

# VITO ACCONCI

## ARCHITECTURAL INSTALLATION creates public art at Waterparkcity



**OFFICIAL CEREMONIES WERE HELD** to mark the dedication to the City of Toronto of the Acconci Studio's-created public art architectural installation at WaterParkCity, a multi-tower condominium community by Lanterra Developments and Lifetime Developments. Vito Acconci - formerly a poet and performance/installation-artist, now a designer/architect, joined Lanterra's Chairman Mark Mandelbaum (above right) and President & CEO Barry Fenton (above left), and David Anselmi (centre), Chair of Toronto's Public Art Commission for the celebration.

Fully completed WaterParkCity is located in Toronto's historic Fort York Neighbourhood, steps from Coronation Park and public attractions such as the Princes' Gate at Exhibition Place, Ontario Place and the Waterfront Trail along Lake Ontario. This unique interpretation of concrete-and-steel perimeter fencing encircles the exterior of 219 and 231 Fort York Boulevard at the award-winning community, creating an interplay between public space and private residential areas.

To fully appreciate the impact of this fresh approach, Acconci led attendees on a walking tour of the installation, where traditional materials were reshaped through the use of heat and hammers to create a surrounding that swoops and twists around the complex of buildings. As it rises and falls, the new fence makes seating that turns into privacy screens, trellises, an entrance canopy, and windscreens that climb the building. The Acconci Studio installation

was commissioned through a juried competition in keeping with the developer's commitment to enhance the public spaces of the communities it builds, and as part of the City of Toronto Private Developer Percent for Public Art program overseen by Toronto's Planning and Development Department. The competition was managed by Public Art Management.

"We want our projects to be multiply useful," Acconci said. "That way, users can decide what they want to do - they don't need to be told what to do. This is a new neighborhood, and we wanted to draw attention to it. We hoped that, by letting the fence go wild, we could allow people to engage with it on their own terms and let something useful become complex and fun."

Jury member and developer Mark Mandelbaum said, "We are proud to have Vito Acconci's artistic vision as an integral part of WaterParkCity. His work is known around the world for its creativity and fluidity. The flow of the materials suggests water and waves, a concept that is especially appropriate due to WaterParkCity's location next to Lake Ontario."

According to David Anselmi, Chair of Toronto's Public Art Commission, "The WaterParkCity installation by Vito Acconci and Acconci Studio demonstrates the distinctive and provocative work that typifies this very fine international artist. It is gratifying that the lengthy, but truly collaborative process involving the City of Toronto staff, Toronto Public Art Commission, the private developer and public art consultant has culminated in such an iconic project. Toronto is most fortunate to have added this great landmark to its growing collection of innovative Public Art."

"This interesting installation is the result of a long-range vision, and involved a technically challenging process," added Karen Mills of Public Art Management. "Acconci Studio transformed a portion of the building to inspire an interesting dialogue among people, the building, the artwork and the street. Vito and his team set out to challenge our notions of private and public, and how people interact between these spaces. The result is an extraordinary collaboration between art and engineering."