

SAINT PAUL, MN - Today, Nov. 6, a 17-foot long, bright yellow megaphone shaped sculpture entitled Democracy Speaks will be installed in Saint Paul's Western Sculpture Park. Minnesota artists John Hock and Andrew MacGuffie were commissioned by Public Art Saint Paul to create the sculpture of fabricated and painted steel. A large tripod points the 16-foot high sculpture directly toward the Minnesota State Capitol dome, seen across Marion Street to the east of the park. Crews will arrive in the park Friday morning at 10:30 a.m. and expect to complete the installation by 1:30 p.m. From 3:30 to 4:30, celebratory yellow lemonade will be served as the community welcomes the sculpture.

John Hock is one of the nation's most admired sculptors and has dedicated his life to promotion and support of sculpture as the founder and Artistic Director of Franconia Sculpture Park. His work has been exhibited and collected nationwide, including at the International Sculpture Center in Hamilton, New Jersey and Chicago's renowned Pier Walk. Hock was instrumental in establishing Western Park's sculpture exhibition in 1998 and has been engaged by Public Art Saint Paul as its exhibition curator for the past 11 years. Andrew MacGuffie's work has been exhibited and commissioned from Minneapolis and Franconia to Vilnius, Lithuania and Chalon-sur-Saone, France. He is the winner of numerous artist fellowships and awards. Like Hock, MacGuffie lends his talent and expertise to support the work of artists and arts organizations throughout the region and is considered a foremost rigger and sculpture installer.

Public Art Saint Paul's continuing commitment to Western Sculpture Park. Since the re-designed park opened in 1998, the non-profit Public Art Saint Paul has produced a display of sculpture by leading mid-career American Artists. John Hock, artistic director of Franconia Sculpture Park, serves as the exhibition curator. 12 artworks are exhibited, on loan from artists coast to coast. The park is anchored by a 70-foot kinetic sculpture by the eminent American artist Mark di Suvero: Grace à Toi (Homage à Michel Guy). Says Public Art Saint Paul President Christine Podas-Larson, "the sculpture exhibition was our response to the initiative of neighborhood residents and artists. They approached us to give this park in the heart of a densely populated neighborhood a purpose. They wanted it to be a safe place for community gathering and for creative activity. We have kept it going for 11 years. We have offered art programs for kids and families since the beginning – including workshops that served 200 children over the past summer."

The park is a story of the vision and determination of the local Fuller Aurora Neighborhood Association; it is credited over the years with increased civic attention to larger neighborhood needs and public safety, improved housing conditions, and public space improvements and new confidence among residents and property owners. In a neighborhood that is home to an increasingly diverse population, art is becoming a common language.

“Saint Paul Parks and Recreation has been tremendously supportive of these efforts. The park was specifically designed by city landscape architects to accommodate and feature the sculpture display and Parks Operations has bent over backward to provide advice and special assistance,” says Podas-Larson. “However,” she notes, “all cash costs of the exhibition and special programs such as PASPider have been paid by Public Art Saint Paul with support from generous private donors.”

Western Sculpture Park is located on the west side of Marion Street, between I-94 and University Avenue

Democracy Speaks is made possible with generous support of the Elmer and Eleanor Andersen Foundation, the Constance Otis Fund of the Saint Paul Foundation, the R. C. Lilly Foundation, the Sage Cleveland Foundation, and contributors to Public Art Saint Paul’s 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund.

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