

HIP DEVELOPMENTS AND THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE UNVEIL “MEANDER” – THE LARGEST LIVING ARCHITECTURE SCULPTURE IN THE WORLD, BY PHILIP BEESLEY.

CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO IS NOW HOME TO A WORLD CLASS CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL WORK OF ART.

Toronto and Cambridge, October 19, 2020 – Could architecture come alive? Could future buildings think, and care? *Meander*, the largest permanent living architecture sculpture in the world, is now open to the public at Tapestry Hall in the heart of historic Cambridge, ON, Canada. The work was created by world-renowned artist, designer and University of Waterloo Architecture professor Philip Beesley with the Living Architecture Systems Group, a Waterloo-based collective of artists, architects, engineers, software developers and scientists.

Meander is a soaring, flowing installation of meshwork spheres, columns and canopies suspended from the ceiling of Tapestry Hall – a new event space housed in a historic limestone factory along the Grand River. Entering Tapestry Hall and gazing up at *Meander*'s illuminated spheres, billowing cloud canopies and flowing water-like formations will elicit feelings of joy, awe and wonder... like walking into the interior of a cathedral.

The sculpture is made up of a lightweight, flexible structure that is interwoven with radiant lattices of expanded metal and recycled transparent polymer. It is embedded with miniature computers and sensor arrays that can sense, react and learn from its environment and the behaviour of its audiences.

Downloadable images of *Meander* can be found here: www.meandercambridge.ca/news

Living architecture is inspired by “organicism,” the philosophy and art of learning from nature. Nature is full of complex interwoven parts that allow it to not just survive but constantly change and thrive. Like the ecosystem of the Grand River that inspired it, *Meander* is made of many tiny interconnected parts that pass physical impulses and data signals back and forth in a constant state of transformation.

Meander was commissioned by HIP Developments in partnership with the City of Cambridge to help inspire and transform the community. “The Grand River reminds us of how we built the region’s industry and prosperity, but it can also teach us how to prosper in the future,” said Scott Higgins, President of HIP Developments. “Sustainability is found in thinking and working in systems, where boundaries are soft and flowing. That is nature’s way! *Meander* is a work of art, but it is also a collaborative web of science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM). This sculpture, and our river, can be seen as a metaphor for nature’s networks and how to think, design and problem solve in today’s complex, turbulent and interconnected world.”

Meander will attract visitors with its stunning beauty but will also serve as a teaching tool through ongoing research about human interaction with responsive environments and a STEAM school curriculum for the next generation of Waterloo Region’s thinkers, creators and inventors. “It is emblematic of the creative dynamism and the technological and artistic leadership and potential of the community,” said Higgins.

“If COVID-19 has taught us anything, it is that we are all interconnected and interdependent,” said Philip Beesley. “While the urge may be strong in these challenging days to put up boundaries and retreat into our individual silos, to do so inevitably weakens society. It is only through embracing joyful and curious openness and exchange that we can sustainably address challenges moving forward.”

Meander will also play a central role in a new work that Philip Beesley will present at the 2021 Venice Architecture Biennale, the most important and prestigious architecture exhibition in the world. Often called the “Olympics of Architecture,” the Venice Biennale opens on May 22, 2021, and *Meander* and Waterloo Region will be there on the world stage.

About Philip Beesley and the Living Architecture Systems Group

Philip Beesley is a multidisciplinary artist and designer. His research is widely cited for its pioneering contributions to the rapidly emerging field of responsive interactive architecture. Beesley directs the Living Architecture Systems Group (LASG), an international consortium of researchers, creators and industry partners. LASG explores questions such as whether architecture can integrate living functions and future buildings could think and care. Beesley and the LASG’s immersive installations integrate expertise in architecture, environmental design, visual art, digital media, engineering, machine learning, cognitive psychology, synthetic biology and knowledge integration. Collaborations with LASG artists, scientists and engineers has led to a diverse array of projects, from haute couture collections to complex electronic systems that can sense, react and learn.

Beesley is a professor at the School of Architecture at the University of Waterloo and Professor of Digital Design and Architecture & Urbanism at the European Graduate School. His work has been presented around the world including Barcelona, Berlin, Boston, Copenhagen, Delft, Hong Kong, Madrid, Mexico City, Montreal, Moscow, New York, Paris, Rotterdam, Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore, Sydney, Toronto and Washington, DC. Beesley represented Canada at the 2010 Venice Biennale of Architecture and will present a major new work in the main exhibition of the 2021 Venice Architecture Biennale. He has authored and edited numerous books and proceedings, and has been featured in Canadian and international media, including Vogue, WIRED, Artificial Life (MIT), LEONARDO, CBC and a series of TED talks. <http://www.philipbeesleyarchitect.com> and <http://livingarchitecturesystems.com>

About HIP Developments

Passionately building more than just real estate, HIP Developments is committed to building a community that is vibrant, creative and confident. As an innovative leader in real estate development, HIP is an early supporter of helping shape Waterloo Region into the Creative Capital of Canada. www.hipdevelopments.com

For more information on *Meander*, its inspiration and the *Meander*STEAM curriculum, please go to:

www.meandercambridge.ca

***Meander* is free and open to the public at the following times:**

Thursday and Friday 4:00pm – 8:00pm and Saturday 3:00pm – 8:00pm

For interviews with Scott Higgins or Philip Beesley please contact:

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