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Minneapolis Parks Foundation debuts 2016-2017 Next Generation of Parks™ Lecture Series on Friday, September 9, 7pm, at Northrop Auditorium

Internationally acclaimed architect Leila Araghian will talk about the award-winning Tabiat “Nature” Bridge with event host Marianne Combs

*Minnesota Public Radio presents the 2016-2017 season, which also explores the themes of recreation, water and play through the insights of planner **Maurice Cox**, designer **Mark Johnson** and parenting expert **Janet Lansbury***

Minneapolis, Minn. – The [Minneapolis Parks Foundation](#) proudly announces the 2016-2017 [Next Generation of Parks™ Lecture Series](#), presented by [Minnesota Public Radio](#) (MPR) **Leila Araghian**, co-founder of Diba Tensile Architecture in Tehran, Iran, and acclaimed architect of Tehran’s transformational Tabiat “Nature” pedestrian bridge, opens the season on Friday, September 9, with a 7pm talk in Northrop’s Best Buy Theater. **MPR Arts Reporter Marianne Combs** will host the evening, which begins with Araghian’s short presentation, followed by a deeper conversation with audience questions. The event is free and [pre-registration via Eventbrite](#) is encouraged due to strong interest in the speaker. The evening will close with a brief opening night reception immediately after the talk.

Araghian’s talk is the first of four planned events in the 2016-2017 Next Generation of Parks™ Lecture Series. Additional speakers include **Maurice Cox**, Planning Director for the City of Detroit, **Mark Johnson**, co-founder of Civitas, Inc., and **Janet Lansbury**, author of *Elevating Childcare: A Guide to Respectful Parenting*.

“This year’s speakers bring Twin Cities audiences distinct experiences and points-of-view, yet share the same passion for people and place that imbues all of our work at the Parks Foundation,” says Tom Evers, Executive Director. “From the physical forms of the famed nature bridge of Tehran to the rebirth of Detroit, and important values like universal access to water and healthy outdoor play, these lectures help us aspire to create common ground through innovative parks and programming that meet the needs of this generation and generations to come.”

The Parks Foundation created the Next Generation of Parks™ Lecture Series in 2010 to jumpstart the conversation around parks design and city-building. Through the Parks Foundation’s always-free Lecture Series events, global design innovators and local thought-leaders showcase the most exciting new parks destinations and delve into important issues of place affecting our community today.

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“Partnering with the Minneapolis Parks Foundation helps strengthen our focus on topics we care about, including Minnesota’s fresh water resources, youth and education, mental health and culture,” says Nancy Cassutt, Executive Director of News and Programming at MPR. “We’re happy to be part of this year’s series.”

2016-2017 Next Generation of Parks™ Speakers

Leila Araghian holds a BA in architecture from Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, and two Masters degrees from Anhalt University in Germany and the University of British Columbia, Canada, where she won the UBC architecture alumni Henry Elder prize. In 2011, Araghian served as technical assistant at BC Place Stadium in Vancouver, Canada. Araghian has given numerous lectures internationally, including at Anhalt University, American University of Dubai, University of Toronto, 5x15 talks in London, and University of Oklahoma.

Joining Araghian for the 2016-2017 Lecture Series are three additional acclaimed speakers:

RE-CREATION: November 4, 2016

Maurice Cox, City of Detroit

Maurice Cox, newly appointed Planning Director for the City of Detroit is an urban designer, architectural educator and former mayor of the City of Charlottesville, VA. Cox’s talk will address the role of parks in the rebirth of Detroit, including how public space design affects community health. His experience merging architecture, politics and design education led to his being named one of “20 Masters of Design” in 2004 by *Fast Company*. In 2013, Cox was named one of the Most Admired Design Educators in America in the annual ranking of *Design Intelligence*. Cox has taught at Tulane University, Syracuse University, the University of Virginia and Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design. He also served as Design Director of the National Endowment for the Arts from 2007-2010 where he led numerous national initiatives and oversaw direct design grants to the design community across the U.S.

WATER: March 9, 2017 – Co-produced with the Walker Art Center

Mark Johnson, Civitas, Inc.

Mark Johnson is co-founder and principal of Civitas, a Denver-based landscape design and urban planning firm that has made waves throughout the United States with their work on urban waterfronts. He is a recognized thought-leader in the design of urban parks and public spaces and the reuse of brownfield and industrial sites. He led the urban design for the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan and, in the Twin Cities, recently completed the Lake Effect Signature Project plan in Wayzata, Minn.

PLAY: May 2017

Janet Lansbury, Parenting Expert

Janet Lansbury is a parenting expert whose respectful parenting advice is quoted and shared by millions of readers worldwide. Inspired by the pioneering parenting philosophy of her friend and mentor, Magda Gerber, Janet encourages parents and childcare professionals to initiate and direct independent play for extended periods. In addition to *Elevating Child Care: A Guide to Respectful Parenting*, she’s also authored *No Bad Kids: Toddler Discipline Without Shame*. Lansbury’s town hall-style conversation will be the centerpiece of an outdoor all-ages daytime event featuring innovative ways to bring families and communities together through play.

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Thank You to our 2016-2017 Partners & Sponsors

The 2016-2017 Next Generation of Parks™ Lecture Series is presented by Minnesota Public Radio and produced in partnership with the [Walker Art Center](#) and [University of Minnesota Department of Landscape Architecture](#), with additional support from the [Cynthia Froid Group](#). The Park Foundation is grateful for their support. For information about sponsorship opportunities, please [email Janette Law](#), Director of Communications & Strategic Partnerships.

About the Minneapolis Parks Foundation

The Minneapolis Parks Foundation is an independent, donor-supported nonprofit that brings visionary leadership, philanthropic investment and private sector expertise to support innovation and equity throughout the Minneapolis park system. It co-leads the [RiverFirst Initiative](#) with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and is responsible for private fundraising and implementation of the [Water Works](#) and 26th Ave N to Ole Olson projects. MPF supports innovative Minneapolis parks projects through equity funding and champions world-class design through its [Next Generation of Parks™ Lecture Series](#). Become a Member at [MplsParksFoundation.org](#).

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