

Greenway Conservancy Announces 6th Annual Chinese Zodiac Public Art Installation for Year of the Mouse

*Furen Dai's installation showcases the history and function of
Chinese characters on The Greenway*

February 6, 2020 – Boston, MA – The [Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy](#) today announced the completed installation of a new public art commission, [A Mouse with Ears and Tail / 带耳朵和尾巴的老鼠](#), from artist Furen Dai, continuing the annual curation of sculptural installations celebrating the twelve years of the Chinese Zodiac.

Furen Dai's practice has focused on the economy of cultural industries and how languages lose function, usage, and history over time. Her years as a professional translator and interest in linguistic studies have guided her artistic practice since 2015. For the "Year of the Mouse," as Dai grew up saying in China, Dai researched the evolutionary process of the Chinese character "鼠", which means "mouse" from the ancient Oracle bone script to what we use nowadays – SimSun font.

When foreign characters are placed in a different cultural context, people without knowledge of the language tend to read the character as a series of abstract lines and shapes. This artwork explores the experience of viewing a Chinese character from both a native and foreign perspective, encouraging both Chinese speakers and non-Chinese speakers to see "mouse" when viewing "鼠". In this work, the small mouse of the ancient Oracle bone script races around the contemporary SimSun font, which is in turn transformed into a cartoon mouse figure blinking and beckoning us in with its warm, neon glow. The installation will run from February 2020 through January 2021.

"A Mouse with Ears and Tail is a visually stimulating take on the study of Etymology, through the use of neon; serving as a catalyst for engagement and understanding in a historic community such as Chinatown," said Lucas Cowan, Greenway Conservancy Curator of Public Art. "We're excited to celebrate the history, connections, and values that each installation brings to both the residents of Chinatown and the many visitors throughout The Greenway."

With the aim of celebrating both past and present, each year a new artwork has been installed in front of the Essex Street Gate. The installation's goal is to celebrate the culture, history, and





traditions of the Chinese New Year and the Chinatown community through the ideas and expressions of contemporary artists. Past zodiac curations have included Elliott Kayser's ceramic pig sculptures, [Year of the Pig](#) (2019), Risa Puno's community storytelling abacus, [Year of the Dog](#) (2018), Chis Templeman's 3D rooster printer [Make and Take](#) (2017), Don Kennell's 12-foot [Monkey See](#) (2016), and Kyu Seok Oh's paper-mache [Wandering Sheep](#) (2015).

"By working with the Greenway Conservancy on this project, I'm able to fulfill my first public art commission. The process was challenging in an exciting way as I had the opportunity to experiment with a new medium, expand my studio practice to working with professional fabricators, and think of moving my art practice from a traditional art space to the public realm," said artist Furen Dai. "It was a professional yet warm experience working with Public Art Program staff at the Greenway Conservancy as they trusted in me and guided me through the whole process."

A [Greenway Artist Meet & Greet](#) event with Furen Dai will take place on Tuesday, February 25, from 5-7p at Radian, 120 Kingston St, Boston, MA 02111.

This installation is funded exclusively through competitive grants and private sources, including The Barr Foundation and New England Foundation of the Arts and created in partnership with [Neon Williams](#). Photo requests may be forwarded to rlake@rosekennedygreenway.org.

About The Greenway and the Greenway Conservancy (www.rosekennedygreenway.org)

The Greenway is the contemporary public park in the heart of Boston. The Greenway welcomes millions of visitors annually to gather, play, unwind, and explore. The Greenway Conservancy is the non-profit responsible for the management and care of The Greenway. The majority of the public park's annual budget is generously provided by private sources.

The Greenway Conservancy Public Art Program brings innovative and contemporary art to Boston through free, seasonal exhibitions, engaging people in meaningful experiences, interactions, and dialogue with art and each other. Over the past 7 years The Greenway has been awarded 8 Public Art Network Awards through the Americans for the Arts, placing the Greenway

Conservancy in a preeminent position among nonprofits. Past Greenway exhibitions can be viewed on [the Conservancy's website](#).

About Furen Dai (www.furendai.com)

Furen hybrid art practice utilizes video, sound, sculpture, painting and collaboration. Dai received a Bachelor in Russian Language Studies from Beijing Foreign Studies University; she also holds an MFA degree from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University. Dai has received an Excellence Award from the 21st Japan Media Art Festival, The Art Newspaper commission for Frieze Art Fair New York 2019, the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation Fellowship, Art OMI residency, International Studio and Curatorial Program Residency.



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