

**Art4Water Sacred Springs Kite Exhibition Opening Reception  
Friday, May 6th  
Austin Central Library**

**David Baker & Robin Gary of the Watershed Association**

Let's give a round of applause for Big Cedar Fever Spring Band for their wonderful music and Courtney Smith from Cookbook Cafe for the fantastic food tonight.



I'm Robin Gary, Managing Director of The Watershed Association. Unfortunately, we have a substantial part of the Exhibition team out sick with COVID tonight. This is heartbreaking after all the work, time, and creativity they've contributed to making this exhibition possible. David Baker, our Founder and Executive Director, asked that I step in for him tonight to acknowledge all the hard work that has made this Exhibition truly exceptional.

I want to thank everyone on behalf of the Watershed Association and the Austin Central Library for being here tonight for the official opening of the Art4Water Sacred Springs Kite Exhibition. We are grateful beyond words for your presence here tonight for this historic event to celebrate our communities collective love for water and springs through art and enjoy the 47 artist and kite fabricators' beautiful creations.

These incredible artists and the Watershed's Art4Water team guided by the vision and leadership of Terry Zee Lee and Ryan Willett have collaborated over the last year to create the first exhibit of its kind and the 50 Sacred Springs Kites you see here tonight.

This is the first show of this scale to be featured in the atrium of this spectacular architectural wonder designed by Lake Flato Architects. The Austin Central Library building was named by Time Magazine in 2018 list of the World's 100 Greatest Places and was awarded one of the highest possible green building certifications. It is the most water efficient "One Water" Platinum Leed certified building ever constructed in Austin. This building is like a spring in that it captures rainwater and ac condensate and recycles that water here onsite to flush toilets and water the landscape and reduces water consumption by 90%. We are so proud to be here to represent both the power of Art and Water Conservation.

The Sacred Springs Kite Exhibition could not have happened without Terry Zee Lee, a world class kite-maker, artist, and teacher. She has a long history of facilitating cutting-edge, impactful kite exhibitions that raise awareness of powerful topics. As President of Sky Wind World, she curated the nationally-acclaimed Buffalo Project and Louis and Clark Kite Exhibitions and has shared her love of art, kites, and kite building with students across the world. She and David Baker collaborated to bring the Sacred Springs Kite Exhibition together. They did an amazing job, didn't they?

I've known David Baker for over 25 years. David is an accomplished artist and passionate environmental steward. While he paints in many different styles, he is well known for his detailed dot paintings. This is also his superpower. When he looks at the world, he sees lots of dots and naturally starts connecting them. Environmentally, I've seen him paint a collective dream and persist at telling that story until the community is dreaming that dream, then big things happen. He put over 100 tiny parcels back together and created the Jacob's Well Natural Area. He encouraged scientific research and flow monitoring at Jacob's Well that recently (in

2020) led to the creation of the groundwater management zone that helps protect groundwater availability and spring flow at the Well. He doesn't do it alone and he doesn't do it for himself. I think he does it because someone taught him long ago that life is a party and everyone is invited.

This exhibition was made possible by the sponsorship of the Austin Library, a grant by The Library Foundation. All of the artworks were underwritten by the Harry L. Willett Foundation. Ryan Willett deserves special thanks for his ongoing support of the Watershed Association for our work protecting springs and watersheds across the Hill Country and particularly tonight for his insights and connecting us with Terry Zee Lee, the visionary curator and co-creator for this exhibition.

We also want to thank Austin Library Exhibit Coordinator Jieun Beth Kim and Sharon Herfurth for their guidance and support in preparation for this event. We could not have done it without you. Also the entire Austin Library staff, security team for their coordination including graphic designer Tatiana Gonzalez, communications coordinator Baylor Johnson and the entire Library team. Also special thanks to Arts Seen Alliance, David Russell, Eric Dieterich, and the incredibly talented kite makers Cat Gabreal, Scott Skinner and Jose Sainz for their assistance.

This project could not have happened without the endless hours and dedication put in by Art4Water coordinator Aliya Rosenbloom and Ellen Evans and their planning and execution of all the details required to launch this exhibition and the Art4Water program for the Watershed Association. To learn more about sacred springs artist and kite fabricators who worked collaboratively to make these beautiful artworks inspired by water and springs, Please pick up an event program and explore the unique stories of the diversity of artists that were selected from over 200 entries, the beautiful kites fabricated by master kite builders from across the country and the eight sacred springs kites created by John Mata. Use the QR code to learn more.

"Sacred Springs" recalls the reverence of indigenous people and an enduring mystical connection with the source of life. Water falls as rain from the sky, filters into the ground, and emerges later through cracks and openings to form the great river basins. Many Texans drink from the groundwater that powers these springs every time we turn on the tap. As growth and demand for water grows, many of our springs have been lost, draining more than just a piece of our history or a source of water.

Water is at the heart of what makes the Hill Country such a beautiful place. Water flows quickly from aquifers to springs, to iconic creeks and rivers, then back into our aquifers. We all have a dot to contribute to protecting it. As the population in our region grows, we've got more challenges to face as a community. Demand for water, development and the sources of pollution that come with it, and a changing climate can reshape what our Hill Country looks like, if we're not careful.

Artists have always served society as visionaries, translators and storytellers— they help share powerful stories and elements of the human experience that are limited by spoken language. We want to thank the artists whose work you see tonight for shining their light on the beauty of water, the life that depends on it, and the treasures that make Texas proud. It's our hope that this inspiration helps fuel awareness... After all, we tend to protect what we love.

I invite you to share your reactions, compliments, and thoughts with David, Terry, the artists, and kitemakers of the Sacred Springs Kite Exhibition. There is a comment board on the table. Let's fill it up for them. They'd love to hear from you. Please share information about Art4Water and the Kite Exhibition widely. You can post your photos and thoughts @\_art4water or @wimberleywatershed.

Thank you all for being here tonight to kick off the Art4Water Sacred Springs Kite Exhibition! If you are interested in learning more about becoming a Sacred Springs Sponsor see me and Ellen Evans at the Watershed Table.

Many Thanks to all the Sacred Springs artists and kitemakers who contributed to this exhibition:

<b>*Adam Grow</b>	<b>*Jose Sainz</b>
<b>*Alexa King</b>	<b>*Julie Whitsett</b>
<b>*Ava Tran</b>	<b>*Kathy Goodwind</b>
<b>*Betty Street</b>	<b>*Ken Conrad &amp; Suzanne Sadow</b>
<b>*Bindu Viswanathan</b>	<b>*Leslie Kell</b>
<b>*Bonita Saucedo</b>	<b>*Mitch Cordover</b>
<b>*Carolyn Kilday</b>	<b>*Nanya Aku-Ki Sanders - NAS</b>
<b>*Cat Gabreal</b>	<b>*Rene Perez</b>
<b>*Chris Hanson</b>	<b>*Ripley LaRue</b>
<b>*Christian Baden Powell</b>	<b>*Ron Bohart</b>
<b>*Christy Pohler</b>	<b>*Ron Gibian</b>
<b>*Chrys Grummert</b>	<b>*Sam King</b>
<b>*Claudia Maysen</b>	<b>*Scott Hampton</b>
<b>*Cliff &amp; Gerry Pennell</b>	<b>*Scott Skinner</b>
<b>*Dave Wagner</b>	<b>* <a href="#">Stan Swanson</a></b>
<b>*David Baker Bear</b>	<b>*Steve Anderson</b>
<b>*Drake Smith</b>	<b>*Storie Hawkins</b>
<b>*Hunter Brown</b>	<b>*Summer Nielson</b>
<b>*Jeremy Colbert</b>	<b>*Terry Zee Lee</b>
<b>*Jim Day</b>	<b>*Tiffany Heng Hui Lee</b>
<b>*Joel Scholz</b>	<b>*Topher Sipes</b>
<b>*John Mata</b>	<b>*Veronica Mestre</b>
<b>*John Pollock</b>	
<b>*Jon &amp; Karen Burkhardt</b>	