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KATE D. LEVIN  
Commissioner

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Dear Friends,

In February 2005, and in fulfillment of an inaugural promise, Mayor Bloomberg welcomed Christo and Jeanne-Claude's *The Gates* to Central Park. The project consisted of saffron-colored fabric attached to 7,500 gates along 23 miles of paved paths throughout Central Park. In addition to enlivening the Park, *The Gates* generated \$254 million in economic activity over the project's two-week span, and attracted some 4 million visitors to Central Park who were interested in all that the City had to offer. In addition to driving business at hotels, restaurants and retail operations, these visitors traveled throughout our five boroughs. The artists have an extraordinary international following, and their respectful, joyful interaction with the work made for an unusual degree of excitement, and highly venturesome patterns of visitation to cultural organizations throughout the City. For instance, in Long Island City, Queens, the P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center doubled their attendance, and The Noguchi Museum reported a 170% increase in theirs.

All too often it takes an unfortunate circumstance – be it a blackout or a transit strike – to unite a city and draw the world's attention. But in February of last year, this City was singularly focused on art, and New York City was on the front page of newspapers around the world. Opinions of *The Gates* varied widely, but there was virtually no New Yorker without one. The work left an indelible mark on all of us, and gave us a new sense of pride in something that was lovingly and painstakingly imagined specifically for our City.

*The Gates* was a singular experience not only because of the finished artwork. The process of creating and installing it was extraordinarily robust and rewarding. First proposed 26 years ago, Christo and Jeanne-Claude spent a quarter decade building a sense of community around, consensus for, and anticipation of this project. Once the Bloomberg administration committed to doing it, we worked intensively over a two-year period with Christo, Jeanne-Claude and the team they assembled on issues including environmental impact reviews, outreach to community stakeholders, and marketing and tourism initiatives. The actual installation involved hundreds of paid volunteers, insuring a uniquely participatory sense of ownership that ranged well beyond most public art projects. Throughout the process, Christo and Jeanne-Claude made sure that their creative priorities

aligned with the needs of our citizens and brought with them the sophistication and sensitivity necessary to accomplish a project of this magnitude.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude have consistently developed projects that give physical form to our aspirations and take advantage of the unique identity of the sites they identify. Their respect for the process of creating public art, and their keen interest in and attention to the particular needs and qualities of the communities in which they choose to work, give their projects extraordinary impact. For the City of New York, their work was transformative and engaging in every positive way. It is my great pleasure to write with the highest recommendation regarding the opportunity to host the work of Christo and Jeanne-Claude.

Sincerely,



Kate D. Levin  
Commissioner