

# ARTFORUM



## Rainbow Connection

- Linda Yablonsky



(Left) Yvette Mattern's Global Rainbow, After the Storm. Right: Artist Yvette Mattern and Yvonne Force Villareal. (All photos: Linda Yablonsky)

AT 8 PM last Tuesday, I was in a taxi moving through a light rain to the Standard Hotel. Suddenly, the sky lit up. "What's that?" said the startled driver. "A rainbow?" It was. A rainbow in the dark—namely Global Rainbow, After the Storm, a public artwork made of laser beams by Yvette Mattern, an American artist who lives in Berlin. For three nights, it would shoot thirty miles from the roof of the Standard across Manhattan to the parts of Brooklyn devastated by Hurricane Sandy. "Beautiful," the driver said.

At the Standard, the Art Production Fund, which facilitated the installation, was toasting Mattern in a ground-floor lounge. "It all happened so fast, in just one week," said APF cofounder Yvonne Force Villareal. "The best part was that it came with its own funding." Everything was donated: the work itself, which Mattern is touring on commissions from cities around the world; the \$80,000 lasers by Lightwave International; and the rooftop by the hotel. Waves for Water and the New York Foundation for the Arts, nonprofits that had already established channels for donations, welcomed the beacon as a call to action.

As it happened, the Armory Show was hosting a party for Liz Magic Laser that evening in the top-floor Boom Boom Room, where some guests mistook the rainbow for hers. Outside on the roof, there was no confusion. Just astonishment. The lasers zoomed over the city skyline in six divergent straight lines that met at what Villareal observed was "a perfect illustration of the vanishing point." Viewed from the ground, Mattern said, the curve of the earth made the beams appear to arc. But as the week went on, the beams also seemed to signal the openings of galleries in Chelsea that had been in dry dock since the storm.