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LUMINATO FESTIVAL AUDIO DESCRIBES THREE EXTRAORDINARY ART INSTALLATIONS FOR BLIND AND LOW VISION PATRONS

TORONTO, ON –The Visual Arts Program of this year's **Luminato Festival, June 8th –17th, 2012**, includes three extraordinary installations equipped with recorded audio descriptions created by **Theatre Local** and **Picasso PRO** for blind and low vision patrons.

Audio description, the art of talking pictorially, acts as a verbal lens making exhibits, theatre, film and other art events more accessible to patrons who are blind or partially sighted. Patrons use audio devices to hear trained describers talk about visual aspects that are vital to experiencing the works in their totality. Luminato's recorded descriptions will be available through luminato.com on the Accessibility page under Visitor Info and Luminato's mobile app on June 4. Directions to the exhibit sites and background on the works can be found on luminato.com. TELUS, Luminato's Innovation Partner, is Presenting Partner of the Audio Description, mobile application and offers engagement through technology across the Festival.

The Encampment by artists **Thom Sokoloski** and **Jenny-Anne McCowan, June 8th - 24th, at Fort York National Historic Site** and co-commissioned with the City of Toronto, is a large scale installation comprised of 200 A-frame tents pitched on the grounds of Fort York. Conceived as a temporal village, each tent will contain an installation by one of 100 creative collaborators to represent an intimate aspect of the War of 1812's civilian history. In this way the site becomes a metaphorical archeological dig, unearthing long-buried shards of human experience. The audio description will provide a description of the site's pathways and features, plus a small sampling of tent installations.

Revered street artist **Dan Bergeron** explores themes of location, transformation, public space and its reclamation by those whom it excludes and ignores. **///RE-PLY\\, June**

8th -17th, is the artist's latest response to these issues through a series of temporary site-specific sculptural installations situated along **Parliament Street** between **St. Jamestown (Wellesley)** and **Regent Park (Dundas)**. Both abstract and concrete, the pieces will reference the overabundance of condo development throughout the city with a sly and playful eye.

S/N the third installation, located at **Toronto Pearson Airport's Terminal One, June 8-30th** and created by **Belgian artists LAb[au]**, is constructed from a large assortment of discarded technology and salvaged split-flaps; components from information displays that pre-date LED monitors in public spaces like airports and train stations. Arranged in a circular grid that allows visitors to stand in the centre, the flaps randomly rotate until the system identifies words which create auto-poetic sequences, inviting viewers to interpret their meaning.

Luminato's new Festival website, luminato.com, has been redesigned with accessibility in mind, and underwent an Accessibility Review by the Inclusive Design Research Centre at OCAD University. The Festival's mobile app can be made accessible through settings on a user's mobile phone, and is now available for download. Toronto based arts pioneer, Theatre Local teams up once again with Picasso PRO, a collective dedicated to bridging disability and the performance /media arts to create and provide the audio description. In 2011 they first partnered with Luminato on the pilot description of Sargasso, a large-scale suspended sculpture by Philip Beesley at Allen Lambert Galleria in Brookfield Place. Audio description is one of Luminato's latest commitments to making the Festival accessible, inclusive and inviting to all audiences.

Theatre Local is a leading arts innovator in Canada and challenges the norm to make spaces better for people. With 20 years of experience, project leader Rebecca Singh looks for and creates viable initiatives to influence and shape cultural dialogue that impacts Toronto and all its citizens. Rebecca was the Luminato Festival fellow in 2010-11 and was the driving force behind in establishing the Audio Description Pilot Program in 2011, with the landmark audio description of Philip Beesley's Sargasso.

Picasso PRO was formed to facilitate genuine opportunity and integration for artists with disabilities and Deaf artists in the performing and media arts. It springs from the passionate conviction that artists with disabilities and Deaf artists belong on Canada's stages and

screens, among our audiences, professional staffs, teachers and cultural leaders. They partner with individual artists and companies to create innovative, accessible work in all facets of live performance and media creation. Audience access for patrons who are Deaf and live with disabilities is a key aspect of Picasso PRO's work.

Luminato is Toronto's fifth season when the festival stages the best of our city and invites the world to celebrate and transform it with us. Luminato is an annual multi-disciplinary celebration of theatre, dance, music, literature, food, visual arts, film, magic, and more. The sixth edition of Luminato takes place from June 8-17, 2012.

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