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SEPTEMBER 15, 2003, 7:45 P.M., ARTIST CAI GUO-QIANG EMBLAZONS
CENTRAL PARK SKY WITH

LIGHT CYCLE: EXPLOSION PROJECT FOR CENTRAL PARK

AERIAL DRAWINGS OF LIGHT AND FIRE CELEBRATE PARK'S SPLENDOR
AND VITALITY ON 150TH ANNIVERSARY



Artist's rendering of *Light Cycle* over Central Park Reservoir

August 6, 2003: Creative Time is delighted to announce Chinese artist Cai Guo-Qiang's *Light Cycle*, an explosion event that will illuminate Central Park on Monday, September 15, 2003, at 7:45 p.m. sharp, in celebration of Central Park's 150th anniversary. Signifying renewal and wholeness, the event has been specially commissioned as the denouement of a summer-long celebration of the vitality brought to our City by Central Park. *Light Cycle*



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will highlight the Park as the heart of Manhattan, rendering it the brightest point of the City for one festive night.

Light Cycle is curated by Creative Time, presented in conjunction with The City of New York and the Central Park Conservancy, and sponsored by Häagen-Dazs as part of their *Art of Pure Pleasure* initiative.

Coinciding with the event over Central Park, an installation of Cai's gunpowder drawings focusing on the artist's conceptual process, *Light Cycle: Explosion Project Over Central Park*, will be on view at the Asia Society and Museum, September 9 – December 14, 2003. There will also be a public conversation with the artist hosted by the Asia Society on September 17 at 6 p.m.

Light Cycle

Cai Guo-Qiang, world renowned for his explosion projects, in which he uses gunpowder's constructive power and energy as an artistic and expressive medium, will illuminate the night sky over the Park with *Light Cycle* on September 15, 2003. Designed to provide a variety of experiences, *Light Cycle* will unfold in three stages from five firing locations in the Park, taking as its central motif a 1,000 foot high colossal halo of fire and light. Cai Guo-Qiang has collaborated with Fireworks by Grucci, America's oldest fireworks company, to develop state-of-the-art technology, that employs programmable microchips in each shell, allowing the artist to draw in the sky. The total duration of *Light Cycle* will be approximately 4 to 5 minutes. Spectators on the ground will be directed towards the southern end of Central Park's Great Lawn, the Sheep Meadow, and the perimeter of the North Meadow for viewing, while buildings overlooking the Park will afford the most complete viewing of all firing locations.

Light Cycle will begin with *Signal Towers*, a series of five pillars of fire referencing ancient methods of communication. These resonant symbols, reminiscent of geysers of fire, will extend 600 feet high and move from south to north from the five firing locations: Heckscher Ballfields (near West 64th Street), Cherry Hill (center of Park at 72nd Street near the Bethesda Fountain), two sites over the Reservoir (on the island between the south and north gatehouses at 87th and 94th Streets), and the North Meadow (center of Meadow at 98th Street, near the North Meadow Recreation Center).

The second stage, *Light Cycle*, is the focus of the program, and will consist of a series of luminous halos. The artist will draw three rings horizontally over the tree line before creating a fourth that will extend to 1,000 feet in height and hang vertically over the Reservoir. For the final ring, more than 10,000 titanium salutes will explode thunderously in three successive sequences forming a "turning wheel of light." The artist describes these pointillistic circles as "amulets placed over the heart of Manhattan."



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The third and final stage is titled *White Night*, in which shells producing an effect similar to signal flares will be shot into the air from all five locations to form canopies of bright white light. In contrast to the darkness that characterizes Central Park at night, these slow, descending lights will provide a revelatory perspective of the illuminated Park. The pure and measured effects of *White Night* will be the peaceful conclusion to the evening.

A hotline will be established to provide updates and information for the public in the event of delay or postponement. Creative Time will post that number on our website at www.creativetime.org.

Cai Guo-Qiang

Cai Guo-Qiang was born in Quanzhou City, Fujian Province, China, a town known for firecracker manufacturing. The son of an academic, Cai was trained in Shanghai in stage design after China's Cultural Revolution and his work has, since the outset, been scholarly and often politically charged. A master of many mediums, Cai began working with gunpowder in an effort to foster spontaneity in his painting, which he felt was overly "branded" by the controlled traditional technique of his training and the then contemporary social climate. While living in Japan (1986 -1996), Cai explored the properties of gunpowder in his drawings, an inquiry which eventually led to his experimentation with explosives on a massive scale and the development of his signature land art, exemplified in his series *Projects for Extraterrestrials*.

Cai quickly achieved international prominence during his tenure in Japan and began to show widely around the world. He became the first contemporary Chinese artist to have a solo show mounted by a Chinese government museum (Shanghai Museum of Art, 2002). Now a New York resident, Cai continues to draw on symbols of his native Chinese culture such as feng shui, eastern medicine, and dragons, among others, while referencing contemporary and popular culture with materials such as computers, vending machines, and fireworks. Such vernacular, he believes, can be universally understood, and employed to engage the viewer on a variety of levels, both conscious and unconscious. The desired outcome of Cai's famous explosion projects is both wildly poetic and ambitious at its core: to establish an exchange between viewers and the larger universe around them. On September 15, Cai Guo-Qiang will use the sky over Central Park as a canvas for *Light Cycle*, and etch the magnificent event in our memory in honor of the Park in its 150th year.

Born on December 8, 1957, Cai Guo-Qiang is regarded as one of the most significant Chinese artists to have emerged internationally in the last ten years. His work has ranked him as a finalist for the 1996 Hugo Boss Prize and merited such prestigious awards as The 48th Venice Biennial International Golden Lion Prize. Among many of the artist's solo exhibitions and projects are the notable *An Arbitrary History*, Musee d'art Contemporain Lyon, Lyon, France; *Ye Gong Hao Long: Explosion Project for Tate Modern*, Tate Modern, London; *Transient Rainbow*, 2002, Museum of Modern Art, New York; *Cultural Melting Bath: Projects for the*



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20th Century, 1997, Queens Museum of Art, New York; *Flying Dragon in the Heavens*, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, and *Project to Extend the Great Wall of China by 10,000 Meters*, 1993, Jiayuguan City, China. Cai participated in the pivotal group exhibition *Inside Out: New Chinese Art*, 1998 at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, and *2000 Biennial Exhibition* at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Cai is currently featured in the group exhibitions *Pulse, Art, Healing, and Transformation* at The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston as well as the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center's *Somewhere Better Than Here*, on view through November 9, 2003.

Creative Time

Creative Time, the New York-based nonprofit organization, has commissioned, produced, and presented multidisciplinary public arts projects for 30 years. From the landmark Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage, Grand Central Terminal, and Times Square, to billboards, the skies over Manhattan, and *Tribute in Light*—the lauded temporary light memorial to September 11, 2001—Creative Time supports artists in surprising New Yorkers and visitors alike with fresh artistic visions in unlikely urban locales. www.creativetime.org.

Asia Society

Asia Society is America's leading institution dedicated to fostering understanding of Asia and communication between Americans and the peoples of Asia and the Pacific. A nonprofit, nonpartisan educational institution, the Asia Society presents a wide range of programs including major art exhibitions, performances, media programs, international conferences and lectures, and initiatives to improve elementary and secondary education about Asia. www.asiasociety.org.

The Häagen-Dazs Art of Pure Pleasure Initiative

Established in 2001, the *Art of Pure Pleasure* initiative seeks to increase public awareness for the innovative work of emerging and established artists in the areas of film, fashion, and the visual and performing arts. In addition to sponsoring Cai Guo-Qiang's *Light Cycle* on the occasion of Central Park's 150th anniversary the Initiative sponsored Yoshitomo Nara's *Your Dog – A Sculptural Pavilion* at Tompkins Square Park in New York's East Village last summer. In November 2002, Häagen-Dazs reinvigorated Grand Central Terminal's fourth annual *Holiday Light Shows* with original video work by six emerging artists and, most recently, in May 2003, Häagen-Dazs commissioned artist Erwin Redl to create *Matrix X* for Art Chicago 2003. www.häagen-dazs.com

Central Park Conservancy

The Central Park Conservancy is a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1980 that manages Central Park under a contract with The City of New York/Department of



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Parks & Recreation. Since its founding, the Conservancy has prescribed a management and restoration plan for the Park; funded major capital improvements; created programs for volunteers and visitors; and set new standards of excellence in Park care. While enabling millions to enjoy the many wonders of Central Park, the Conservancy is firmly committed to maintaining and preserving New York City's treasured greensward and to educating the public to become better stewards of this irreplaceable urban treasure.
www.centralparknyc.org.

Fireworks by Grucci

Founded in Italy in 1850, Fireworks by Grucci has been based in Bellport, Long Island since 1929. Masters in their art, the family business invented technology ranging from the stringless shell, a landmark innovation in pyrotechnics, as well as an atomic simulator for U.S. Defense Department troop training. Known as "America's First Family of Fireworks" since winning the Gold Medal for the United States at the annual Monte Carlo International Fireworks Competition, the Gruccis have entertained at several Olympics, in Lake Placid, Los Angeles and, most recently, Salt Lake City; consecutive world fairs in Knoxville, New Orleans, and Taejon, Korea; the Centennials of the Brooklyn Bridge and the Statue of Liberty, and six consecutive presidential inaugurations. www.grucci.com.