

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 18, 2014

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If the World is a Fair Place Then...
Laumeier Sculpture Park's 2015 Exhibition Prompts Response

(ST. LOUIS, MO)—Laumeier Sculpture Park announced today that it has launched a project with the [Raqs Media Collective](#), a group of New Delhi-based artists and theorists exploring the complexities of urban life, entitled, *If the World is a Fair Place Then...* The project and resulting exhibition will present a carnival-esque take on the notion of fairness and justice, invoking the history of the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis.

Between now and early 2015, individuals who interact with Laumeier—through personal visits to the Park, online via Laumeier's website and social media outlets, or through other Laumeier-initiated opportunities—are being asked to respond to the prompt, "If the world is a fair place then..." The submissions will shape the creation of a fairground and carnival of people, ideas and acts to be held at Laumeier as part of its fall 2015 exhibition.

"What can a 'fair' that talks about fairness in the world be?" asks Jeebesh Bagchi, co-founder of the Raqs Media Collective. "St. Louis' history with the World's Fair positions it as an ideal place to pose the question. The answers and related conversations will then inform the direction of our installation."

In addition to using the World's Fair as inspiration, Bagchi and his partners, Monica Narula and Shuddhabrata Sengupta, will consider the network of eccentric and occasionally anonymous abolitionists who sustained the Underground Railroad in St. Louis, providing relief and hospitality to fugitive slaves. Bagchi wonders if their motivation was their idea of what was and was not "fair."

"We are thrilled to bring the Raqs' work to Laumeier," said Laumeier's Executive Director, Marilu Knode. "Looking at what World's Fairs meant in the past, and what fairness actually means in the 21st century—as so many American cities try to navigate their hollowing out—is inherent to our mission of examining and critiquing our place in history."

The Raqs Media Collective was founded in 1992 by Bagchi, Narula and Sengupta. The trio enjoys taking on various roles, including those of artists, curators and sometimes even philosophical agent provocateurs. Using "kinetic contemplation," the Raqs creates a trajectory that is restless in terms of the forms and methods it deploys, even as it achieves a consistency of speculative procedures. "Raqs" is a word in Persian, Arabic and Urdu that refers to the state that "whirling dervishes" enter into when they whirl. The Raqs' project for Laumeier will feature a characteristically eclectic collection of objects, sculpture, live performances and more to transform Laumeier's 105 acres into a 21st century collaborative space.

Individuals interested in participating may submit their response to the prompt, "If the world is a fair place then..." by email at pklscur@laumeier.org, via [Facebook](#) @LaumeierSTL, via [Twitter](#) @LaumeierArtSTL (#fairworld) or in person using the Raqs Mailbox at Visitor Services at [Laumeier Sculpture Park](#). Responses will also be collected at Laumeier's fair-themed Special Exhibition booth at [EXPO CHICAGO](#), the International Exposition of Contemporary & Modern Art, September 18–21, 2014, at Navy Pier.

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Laumeier Sculpture Park is a living laboratory where artists and audiences explore the relationship between contemporary art and the natural environment. Founded in 1976, Laumeier is one of the first and largest dedicated sculpture parks in the country, making it an institution of international significance as well as a unique complement to the cultural landscape of the St. Louis region. Laumeier is a nonprofit, accredited art museum that operates in partnership with St. Louis County Parks. Projects and programs are supported by the Mark Twain Laumeier Endowment Fund, the Regional Arts Commission, the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Missouri Arts Council and the Arts and Education Council of St. Louis. Laumeier presents 60 works of large-scale outdoor sculpture in a 105-acre park available free to the public year-round, and serves 300,000 patrons annually through temporary exhibitions, education programs, public events and sculpture conservation.