



Media Contacts:
Mary Haus, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
mhaus@mfah.org
713.639.7554

Trudi Smith, Buffalo Bayou Partnership
tsmith@buffalobayou.org
713.752.0314 x103

Rain: Magdalena Fernández at the Houston Cistern

Presenting the artist's *2iPM009* from the series *Mobile Paintings, 2009*

Video installation launches art program for Houston's historic city reservoir

HOUSTON – November 1, 2016 – Buffalo Bayou Partnership (BBP) and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH) will co-present the inaugural art installation in the Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern, a 1926 underground city reservoir that BBP restored, repurposed and opened to the public last spring. ***Rain: Magdalena Fernández at the Houston Cistern*** (#CisternRain) will feature *2iPM009* from the Venezuelan artist's video series *Mobile Paintings* and open to the public on Saturday, December 10, 2016.

The Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern, a structure reminiscent of the ancient Roman cisterns in Istanbul, is a cavernous, 87,500-square-foot-space featuring more than 200 slender, 25-foot high concrete columns. BBP re-discovered the Cistern in 2010 when it was developing the \$58-million Buffalo Bayou Park project, a 160-acre site west of downtown Houston. Recognizing the historical and architectural significance of the highly unusual space, BBP took a bold step to repurpose the Cistern into a magnificent public space that would house an ambitious program of changing art installations. Houston-based architecture and engineering firm Page was charged with designing a complementary ground-level entry structure which provides a transition for visitors from the park outside to the subterranean Cistern. Improvements to the existing pedestrian walkway and a guardrail were added, but the overall structure remains in its original form. In May 2016, Buffalo Bayou Partnership opened the Cistern to the public as a distinctive industrial site and over 16,000 visitors have since experienced the space.

"Buffalo Bayou Partnership has long been committed to permanent and temporary public art, and we are honored and privileged to collaborate with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston to present the work of Magdalena Fernández in this exceptional space. The entire MFAH team, the artist and Sicardi Gallery have all been incredibly generous with their time and resources to help us launch our Cistern art program," says BBP President Anne Olson.

"This iconic space both reminds us of Houston's architectural history and signals the city's future in revitalizing its urban fabric," comments Gary Tinterow, director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. "We are very pleased to organize the inaugural art project for the Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern, and in particular with Magdalena Fernández's beautiful and evocative installation, which was acquired for the Museum's permanent collection in 2012."

2iPM009 is an abstract video-projection piece, 1 minute and 56 seconds in length, that evokes a rain-soaked night. For nearly 20 years, Magdalena Fernández has been using digital media to deconstruct the geometric abstraction of 20th-century masters such as Piet Mondrian and Joaquin Torres-Garcia. In *2iPM009*, Fernández starts with a basic geometric unit that refers to those that Mondrian used a century ago in his *Composition in Line* (1917), from the 1914-15 Pier and Ocean series. She then multiplies that unit through its exponential projection onto the walls of the exhibition space, transforming the initial unit into a rainy night sky through the use of light, sound and movement. The soundtrack is an acoustic montage that Fernández has meticulously edited, of sounds made by members of the a cappella Slovenian choir Pertuum Jazzile, who snap their fingers, slap the palms of their hands against their legs, and stamp their heels on wood to evoke both the drumming and gentle patter of rain. With ingenuity and humor, the artist constructs a language that, though concrete and deeply rooted in Constructivism and its legacy, challenges and transcends those parameters.

For the Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern, Fernández adapted *2iPM009* to project the video onto the columns so that its imagery is reflected in the shallow pool of water on the Cistern floor. The Cistern's raw interior, modulated by a series of majestic columns, and its 17-second acoustic reverberation time, will make for an immersive art environment. Mari Carmen Ramirez, Wortham Curator of Latin American Art at the MFAH, is working with the artist to realize the installation.

Rain: Magdalena Fernández at the Houston Cistern

Video Installation *2iPM009* from the series *Mobile Paintings*, 2009

On view from December 10, 2016 to June 4, 2017 at the Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern located at 105 Sabine Street, Houston, Texas 77007. Open Wednesdays through Fridays from 3:30 to 7 PM; Saturdays and Sundays from 10 AM to 7 PM.

Admission is \$10 per person; \$8 for Seniors (65+ with ID), Youth (9-17) and Students (18+ with ID). Admission is free on Thursdays. Please note that children under the age of 9 are not permitted in the Cistern. Timed tickets for ***Rain: Magdalena Fernández at the Houston Cistern*** can be purchased at **buffalobayou.org**.

This exhibition is organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and co-presented by Buffalo Bayou Partnership.

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Digital rendering of *2iPM009* for *Rain: Magdalena Fernández at the Houston Cistern* by Jean C. Giallorenzo; Courtesy of M. Fernández.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/s8vph912us75sro/Rain.jpg?dl=0>.

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About Buffalo Bayou Partnership

Established in 1986, Buffalo Bayou Partnership (BBP) is the non-profit organization transforming and revitalizing Buffalo Bayou, Houston's most significant natural resource. BBP's geographic focus is the 10-square mile stretch of Buffalo Bayou from Shepherd Drive to the Port of Houston Turning Basin. BBP has raised and leveraged more than \$150 million for the redevelopment and stewardship of the waterfront – spearheading award-winning projects such as Sabine Promenade and Sesquicentennial Park, protecting land for future parks, constructing hike and bike trails, and operating comprehensive clean-up and maintenance programs. BBP recently completed the \$58 million Buffalo Bayou Park project that includes major destinations, natural landscaping, footpaths, trail lighting, water features and pedestrian bridges. Buffalo Bayou Partnership also seeks ways to activate Buffalo Bayou through pedestrian, boating and biking amenities; volunteer activities; permanent and temporary art installations; and wide-ranging tours and events that attract thousands.

About the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Founded in 1900, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, is among the 10 largest art museums in the United States. Located in the heart of Houston's Museum District, the MFAH comprises two gallery buildings, a sculpture garden, theater, two art schools, and two libraries, with two house museums, for American and European decorative arts, nearby. The encyclopedic collection of the MFAH numbers more than 65,000 works and spans the art of antiquity to the present.

About Magdalena Fernández

Venezuelan Magdalena Fernández (b. 1964, Caracas) has been active since the early 1990s, aligning her artistic approach with abstract-constructivist tenets of stylistic purity and economy of design. By the mid-1990s Fernández developed a series of elongated stainless-steel sculptures set on the ground; viewers interact with the works by penetrating the exhibition space. The artist has continued to explore the interaction between viewer and exhibition space through the use of digital media and animation to incorporate light, sound and movement. Her works have been exhibited internationally and are part of major museum collections, including those of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and the Galeria de Arte Nacional, Caracas.