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For Immediate Release

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**Flatiron Partnership and Van Alen Institute Install Winner of
Flatiron Public Plaza Holiday Design Competition:
“Happy” by Studio Cadena**



Photo: Cameron Blaylock

NEW YORK, November 20, 2018 – Last night, the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership Business Improvement District (BID) and Van Alen Institute unveiled the installation of **Happy**, winner of the fifth annual *Flatiron Plaza Holiday Design Competition* in partnership with New York City DOT Art. The unveiling kicked off the BID’s seventh annual 23 Days of Flatiron Cheer, with the installation as a highly visible centerpiece of the Partnership’s holiday programming from December 1st-23rd.

Happy was selected by a jury with expertise across the worlds of design and public art, including representatives from the Flatiron Partnership, New York City DOT Art, and Van Alen Institute’s board of trustees. The installation, situated on the Flatiron North Public Plaza at the intersection of 23rd Street, Broadway and Fifth Avenue, will be up through January 1st.

Designed by the Brooklyn and Bogota-based architecture and design firm Studio Cadena, **Happy** is both a figure and a place. A series of softly shaped and richly colored screens drape down from an open frame to inscribe a more intimate collective space and provide an analog filter to see the city in a different light.

“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.”

Softly swaying in the breeze, its overlaps and overlays continuously interplay with light, inviting passersby to bask in its rich saturated glow. It emotes and evokes what we all wish to be. The **Happy** installation is a simple device to make you stop, wonder, and most importantly, smile.

The installation is permitted through New York City DOT Art and is open to the public daily, weather permitting. Visitors to the installation and participants in the “23 Days” programming are encouraged to share their photos on Twitter and Instagram using the hashtag **#HappyinFlatiron**. Throughout the month of December, Flatiron Partnership will enter photos using the hashtag to win prizes from local businesses.

The closed-call design competition began in June 2018, when the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership and Van Alen Institute invited eight design and architecture firms to submit proposals. Invited firms were: Agency—Agency; BRANDT: HAFERD; MODU; N H D M; Office III; P.R.O.; Studio Cadena; and Wolfgang & Hite.

“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 enjoy 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).

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.

Learn more at www.FlatironDistrict.nyc
Facebook: [FlatironDistrict.nyc/facebook](https://www.facebook.com/FlatironDistrict.nyc/)
Twitter & Instagram: @FlatironNY
Email: info@flatironbid.org

About New York City DOT Art

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. Projects are presented within four program tracks: Arterventions, Barrier Beautification, Community Commissions, and Art Display Case Exhibits.

Learn more at www.nyc.gov/dotart
Instagram: @nyc_dotart

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.

Learn more at www.studiocadena.com
Instagram: @benjamincadena

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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