

MEDIA CONTACT: Holly Taylor
htaylor@first-works.org
401-421-4278
[High-resolution images available](#)



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 22, 2018

**FirstWorks Spectacle Invites Attendees to Light Up PVDfest
Renowned Pilobolus Brings The Umbrella Project to Providence**

World-class Dance and MIT Robotics Combine for Three Dazzling Collective Performances

Providence, RI - FirstWorks is thrilled to announce that **Pilobolus**, described as a “mind-blowing troupe of wildly creative and physically daring dancers” by Newsday, will return to Providence for the 2018 edition of **PVDfest**. On Saturday, June 9, the legendary movement illusionists will lead dozens of participants in “**The Umbrella Project**” (UP!, for short), a dazzling illuminated community art experience that will light up downtown Providence. **PVDfest**, Providence's signature art festival, is hosted for the fourth year by Mayor Jorge O. Elorza, the **City of Providence's Department of Art, Culture + Tourism** and founding creative partner **FirstWorks**.

Curated by **FirstWorks**, “**The Umbrella Project**” is a colorful spectacle in which participants illuminate the night with LED umbrellas developed by **Pilobolus** in collaboration with MIT Computer Lab. A large overhead screen projects an aerial view as the umbrellas change color, with participants of all levels of mobility moving throughout the outdoor space. Non-participants are also welcome to attend and behold the power of their community in motion!

“It's special to reintroduce Providence to Pilobolus, movement artists that have been so pivotal to FirstWorks,” says FirstWorks Executive Artistic Director Kathleen Pletcher. “Their innovative Umbrella Project promises to be one of those memory-making PVDfest moments that live on in

our collective imaginations. People still talk about Pilobolus' stunning performance as the very first artist in FirstWorks' inaugural 2004 season. Pilobolus' PVDFest appearance is also an exciting kick-off to a collaboration during FirstWorks' upcoming 15th Anniversary Season."

The sheer innovation and marriage of dance and cutting-edge robotics and technology make "The Umbrella Project" a perfect capstone for the theme of this year's Ideas Conference, Cyborg Cities: People, Technology, and Urban Spaces, taking place on Thursday, June 7 at Providence Public Library.

"The Umbrella Project' is an opportunity for festival-goers to really be a part of the magic that makes the PVDFest experience so powerful," says Stephanie Fortunato, Director of Providence's Department of Art, Culture + Tourism. "This kind of art lets us put our PVDFest tagline into motion. Come participate, create, and celebrate with us!"

Beginning just after sundown, Pilobolus' three consecutive evening performances (at 8:30, 9:30 and 10:30 p.m.), sponsored by Cox Communications, will allow festival attendees multiple opportunities to experience and participate in the brilliantly illuminated magic of "The Umbrella Project." There is no need for participants to sign up in advance. They can simply show up at 101 Washington Street 20 minutes before each performance.

Pilobolus has a long creative relationship with FirstWorks. They headlined the inaugural FirstWorksProv Festival in 2004, appearing in Providence for the first time in over 25 years. "Pilobolus always brings new discoveries to FirstWorks audiences," Pletcher says, "and 'The Umbrella Project' epitomizes their unique collaborative creative process."

The City's signature arts festival returns June 7-10, 2018 when Mayor Jorge O. Elorza, the City of Providence's Department of Art, Culture + Tourism and founding creative partner FirstWorks will host PVDfest for a fourth year. Providence's world-renowned art, culture and culinary communities join forces with artists from across the country and globe to deliver a once in a lifetime experience. Live music, dance, food, and visual art installations transform the city in a four-day, multi-arts take-over of public spaces, parks, and outdoor stages in the heart of Providence, Rhode Island.

Please visit PVDfest.com as the schedule is updated with stage locations.

About Pilobolus

Pilobolus is an internationally renowned movement company. For 45 years, they have tested the limits of human physicality, exploring the power of connected bodies. **Pilobolus** performs internationally for 300,000+ people each year – and creates custom performances, digital content, movement experiments, and live events. You've seen them at the Oscars, the VMAs, and the Olympics, and collaborating with OK Go, the NFL, Hyundai, RadioLab, and more. Honors include a TED Fellowship, a Grammy® Nomination, a Primetime Emmy® Award, and several Cannes Lion Awards. “**The Umbrella Project**” has appeared at festivals throughout the world including Baltimore (2016), Singapore (2016), and Brooklyn Bridge Park (2017). The project was conceived in collaboration with CSAIL at MIT Distributed Robotics Laboratory.

About FirstWorks

FirstWorks is a non-profit based in Providence, R.I., dedicated to connecting art with audiences. Since 2004, **FirstWorks**' signature strengths - sustained partnerships and innovative strategies - have propelled their growth as the only First Night festival in the country to become a year-round arts organization. Their season includes **The Artistic Icons Series**, **The Frontier Series**, and **Arts Learning** benefiting over 4,000 low-income students across Rhode Island. The **FirstWorks** engagement practice is hailed as a “national model” for developing new audiences with world-class artists, having connected Rhode Island audiences with new works by Yo-Yo Ma, Urban Bush Women, and Paul Taylor Dance Company. **FirstWorks** is honored to partner with the City of Providence. Since the 2012 FirstWorks Festival on the Plaza, **FirstWorks** and the **Department of Art, Culture, and Tourism** have been awarded three prestigious “Our Town” grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. Learn more at First-Works.org.

About PVDfest

For the fourth year, Mayor Jorge O. Elorza, **the City of Providence's Department of Art, Culture+ Tourism** and founding creative partner **FirstWorks** will host **PVDfest**, Providence's signature art festival, June 7-10, 2018. Providence's world-renowned art, culture and culinary community join forces with artists from across the country and globe to deliver a once in a lifetime experience. Live music, dance, food, and visual art installations transform the city in a four-day, multi-arts take-over of public spaces, parks, and outdoor stages in the heart of Providence, Rhode Island. More info at <http://pvdfest.com>.

Listing Information:

WHO: **Pilobolus "The Umbrella Project" Lights Up PVDfest**

WHAT: Festival attendees are invited to participate in an interactive light display

WHEN: **Saturday, June 9, 2018** at **8:30, 9:30, and 10:30 p.m.**

WHERE: **Downtown Providence** (101 Washington Street Stage)

TICKETS: **FREE – no tickets required**

###