



JASON BRUGES STUDIO PRESENTS *THE CONSTANT GARDENERS* A LARGE-SCALE OUTDOOR ROBOTIC ART INSTALLATION

TOKYO TOKYO FESTIVAL SPECIAL 13
UENO PARK, TOKYO, 28 JULY - 5 SEPTEMBER 2021



Test build of *The Constant Gardeners*, 2021, photo by James Medcraft, courtesy of Jason Bruges Studio

Jason Bruges Studio is delighted to announce *The Constant Gardeners*, an unprecedented, large-scale, performative robotic art installation, which will be unveiled on 28 July 2021 in Ueno Park, Tokyo as part of the Tokyo Tokyo FESTIVAL Special 13. The artwork was commissioned by The Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Arts Council Tokyo (Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture) and is delivered in partnership with the British Council, as part of their UK/JAPAN bilateral season.

Spanning art, technology and sports, the outdoor installation will run in parallel to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, combining cutting-edge computing and the ancient tradition of the Japanese Zen garden. Analysing past video footage from across a wide range of sporting disciplines and events, *The Constant Gardeners* will create a new visual language to communicate and celebrate the motion of the professional athletes and their feats of physical prowess. The installation will produce dynamic, representative patterns, which 'the gardeners', a team of four industrial robot arms mounted on linear rails, will precisely rake into a large-scale gravel canvas, consisting of fourteen tonnes of crushed black basalt,

surrounded by a further four tonnes of silver-grey granite. In a series of daily performances, 'the gardeners' will work together to create around one-hundred-and-fifty unique illustrations throughout the duration of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Some of the performances will showcase the story of an event unfolding over time, while others will shine a light on a single spectacular movement or sporting moment.

Jason Bruges Studio explores the interrelationships between people, data, technology and nature, creating spatial interventions that disrupt urban life and encourage visitors to slow down and reconnect with their surroundings. *The Constant Gardeners* and the mesmerising raking of its 'gardeners' will offer visitors a peaceful space for quiet introspection in the heart of Tokyo's cultural district. The artwork draws inspiration from the aesthetic and craft of the traditional Zen garden and from the sportsmen and women who carefully hone and perfect their movements to train and excel in their fields. The artwork uses second hand industrial robots, reclaimed from a lifetime of working in factory foundries and in this piece Jason Bruges Studio reflects on the role of machines in our daily lives and suggests a new narrative around robotics, which highlights their potential for experimental creativity.

Jason Bruges, Creative Director and Founder of Jason Bruges Studio said *'We are proud to present The Constant Gardeners as part of Tokyo Tokyo FESTIVAL Special 13. By developing new paradigms in robotics and performative arts, we hope to show how innovative technologies can be used in storytelling, offering audiences in Tokyo an accessible, meaningful experience that celebrates the Tokyo 2020 Games and the incredible skill and achievements of its athletes.'*

Matthew Knowles, Director British Council, Japan, commented *'Japan is an important international partner for the UK and cultural collaborations have a key role to play in supporting economic recovery and the wellbeing of our societies as we emerge from the pandemic. The global spotlight of the Olympic and Paralympic Games offers a fantastic opportunity for the British Council to showcase the best of UK creativity in Japan and we are proud to be partnering with Jason Bruges Studio during Tokyo 2020.'*

The Constant Gardeners will be the first artwork by Jason Bruges Studio to be presented in Japan. Jason Bruges Studio is an internationally renowned pioneer in the space between art, architecture, technology and interactive design, with a specialist team of architects, industrial designers, engineers, visualisers and programmers. The Studio has worked with leading institutions including the V&A, Tate Modern and Natural History Museum in London. In 2017, they began developing large-scale urban robotic interventions presenting *Where Do We Go From Here?*, an epic night-time installation that transformed the city of Hull, UK with nightly performances by a cast of 21 industrial robots.

Notes to Editors

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About *The Constant Gardeners*

Dates: 28 July – 5 September 2021

Venue: Ueno Park, Tokyo

Organisers: Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Arts Council Tokyo (Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture)

Production and Planning: Jason Bruges Studio, supported by the British Council

Website: theconstantgardeners.art

The installation will implement various COVID-19 measures to ensure maximum safety. Visitors will be required to co-operate with the measures in place. The program is subject to change. More information will be released through *The Constant Gardeners* website.

About Jason Bruges Studio

Jason Bruges is a multi-disciplinary artist and designer based in London. Jason's work blends architecture with interaction design and uses a high-tech, mixed media palette to explore spectacle, time-based interventions and dynamic spatial experiences. He is passionate about creating site-specific pieces that engage people with their environments.

In 2002 Jason set up the studio and now works with a talented team of people to develop and deliver interactive projects worldwide. The studio comprises of an experienced team of architects, artists, engineers and computational designers as well as specialists in electronics, programming and project management.

www.jasonbruges.com

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About Tokyo Tokyo FESTIVAL

Tokyo Tokyo FESTIVAL is an initiative that unfolds a variety of cultural programs in the run-up to the Olympic and Paralympic Games held in Tokyo, promoting its appeal as a city of arts and culture.

<https://tokyotokyofestival.jp/en/>

About Tokyo Tokyo FESTIVAL Special 13

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Arts Council Tokyo sought a wide range of creative and innovative ideas from the public for projects that would become the core of the cultural programs for the Tokyo Tokyo FESTIVAL. From a total of 2,436 project proposals submitted from within Japan and overseas, 13 were selected for implementation. The 13 projects are collectively named "Tokyo Tokyo FESTIVAL Special 13," and are being implemented in sequence.

<https://ttf-koubo.jp/en/>

About Arts Council Tokyo (Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture)

Arts Council Tokyo develops a variety of programs to encourage the creation and dissemination of arts and culture and to promote Tokyo as an international city of artistic and cultural attractions.

In order to improve the infrastructure and environment for new artistic and cultural creation, Arts Council Tokyo plays a key role in Tokyo's cultural policies by implementing programs that explore Tokyo's originality and diversity, promoting international cultural exchange, and providing opportunities for promising young people who engage in a variety of artistic and cultural pursuits.

www.artscouncil-tokyo.jp/en/

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. Last year we reached over 80 million people directly and 791 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934 we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive a 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government.

www.britishcouncil.jp/en

