



**MONTALVO ARTS CENTER AND THE VALLEY FOUNDATION
PRESENT STUNNING PUBLIC LIGHT EXHIBITION
THROUGHOUT HISTORIC PROPERTY
BRUCE MUNRO AT MONTALVO:
STORIES IN LIGHT**

OCTOBER 28, 2018 – MARCH 17, 2019

SARATOGA, CA (3 April 2018) —This fall, **Montalvo Arts Center**, located on 175 acres in Silicon Valley’s Saratoga Hills, will glow with stunning illuminated installations by internationally acclaimed artist **Bruce Munro**. As part of this, his first public West Coast exhibition, the renowned British artist will scatter 10 of his light-based works throughout the center’s lawns, gardens, terraces, and historic structures for ***Bruce Munro at Montalvo: Stories in Light***. Inspired by the artist’s readings of C.S. Lewis’s *Chronicles of Narnia*, these installations will range in scale from enormous and immersive to intimate, utilizing hundreds of thousands of bespoke components to construct multi-hued waves, clusters, cascades, flocks, and seas of light, transforming Montalvo’s historic Villa and extensive public areas into a breathtaking spectacle of illumination. Featuring the largest number of works by Munro ever on public display at a single venue, this exhibition will require hundreds of helpers to install and is expected to attract visitors from around the world to the Saratoga arts center. Made possible in part by a generous gift from The Valley Foundation, ***Bruce Munro at Montalvo: Stories in Light*** opens to the public October 28, 2018 and runs through March 17, 2019 at **Montalvo Arts Center**, 15400 Montalvo Rd., Saratoga, California. For more information the public may visit munromontalvo.org or call (408) 961-5858.

“*Bruce Munro at Montalvo* is the most ambitious, impactful exhibition Montalvo has ever presented,” said Montalvo Executive Director Angela McConnell. “With anticipated attendance in the tens of thousands, we believe this show will elevate Montalvo—and the town of

Saratoga—to increased relevance and prestige in the national and international art scene. With the generous support of The Valley Foundation, we look forward to inspiring and delighting visitors from across the Bay Area and beyond.

Munro’s oeuvre, which blends the highly personal with the poignantly universal, aims to transcend time and space by inspiring moments of awareness, and invites viewers to contemplate a world larger and more mysterious than their own existences. *Smithsonian Magazine* has called Munro’s work “stunning,” while *The Guardian* noted, “This is art you feel, rather than art you view.” *The Washington Post* wrote, “Munro is to fiber optics, you might say, as Dale Chihuly is to blown glass and Christo to wrapped fabric, an artist whose outdoor installations intensify their subject landscapes.” *The Huffington Post* said, “It can be hard to describe in words the gifts that Munro bestows on the landscape as his work escapes description in either written or photographic form, it is something to be experienced.” Theoretical physicist/Nobel Laureate Frank Wilczek noted, “I had the uncanny sense that I was walking through my own mind, or at least a good model of it. I’ll never again think about brains, or myself, in quite the same way.”

When Munro was invited to Montalvo in 2016 to consider its property as a possible site for a new exhibition, he experienced a profound moment of what he calls “powerful literary connection.” He was immediately struck by the grounds’ resemblance to a house and garden that feature prominently in *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, the third book in C.S. Lewis’s much beloved series of novels, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. “While always a literary reference point, over the years I have appreciated the subtle changes of my understanding towards these books and it is only relatively recently that I recognized that they have inspired thoughts and feelings worthy of abstracting into art installations,” said Munro. “My immediate response was to see Montalvo as a unifying canvas, a place to draw all these ideas together, the landscape continually inspiring and directing my imagination.” Thus, this exhibition at Montalvo is the artist’s first to be driven by a unifying theme, rather than a disparate set of concepts.

Among ***Bruce Munro at Montalvo***’s various nods to Lewis’s works, Montalvo’s large Great Lawn will be covered by a sea of “lily pads” created from over 4,000 illuminated stems in an installation entitled *Silver Sea* – named for Narnia’s flowing freshwater ocean (called “drinkable

light” by the character Prince Caspian). A flamboyance of flamingos, densely clustered on Montalvo’s Garden Terrace and illuminated in sunset hues, pays tribute to Ramandu’s Table (on which food magically appeared every day to feed a flock of pure white sun-birds), while a metal tree of glowing lights alludes to the Parliament of Owls (the talking birds who met nightly to discuss the affairs of Narnia). Over the grand staircase in Montalvo’s historically landmarked Villa, a 106-year-old stained glass window depicting the three sailing ships of explorer Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo will be illuminated to create the illusion of movement, in allusion to Prince Caspian’s galleon, the Dawn Treader, voyaging across mythological seas. Also inspired by the Narnia books is the massive *Reepicheep’s Wave*, which will be installed on Montalvo’s Garden Theatre stage. The wave, made of 15,000 vacuum cast mussel shells, formed from ocean plastics, suspended on illuminated optical fibers, is a representation of a beautiful visual metaphor employed by Lewis in the last chapter of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* to convey a journey taken from one reality to another. This will be a new installation created expressly for the Montalvo exhibition.

At the same time, however, the installations comment on the landscape they illuminate and draw from the artist’s personal recollections as well as society’s collective memories and stories. *Reepicheep’s Wave* is equally inspired by Munro’s teenage fascination with the 1977 film *The Last Wave*, in which a monstrous typhoon is poised to destroy New Zealand and by the woodblock print *The Great Wave at Kanagawa* by Katsushika Hokusai. A man-made forest of illuminated acrylic clothespins, installed in the Italianate Garden and paired with a soundtrack of cackling Australian cockatoos, is inspired by Munro’s recollection of anthropomorphic animals in Lewis’s work, but it is also an expression of nostalgia for when he, as a young man and budding artist, lived in Australia with the woman who would become his wife.

In addition to The Valley Foundation, major support for *Bruce Munro at Montalvo* was also provided by the Alice Phelan Sullivan Corporation, Applied Materials, The Jo and Barry Ariko Fund for Artistic Programs, Casto Travel, Cupertino Electric, Jennifer and Phil DiNapoli, Susan and Bob Finocchio, Mary Ellen and Michael Fox, Donna and Till Guldemann, Katherine and Bob Maxfield, the Orr Foundation, Cathie and Jeff Thermond, Charmaine and Dan Warmenhoven, and Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati.

London-born **Bruce Munro** is best known for large-scale light-based artworks inspired largely by his continuous study of natural light and his curiosity for shared human experiences. With a fine arts degree, early career training in the lighting design industry, and an inventive urge for reuse, his art captures his responses to literature, music, science, and the world around him. His work has been commissioned by and displayed in special exhibitions in galleries, parks, grand estates, cathedrals, botanical gardens, and museums across the globe, including Longwood Gardens, PA; the Guggenheim Museum, NY; the Sharjah Museum of Art, UAE; Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, AZ; Desert Botanical Garden, AZ; the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, CO; Sotheby's *Beyond Limits* at Chatworth; Victoria & Albert Museum, London; Waddesdon Manor, the Rothschild Collection, Buckinghamshire; and Salisbury Cathedral, among others. Artworks by Munro are held in the permanent collections of museums and public art collections worldwide including the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archeology, Oxford; Cheekwood Botanical Garden and Art Museum, TN; and Texas Tech University Public Art. His installation *Field of Light* is currently on display at Uluru, Northern Territories in Australia through December 2020. This solo exhibition—Munro's first in Australia—features an installation of 50,000 spheres of light, and represents the largest and most remote iteration of his artwork to date.

Montalvo Arts Center is a donor-supported nonprofit institution, whose mission is to engage the public in the creative process, acting as a catalyst for exploring the arts, unleashing creativity, and advancing different cultural and cross-cultural perspectives. Located in Silicon Valley's Saratoga Hills, Montalvo occupies a Mediterranean-style Villa, built in 1912 by Senator James Duval Phelan, surrounded by 175 stunning acres. Senator Phelan bequeathed the Villa and grounds to the people of California for the encouragement of art, music, literature, and architecture, a mandate Montalvo has carried forward ever since its founding. The grounds include the campus of the Sally and Don Lucas Artists Program (LAP), the Claire Loftus Carriage House Theatre, and the Lillian Fontaine Garden Theatre, as well as miles of hiking trails, terraces, gardens, and other picturesque public areas. For more information about Montalvo Arts Center and its programs, the public can call (408) 961-5858 or visit montalvoarts.org.

For 30 years, **The Valley Foundation** has worked to improve the quality of life for the residents of Santa Clara County, and looks to foster innovation and change with non-profit partners so they may achieve operational and programmatic sustainability. For more information, visit www.valley.org.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

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WHEN: October 28, 2018- March 17, 2019 – hours/days TBA
Press preview: October 23, 2018
VIP/Member/Donor Previews: October 25-27, 2018

WHERE: **Montalvo Arts Center**, 15400 Montalvo Rd., Saratoga

TICKETS: Tickets will become available in June 2018.

INFO: For information or to order tickets visit montalvoarts.org or call **(408) 961-5858**.

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PRESS: Contact Lauren Goldfarb, Carla Befera & Co.
650.327.1200 | lauren@cb-pr.com

PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<http://cbpr.co/press/BruceMunro>