

W*magazine*



BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY

Last night outside the Standard Hotel on Manhattan's west side, a cabbie pulled up short. "Do you see that?" he asked, craning his neck back. "What is that?" He wasn't hallucinating. There was, unmistakably, a laser rainbow shooting out over the city.



Yvette Mattern's "Global Rainbow, After the Storm"
Photos: James Ewing
Courtesy of Art Production Fund

"Global Rainbow, After the Storm," artist Yvette Mattern's installation made up of seven chromatic lasers beamed out across the skyline from the hotel's rooftop, is presented by Art Production Fund to raise awareness for the victims of Hurricane Sandy. (In particular, Waves and Water and New York Foundation for the Arts, two organizations providing relief.) From 8 pm – 2 am over the next two nights, from its proverbial pot of gold atop the Standard, the rainbow will power a path through the downtown sky towards Brooklyn, until it plunges into the dark water beyond the Rockaways, one of the areas hardest-hit by Sandy.

On the way to the top of the Standard last night—where, in a coincidence too strange to go unnoted, there was also a party being held for the artist Liz Magic Laser—concerns were voiced about the moist conditions, which some feared would dim the bold lights. "Actually," Mattern said, "the colors are brighter when there's a lot of weather. I was hoping for snow."

The lasers, which the artist has installed in several European cities (and which is made possible with equipment donated by Lightwave International), are said to be visible for up to 35 miles, depending on the weather. Seen up close, they're spectacular and otherworldly—colorful piano wire strung tautly beneath a bright moon. But the real action is on the street level, where unsuspecting New Yorkers out in the cold night are glancing up to discover a joyful surprise. "I don't know what it is," one commenter posted on Instagram (hashtag #globalrainbow) shortly after the launch last night. "But I like it."

Photos by James Ewing. Courtesy of Art Production Fund
By Fan Zhong