

*For Immediate Release*

## **LITTLE ISLAND OPENS TOMORROW TO NEW YORKERS**

*Timed Reservations Begin on Friday, May 21*

*Photos and Video of Little Island are Available [Here](#)*

**New York – May 20, 2021** - Little Island, a new, free public park at 13<sup>th</sup> Street in Hudson River Park, will open tomorrow, providing New Yorkers and visitors from around the world with a unique greenspace unlike any other in New York City. The park – one of the first to open in the city since the COVID-19 pandemic – provides serene spaces to explore, new venues for live performances and cultural events, and unique vantage points to view the surrounding area.

Primarily funded by The Diller – von Furstenberg Family Foundation, Little Island is opening as New York City prepares for the summer season and after more than a year of restrictions and closures, and adds sweeping space to the popular Hudson River Park, which spans four miles along Manhattan’s west side. With its own independent arts programming set to begin in June, Little Island will host hundreds of local artists and performers, and offer free programming for visitors of all ages.

Components of the park, nestled among more than 350 species of flowers, trees and shrubs, include a 687-seat amphitheater (“The Amph”), a central plaza with seating and serving food and beverages (“The Play Ground”), an intimate stage and lawn space (“The Glade”), and dazzling views of the park, New York City, and the Hudson River. Little Island was designed by Thomas Heatherwick of Heatherwick Studio, with landscape design by Signe Nielsen of MNLA.

“I hope Little Island will serve as a whimsical oasis for everyone who visits, a place to wander around and be happily surprised at every turn, to lounge and graze the landscape, and to be entertained, educated and stimulated by our programming” said Barry Diller.

“It’s a joy to welcome the public to this newest area of Hudson River Park, and we are forever grateful to Barry Diller and the Diller-von Furstenberg Family Foundation for their extraordinary contribution to Hudson River Park and New York City overall,” said Noreen Doyle, acting President of the Hudson River Park Trust. “Bringing a project like Little Island to life took vision, tenacity and commitment from countless people – design professionals, government partners, artists, community advocates, local elected officials, Governor Cuomo, Mayor de Blasio and above all, Mr. Diller. On behalf of the Hudson River Park Trust, we can’t wait to see people discovering and enjoying the pier. Aside from its abundant plants and beauty, its diverse cultural and educational programming will welcome visitors from all over the city, and will wonderfully complement and enrich Hudson River Park.”

### **The Landscape**

The landscape design was led by Signe Nielsen of MNLA, and provides a visually surprising and inspiring experience as visitors walk across the park. The plantings are varied to provide an

environment that changes with the seasons, with flowing trees and shrubs, fall foliage and evergreens. More than 66,000 bulbs and 114 trees have been planted, some of which will grow to 60 feet tall.

“Every time I come to Little Island, I’m struck by the same sense of wonder. This is an environment made to surprise. I wanted New Yorkers to feel delight and excitement around every turn from the moment they set foot here. When you enter from the concrete of the city, you’re immersed in this living, breathing ecosystem full of unexpected corners, hills and overlooks. I can’t wait to see New Yorkers experience this special place for the very first time,” said Signe Nielsen, Principal at MNLA.

## **The Architecture**

Designed by Heatherwick Studio, Little Island’s distinct exterior is supported by a structure that is made up of 280 concrete piles, which emerge from in between the leftover wood piles of Pier 54 that were largely preserved to maintain habitats for aquatic life.

On top of the piles, 132 concrete “Tulips” make up the structure of the park. Each tulip’s shape is unique and has a different weight load capacity to hold the soil, lawns, overlooks, and trees.

Arup’s New York City team served as the engineering firm, leading the structural development of the park’s unique pot structures, along with the design of the park’s subsurface and theatrical infrastructure.

## **The Arts**

Beginning in June, Little Island will host a season of programming to foster and support New York City-based artists, including four Artists-in-Residence:

- Tap dancer and choreographer Ayodele Casel
- Playwright and award-winning director Tina Landau
- Actor, singer, and music director Michael McElroy
- Acting, musical, and storytelling group, PigPen Theatre Co.

They will perform, curate, and direct a range of work over their three-year residency in collaboration with a team of producers, led by Producer Julia Kraus.

The majority of events will be free, and ticketed events will be primarily free or low-cost. There will be performances and educational programming six days a week, with offerings from music, dance, circus, spoken word, and more. Programming ranges from surprise performances with local performers to special events with renowned New York City arts organizations.

Some of this season’s signature events will include:

- A concert with the award-winning Broadway Inspirational Voices
- A Pride weekend celebration with Tina Landau and her many Broadway Friends
- The New York City live-performance return of American Ballet Theatre

- A revival of a Little Orchestra Society’s fan favorite program *Things That Go Bang!*
- A weekend of music from the islands curated by the World Music Institute

The full slate of summer programming can be viewed at [www.LittleIsland.org](http://www.LittleIsland.org). Full details will be announced at a later date.

## **The Community**

Little Island will offer free educational programming six days a week, including creative workshops for all ages led by Little Island teaching artists, weekly programs from the Children’s Museum of Arts and New Victory Education, a Teen Night with The Door, and a Little Library that visits the park on Fridays in partnership with the Free Black Women’s Library, Women in Comics and Teatro SEA.

Little Island has ongoing partnerships with local organizations Greenwich House, Hudson Guild, PS 33, The Door, and Westbeth, which include offering free tickets to programming, workshops with teaching artists, and opportunities to collaborate with Artists-in-Residence.

## **The Food and Beverage**

For its food and beverage offerings, Little Island is partnering with Savory Hospitality, which will operate three stalls in The Play Ground, with ample seating and shade. The menu, with items curated for all ages, is responsibly sourced and supports small local businesses representative of all five New York City boroughs.

Food and beverages will be sold from 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm daily, including wine, beer, and wine- or beer-based cocktails created exclusively for Little Island visitors.

## **Visiting Little Island**

The park will be open daily from 6:00 am to 1:00 am, with timed reservations required from 12:00 pm to 8:00 pm. All admission is free.

Located within Hudson River Park, Little Island’s main entrance is located at West 13<sup>th</sup> Street and the Hudson River, at Pier 55.

Visitors can arrange a time to visit online at [www.LittleIsland.org](http://www.LittleIsland.org) or in person at the park entrance.

Learn more at [www.LittleIsland.org](http://www.LittleIsland.org).

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