



## ***Water Sky Garden, 2010***

Richmond Olympic Oval, B.C., Canada,

an official venue for the

### **2010 Vancouver Olympic Winter Games**

#### **Description:**

Water Sky Garden transforms the plaza surrounding the Richmond Olympic Oval, official venue for the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Winter Games speed-skating events, into a permanent art environment for the community. Echelman's design engages the space all around the viewer – water, sky, and pedestrian pathways – to create an immersive whole using rock, wood, water, air bubble fountains, steel, netting, and light.

Red-stained cedar boardwalks lead visitors through the artwork. Water-purifying aerators draw shapes with bubbles on the surface of a pond that collects runoff water from the Ovals' 5-acre roof, while suspended net-forms undulate overhead in the wind, becoming sky-lanterns during nighttime illumination.

The red boardwalk and "sky lanterns" are inspired by the city's cultural communities. Richmond has the largest immigrant population by proportion of any city in Canada with the majority of those immigrants being of Asian descent. The wooden boardwalk follows a curving path similar to the choreography of the Dragon Dance, a performance frequently seen in local Chinese festivals. The Nitobe Japanese garden and the Sun Yat Sen Chinese garden of the Vancouver region are important references, especially their material presence, intersecting paths and reflective ponds, and their framing of views. *Water Sky Garden* is a contemplative art environment that encourages participants to linger. The overhead netted forms provide a new visual experience, putting art in the sky; at night they glow like lanterns. Nets have a special relationship with the site, as the native Musqueam Band continue to teach their children to fish using nets at this particular bend in the Fraser River to this day, and this area has a history of the fishing/canning industry which employed many ethnic groups.

This project was achieved through Echelman's collaboration with a team of international award-winning architects, engineers, lighting and water consultants, landscape architects, and fabricators.

#### **Materials:**

Cedar, rock, water, air-bubble fountains, painted galvanized steel, Tenara® architectural fiber, lighting

#### **Size and Arrangement:**

Total area of *Water Sky Garden*: approx. 75,000 sq. ft.

East Net: largest diameter: 75 ft.; 50 ft. above grade

North Net: largest diameter: 52 ft.; 40 ft. above grade

#### **Client:**

City of Richmond Public Art Program, BC, Canada

#### **Design Team:**

Janet Echelman, artist

Phillips Farevaag Smallerberg, landscape architecture

Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden, architects and urbanists

Buro Happold, net engineering

Peter Heppel Associates, aeronautical engineering

Fast + Epp, structural engineering

Speranza Architecture, consultant

Cole Brown Henry Consulting, public art consultants

Vince Helton and Associates, fountain mechanical

Joseph Scott, lighting design