

BridgeFest: Connecting Community

Gary Duehr

Inspired by *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino, BridgeFest in May, 2011, will celebrate Fort Point with an explosion of dozens of bridges throughout the neighborhood—from the miniscule to the grand, from the wildly imaginative to the subtly poetic.

Made of materials ranging from feathers to old photos, from seashells to braids of hair—or even of scents or sounds—the bridges will vary in length from hundreds of feet to a few inches. The bridges will connect the sides of an alley or one tree branch to another; they will arch from the curb to the pavement or across a window sill; they might jut from the Channel or curve from a walkway down to a dock. Also transformed in identity will be key structures such as the Northern Avenue Bridge and the Congress Street Bridge.

There will be a Bridge of Memories, a Bridge of Flowers, a Bridge of Unsent Letters, and a Bridge of Chance Encounters.

There will be a Bridge of Desire and a Bridge of Rain, a Bridge of Lost Keys and a Bridge of Tides.

Some structures might be woven into the environment, to appear only at certain times, such as a Bridge of Shadows or a Bridge of Moonlight.

A Parade and Self-Guided Tour

Inaugurating BridgeFest will be a parade through city streets, featuring some of the smaller bridges, as well as some of the bigger structures held high on poles like a Chinese dragon, dipping and weaving. Marching bands, like those at the Honk Festival in Davis Square in Somerville, will accompany the fun, quirky parade.

BridgeFest will continue through the month of May. Spectators will be able to find the bridges by using a map for a self-guided tour. Besides the actual transformed bridges, sculptural bridges will be installed throughout Fort Point. For the month of May, bridges will be everywhere, connecting buildings and people and city sights in a new and exciting way.

Creating the Vision: Artists and Community

The bridges will be designed and fabricated by teams of local artists curated by Gary Duehr. Artists will be connected with local community groups for help in fabrication, and bridges might be sponsored by collectives of residents or even offices. For example, the Bridge of Memories might be constructed from family photos gathered by some neighbors.

And this collaborative creation will continue into an interactive experience with the public.

Passersby might be invited to add missives to the Bridge of Unsent Letters, and post them on the structure to share with others.

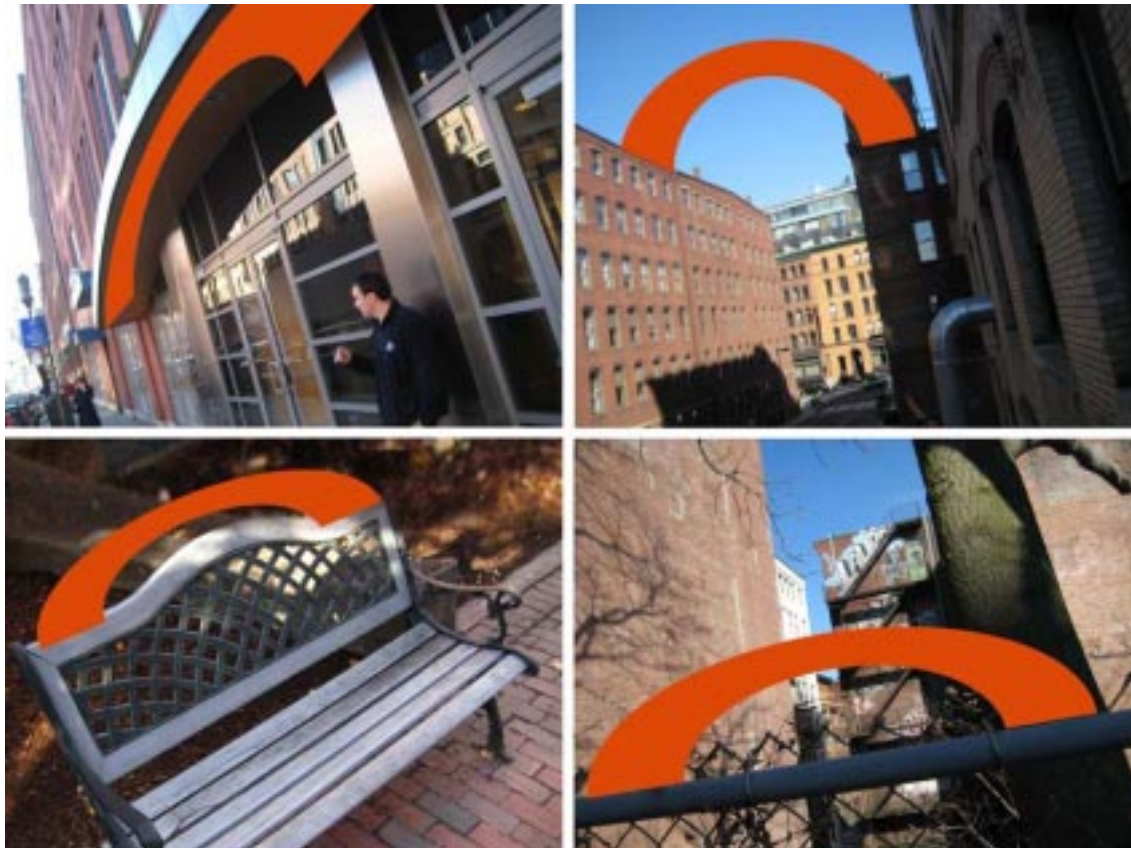
Bio

In 2007 Gary Duehr was chosen as a Best Emerging Artist in New England by the International Association of Art Critics. In 2003 Duehr received an Artist Grant in photography from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and his work has been featured in museums and galleries in Boston, New York, and internationally. Past awards include grants from the LEF Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation.

His public artworks include a photo installation funded by the Visible Republic program of New England Foundation for the Arts, and a commission from the MBTA for a permanent photo installation at North Station. Duehr is codirector of the Invisible Cities Group, which creates “large-scale urban detours” combining performance, poetry, and installations of visual art.

BridgeFest Sites

Possible locations for bridges in BridgeFest (Note: the red icon is for illustration only - the actual bridges would be made of various materials and have different shapes):



BridgeFest

Images of Past Projects

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Currents, North Station subway, Boston, MA, 2005. Commissioned by the MBTA, *Currents* is a series of 120 photo-panels showing harbor scenes, printed in sepia on aluminum, which animate like a filmstrip when viewed from a passing train.



Impossible Library, Forest Hills Cemetery, Jamaica Plain, MA, 2001. Created by the Invisible Cities Group (Gary Duehr, co-director), this project combining installation and performance transformed the garden cemetery into an interactive library full of personal stories.



Square², Davis Square, Somerville, MA, 2001.

Commissioned by the Visible Republic program of NEFA, this project saturated Davis Square for one month with thousands of photographs of its own pedestrians, on every level from micro to macro: from bus benches to manhole covers, from leaves on trees to a flag in the park.

