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## **ArtHouse: A Social Kitchen Announces Ripple + Wilson to Design Gary's Downtown Cultural Hub**

*The design team was selected by jury of artists, community members and others to create two temporary public artworks*

*Design vision honors Gary's manufacturing history and is supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies*

ArtHouse: A Social Kitchen announced today that design team Ripple + Wilson will create two temporary, original, site-responsive public artworks for its 15,000 square foot facility in downtown Gary. The public art commissions will underscore and celebrate the transformation of the currently underutilized space into a cultural hub for visual and culinary arts.

Over forty talented applicants from around the world responded to ArtHouse's December 2015 call for qualifications. A review committee chose eighteen to develop full proposals for presentation in the semi-final round. Following a day of deliberation with the Mayor of Gary, a jury of artists, community members, and developers selected the proposal from team Ripple + Wilson.

Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson says, "It was exciting to be a member of the panel charged with selecting one design team from so many talented artists to create public art pieces for the ArtHouse project in Gary. Congratulations to Ripple + Wilson. We look forward to the unveiling of the design that will be a showpiece in the heart of our community for many years to come."

Virginia-based Jeana Ripple of Ripple Architecture Studio and Barbara Brown Wilson of the University of Virginia won the commissions for both *ILLUMINATION*, a substantial light-based sculpture meant to create presence and highlight activity at ArtHouse, and *SURFACE*, a significant façade installation that will add aesthetic value to the building. The team's proposal, called *Light-Lab*, utilizes a steel and cable framework strung with color-filtering, rhythmically patterned lanterns. The proposal honors Gary's rich history of manufacturing.

"We're thrilled to have the opportunity to contribute to the success of ArtHouse," said

team Ripple + Wilson in a joint statement celebrating their selection. "*Light-Lab* is inspired by Gary's unique heritage of making and designed to cultivate joy through social interaction."

Proposals were evaluated on their contextual understanding of Gary, their capacity to realize complex public art and their commitment to local participation in the fabrication and installation process. For ArtHouse artistic director Theaster Gates, it was immensely important that proposals demonstrated a deep grasp of the history and opportunities in the City of Gary.

"Artists are amazing at responding to big challenges within our cities," says Gates. "Creating art for public spaces allows us to consider both the aesthetic dimensions of a situation while also working to address a social situation."

Gates, whose work at the University of Chicago's Arts + Public Life initiative and through his nonprofit Rebuild Foundation, believes that arts and culture can act as a catalyst to neighborhood revitalization. He has demonstrated the power of artist involvement in redevelopment efforts through his own projects, including the Arts Block at the University of Chicago and Rebuild Foundation's Stony Island Arts Banks.

"This intense interrogation of both the aesthetic and the social is perhaps the beginning of a more complicated way of thinking about art in or through space. Revitalization is the by-product of artistic imagination."

"Ripple + Wilson was my choice to transform ArtHouse because their proposal addressed all of the criteria required for a highly-visible, light-based installation," says jury member Michael Barlow, artist and owner of Barlow Fine Arts Studio. "They clearly demonstrated their professionalism and creative knowledge base for this kind of architectural design, and visual integration of materials and media. Their proposal would truly be a 'visual calling card' for ArtHouse."

*Light-Lab* uses regional manufacturing processes and salvaged material to wrap the building in an illuminated surface, enliven the street with a public living room, and add interactive large-scale art pieces to encourage play, performance, and local art.

"ArtHouse is the people who are dedicated to this effort," observes Ripple + Wilson, "Gary residents and their Mayor Freeman-Wilson, Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Knight Foundation, Theaster Gates, PlaceLab, and Mama Pearl's. We're honored to join the team."

Joe Van Dyk, Executive Director of Gary's Department of Planning and Redevelopment, was a guest observer during the presentation and deliberation process, and is excited about what these public art commissions mean for Gary.

"The Public Art Commission is an opportunity to do something substantial," says Van Dyk. "We want to take advantage of the rare opportunity to claim something unique to Gary, something that looks forward, and something new. ArtHouse should be imaginative and different."

*Surface and Illumination* will be unveiled in October 2016. Alongside these two outdoor works, ArtHouse will also reveal the winner of a 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**

#### **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." Design and research for the Ripple + Wilson commission will be supported by Eric Barr, Ian Carr, and Elizabeth Van Der Els.

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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 training for food industry jobs, 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).

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.

#### **ABOUT BLOOMBERG PHILANTHROPIES**

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