai international public art competition" with the entries "Flying Bi" and "Tao Pavilion".

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### **ABOUT ARTHOUSE: A SOCIAL KITCHEN**

ArtHouse: A Social Kitchen is a unique destination for food, culture, and art in Gary, IN. ArtHouse is focused on creating a space that positively reflects the city of Gary and provides a platform for economic and artistic activity in the downtown area by providing access to a commercial training kitchen for local residents and emerging businesses, a culinary business incubation (CBI) and operation space, a pop up café shaped by CBI participants, community dinners in Gary homes and the café, and gallery/exhibition space. Project leadership for ArtHouse includes Gary's Economic Development Corporation, Department of Commerce, and the Gary Redevelopment Commission, the office of Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson as well as lead artist Theaster Gates, the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy, and Place Lab, a partnership between the Harris School and UChicago's Arts + Public Life initiative. Support for ArtHouse is provided by Bloomberg Philanthropies and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Learn more about ArtHouse at [arthousegary.com](http://arthousegary.com).

## **ABOUT BLOOMBERG PHILANTHROPIES**

Bloomberg Philanthropies works in over 120 countries around the world to ensure better, longer lives for the greatest number of people. The organization focuses on five key areas for creating lasting change: Arts, Education, Environment, Government Innovation and Public Health. Bloomberg Philanthropies encompasses all of Michael R. Bloomberg's charitable activities, including his foundation and his personal giving. In 2015, Bloomberg Philanthropies distributed over half a billion dollars. For more information, please visit [bloomberg.org](http://bloomberg.org) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Snapchat](#), and [Twitter @BloombergDotOrg](#).

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### **For more information, contact:**

Ronia Holmes, [roniamh@uchicago.edu](mailto:roniamh@uchicago.edu), 773.834.0481