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Lights On Tampa Artists Ask Residents to Submit Photos and Videos

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Date: December 7, 2010



Tampa Bay residents will see their own work up in lights on Feb. 19, 2011, when The City of Tampa kicks off its third Lights On Tampa biennial at Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. A project called "Shedding Light," by Juliet Davis and Stephanie Tripp, will collect photos and videos from the public, asking people to "capture unusual moments of light in their communities." A compilation of the images and videos submitted will be unveiled on the Portal, a digital gateway through the arts, which is a permanent three-screened installation placed along the Tampa Riverwalk. Some of the images selected will appear on a screen of the Portal, while others will appear in an online exhibit at SheddingLightProject.com.

"When we think of Tampa Bay and light," explains artist Davis, "we might initially reflect on postcard pictures of the beach or city lights, but that's not what our everyday lives are like." Davis and Tripp, both professors in the Communication Department at The University of Tampa, say they hope to "shed" (release) traditional notions of "public spectacle" and bring a focus to the spaces of people in diverse communities.

The artists will conduct community workshops throughout 2011, helping residents develop artistic ideas for their imagery and experiment with camera techniques. The public is invited to submit work at any time during the year, but submissions prior to Jan. 7, 2011, will have priority consideration for the park exhibit. Teachers and local group leaders who would like to participate in the project can find a lesson plan posted to the project web site and use the lesson in classes and group meetings, or they can contact the artists directly to plan a visit.

"We're excited to see this project draw in people from our local communities," says Robin Nigh, Art Program Manager for The City of Tampa. "Lights On Tampa belongs to everyone, and in this work, the public can be artists, too."

Tripp suggests a starting point for people who are interested in submitting work: "Take a moment to reflect on your day," she notes. "Maybe you've seen morning light stream through the trees onto the sidewalk mesmerized by a blur of neon on a storefront."

Capturing light is first a matter of light and how it illuminates our everyday world in interesting ways, Davis adds. "It's watching how light reflects on various surfaces, how the angles of the sun change throughout the day."

Davis and Tripp express particular interest in capturing the diversity of residents' lives. "The light of a city is never monolithic," Tripp observes. "On any given day, each neighborhood reflects and emits light in its own way. We want to sample that light to show how the city is illuminated in all its brilliant variations." The "Shedding Light" project will edit together select photos and videos and open as part of Lights On Tampa. Residents can submit links to their photos and videos for consideration by emailing them to juliet.davis@ut.edu and stripp@ut.edu with subject line "Shedding Light Submission." Links can be to images on a Facebook, YouTube, or Flickr account, or other site. For more information, see www.sheddinglightproject.org or www.lightsontampa.org.

Lights On Tampa's third biennial program will kick off on Saturday, February 19, 2011 in Curtis Hixon

Waterfront Park. The program's mission is to offer free access to artistic excellence and is a public/private partnership between the City of Tampa, Art Programs Division and the Friends of Tampa Public Art, a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization.