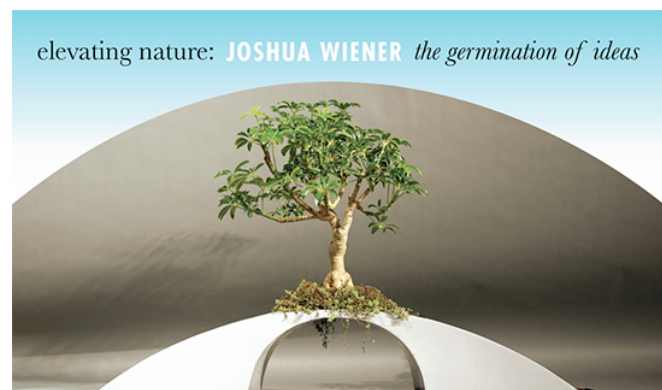


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Elevating Nature: the Germination of Ideas
Joshua Wiener

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La Academia at Denver Inner City Parish

Denver, CO—April 27, 2009 — During his two-month residency at PlatteForum, **Joshua Wiener** continued to work on his *living art* series that inverts the typical garden-to-sculpture relationship. This living art series aligns ingenuity with environmental protection. By placing living organisms in refined compositions, he presents a new way of relating nature to urban expanses. With traditional and contemporary sculpting techniques, Wiener constructs living sculptures with internal irrigation to allow the cultivation of plant materials. The work becomes a combination of construction and subtractive sculpting with man-made and natural materials. In the exhibition, Wiener showcases six living sculptures as seeds for public projects. Each piece experiments with integrating plants into the sculpture in a way that they become the “binding” element. The statement is one of sustainability and the examination of how we harvest, use, reuse, and/or discard materials. Wiener’s dream is to have the viewer slow down, physically and emotionally, to notice the resources around them as valuable for themselves and biodiversity.

Wiener’s residency and exhibition continues the development of PlatteForum’s urban garden, a project that transforms the concrete courtyard into an urban space to celebrate nature and sustainability.

While in residence, Wiener worked intensely with eight students from La Academia at Denver Inner City Parish in a seven-week Learning Lab series. Students explored salvaged materials, dirt, and plant materials as they created living sculptures. Working collectively, they created a limestone living sculpture for their school that expresses their culture, pride, and hopes for the future. Working from the starting point of the Aztec calendar, the students created symbols that expressed their cultural identity and their relationship as stewards of nature. Weighing over 1,000 pounds, the limestone disc incorporates rings of sandblasted images and integrated earth, seeds, and plants. The work, intended to inspire imaginative stewards of the land, will be sited at their school at the culmination of the exhibition.

Exhibition opens May 14, 5:30 – 8:00 pm

Exhibition continues through June 5, 2009

Tuesday-Saturday, noon - 4:00 pm or by appointment 303.893.0791

Free and open to the public

About the Artist

Joshua received numerous public and private commissions around the country and his work is in collections worldwide. He has apprenticed twice with master sculptor Kazutaka Uchida in Tokyo, Japan, and was invited to Bangalore, India in 2004 to participate in a two-week stone-sculpting

symposium. In 1999, he co-founded *Art in Your Park* to provide free opportunities for the general public to make art in public spaces. Through this program, he worked with hundreds of children.

About La Academia at Inner City Parish

La Academia at the Denver Inner City Parish is a private, non-profit school located in West Denver serving 80 sixth through twelfth grade low-income students. Founded in 1971, La Academia addresses the educational and social needs of at-risk youth. The average student at La Academia is Latino/a and lives in poverty. Ninety eight percent the student body qualifies for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program. A Latina student starting ninth grade at La Academia has nearly three times the chance to graduate from high school and sixteen the times the chance of going to college compared to her public school counterparts. The Colorado Children's Campaign report detailed a four-year study, which found that 65% of Latinos in Colorado who began ninth grade dropped out of high school. During the same period, 70% of La Academia's ninth graders graduated. The study also indicated that only 13.5% of Latinos attend college. In the last five years, 75% of La Academia graduates attended college.

Location

PlatteForum is located at 1610 Little Raven St., Suite 135 in Riverfront Park, Denver.

Call to schedule a free tour.

Information about PlatteForum and the Creative Residency Program can be found online at <http://www.platteforum.org> or by calling 303.893.0791.

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High-resolution images available by calling 303.893.0791

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PlatteForum

Youth. Artists. Community.
Transform lives through art.

We Believe:

Through the creative process, PlatteForum gives hope and direction to underserved youth who collaborate with master artists from around the world. This experience transforms the lives of the youth, the artists and the community.