



[Home](#) > [Times Square Arts](#) > [Projects](#) > [At the Crossroads](#) > THE POEM

## THE POEM

April 8 – May 4, 2022

Raúl Cordero

Duffy Square (Broadway at 46th Street)

Share:



### Events Celebrating *The Poem*:

- **Friday, April 8, 2–3pm:** Public unveiling
- **Thursday, April 21, 6–7pm:** Poetry reading, hosted by PEN America's Artists at Risk Connection with PEN International
- **Friday, April 22, 6–7pm:** Poetry reading, hosted by LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs
- **Thursday, April 28, 6–7pm:** Poetry reading, hosted by Barry Schwabsky
- **Friday, April 29, 6–7pm:** Poetry reading, hosted by Paolo Javier

[See more details](#)

In the center of Times Square's urban landscape, Cuban-born artist Raúl Cordero creates an unexpected oasis — a 20-foot tower covered in a cascade of mountain laurel hosting an illuminated poem inside. The landscaped structure is designed to narrow the sensory overload of Times Square to a concentrated line of vision, drawing the eye to a patch of open sky and the words of the poem overhead. Playing with the architecture and energy of Times Square, Cordero offers us a respite from the attention economy in the form of poetry and nature.

Written by poet and educator Barry Schwabsky and created specifically for Cordero's Times Square installation, the characters of the poem take shape through glowing bulbs of black light affixed to the interior of the foliage. The structure of the letters forces viewers to linger longer to receive the message — emblematic of Cordero's ongoing investigation into effects of the digital age on the human mind, specifically our waning ability to focus and the increasing urge to relentlessly multitask.

calm silence rolls	deftly through so much clamor	roar echo un heard
--------------------------	----------------------------------------	--------------------------

Cordero's project is also inspired by and dedicated to fellow Cuban and poet Reinaldo Arenas, an exile of the Cuban government who battled AIDS which led to death by suicide in 1990. As a child, Arenas would write poems while sitting in a tree, a pastime that inspired the height and foliage feel of Cordero's installation. Arenas spent his final years as a creative in New York City, living only two blocks away from *THE POEM*'s location.

"It's difficult to create meaningful art for people in an era when their attention is scattered across so many mediums and technologies simultaneously. *THE POEM* seeks to stop time, reminding us that humans also have the capacity to invest in one thing at a time — like listen to 'the secret dialogue of trees' (as put poetically by Reinaldo Arenas) and read a poem, even when standing in the center of Times Square."  
— Raúl Cordero

In conjunction with the project, Cordero will be presenting text-based video works across digital billboards, and free public programming on the ground featuring New York City's diverse poetry community. Throughout the run of the exhibition, LaTasha Nevada Diggs, Paolo Javier, Barry Schwabsky, and PEN America will each curate evenings of poetry readings and live performance celebrating *THE POEM* and local poets.

Details on upcoming events in conjunction with *THE POEM*, taking place on *Dutty Square*:

**Thursday, April 21, 6-7pm**

PEN America's Artists at Risk Connection (ARC) and PEN International will host readings from poets **Jamie Manrique**, **Melissa Lozada-Oliva**, **Eloisa Amezcua**, and **Maya Popa**, closing with a vigil in solidarity and support for artists targeted by political persecution in Cuba.

**Friday April 22, 6-7:30pm**

This night will feature a series of performances hosted by poet and sound artist **LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs**. Diggs is the author of *TWERK* (Belladonna, 2013) and has performed at California Institute of the Arts, El Museo del Barrio, The Museum of Modern Art, and Walker Art Center. The night includes readings from **Peggy Robles-Alvarado**, **Christina Olivares**, **Moncho Alvarado** and a performance from celebrated singer and producer **keiyaA**.

**Thursday, April 28, 6-7pm**

An evening hosted by **Barry Schwabsky**, poet and Art Critic at *The Nation*. A poem composed by the writer is featured along the walls of the interior of *THE POEM*. In addition to Schwabsky, the night will feature readings from poets **Monica de la Torre**, **John Yau**, and **Erica Hunt**.

**Friday April 29th, 6-7pm**

The lineup of programming concludes with an event emceed by former Queens Borough Poet Laureate **Paolo Javier**, to be broadcast live by **Montez Press Radio** (**Thomas Laprade** and **Stacy Skolnik**). The night will feature performances by **Montez Press**, comedic performer **Morgan Bassichis**, poet/curator **Paolo Javier** and electronic artist **Listening Center** (aka **David Mason**), and writer and artist **Miatta Kawinzi**.

*THE POEM* coincides with Cordero's solo show at Richard Taittinger Gallery, *HEAVEN IS A PLACE IN THE MIND*, on view through April 24.

*THE POEM* is commissioned by Times Square Arts with generous support from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and in part through support from Morgan Stanley, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature, and public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

**ABOUT RAUL CORDERO**

Known for his large format blurry paintings with dotted texts and his endless investigation into the structure and language of an artwork, Raúl Cordero (Havana, 1971) has successfully merged figurative painting and text-based conceptual art throughout his career. Exhibiting in museums and galleries around the world, while establishing a very personal universe that explores the visual manifestation of language and investigates the cognitive links between "looking at" and "reading" art.

Cordero's work can be seen in public collections around the world, including the Musée National D'Art Moderne Centre Pompidou in Paris, France; Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles (MOCA), The Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, The Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) and the Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale, in the United States of America; El Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, in Cuba; The Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK) in Gent, Belgium; El Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno (CAAM) and Museo Extremeño e Iberoamericano de Arte Contemporáneo (MEIAC) in Spain; among many others. Cordero's work is represented by Mai 36 Galerie in Zürich, Switzerland, Fredric Snitzer Gallery in Miami, and Richard Taittinger Gallery in New York, U.S.A.

TIMES SQUARE ARTS  
1560 BROADWAY, SUITE 1001, NEW YORK, NY 10036 | (212) 768-1560 | [ARTS@TIMESSQUARENYC.ORG](mailto:ARTS@TIMESSQUARENYC.ORG)  
PART OF THE TIMES SQUARE ALLIANCE

SIGN UP FOR ARTS E-NEWS



TIMES SQUARE ARTS SUPPORTED BY



© Copyright 2022 The Times Square Alliance, Inc. All rights reserved. [LEGAL](#) [TIMESSQUARENYC.ORG SITE MAP](#)