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Solar-Powered Art Installation Lights Up Community Garden After Dark



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Alex Nathanson

Community Garden to present "Nightlight," a light-based outdoor installati

LONG ISLAND CITY — Who says you can't stay in the park after dark?

A community art group is turning a neighborhood garden into an interactive exhibit, featuring a solar-powered installation that lights up the space after sundown.

Art collective Flux Factory (<http://www.fluxfactory.org>) is partnering with the LIC Community Garden (<https://sites.google.com/site/liccommunitygarden/home>) to present "Nightlight," keeping the garden open until 9:30 p.m. each evening through June 28 to let visitors see the installation, which uses projectors, shadows and motion sensors to transform the space after dark.

Components of the exhibit include LED lights hidden throughout the garden that are triggered by visitors' footsteps, an image of a dancing palm tree that changes (<http://www.julius-schmiedel.de/>) when people stand near it, and a sculpture that moves with the wind (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoWScC-VRL0#t=16>), casting shadows on a wall next door.

"A lot of them need to be interacted with in order to be triggered," said Carina Kaufman, the residency manager at Flux Factory, who organized the exhibit with co-curator Alex Nathanson.

"We wanted to create a space that anybody can engage with, no matter what time of day it is," she said.

The exhibit is run on a solar-powered circuit, with batteries that charge up during the day.

The peak viewing time is the hour around sunset, organizers said, and the park is being kept open until around 9:30 p.m. each evening through June 28, weather permitting — though some components are visible from the street even when the park is closed.

LIC Community Garden is located on 49th Avenue between Vernon Boulevard and 5th Street, once a vacant lot belonging to the Parks Department. It was being used as a dumping ground for a nearby auto body shop until residents petitioned for the rights to clean it up and turn it into a garden in 1990.

"[There are] not so many places that are open, and free and accessible after dark that are public land," said Kaufman. "We were super lucky to be able to work with the community garden and curate this."

A free closing party for the exhibit will take place on June 28 between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m., and will feature a performance by artist Merche Blasco (<http://half-half.es/>), in which participants will be given solar-powered flashlights to trigger light sensors

spread throughout the garden.



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