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***ACTIVATE* turns downtown Chicago alley into free one-night-only urban celebration on Thursday, Sept. 12**

Chicago Loop Alliance to transform Couch Place with DJ, interactive artworks, jugglers, video projections and more

CHICAGO (August 23, 2013)—**Chicago Loop Alliance** (CLA) will transform the **Couch Place** alley into a free one-night-only urban celebration with ***ACTIVATE*** on Thursday, Sept. 12 from 5-10 p.m. in conjunction with CLA's monthly **Pop-Up Art Loop** gallery walk. Both events are open to the public. Transportation sponsor Uber will provide one free ride to each new user attending the event using promo code **ACTIVATE13**. For more information, visit www.popupartloop.com.

ACTIVATE will frame the alley, located between State and Dearborn Streets just south of Lake Street, with a false wall of LED-backlit bricks—and once inside, visitors will enter a multidimensional art experience. Filling the alley with lighting and a 2D art exhibition curated by CLA, the celebration will kick off with a DJ and fashion show from House of Frog complete with jugglers and other unique activations, leading into a series of Victorian-era parlor games with tokens redeemable for prizes. The models and “steampunk” photographers will interact with guests throughout the evening, which also includes an interactive glowing artwork, video projections and complimentary wine and beer from Widmer Brothers Brewing.

ACTIVATE is the second placemaking initiative Chicago Loop Alliance has undertaken this year as part of the Chicago Department of Transportation's Make Way for People program, which aims to create public spaces that cultivate community and culture in Chicago's neighborhoods through placemaking. CLA's ***ACTIVATE*** in Couch Place is the City's first “People Alley.”

“Placemaking and place management have emerged as key priorities in Chicago Loop Alliance's ongoing strategic planning process, and ***ACTIVATE*** is our second experiment in activating public space this summer,” says CLA Executive Director **Michael Edwards**. “We've seen great success with The Gateway, our recently created public plaza on State Street, and are excited to continue our partnership with the Chicago Department of Transportation to Make Way for People downtown.”

The Gateway received two new additions this week: *Give*, an interactive 14-foot-tall steel sculpture by local artist Dusty Folwarczny, and a series of ongoing pop-up lunchtime performances from the

Chicago Street Musicians. Both of these activations on The Gateway, which occupies the State Street median from Lake Street north to Wacker Drive, are a continuation of CLA's efforts to improve the quality of the public realm downtown, creating a distinctive sense of place and a powerful sense of arrival into the Loop. Since opening in June, The Gateway has become a lunchtime destination, drawing 40-50 visitors at any given time during the afternoon hours.

CLA's **Pop-Up Art Loop** transforms vacant storefront space into vibrant temporary art galleries open to the public. The program's monthly gallery walks are free self-guided tours of the many new exhibits throughout the Loop. Pop-Up Art Loop is made possible through the generous support of downtown property owners and the **Chicago Loop Alliance Foundation**, which develops and promotes artistic, cultural and public events within the CLA project area. These initiatives enhance the character of the Loop, contribute to its competitive position as a mixed-use destination, and promote economic development and tourism in the area. Additional support for Pop-Up Art Loop is provided by: presenting sponsor Columbia College Chicago; art materials sponsor Blick Art Materials; apparel sponsor Carhartt; media partners ArtSlant, Gapers Block and DO312; and event partners PBR and Smilebooth.

Chicago Loop Alliance (CLA) is a member-based business organization that represents Chicago's most dynamic mixed-use district—the Loop—and advocates for the rapidly growing central business area. CLA is focused on promoting and uniting Loop businesses and organizations to support one another in creating a vibrant, flourishing Loop where people live, work and play. For more information, please visit www.chicagoloopalliance.com.

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