

## Illuminated River features as part of Winter Lights at Waddesdon



**Above:** *Illuminated River artwork on Waterloo Bridge, Golden Jubilee Footbridges, Westminster Bridge and Lambeth Bridge © James Newton.*

Waddesdon, the Rothschild House & Gardens in Buckinghamshire, is featuring a new display dedicated to Illuminated River and the work of artist Leo Villareal, opening this week (13th November 2021 – 3rd January 2022), as part of the Winter Light trail.

Leo Villareal is acclaimed world-wide for his light installations in public spaces as well as more intimate settings. The exhibition, staged in the atmospheric context of the Coach House, is an opportunity to discover more about his most recent high-profile installation in London, Illuminated River, and to explore a selection of his standalone pieces.

Illuminated River is the visionary public art installation that has reframed the Thames at night, celebrating Central London's historic links with the river. Subtly moving light installations over nine bridges, from London to Lambeth, have transformed perceptions of the river, with every bridge having a different, never-repeated lighting algorithm. In turn, these artworks have highlighted the beauty of each individual bridge, while drawing attention to London's varied architectural and engineering heritage. Illuminated River will be in place for at least 10 years and forms the longest public art commission in the world.

The delivery of this monumental installation crossed disciplines of art, design, lighting, technology, planning and construction, informed by expertise including ecology, sustainability and civil engineering. Learnings from this project are being shared for the benefit of all, with the Illuminated River Foundation making its extensive and unique research freely available as a public resource.

It is the first time that this inspirational project can be experienced outside of London; visitors will be able to learn about it through a series of short videos, alongside a filmed interview with Leo Villareal.

Three standalone pieces by the artist also feature, entitled Blossom (2003), Radiant (2016) and Empyrean Tide (2020). These works take visitors on a journey of the artist's trajectory created using LEDs, customized software and electrical hardware. Each show how changing technology and materials have influenced his light works, and display his breadth and creativity to a wider audience.

As with this exhibition, light is a key component of the Winter Light trail. This annual event is a magical opportunity for visitors to explore the celebrated grounds with a new light trail for 2021 that includes eleven Winter Light features and 3.2km of festoon lighting. New elements include a new light display in the Rose Garden as well as the stunning colourful tree canopies at the end of the trail where a musical walk-through lightshow has been created. In addition, there is a festive Christmas Fair with over 80 artisan makers and craftsmen.

Artist Leo Villareal comments on the exhibition: "I am honored to have Illuminated River along with a few other examples of my work on display in the Coach House Gallery as part of the annual Christmas at Waddesdon celebration as yet another example of the ongoing generosity of the Rothschild Foundation as they continue to present incredible experiences for all to enjoy."