



SIMONS UNVEILS MAJOR ART INSTALLATION BY CANADIAN ARTIST AND ARCHITECT PHILIP BEESLEY

West Edmonton Mall Store Home to *Simons Aurora*

Quebec City, QC (February 2013) – Simons, the renowned family-owned fashion retailer from Quebec City, will unveil a permanent in-store art installation called *Simons Aurora* at its new West Edmonton Mall location on Wednesday, February 20. Designed by Canadian artist and architect Philip Beesley, *Simons Aurora* is a canopy of crystalline columns that uses sensory mechanisms to respond to human movement, creating a gently swelling and rippling ocean of light.

Simons stores are compelling, original environments that inspire customers through fashion, art and architecture. The West Edmonton Mall location was designed by award-winning firm Figure3 and realized by Lemay Michaud Architecture Design. The exterior showcases vertical, twisted titanium blades that create dynamic arches and a 30-foot glass cube built into the corner of the building that shines like a beacon – day and night.

“We continuously challenge ourselves to build stores that go beyond the norm. We want to inspire and delight our customers, not only with our fashion, but with the surroundings, making the Simons experience unique and memorable,” said CEO Peter Simons. “Philip Beesley’s *Simons Aurora* is a stunning piece of sculptural architecture that reflects our shared appreciation of beauty and art.”

Inspired by the aurora borealis, *Simons Aurora* is composed of laser-cut acrylic, mylar and custom glassware. Suspended from the ceiling of the store’s north atrium, the installation is 68 feet long, 26 feet wide, and has more than 40 electronically active columns of varying lengths. Philip Beesley’s team used a new generation of electronics that allows a highly complex, intelligent digital fabric to create responsive chain reactions of light.

“We were excited by the idea of working with the Simons family which has a long-standing reputation for creating innovative retail spaces,” said Philip Beesley. “The scale and atmosphere of the Edmonton location allowed us to envision a significant installation that would adapt to and be energized by interactions with customers.”

The installation of *Simons Aurora* will take eight members of Philip Beesley’s studio and a large team of local artists, designers and students 17 days to complete. The process will be captured on time-lapse video. While Philip Beesley’s works reside in many countries around the world, *Simons Aurora* is Beesley’s first permanent installation in Canada.

Art Gallery of Alberta – Art for Lunch with Philip Beesley

In addition to unveiling *Simons Aurora* at West Edmonton Mall, Philip Beesley will deliver a presentation called *Near-Living Environments* at Art for Lunch at the Art Gallery of Alberta.

Thursday, February 21, 2013

12:10 pm – 12:50 pm

Ledcor Theatre, Art Gallery of Alberta

Admission is free

About Simons

Simons was founded in 1840 by John Simons as a dry goods store in Quebec City. Since then, the company has built its reputation on being passionate about fashion – a value that has been handed down from generation to generation. Simons offers a curated selection of renowned international designers (such as Balmain, Missoni and Paul Smith), as well as an exhaustive, fashion-forward collection of its own exclusive and innovative private label brands for men and women. Simons also carries home fashions for the bedroom, bathroom and kitchen. In addition to the West Edmonton Mall location that opened in fall 2013, Simons has seven well-established stores in Quebec: Montreal, Laval, St. Bruno, Sherbrooke, and three locations in Quebec City, including its headquarters in Old Quebec.

Follow Simons on Twitter: @SIMONS_eng (English) or @Simons (French), Facebook: facebook.com/simons.ca or visit www.simons.ca.

About Philip Beesley Architect Inc.

Philip Beesley Architect Inc. is an interdisciplinary design firm located in Toronto, Canada. The studio's design methods incorporate advanced digital visualization, industrial design, digital prototyping, and mechatronics engineering. Sculptural work in the past decade has focused on lightweight 'textile' environments and landscape installations. Experimental projects have increasingly focussed on lightweight and immersive digitally fabricated "textile" structures, featuring interactive kinetic systems that use dense arrays of microprocessors, sensors and actuator systems. These environments combine synthetic and near-living systems in pursuit of a distributed emotional consciousness. Currently, there are 15 artists, designers, architects, and engineers within the collective.

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