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NEW YORK STATE CANAL CORPORATION AND THE ERIE CANAL MUSEUM LAUNCH ERIE CANAL ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

New Instagram Channel [@all524miles](#) Now Live, Video of Artist [here](#)

The New York State Canal Corporation and the Erie Canal Museum today announced that Matthew López-Jensen, a Bronx-based, interdisciplinary environmental artist, has been named the 2023 Erie Canal Artist-in-Residence (AIR), the first in the history of both organizations. The AIR program will focus on a year-long creative inquiry into the Canal and the logistics of Canal maintenance and operations – what is required to keep the Canal in a state of good repair so that it remains reliable and safe for all users.

“Through this unique collaboration with the Erie Canal Museum, we are thrilled to welcome Matthew aboard,” said **New York State Canal Corporation Director Brian U. Stratton**. “Though new to us here at Canals, AIR programs have been successfully employed in New York City government agencies and other places to enhance and encourage interactions between government and communities. We are excited to host Matthew for his residency and to reflect upon the Canal’s physical, environmental, and social condition through new eyes.”

Over the course of the year, López-Jensen will engage with the Canal and adjacent Empire State Trail, Canal Corporation staff, canalside communities, and visitors. He will spend the first four months of his residency shadowing Canal Corporation staff and visiting Canal sites before proposing and initiating his artistic project. Community engagement is an important element of the AIR program and López-Jensen will host three public-facing events over the course of his residency to share his artistic practice. Lopez-Jensen has launched a new Instagram channel - [@all524miles](#) – to document his AIR experiences.

The AIR program was created through a partnership between the New York Power Authority and Canal Corporation’s *Reimagine the Canals* initiative and the Erie Canal Museum in Syracuse. López-Jensen was selected via an open call for artists conducted in late 2022 that attracted 40 applicants. The Canal Corporation and the Erie Canal Museum have previously partnered on a two-year Erie Canal Fellowship to tell a more inclusive history of the Canal, and on a series of tours of iconic Canal infrastructure.

New York Power Authority Vice President of Planning for *Reimagine the Canals* **Angelyn Chandler** said, “We are excited to welcome Matthew Lopez-Jensen as the inaugural Erie Canal Artist-in-Residence. We launched this program to expand awareness and appreciation for the tremendous work it takes to keep the Canal in good working order. Artists have the power to share unique points of view and to illuminate how the everyday can be remarkable. Matt will dedicate his first four months to engaging with Canals staff and experiencing the Canal system first-hand. During the rest of the year Matt will develop a public-facing art project based on his Canal experiences. The *Reimagine the Canals* initiative is helping to prepare the Canal system for its third century of use, and maintenance and care are at the foundation of everything we do.”

Erie Canal Museum Executive Director Natalie Stetson said, “We are grateful to be partnering with the Canal Corporation in hosting Matthew López-Jensen as the first Erie Canal Artist-in-Residence. The Museum’s mission is to engage the public in the story of the Erie Canal’s transformative impacts on peoples and places in the past, present, and future. The impact of the Erie Canal is immeasurable, affecting the land and lives of generations of New Yorkers. Each year we find creative ways to share the story of the Erie Canal, and for 2023 we are dedicating our programming to *Ode: Exploring the Erie Canal through Art*. As one part of *Ode*, the Artist-in-Residence project is providing us with an opportunity to continue expanding our reach outside of the walls of the Museum and connect with our community in new way.”

2023 Artist-in-Residence Matthew López-Jensen said, “It is truly an honor to be the first Artist-in-Residence working on behalf of the New York State Canal Corporation, and Erie Canal Museum for the next year, and I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity. There is an overwhelming amount of inspiration residing in the history, landscape, and surrounding communities of New York’s canals that I could spend years working and not run out of ideas and projects. Much of my work is about the relationship between people and the landscape; rivers and waterways articulate this relationship with a particular clarity. There are so many scenes on the Canal where geology, hydrology, ecology, infrastructure, and community reside in a single frame.”

López-Jensen is a Bronx-based, interdisciplinary environmental artist whose projects combine social practice, walking, mapping, photography, and research. He is a Guggenheim Fellow in photography and has twice received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts in support of site-specific landscape projects. López-Jensen teaches environmental art and photography at Fordham University and Parsons School of Design. His work is in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Gallery of Art and the Brooklyn Museum, among other institutions. He received his MFA from the University of Connecticut, and his BA from Rice University. Lopez-Jensen previously served as an artist-in-residence with the New York City Urban Field Station which is a collaboration between the United States Forest Service and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

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About the New York State Canal Corporation

New York's Canal system includes four canals: the Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga–Seneca. Spanning 524 miles, the waterway links the Hudson River with the Great Lakes, the Finger Lakes and Lake Champlain. The canals form the backbone of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and connect hundreds of unique and historic communities.

The New York State Canal Corporation is a subsidiary of the New York Power Authority.

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About the Erie Canal Museum

Located in Downtown Syracuse, NY since 1962, the Erie Canal Museum engages the public in the story of the Erie Canal's transformative impacts on peoples and places in the past, present, and future. We are stewards and interpreters of Erie Canal related materials and heritage. The Museum is open daily from 10 AM – 4 PM and offers exhibits with interactive displays and original artifacts, and engaging programs.

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