

ALUNA – a tidal powered Moon Clock for London?

Press release 24.10.06

The ALUNA project, which has developed plans to build a tidal powered Moon Clock, is one step closer to finding a site on the River Thames in London. The team behind the proposal for the global landmark, led by artist Laura Williams, has opened initial discussions with Lee Valley Regional Park Authority about the possibility of leasing land at East India Dock Basin. ALUNA has also received the backing of major arts, science and regeneration figures in London including the Deputy Mayor **Nicky Gavron**, the Artistic Director of the South Bank **Jude Kelly**, the architect and planner **Sir Terry Farrell** and the President of the Royal Society **Sir Martin Rees**.

ALUNA is a glass and steel structure of three concentric rings, illuminated by tidal energy. The waterside sculpture will show the lunar phase, the lunar day and the ebb and flow of the tide by lightening or darkening the individual rings of glass. The wider message of the 40-metre diameter structure is to promote an understanding of environmental sustainability and a world of many cultures, where the major religions are united by their reliance on the moon for their holy calendars. ALUNA brings to life the natural sciences behind our watery planet and, in these times of global warming and rising sea levels, will act as an indicator for spring tides every new and full moon, warning us when the potential for flooding is at its highest. Using the latest energy efficient LED and tidal turbine technologies combined with community-collected, locally produced recycled glass cladding, ALUNA will be a beacon for an environmentally sustainable future. It will be powered directly by the River Thames' tides, thus by the moon. In addition to powering the sculpture itself, it is envisaged that ALUNA will generate enough renewable energy for a potential Visitor Centre and surrounding homes.

The architect and Thames Gateway planner Sir Terry Farrell said “The ALUNA project is easily among the most exciting new projects and major visitor attractions for London’s Thames. Laura Williams’ brilliant idea links the moon and tides in an iconic sculptural form that is powered by tidal turbines and made of recycled glass and steel. It is symbolic of the vision for East London and the Thames Gateway as an exciting place to live and work. I am very keen that all of us who are interested in the tidal Thames will find a way to realise the fundraising and construction of this beautiful project.”

London is home to the Meridian, the global measure of standardised time. From the site at East India Dock Basin you can see the Meridian laser at night from across the river in Greenwich, and you can see the Greenwich Observatory Time Ball during the day. The ball was used to allow ships in the docks to set their chronometers before setting sail to navigate the seas. Placing ALUNA at this spot on the Thames would reawaken interest in all forms of timekeeping. According to **David Rooney, Curator of Timekeeping at the Royal Observatory Greenwich** “ALUNA....provokes conversations and raises questions about the nature of time and space, and, more importantly, about us: how our actions and inventions and hopes and fears sit

in a long time and a big space. We need ALUNA; we need to be reminded about our past and our future, and what a magnificent and gentle and beautiful reminder it is."

Situating the Moon Clock, which will be a major visitor attraction, in the most culturally diverse borough of London will resonate with the project's aims, and provide a 21st century symbol for the regeneration of East London and the Thames Gateway. The project has been backed by the **Muslim Council of Great Britain**, and inspired interest and support from representatives of Judaism, Christianity and Buddhism. ALUNA's aim is to be a non-denominational place where a variety of cultures can celebrate our humanity in its unity and diversity.

A spokesman for **Docklands Light Railway**, which would be the main public route to the site and is involved as a project partner, said "ALUNA is an impressive proposal for a striking landmark for the Lower Lea Valley. It embraces the key themes of regeneration, community understanding and social inclusion which are key factors in the on-going renaissance of Docklands."

ALUNA's global relevance is raising increasing international interest in building it elsewhere. Cities in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Australia have expressed interest in the project. A recent visit to North America by ALUNA's designer, Laura Williams, as a guest of the International Association of Lighting Designers, resulted in interest in a sister sculpture there. It would be a huge loss to the UK if this project were allowed to go abroad. **Nicky Gavron, Deputy Mayor of London**, says it would be "dreadful" if another city got there first. "Once you see the scale of the project it is obvious how powerful and iconic it will be. It is essential to maintain the momentum and turn an excellent concept into reality on the ground. The ALUNA Moon Clock project is amongst the most interesting and imaginative proposals I have seen while being Deputy Mayor. It has the potential to become symbolic of the regeneration planned for the Lower Lea Valley in association with London's successful Olympics bid and, indeed, for the regeneration of the whole Thames Gateway. The project is of regional significance and in the right location, could have a comparable defining role for its area as the Angel of the North has for the North East. London is the most diverse and cosmopolitan city on Earth. The Moon has an important place in many cultures and religions. The ALUNA Moon Clock will therefore become a focus of community understanding and inclusion as well as a landmark and a scientific instrument."

ALUNA has captured the imagination of the public, but we are still waiting for someone in business or philanthropy with the vision and finances to come on board and help get the project off the ground. Hailed as the modern day Stonehenge, ALUNA presents a unique opportunity to be involved in one of the largest and most ambitious public arts project ever undertaken. ALUNA is much more than public art as we know it, as it is a complex scientific instrument powered by renewable energy.

The project will feature at a major event on the nature of time at the National Maritime Museum on Saturday January 27th 2007. It will also be showcased at a public art event called New Ideas for London, at the Hayward Gallery on London's South Bank in March. **Jude Kelly OBE, Artistic Director of the South Bank Centre**, said "ALUNA is symbolic of the quality of imagination and creativity of our home grown artists. We must find ways to enable individuals to express their visions on the large canvass which will enhance the public realm."

There are many ways to get involved with the ALUNA project through sponsorship. These include direct financial support, goods and services in kind, and materials / technical sponsorship. Sponsors will benefit from being associated with an internationally recognisable landmark that will bring with it huge social benefits including education, regeneration, tourism, and a sense of community. It will also be an opportunity to showcase materials and technology on a global stage.

Please download ALUNA's sponsorship overview for further information.

Since July 2002 over £500,000 has already been invested in terms of support in kind, grants, sponsorship, materials and individual contributions.

If you are interested in joining the growing number of sponsors of the ALUNA project or finding out more about sponsorship opportunities, please email Jason Hollingsworth, sponsorship@alunatime.org or call the Project Office on +44 (0)20 7683 1138.

www.alunatime.org