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For Immediate Release

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Flatiron Partnership and Van Alen Institute Unveil Winner of the 5th Annual Flatiron Public Plaza Holiday Design Competition:

***Happy* by Studio Cadena**



NEW YORK, October 15, 2018— The Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership Business Improvement District (BID) and Van Alen Institute today unveiled the winner of the fifth annual Flatiron Public Plaza Holiday Design Competition—***Happy*** by Studio Cadena—a temporary installation in the heart of the Flatiron District. ***Happy*** will be the centerpiece of the Partnership’s seventh annual holiday program and a highly visible landmark in this thriving New York City neighborhood.

“We all wish each other happiness during the holidays. This installation physically manifests this well wishing to all who visit Flatiron,” said **Benjamin Cadena, Founder and Principal of Studio Cadena**. “In our otherwise bleak social and political context, it aspires to carve a small and more positive space in the city—it offers a warm embrace during the cold winter months.”

The installation features 24 softly shaped transparent vinyl screens that drape down from an open frame to inscribe an intimate collective space within. Its rich colored surface projects a highly visible and memorable figure from a distance, and up close, filters views inside and out by infusing the surrounding context in a rich, saturated glow. Gently swaying in the breeze, it shimmers and reflects while it casts long colored shadows in the low light of late fall and early winter. Happy is a simple device to make you stop, wonder, and most importantly, smile.

The installation will remain on view to the public on the Flatiron North Public Plaza at Broadway, Fifth Avenue, and 23rd Street, through the holidays as part of the Partnership's "23 Days of Flatiron Cheer" programming. The installation is permitted through NYC DOT Art and is open to the public daily, weather permitting, through January 1, 2019.

The closed-call competition began in June 2018, when the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership and Van Alen Institute—a 124-year-old design not-for-profit that produces innovative competitions, programs, and communications to make cities better places—invited eight design and architecture firms to submit proposals. Invited firms were: Agency—Agency; Brandt : Haferd; MODU; N H M D; Office III; P.R.O.; Studio Cadena; and Wolfgang & Hite.

A jury with expertise across the worlds of design and public art, including representatives from the Flatiron Partnership and Van Alen Institute's board of trustees, reviewed the proposals.

"Our holiday installations have become a destination for those who live in, work in, or visit Flatiron during the holiday season, and take part in our annual '23 Days of Flatiron Cheer' celebration," said **Jennifer Brown, Executive Director of the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership**. "**Happy** is animated, fun and whimsical, imbuing the spirit of the season and what makes our neighborhood so special this time of year. We are proud to partner with Van Alen Institute and Studio Cadena and invite all New Yorkers – and holiday guests – to visit Flatiron this season!"

"In a relatively small way, **Happy** demonstrates the huge impact that design can have on daily life," said **David van der Leer, Executive Director of Van Alen Institute**. "By expressing a positive emotion in a public space, Studio Cadena's delightful installation invites people to take a moment to consider the joy of being in the big, busy city during the holiday season. Congratulations to the design team and thank you to our partners in realizing this creative vision for everyone's enjoyment."

"We look forward to watching people get surprised and delighted when they come upon this imaginative installation in the Flatiron Plaza," said **NYC DOT Assistant Commissioner of Design + Art + Wayfinding Wendy Feuer**. "The firms selected for the Flatiron BIDs annual holiday installation find ever inventive ways to interpret the season, adding to the City's magic at this time of year."

Studio Cadena is based in Brooklyn. The **Happy** project team includes Silman (structural engineer) and YOUNGBUK Art Services LLC (fabricator/installer).

Competition Jury Members

Nicholas Athanail, The Corcoran Group and Flatiron Partnership board member; **Michael Bierut**, Partner, Pentagram; ; **Jennifer Brown**, Executive Director, Flatiron Partnership; **Emily Colasacco**, Summer Streets Event Director, New York City Department of Transportation; **Ifeoma Ebo, Architecture, Urban Design & Policy**, BlackSpaceNYC; **Ahmed ElHusseiny**, Partner, AE Superlab; **David van der Leer**, Executive Director, Van Alen Institute; **Aleksey Lukyanov-Cherny**, Partner, SITU Studio; **Nina Marren**, Art

Project Manager, New York City Department of Transportation; **Deirdre McDermott**, Partner, Future Expansion; and **V. Mitch McEwen**, Van Alen Institute Board Member, Assistant Professor, Princeton University School of Architecture, and Partner, A(n) Office.

Flatiron Public Plaza Holiday Design Competition - Invited Proposals

Winner

Happy | Studio Cadena

Happy defines both a figure and a place - an analog filter to see the city through warm colored eyes. Animated by movement, overlaps and overlays, it changes in the light inviting passerby to bask in its yellow glow while creating an instantly recognizable image of the flatiron plaza during the holidays. Within, its saturated color screen provides a soft color buffer encircling a more intimate space to host more programs and events. At night the panels reflect, shimmer and glow - the installation becomes a beacon in the cold winter month. During the panel filter and catch the sun to creating a striking landmark on the Flatiron Plaza

Runner up

Polaris | Wolfgang & Hite

POLARIS, like the eponymous North Star, celebrates the center of the city in thousands of reflections, images, transient interactions, and memories. Hundreds of reflective orbs hang in the form of larger mirrors arranged toward views of the Flatiron District. The multiplicity within each spherical mirror represents the myriad perspectives and viewpoints of New York's inhabitants and visitors, which come together as a glistening whole. Like holiday wishes, the orbs light up at night in programmed sequences. Lights dim and glow, moving through the structure like stars in a winter night sky. *POLARIS*, like New York City, is a beacon of discovery, entertainment, inspiration, and adventure.

Finalists

Flatiron Crossings | Agency—Agency

Mingle | Brandt : Hafred

Diamond Dust | MODU

Pavilion Pavilions | N H D M

Standing Figures | Office III

The Grove | Peterson Rich Office

For more information and images of the submitted proposals, [click here](#).

Sponsored by the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership, *Happy* and the accompanying programming "23 Days of Flatiron Cheer" are made possible with generous support from Presenting Sponsor Meringoff Properties and Supporting Sponsors Sony Square NYC and 212 Fifth Avenue.

Throughout the holidays, the Partnership is encouraging visitors to use **#HappyInFlatiron** on Twitter and Instagram to share images of the installation to be entered into a contest to win prizes from local businesses.

Competition Jury Members

Nick Athanail, The Corcoran Group and Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership Board Member; **Michael Bierut**, Partner, Pentagram; **Jennifer Brown**, Executive Director, Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership; **Emily Colasacco**, Summer Streets Event Director, New York City Department of Transportation; **Ifeoma Ebo**, Architecture, Urban Policy & Design, BlackSpace NYC; **Ahmed ElHusseiny**, Founder, AE Superlab; **David van der Leer**, Executive Director, Van Alen Institute; **Aleksey Lukyanov-Cherny**, Partner, SITU Studio; **Nina Marren**, Art Project Manager, New York City Department of Transportation; **Deirdre McDermott**, Partner, Future Expansion; **V. Mitch McEwen**, Van Alen Institute Board Member, Assistant Professor, Princeton University School of Architecture, and Partner, A(n) Office

About the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership

The Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership Business Improvement District, formed in 2006, is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to enhance the area's reputation as one of New York's most vital and exciting neighborhoods. This is accomplished by maintaining a clean and safe environment for the district's businesses, residents and visitors; by spearheading area improvement projects; and by marketing the diverse business and retail options in this vibrant and historic neighborhood.

www.FlatironDistrict.NYC

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About Van Alen Institute

At Van Alen Institute, we believe design can transform cities, landscapes, and regions to improve people's lives. We collaborate with communities, scholars, policymakers, and professionals on local and global initiatives that rigorously investigate the most pressing social, cultural, and ecological challenges of tomorrow. Building on more than a century of experience, we develop cross-disciplinary research, provocative public programs, and inventive design competitions.

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About the NYC DOT Art Program

Launched in 2008, the New York City Department of Transportation's Art Program invigorates the City's streetscapes with engaging temporary art installations. The program partners with community-based organizations and artists to present murals, sculptures, projections and performances on plazas, fences, barriers, bridges, step streets and sidewalks for up to 11 months. For more information, visit

www.nyc.gov/dotart

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About Studio Cadena

Studio Cadena is an award-winning design and architecture studio interested in engaging contemporary life, the city and its people – in designing new and captivating spaces, places and experiences for those who use them. The studio is young, yet combines substantial experience in the US and abroad, ranging from high-level strategic planning for cities, to cultural, commercial, residential and civic projects – museums, libraries, private homes, interiors, exhibitions and furniture. Founded by Benjamin Cadena

around 2013 and based in Brooklyn, the studio was selected in 2016 by the American Institute of Architects for its New Practices award.

www.studiocadena.com