

ARTnews

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James Turrell: The Light Stuff

**Magritte's
Grand Illusions**

**Studio Visits:
Dos and Don'ts**

**Armory Show:
Refuting the Myths**



Boardwalk Empire

From an abandoned lot beside the Atlantic City boardwalk, where the Sands Casino Hotel stood before it was imploded in 2006 and never replaced, rises a field of 14-foot mounds covered with indigenous grasses and wildflowers. This is the heart of "Artlantic," a series of public artworks, installed in phases over five years, organized by independent curator **Lance Fung**. "I wanted something that spoke to the nature that's missing here. Pine barrens were eradicated to make way for the city," Fung says. "The city's vacant lots presented an ideal opportunity." The project is part of New Jersey governor **Chris Christie**'s plan to help revive the downtrodden resort town using casino tax funds. So far, \$12 million has been set aside for a broad city-improvement campaign overseen by the Atlantic City Alliance and the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority.

"What makes my heart race is to bring artists into new situations where they have to interact with the people," says Fung. "There are around 30 million visitors



Kiki Smith's landscape piece *Red Garden*, 2012, and the self-portrait *Her*, 2003, are part of "Artlantic" in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

here every year, and most of them are not art people." "Artlantic" debuted last fall with **John Roloff's** spiraling Op-art mural/stage painted on the asphalt of a city lot adjoining the boardwalk and three installations on the former Sands property: a giant ship by **Ilya and Emilia Kabakov**, text sculptures by **Robert Barry** set in the grass, and New Jersey native **Kiki Smith's** first landscape

artwork, consisting of a bronze self-portrait surrounded by plantings of red berries, red leafy plants, and red flowers, designed to provide color all year long.

The seven-acre site is scheduled for completion this month with new works by three more contributors, including Land Art veteran **Peter Hutchin-son's** only permanent "thrown rope" installation in the United States. This past spring, he tossed three ropes into a swath of dirt. He then planted seeds where two of them landed, and placed rocks along the third. In full bloom, the pieces resemble snakes of flowers creeping across the park.

Fung has also made an effort to bring in New Jersey artists for the current round of works. For his contribution, West Orange-based

sculptor **Robert Lach** built doughnut-shaped masses out of trash and debris he had gathered from local beaches; these were then cast in fiberglass and polyester resin to create brightly colored "nests" that people can sit in. **Jedediah Morfit**, meanwhile, an associate professor at nearby Richard Stockton College, has sculpted elaborate aluminum garden furniture and gates with motifs related to Hurricane Sandy. The park is an oasis of calm for those ambling down the busy boardwalk, but it's also a reminder of the area's natural assets. Beach grass has been planted around it, and the scent of sea air wafts through the works.

Next year, Fung plans to install more art sanctuaries throughout the city. "The money is slated for public art," he says, "but rather than creating an art exhibition, we're creating much needed public space that is esthetic."

—Meredith Mendelsohn



Untitled, 2012, one of Robert Barry's sign sculptures for "Artlantic."