

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
**NEWS RELEASE**  
CHICAGO OFFICE OF TOURISM

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**CHICAGO OFFICE OF TOURISM NAMES JIM LASKO  
ITS FIRST “ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE”**

The Chicago Office of Tourism, a division of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, has named Jim Lasko its first-ever Artist-in-Residence. Lasko, the former Artistic Director of Redmoon Theater, will oversee creation of a new large-scale cultural event to take place in 2011, as well as the ongoing development of neighborhood artistic collaborations. This event, equal parts public spectacle and urban festival, will unite the city in a common celebration.

“We are thrilled to have Jim Lasko, one of Chicago’s most creative individuals, join the Chicago Office of Tourism,” said Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Lois Weisberg. “Chicago is the only city in the country to have its entire tourism operation housed within the Department of Cultural Affairs. This appointment of Jim Lasko, which we believe is the first of its kind in the nation, furthers our commitment to promoting Chicago as a premier cultural destination to travelers from around the world.”

Cultural tourism is a major travel motivator. Visitors to Chicago engage in cultural activities at a rate of more than four times the national average. Additionally, according to a Smithsonian Magazine study, cultural tourists spend more money while at a destination and stay longer.

“The event that Jim Lasko has been charged with creating will reveal all of Chicago’s great diversity and cultural life. It promises to capture the imagination of our city, while creating a compelling reason for visitors from around the world to come here,” said Chicago Office of Tourism Director Dorothy Coyle. “We are excited to begin this partnership with Jim and are confident that his unique vision and stellar record will combine to bring something truly magical and unforgettable to Chicago.”

Jim Lasko served as Artistic Director of Chicago’s renowned Redmoon Theater from 1992 through 2008. At Redmoon, he created numerous original theater and spectacle events ranging from massive public celebrations to formal indoor shows. In addition, he has received numerous commissions for spectacle and interactive design both domestically and internationally, including the Spertus Institute of Chicago, the Pritzker Family, the Zell Family, Australia’s Dream Masons, and the Living Statues competition in Arnhem, Holland. Jim is the recipient of the Meier Award for Excellence in the Arts, numerous Jeff Citations, and an Award for Excellence in Puppetry. He was also named “an artist to watch for the next decade” by the Chicago Tribune.

“I am honored to be given this opportunity to serve the City of Chicago,” said Lasko. “This project is intended to showcase everything that I love about this city: its commitment to the highest quality art, the richness of its neighborhoods, its incredible natural resources in the river and lakefront, and, above everything else, its ability to surprise, to have a grand vision and to achieve it.”

The Chicago Office of Tourism, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, is the official City agency dedicated to promoting Chicago to domestic and international visitors and to providing innovative visitor programs and services.

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