

**JOSIAH  
MCELHENY**  
**PRISMATIC PARK**

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**Mad. Sq. Art. 2017**

Josiah McElheny

*Prismatic Park*

**June 13, 2017–October 8, 2017**

Madison Square Park

New York

**Presented by**

Madison Square Park Conservancy



**Josiah McElheny**  
*Prismatic Park*

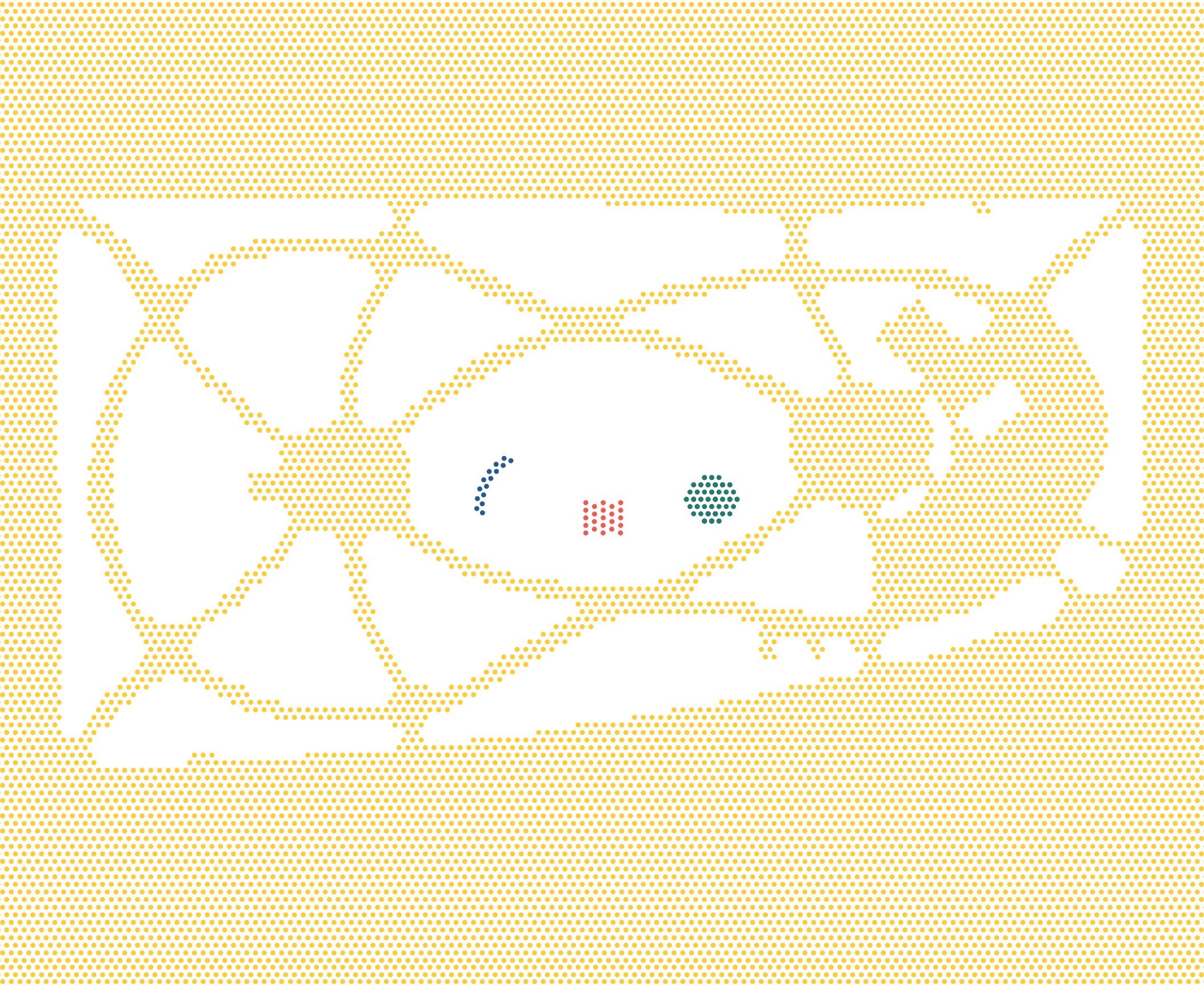


Fig. 1



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Fig. 2





# Foreword

This catalogue is published on the occasion of a newly commissioned collaborative public art project in Madison Square Park, Josiah McElheny's *Prismatic Park*. The Conservancy first approached the artist in summer 2014 to discuss his creating work for the 7-acre site. We anticipated that McElheny would produce sculpture in industrial glass that would dazzle in the urban summer light; hand-blown glass, a favored medium for the artist, would likely be too fragile for an outdoor site visited by 60,000 Parkgoers each day. But McElheny pushed beyond these initial assumptions when he confronted questions of how his work would adapt to "publicness," a term that has guided him from the outset. What is the mission of art in a public setting? How does the artist adapt to an urban site? What is the viewer's role in transforming works of art? *Prismatic Park* brings three custom-made, factory-pressed prismatic glass-tile objects to Madison Square Park, but it also represents a clear-cut advance for how sculpture can inspire other arts.

The outdoor exhibition comprises exquisite sculptures in painted wood and prismatic glass. Minimal, almost architectural forms shape new spaces within the Park for creating dance, music, and poetry: a circular, reflective green floor for vanguard dance; a curvilinear, translucent blue sound wall for experimental music; and a vaulted-roofed luminous red-and-yellow pavilion for innovative poetry. Each sculpture refracts the surrounding natural light, beckoning the casual passerby and the regular Park visitor alike. The three structures are open, stagelike platforms—in both the physical and the metaphorical sense—for the choreographers, dancers, musicians, and poets who will work next to them, on them, and under them. McElheny's unexampled vision reaches beyond the visual arts into the written and performing arts and conceives a position for optimism.

Some contemporary art can be cynical or brooding, laden with thoughtful response to materials, to harsh politics, to historical inequity. The best public sculpture

often assumes similar ambition. McElheny offers a project of great idealism that encompasses the construct of commissioning participant artists to consider the responsibility of public interface; the development of their dance, music, and poetry; the vulnerability of creating in full view of people; and the sculptures' red, yellow, blue, and green. As with Alexander Calder's joyous stabiles in brilliant color, McElheny's initial gambit is to delight viewers with three beauteous, cheerful structures. Once galvanized by resident artists, *Prismatic Park* moves into a complex direction of opportunity. When the three sculptures are not being used by the artists, the public can generate new work or simply enjoy their radiance.

We are living in, breathing in, a polarized, polemical era. If we heed artists' work, we can find inspiration and fortitude, solutions and sustenance. Strong public art has become increasingly urgent today because it is a catalyst for dialogue. *Prismatic Park* is prescient: parks and squares internationally—Tahrir Square in Cairo, Zuccotti Park in Manhattan, Gezi Park in Istanbul—have taken on significance, linking civic unrest and civic action with public space. *Prismatic Park* proposes an idealized, almost utopian, role for a public park where artists—but not just artists—can influence and inform one another.

For *Prismatic Park*, Madison Square Park Conservancy has collaborated with three nonprofit arts organizations based in New York. Leaders of these organizations—Lawrence Kumpf at Blank Forms, Judy Hussie-Taylor at Danspace Project, and Stephen Motika at Poets House—have selected artists to "inhabit" the Park and realize new commissions. They are in the Park daily to create ambitious work that summons the potential for imagination and performance inspired by spontaneous audiences and chance encounters that only a public place like an urban park can offer.

Each week, dancers, musicians, and poets are in Madison Square Park for rehearsals, workshops, and performances based on the site and on the question

of what is publicness. How does a work form and change when realized in a teeming city setting with no admission fees, where access to people is open-ended and unexpected, where the quiet is shattered by taxi horns, ambulance sirens, and bike riders' bells, by cell phone conversations and children's shouts, and by other everyday clamor. *Prismatic Park* is an experiment in possibility and in the expansiveness of the arts. We are honored that McElheny has collaborated with the Conservancy and with our nonprofit partners to bring to the Park these extraordinary artists: Joshua Bennett, Lea Bertucci, CAConrad, Mónica de la Torre, Limpe Fuchs, Shelley Hirsch, MC Hyland, Donna Masini, Joe McPhee and Graham Lambkin, Jodi Melnick, Rashaun Mitchell and Silas Riener, Matana Roberts, Patrick Rosal, Ánde Somby, and Netta Yerushalmy.

McElheny works in Brooklyn, in a studio with a furnace for glassblowing, a space to view new work, and an extensive library. He is in many ways an impresario, commingling film, installation, writing, architecture, and sculpture in his practice and gathering artists, poets, writers, critics, musicians, dancers, and scientists to motivate his work. In 2008 he created *Island Universe*, a spectacular hanging sculpture influenced by a previous decade's innovative design and science: the 1966 debut of the Vienna-based J. and L. Lobmeyr crystal-and-metal chandeliers that dramatically rise to the ceiling at New York's Metropolitan Opera House, and the 1965 discovery, by Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson, of cosmic radiation that constitutes evidence for the Big Bang. *Island Universe* evokes in our imagination the Big Bang—the theory explaining the origins of the universe. The sculpture exemplifies McElheny's process, in which a constellation of sources inspire his inquiry. *Prismatic Park* similarly consolidates myriad influences to make a whole.

Like all of Madison Square Park's exhibitions, *Prismatic Park* could not have been accomplished without the extraordinary support and counsel of the Conservancy's Board of Trustees, including Board Chair Sheila Davidson and Board Chair Emeritus David Berliner. Our Art Committee, chaired by Ron Pizzuti, is a group of indispensable advisors who share their guidance, generosity, and wisdom. We are grateful to Christopher Ward at Thornton Tomasetti, who worked closely with

the Conservancy and the artist to attain his vision. Jim Cummings and Viana Segarra at Showman Fabricators resolutely guided all aspects of the fabrication of *Prismatic Park*. Charlie Gillinder and Fred Harding at Gillinder Glass brought their expertise and generosity to the glass-tile production. At Madison Square Park Conservancy, Julia Friedman, Curatorial Manager, and Tom Reidy, Senior Project Manager, are extraordinary and astute colleagues. Keats Myer, Executive Director, has been a great advocate of this project. Andrea Rosen and Teneille Haggard have been beneficent supporters. It is gratifying to include contributions by Dr. Darby English and Lynne Tillman in this volume. Mark Shortliffe, in the McElheny studio, has been an outstanding collaborator. We are all grateful to Josiah for his remarkable vision.

In *Prismatic Park*, Josiah McElheny has brought forward work that has occupied his studio practice and that now reaches into the realm of public art. He has built an unexpected framework for outdoor sculpture to embolden artists as well as visitors. Enjoying dancers, musicians, and poets directly in their realm has enchanted Park visitors, and the artists have adjusted and adapted their work to accommodate the setting. As McElheny has suggested, the resident artists in *Prismatic Park* stand somewhere between the street busker and the opera performer.

**Brooke Kamin Rapaport**  
Director and Martin Friedman Senior Curator  
Mad. Sq. Art



Fig. 3





## Artist's Statement

At this point in my life as an artist, I am trying to explore how art can propose new approaches for thinking about the civic sphere and art's place in it. For this project, I am attempting to find ways in which aesthetic presentations can be structured to emphasize two questions: What is public space, and what can we say to each other within it? I hope we find that new forms of expression can be generated by thinking about context as a subject in and of itself. The specific framework here is the unique space of a public park: a space that is both within the urban environment and sanctuary from it, a place for individual contemplation and for meeting others, for reading, for demonstrations, for practicing tai chi. What is an art—literature, dance, music, visual art—made specifically for this environment rather than for the book, the theater, the nightclub, or the museum? What can one say in a park that cannot be said in those places, and can a park be a place to speak broadly about the public space we share?

Fig. 4



*Prismatic Park* began a number of years ago, when I first learned about three events held in Central Park, one of which celebrates its hundredth anniversary this year: large-scale art projects organized by the architect, stage designer, and writer Claude Bragdon titled the Festivals of Song and Light. These festivals were not confined to performances; they were also part of a political statement about democracy. Bragdon sparked the formation of “song societies” across the United States; amazingly, he was able to prompt a nationwide effort to teach music to immigrants. His vision was to gather people in public situations to sing together in order to create social cohesion. People traveled to New York to meet in Central Park specifically for this experience. Bragdon built a stage as a structure focused on the theme of light, with novel electrical systems illuminating colorful screens and lamps. A choir sang on the stage, and just across the lake the audience sang along.

I wondered what might be done in homage to Bragdon's opus today. Could we do something in a park that pointed toward aesthetic experience, but also took on questions of civic unity, civic engagement, togetherness? Could we perhaps generate subtly new forms of expression within the arts as a result? As I talked to colleagues about this idea, revolutionary things started to happen in parks worldwide. The “publicness” of parks became more complicated, charged, and, in some ways, disturbing. In Tahrir Square in Cairo in 2011, up to 250,000 people assembled—it was empowering but of course did not end happily. But one of the questions raised at the outset is still one of the most important ongoing conversations today: What is public space? And how do we become a public at all? My relatively modest answer to that, for a beautiful and intimate park, is this project.

*Prismatic Park* seeks to foster the opportunity for a different kind of interaction with the public. A performance, for example, is typically something

that one attends at a given time, and that comes with a social contract between audience and performer. Visual art is often the same, presented on a museum's or gallery's terms, with opening hours and expectations of a formal presentation. With the Park there is not the same kind of guaranteed social contract, but maybe there are new possibilities.

A set of large sculptures in the Park function as artworks, but also as tools to frame and provide a platform for these subtly new forms of art—forms that assume various types of encounters with the public. Not simply street theater or the poem on the subway, but somewhere between that and the opera house. An art that shares the space with the public on its own—even avant-garde—terms but with an awareness that the city's inhabitants travel through and around this art, within a shared space where we often pause and reflect on our place within the cosmopolitan environment. These sculptures consist of a “dance floor,” a “sound mirror,” and a “literature arcade” at the geographical center of Madison Square Park, which is also the Park's visual and social center. The dance floor, made of wood with embedded green glass and mirrored tiles, inspired in part by Bragdon's visual vocabulary, sits almost seamlessly with the lawn; the

Fig. 5

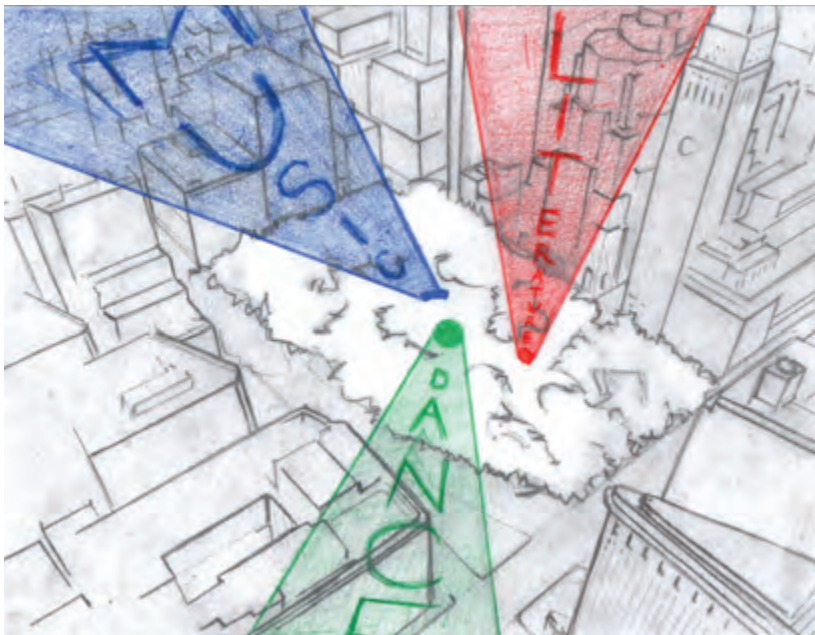


Fig. 6

sound mirror offers a tiled, translucent blue prismatic window into the trees beyond it; the literature arcade colors the sky in red and yellow glass prismatic tiles and illuminates people standing under it.

The physical part of the project is just the beginning: we have commissioned dance, music, and literature for this park, for parks in general. In and among these structures, the authors of park music, park dance, and park poetry rehearse, perform—perhaps even teach—their aesthetic ideas about art in a public space. The three New York City-based partner organizations, invited to help us discover the artists best suited to this type of exploration, will continue to carry the spirit of the project forward, in ways that will surprise us, after the exhibition is over. The resident artists are the real heart of this effort, and it is my dream that this dialogue will help give rise to further explorations of this point of view, in other parks, other cities, and other years. It is a utopian idea, but why not?

We all have a lot to learn about where we're going with public space and what's possible there.

**Josiah McElheny**



Fig. 7





Fig. 8



## An Ode to Nothing Else and Nothing More

A three-year-old boy walks beside his mother, who asks, “How do you like the park?” The little boy says, “This isn’t the park. This is outside.”

Let’s say a park is land set aside for rest, contemplation, for strolling, forgetting, remembering, for play, and ordinary relief, relief from the day. With those expectations, because they are—this is what a park connotes—it also proposes itself as an area or arena for fantasy and imagination, drawing people to it not just because of its lack of buildings, or its lack of commerce, but because of its plenitude, of chance, possibility, and change.

Is this idealism? utopianism? hope?

There are eight entrances to Madison Square Park, and it’s free to the public in manifold ways, depending on that public, an anonymous assemblage of individuals, the public.

Most of the year, the color green dominates. When it doesn’t, there’s more brown and gray.

From the streets, people enter the three-block-long park, whose shape is defined by the city’s avenues—its perimeters—where people and food trucks and clothes stores, where determined shoppers, out-of-school students, lunch-break employees and their bosses merge with confounded tourists looking for the subway. Driven, downhearted, lackadaisical, these characters, buzzing like bees or sleepwalking, pursue likely and unlikely goals, their own kind of honey, and often just want a little peace and quiet.

People slow their gait when entering the park, as if realizing they have no purpose other than being in a park—curious, this sudden purposelessness, almost stupefying. Some can’t stop, and keep walking, going on their way, the space a fluid station between destinations. They might notice the bushes, flowers,



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



the aroma of lilacs—yes. Some are arrested in their movement, some get stuck. Some sit down, or stand, and stare.

Many change slightly, within these surroundings, not their diehard habits, but ways of seeing—certainly, what they see. Humans adapt, some more easily than others. Some exercise their freedom, or don't, some don't know if they have any, and some have less than others, and feel it always. The park, let's say, is meant to be a realm where anyone can claim a seat. It's a temporary seat, a temporary solution to long-running problems.

Birds hover, they're singing, chattering, on tree branches, or they fly high into a sky not pinched between buildings. They scatter and regroup; and different species move in various formations, provoked by mysterious calls few but ornithologists can discern. But anyone might enjoy a bird's call. A mourning dove's annoys some, delights others—its call reverberates in its throat, its chest gently heaving, feathers barely fluttering.

Omnipresent sparrows flee tree branches, one by one, then five, and more, and more, until every sparrow has flown away, leaving the tree bereft. Soon, one returns, another, still more, and then all return. And they fly again. A bird's day is spent swooping, diving, alighting, following instincts that send them here and there. Their instincts cycle, like a dancer's routine.

There are paths in parks.

People wonder which one to take; more generally, what to trust and follow, existence being what it is, and some imagine a dedicated path for themselves; though many wish for instincts other than fear and hunger, other than unconscious hopes and wants, mostly unbidden.

Fig. 11



Fig. 12





A bird seems to do its bidding without regret, but then who knows.

A park is planned as a designation for small or large events, picnic lunches, love talk, casual drinks, hellos and good-byes, all exempt from ordinary traffic—crowds, cars, high-rises, hawkers. It cuts an actual swath in the built city, the urban environment, so-called, but it can also cut a swath in a person's mind. A park makes room for another mind.

Let's say, city people found they need to park themselves in otherness.

Since 1607, at least, more than 350 varieties of birds nest, feed, procreate, nurture, and, at various times every year, populate the area in Manhattan, once called Manhatta, that became Central Park. Every year thousands of species migrate thousands of miles, flying the same routes, stopping always in the same places, one of which is Central Park. Sometime in 1860 a man decided to import fifty starlings from Europe, and he released them in that park. Now, starlings are fiercely ambitious creatures, and have overwhelmed many other birds. They're great thieves, brassy and bossy. The starlings weren't natural to North America, and now they are.

Anything might feel natural; curiously, anything can become natural. Nature is not nothing, but it is also not what people say it is, something other than them and their approaches to it.

Homo sapiens are slippery, mutable animals, from predatory monsters to sacrificing altruists. People might become anything, but they can't rain or snow. They can't be birds, so they invented airplanes. They can't be the sun, so they invented electricity. They can't be a cool wind, so they invented air-conditioning. Human nature doesn't know itself, diffused through wishes to be everything that it isn't, could be, or shouldn't even try to be—to be something other than merely human. Though a tree doesn't want to be a person. Or does it?

Anyone can be or be doing anything outside the park—out of work or living the high life—and no one knows, because people saunter into it, into a kind of available anonymity, which pervades the space. A person can't be a dog, though a person could wear a dog costume, or more easily carry a stuffed-animal



Fig. 13

dog and sit beside it on a bench.

The sun casts rays, shiny ripples glide over the lawn, and throws bright green leaves into brightness or shadow. Patterns move across the grass, and linger at the base of trees; darkness and light shift like Manichees. The sun bows to the west at the horizon, and people will watch it go down, seeing it and not seeing it, then suddenly it will have disappeared. And where has the day gone, some might wonder; others will think, It has died, or Isn't it beautiful?

Heads turn up, down, sideways, people look everywhere, and at each other, passively entertaining each other, portraits of difference and similarity, like and unlike each other. Irresistible narcissism.

People are together and also not, intimate and distant, familiar strangers for a matter of time. In the park, points of view get refracted, experience induces inconstant atmospheres, a multitude of readings and perspectives, because things look different, depending upon where you or he or she is.

Call a park what is felt in it. It is a place of nothing else, really, and nothing more.

**Lynne Tillman**

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Teacher, Art Writing MFA Program  
School of Visual Arts*

Fig. 14





## Art Facts

Art facts occur somewhere along the way, when creative imagination sets itself up like a pile. Tweaking a learned harmony, giving way temporarily to frustration or fulfillment, an art fact puts things out of proportion. Affairs between the supposed and the actual, uneasy in the best circumstances, can get real tense in the realm of art facts. A definitive function of art facts: thinking about stuff in ways that instituted thought doesn't sanction.

Several ways exist to gain a feeling for the sort of problem an art fact can throw up. For instance, we know perfectly well but still need a genius of poetic form to tell us that

A kettle can't  
be bigger than  
a table. Interiors  
must fit inside  
in general. With  
spaces left besides.  
Swift justice to  
rogue sizes, is what  
we say—we have to  
say.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>  
Kay Ryan, "Putting  
Things in Proportion,"  
*Erratic Facts* (New York:  
Grove Press, 2015), 16.



Fig. 15

"We have to say" despite knowing otherwise. Just as soon as we win an insight, Kay Ryan reminds us, we lose it to that terrifying compulsion which kicks fact-facts upstairs and art facts to the curb. Art facts are out of whack. We experience them as such, as we do a nag. Is this feeling also, perhaps, the seat of that pull, that attraction unevenly exerted over the time it takes to figure an art out? The time it takes to witness it change from something peculiar and putatively useless into something we can't live without? Hard lessons demand hard teaching. A definitive penchant of the art fact: to pose the vital question but not its answer.

The art fact's representational work consists equally in shaping some observation and casting harsh, because fresh, light on particular structures of expectation. At the instance of their emerging, for instance, the now canonical, forensic conceptualisms



Fig. 16

of makers like Eleanor Antin (Fig. 15), Mel Bochner (Fig. 16), Hans Haacke (Fig. 17), and Adrian Piper were roundly unwelcomed by non-insiders. The art consisted, in part, in the trouble it caused. Not only because this art surfaced known knowns that folks rarely find themselves in the mood to regard, let alone study, but also because it occupied cultural zones—the convention of self-portraiture, the domain of the sculpted female body, the dimensions as such of the gallery, the ramified commercial ecology that art now calls home, the neighborhood bar, *The Village Voice*—previously reserved for very different configurations of expressive form. Its aesthetic of facticity was cool to the touch. Like porcelain, but different. Arguably more displayed than presented. Adapted to discomfiture, these artists eviscerated the lushness that most prior ways of turning out artwork took for granted. Crucially, much of this work was very differently available to viewers accustomed to art serving *them*. It made a show of the self defining itself for a change.

By and large, art facts give what Victor Hugo called "a new shudder" and then give way. Denial of this inevitability may explain why so much gets made of art facts that function as interventions. Continual recontextualization is a hallmark of change,



Fig. 17



perpetuation of which remains a highly ranked good. So why this fantasy of permanent surprise? Not that there's anything wrong with intervening. Not that our present doesn't feel just like a wiry tangle of emergencies needing immediate, ameliorating intervention.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>  
This essay was written in summer 2017.

But in art, when we fetishize intervention, we can quickly lose sight of the implements that effect it in the first place. For example, relative to the achievement they facilitated, little is said about the hardware items themselves that allowed the first readymades to succeed—even though succeeding is exactly what readymades as such were meant not to do. But to look at the catalogue indexing Mott's stock of wares, from which Duchamp chose the tool that became his *Fountain* (Fig. 18), is to behold a revue of exquisite functional design. For a urinal, the Bedfordshire was *très sympa*. It exerted a pull all by itself, an interesting thing become a world-historical art action.

At a certain juncture in the history of organized wonder,<sup>3</sup> racking loveliness turns terrible, one of the most frightening things you could see. It is as though the avant-garde strikes a pact with pleasure-delay and then the requirement of a certain disturbance moves toward the center of serious aesthetic situations. A resymbolization of wonderment follows: the special affordances of art, indeed all the zones created for preserving them, become identified with withholding (of uncomplicated pleasure) and exclusion (of common enjoyments). Worried about getting caught wondering unsophisticatedly at the properties of things, many a witness to art, wittingly or not, demotes looking to looking in, looking for, symbol hunting, and other

<sup>3</sup>  
An improvised term for the domain of experience that enfolds art.

Fig. 18



modes of extravagant repurposing. As if art now had to do way more than merely be and maybe kindle some superordinary attentiveness here and there. After this gut rehab, the work is effectively a street-level window disclosing and framing fanciful manufactures of intention and meaning. But what's so mere about being and interestingness?

It must be hard to be a different kind of artist. What with the number of means now available to fling the old charge of decadence—decorativeness, nostalgia, uncriticality, inertness, apathy, et cetera—whenever it might be said that a given art is more involved with being than with doing. We may too readily accept as normal the ideas that serious art is up to something and that this should *show*. A situation like this heightens precipitously the need for presences, and particularly the faculty of feeling for presences, for aliveness to the relationship we entertain with our environment.<sup>4</sup>

Josiah McElheny's insistently present art facts work with a quiet insistence that I find hard not to liken to a vigil. Wholly without cant, they set up at the morally crucial conjuncture where our physically and socially sensate bodies encounter the things and beings of the world. Today we do such at *such* a speed and with a heightening competence to deal better and more cheerfully with virtual proxies for things and beings than with their analogues in the world of skin, stone, and sticks. Fortunately the presences that McElheny in his art strives to establish—utterly for the sake of encounter—trend sculptural and spatial. This makes their non-virtual facticity hard to question.

In a 2014 text about a project McElheny executed in Chicago (Fig. 19), John Corbett argues unexpectedly but convincingly that MOVEMENT is an organizing principle for this artist's varied and now vast production of decidedly stationary objects. Corbett deploys the concept of anxiety to make the argument work: "The more static the medium, the more desperate the desire" to coax movement effects from it, because we're every one of us hardwired by impulses to move. In this way, the passage of light through or across amalgams of shaped, colored glass—an interaction routinely staged in McElheny's practice—sets the sculptural work into "perpetual motion," making nearly every instance of it "a thing

<sup>4</sup>  
Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's intellectual project comprises, of late, a sustained meditation on this problematic. See especially *Our Broad Present: Time and Contemporary Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).



<sup>5</sup>  
John Corbett, "Move,"  
in *Josiah McElheny:*  
*Dusty Groove*, exh. cat.  
(Chicago: Corbett vs.  
Dempsey, 2014), 6, 5.

and an action."<sup>5</sup> The thing about these actions, though, is that they're annexed to, and in an important way determined by, the objects that engender them, as dew hews to a blade of grass. *Prismatic Park*, which McElheny realized in Madison Square Park in the summer of 2017, sees the artist passing into another register of movement. A characteristic feature of public culture, it frustrates any impulse to conservatism. We call it CHANGE.

Highly visible in public collections around the world, McElheny's sculpture has achieved a familiarity that one does not immediately see reflected in *Prismatic Park*. He usually sculpts to highly individuated, discrete, never monumental outcomes. Tight physical/formal integration and bodily scaled proportions have served him as constants. Upon arriving in Madison Square Park, visitors who "know the work," as we say, will be struck by this project's dispersal. Similarly remarkable, and related, is the absence of evident casework. McElheny's is routinely flawless, unapologetically fine, and integral with the alluring, almost otherworldly elements it encloses. In his art, container and contained liaise, confusing describers' attempts to separate them. Where *Prismatic Park* concerns McElheny's sustained commitment to this question of "presentational methodology, the concept

of the pedestal and the vitrine,"<sup>6</sup> despite appearances we're not on a wholly new path. Rather, we are outdoors; materials were chosen accordingly. This is neither the place (a public park) nor the time (summer in New York) for immaculate optical glass and waxed Douglas fir. On this scene, *the park is the pedestal*. The look of McElheny's indoor art is tight and excluding. It's very much at home in art's customary places of work. In a park bookended by two of the city's most popular eateries, the art-mood links up more to the loosing and informal clustering we see on an active playground. Frames enclosing the bespoke glass lenses—dyed green, yellow, red, and blue, they are pressed with a motif of concentric hexagons, the very picture of color as illuminated, ludic motion—were built to withstand a long summer of temperature and humidity changes, rain and accident, stomps and scratches. Rather than looming or enclosing, McElheny's work *works* with all of the things that the Park is, all the things into which its inhabitants will make it over. Each of the artistic gestures that invite description functions to open this work. The same can be said of *Prismatic Park's* structure as a sculptural ensemble and collaboration with Mad. Sq. Art. Three components make it up: McElheny calls them floor, roof, and wall. Absent an enclosing architecture, the idiom shaping their relation is better described as the

<sup>6</sup>  
John Corbett, "Wes  
Montgomery, End  
of a Love Affair," in  
*Josiah McElheny: Dusty  
Groove*, 30.



zone of the Park itself. By making explicitly sculptural elements integral with the pluripotent character of public culture that the open Park captures, *Prismatic Park* underscores the fundamental disputability of the art fact. McElheny's green dance floor, red and yellow pavilion, and blue sound wall mainly wait. For some relating to occur, say, or for some situation provisionally to take shape. Throughout the summer, as these objects play host to a bustling program of dance, poetry, and music performances, *Prismatic Park* further ensures that its facticity will be disputed. A fixed configuration, it serves, too, as proscenium, prop, and amplifier.

A park constantly exhibits the conditions of publicness. Except there is no constant to speak of, since the "mere" inhabitation of a park subjects to constant testing and revision the meanings, in a given time and place, of being in and being part of a public. An instrument of public culture, a park is defined largely by the uses to which it is put.<sup>7</sup> Entering a park, people elect a position and a pace according to their pleasure or their need. It's nice to think that, in our public lives, it's in our parks that we enjoy consummate freedom to make this election. It's just this informal cavalcade of more or less free choice that makes parks exceedingly reassuring places to occupy, or simply to consider, during crisis moments in democratic culture.

Such a site seems the perfect one for McElheny's art—so much so that one wonders why he hasn't been a public artist all along. What makes an ill-advised word like PERFECT feel correct here is the unapologetically utopian orientation of McElheny's thought. His vision is a utopia of "artistic imagination, democratic and open-ended, inventive and unresolved," where everyone works together.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, *Prismatic Park's* mutations, generated in its use over a run of aesthetically discontinuous creative situations, assure its standing as an art fact.<sup>9</sup> Neither true nor false, and impossible to verify, some art facts *do* serve us. How? By keeping open and on the move ideas about action and the forms it could yet assume.

#### Darby English

Carl Darling Buck Professor of Art History  
University of Chicago  
Adjunct Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York

<sup>7</sup> McElheny describes his interest in public parks by reference to the myriad resonances of their history, for example "as sites for, among other things, personal contemplation, community respite, and organized protest." "Prismatic Park: A Collaborative Public Art Project by Josiah McElheny" (New York: Mad. Sq. Park., 2017), unpaginated informational brochure.

<sup>8</sup> Josh Siegel, "Projects 84: Josiah McElheny, The Alpine Cathedral and the City Crown," *The Museum of Modern Art*, 2007, [https://www.moma.org/d/pdfs/W1siZilsiljwMTYvM-DcvMDEvMWVvZG-Jsc3kzX3Byb2plY3R-zODRfcmUucGRmlld/projects84\\_re.pdf?sha=79803bcd-019c47db](https://www.moma.org/d/pdfs/W1siZilsiljwMTYvM-DcvMDEvMWVvZG-Jsc3kzX3Byb2plY3R-zODRfcmUucGRmlld/projects84_re.pdf?sha=79803bcd-019c47db).

<sup>9</sup> Adaptation of the title of a poem and of a 2015 collection of poetry by Kay Ryan, *Erratic Facts*.





Fig. 21









## Selected Reflections by Resident Artists

### Joshua Bennett

The week I spent in Madison Square Park has had an indelible impact on my thinking regarding future work. The residency served as my first foray into a new genre, the interview, as well as a space in which I could develop foundational material for a forthcoming monograph: a book-length work of prose built primarily from dialogue recorded during *The Envy of the World*. Further, it is my sense—even now, only days removed from the end of my week in the Park—that what began as a standalone literary experiment, albeit one grounded in conversations with men that I love very much, or else am just getting to know but admire a great deal, has developed into a fairly significant branch of my broader intellectual project. That is, the work of facilitating meaningful conversations among black men wherein they can sketch out a radically divergent world. One where they might not only have something like a viable future, but a freer and more joyous present; a language for dreams they have learned to keep hidden, or else thought they must discard altogether.

### CAConrad

For years I have written inside (Soma)tic poetry rituals, which include odd maneuvers, making me write in spaces of extreme present. The rituals also help others amplify their creativity, no matter their discipline, which is why I teach regularly at Sandberg Art Institute in Amsterdam. At my Madison Square Park residency, I sat with individuals for hours each day, building rituals inside the most

challenging aspects of their lives. One person had aggressive cancer with a grim prognosis, and wanted to write a poem for their daughter who moved home to help. I never expected to learn how to write while dying, but I did, and am changed forever.

### Mónica de la Torre

Just thinking about the setting and context in which my residency will take place has made me come up

Fig. 23



Fig. 24





with a specific project aimed at engaging passersby with a little time to spare to play language games that might generate poetry. I'd like for participants to approach my invitation with the same spirit with which they go on a walk in the Park, with a sense of openness and wonder

Fig. 25



toward what they might encounter on their way: be it sunlight traveling through tree branches, a dog with a quirky personality, magnificent flowers, or Josiah's public sculptures. I will seek, in particular but not exclusively, to engage participants who are bilingual or multilingual—immigrants, tourists—so that we might write poetry by exploring the potential of communication and creative misunderstanding across languages.

An example: the other day, a friend based in Holland but originally from Rwanda was telling me about a certain situation: "I had my heart in my mouth." Of course, the English-language equivalent is "to wear one's heart in one's sleeve." When comparing both idioms we're able to see them in a new light, we reanimate tired clichés. I imagine my interactions with participants will be chock-full of these types of comparisons, which are perfect jumping off points to write poetry. I teach, so I rarely get to collaborate with others in non-professional settings. I love the potential in Lautréamont's "Poetry will be made by all!" I see my residency at the park as a unique opportunity to put its idealism to the test and am intrigued by the possibility of interacting with the public in a way that disrupts the hierarchy between performer and audience.

I am hoping to attract those who might think that they can't access poetry, or that their voices don't count, because their English "isn't good enough." The myth that poetry should follow the rules of proficiency and grammar is precisely one I'd hope to debunk.

### Limpe Fuchs

The open-air situation is a real challenge for presenting my acoustic instrument installation. I am using the setting for creating spontaneous improvisations and will also invite the audience to join me. With my flexible percussion instruments I could also join the dancers on the glass circle. Special workshops—whether for professional or nonprofessional players—are planned, including a Sunday final concert together. I am also curious to get to know the work of the different artists involved in the project.

I am an improvising musician and I am always enriched by new experiences, new acoustic places, and the way in which different people use my instruments.

### MC Hyland

My residency gave me an opportunity to take an existing project in a new direction: for the first time, I invited people to join me in my combined writing-and-bookmaking process. Over the week, *A Walking Poets' Library* generated a small collection of handmade books, written and bound on-site. The most important lesson I learned was how to open up my project—which had previously been very intimate, focused on writing for an audience of one—to a broad range of collaborators: poets, volunteers, passersby, and the environment of the Park—including my amazing "home" for the week, Josiah McElheny's Poetry Pavilion.

### Graham Lambkin

*Prismatic Park* was a unique experience in that it challenged the question of not only what constitutes an audience, but also what constitutes a performance space. Removing those boundaries granted an extrapolation of possibility and reach, with all the inherent advantages for interaction that liberation suggests. As a performer one of the most intriguing implications was of the ripple effect—sounds made under the canopy of Josiah McElheny's structures, carried out of the Park and into the streets,

Fig. 26





mixing with the sonic hubris of NYC life, and tinting the city's sonic palette in small yet significant measures. One hopes that a stray trumpet sound, or line of feedback found camaraderie in the wheezing traffic of 26th Street, or in the play of picnicking children, enforcing a cultural weave that united us all during a most creative and productive week of sound making. Being part of the *Prismatic Park* residency will doubtless inform my future thinking on how sound art can be teased out from



Fig. 27

the shell of the gallery institution and of those “in-the-know,” and gifted instead to the community as an enticing and curious parcel of possibilities, waiting to be unwrapped and explored.

#### Donna Masini

Perfect timing, this residency. A new book recently finished, I look up, waiting to be filled. The world

is troubled, unnerving. I'm trying to live in my “headlines” for this project: “I dwell in Possibility” (Dickinson); “What is now proved was once, only imagin'd” (Blake). After the devastating 2016 election, I sent daily postcards to Congress, representatives. Considering what to bring into a public space, I thought of the urgent postcard poems of Margaret Atwood, Miklós Radnóti, Nâzım Hikmet; the more personal, I-have-eaten-the-plums “notes” of William Carlos Williams. (Williams wrote: “It is difficult/ to get the news from poems/ yet men die miserably every day/ for lack/ of what is found there.”) Here was a chance to spend a week trying to juxtapose public and private. For a few hours not to look at news alerts. To make my poems part of my action. To encourage passersby to praise/protest/dream/imagine in the same space. So a poem might begin, “Dear Senator \_\_\_\_: Today in Madison Square Park I really looked at an oak tree, and. . .”

#### Joe McPhee

To have an extended opportunity to develop ideas caught on the the fly was fantastic. These performances were totally improvised, nothing was planned in advance except when to leave Poughkeepsie, sometimes what materials to bring, and how to find a good bar for some single-malt Scotch. Being in the open air, supported by Josiah's extraordinary concepts and structures, the sounds of the city infused with the sounds of children at play, was “the

stuff that dreams are made of.” I often tell about how my interest in the sound world was inspired by a cartoon character named Gerald McBoing-Boing, a little boy who was probably autistic who lived in a sound world. This was as close as I've come to being that little boy.

I once heard someone describe flight as “To rush at the wind and having caught it, to soar.” This experience will certainly impact my work going forward in jazz and improvised music. I wish Pauline Oliveros could have been here for this. Then, perhaps she was.

#### Rashaun Mitchell and Silas Riener

We were both excited by the park and interested in subverting the elements of the *Prismatic Park* installation. So, of course, the first thing we did was ignore the floor designated for dance and use the entire space of the Park. We have done a lot of work outside, but this residency felt more vulnerable, because we were not coming in with something set. We were starting from scratch.

This beginning part of every process is typically private, and we were not prepared for how uncomfortable it would feel. Even in the moments of rest, there was a constant feeling of being on display. We told the dancers, “You're going to be confronted by people, a squirrel is going to run by, you're going to stop to say hello to your boyfriend—all of that is what we're doing.”

Engaging in these kinds of actions don't come with a set of conventions. Viewers had to figure out for themselves what to do with it. But when people asked us what we were doing, we tried to talk with them. In other performances in public spaces, we have felt people reacting like, “You're messing up my 15-minute break by being a weirdo,” but there is permissiveness within the Park. It was like, “I was going to come and stare in this direction anyway and you're in my field of vision and that's O.K. with me.”

During the residency we felt more aligned with ourselves and connected to other people. We hope that this is what happened for the other dancers and maybe, maybe, there was some tiny change that occurred within one person in the public.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Brian Seibert, “Outdoor Stages: Dance in the Park, Where You Can't Hide Behind a Tree.” *The New York Times*, June 29, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/29/arts/dance/creating-dance-in-the-park-you-cant-hide-behind-a-tree.html>.

### Matana Roberts

I feel this residency will give me new room for thinking about: possibility, scope, and most importantly adventure of the themes I am trying to communicate to the witness viewer. I am most interested in creating work that documents, interrogates, and testifies to the human spirit in ways that expand the idea of it means to “see,” what it means to “hear,” what it means to feel, and most importantly what it means to participate and be witness participants to the world, not just an audience to its various joys and pains. In my ideal world, difference is what brings us together, not what tears us apart.

### Netta Yerushalmy

I interpreted the invitation to be part of *Prismatic Park* as an opportunity to further my ongoing research, in public.

I worked in the Park as I would in the studio, barely adjusting my practices.

This intentional insistence on my part of maintaining a workspace and a continuity of methodology, while also allowing the Park’s unpredictabilities to infiltrate, was a generative strategy. It allowed me to see more clearly what it is that my work does, by highlighting what my work cannot do. It sparked constant reflection on the very nature and validity of my project, and had me questioning the double hermeticism of insular experimental dance, created/performed in insular studios/theaters.

As a movement artist, I ask questions and propose ideas through the body. In my current project I deal explicitly with the idea of legacy and its publicness. I could not have dreamed up a more powerful way for me to observe the resonance and reverberation—or lack thereof—of my project, as it captivated, confused, or completely eluded the general public in the Park.

Josiah’s articulating of the activity in the Park as necessary markers of vital democracy, notions of side-by-side-ness, No frame, Encountering strangeness, have deeply infused my residency and will stay with me for a long while.

## Residency Schedule

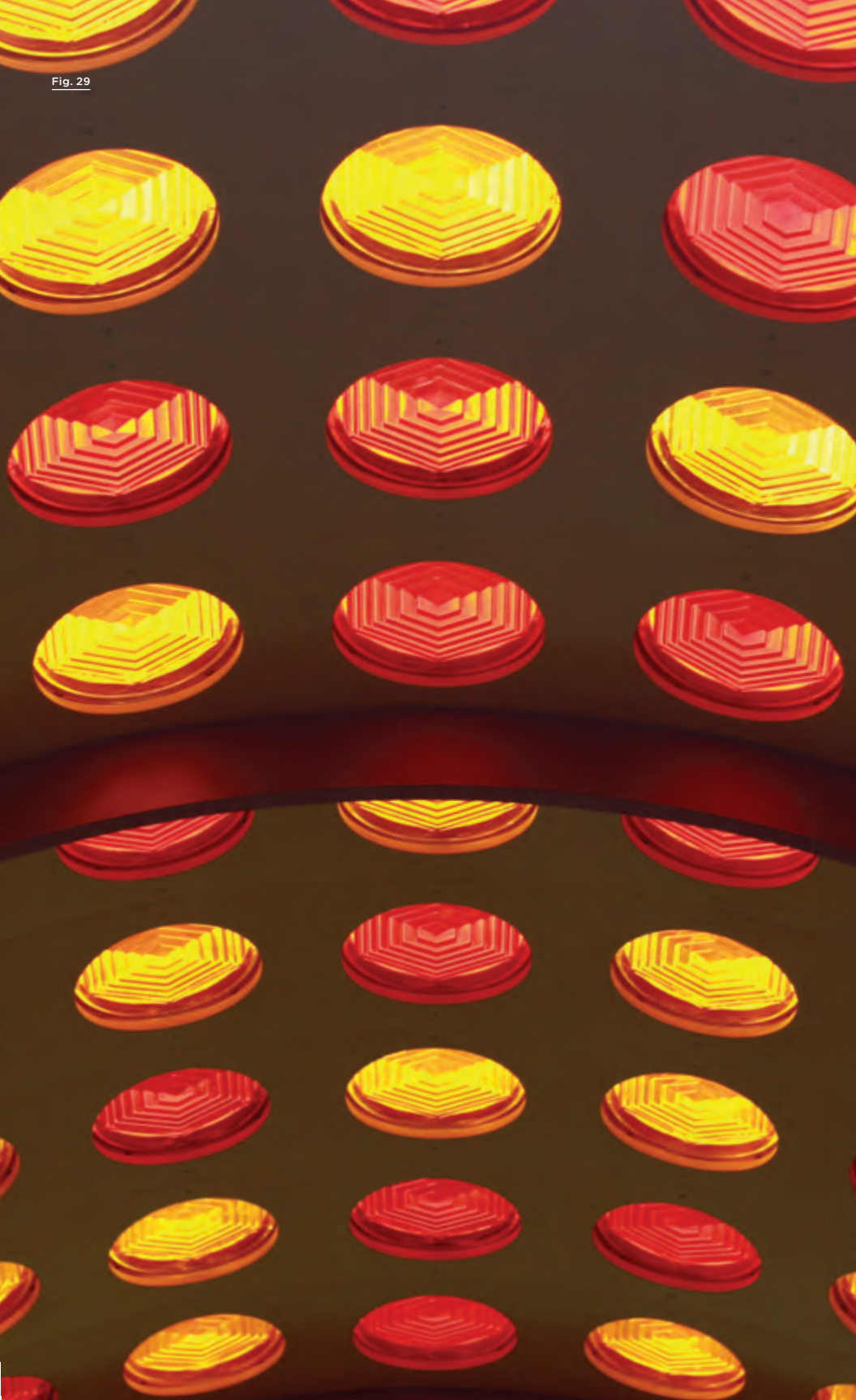
Resident artists were selected by  
Blank Forms, Danspace Project, and Poets House

<b>Jun 13-18</b>	Lea Bertucci, <i>Music</i>
<b>June 20-25</b>	Rashaun Mitchell & Silas Riener, <i>Dance</i>
<b>June 27-July 2</b>	Rashaun Mitchell & Silas Riener, <i>Dance</i>
<b>July 4-9</b>	MC Hyland, <i>Poetry</i>
<b>July 11-16</b>	Ánde Somby, <i>Music</i>
<b>July 18-23</b>	CAConrad, <i>Poetry</i>
<b>July 25-30</b>	Joe McPhee & Graham Lambkin, <i>Music</i>
<b>August 1-6</b>	Netta Yerushalmy, <i>Dance</i>
<b>August 8-13</b>	Netta Yerushalmy, <i>Dance</i>
<b>August 15-20</b>	Joshua Bennett, <i>Poetry</i>
<b>August 22-26</b>	Shelley Hirsch, <i>Music</i>
<b>August 29-September 3</b>	Donna Masini, <i>Poetry</i>
<b>September 5-10</b>	Matana Roberts, <i>Music</i>
<b>September 12-17</b>	Jodi Melnick, <i>Dance</i>
<b>September 19-24</b>	Jodi Melnick, <i>Dance</i>
<b>September 26-October 1</b>	Mónica de la Torre, <i>Poetry</i>
<b>October 1-8</b>	Limpe Fuchs, <i>Music</i> Patrick Rosal, <i>Poetry</i>









## Josiah McElheny

### WORK IN EXHIBITION

*Prismatic Park*, 2017

Temporary installation on the Oval Lawn of Madison Square Park, New York

Fifteen commissioned works in dance, music, and poetry

Seventeen weeks in duration with rehearsals, performances, and workshops

Three structures of painted wood and steel and custom-made prismatic, colored glass

Music Wall: 9 feet 6 inches x 31 feet x 3 feet 9 inches; Dance Floor: 32 feet diameter;

Poetry Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet

### BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1966

Lives and works in New York City

### EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts, 1988

Rhode Island School of Design, Providence

### ARTIST ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the people of New York, its visitors and inhabitants, for visiting the Park and watching, participating, listening to the amazing poets, choreographers, dancers, musicians, and composers participating in *Prismatic Park* over the summer and early fall of 2017; the many "you," most of whom we'll never know, thank you. I would like to thank the people of New York, especially the kids, for playing around, dancing under, and leaning on the sculptures of *Prismatic Park*; thank you for making the sculptures a part of your Park for a time.

On a personal level, I want to thank all the poets, choreographers, dancers, musicians, and composers who made a work of composition, rehearsal, performance, participation, teaching, and dialogue, for taking the risk of thinking about "publicness," in public, unframed, just out there. Your generosity and courage in that challenge astounds me and deeply honors the efforts of Madison Square Park Conservancy and myself.

I am so grateful to all of the organizations that agreed to collaborate so uninhibitedly together with the Conservancy and myself. The fantastic public funding we shared together: I hope this will be remembered as an example of how to collaborate and multiply the impact of art in the public realm.

I want to thank Gillinder Glass, a family owned company from 1861, for the possibility to create a new type of architectural element, never made before, though echoing the amazing past of the Luxfer Prism Company. This colored, prismatic, hexagonal and circular element was brought to life and constantly changed in the light of the Park.

I want to thank Tom Reidy, the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, Thornton Tomasetti, Showman Fabricators, Matempa, and A. Bulfamante Landscaping for making and maintaining the wood, metal and concrete parts of the sculptures.

Finally, I want to thank everyone at Madison Square Park Conservancy, from every intern to the Board Chairs, for taking on the formidable challenges that *Prismatic Park* presented, an exciting adventure for sure! I especially want to say thank you to Brooke Kamin Rapaport for inviting me and seeing through this utopian experiment; Keats Myer for her calm and expert direction of this project's life within the Park; Julia Friedman for the catalogue, posters, and much more; and crucially Mark Shortliffe, my studio manager and creative interlocutor throughout the four years on which we have worked on this idea. Of course without my partner Susanne DesRoches, I wouldn't be here.



## Selected Solo Exhibitions

<b>2017</b>	<i>Prismatic Park</i> Madison Square Park, New York City				<i>Cosmology, Design and Landscape, Part One</i> Donald Young Gallery, Chicago
	<i>The Crystal Land</i> White Cube, London			<b>2007</b>	<i>The Alpine Cathedral and the City-Crown</i> Moderna Museet, Stockholm
<b>2016</b>	<i>The Ornament Museum</i> MAK Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Vienna				<i>Cosmology, Design and Landscape, Part Two</i> Donald Young Gallery, Chicago
<b>2015</b>	<i>Josiah McElheny: Two Walking Mirrors for the Carpenter Center</i> Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts				<i>Projects 84: Josiah McElheny: The Alpine Cathedral and the City-Crown</i> The Museum of Modern Art, New York
	<i>Josiah McElheny: Paintings</i> Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York			<b>2006</b>	<i>Modernity 1929–1965</i> Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York
<b>2014</b>	<i>Dusty Groove</i> Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago			<b>2005</b>	<i>Landscape Models for Total Reflective Abstraction</i> , Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa
<b>2013</b>	<i>Josiah McElheny: Two Clubs at the Arts Club of Chicago</i> The Arts Club of Chicago			<b>2004</b>	<i>Total Reflective Abstraction</i> Donald Young Gallery, Chicago
	<i>Towards a Light Club</i> Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus			<b>2003</b>	<i>Antipodes: Josiah McElheny</i> White Cube, London
<b>2012</b>	<i>The Light Club of Vizcaya: A Women's Picture</i> Vizcaya Museum Gardens, Miami				<i>Theories About Reflection</i> Brent Sikkema Gallery, New York
	<i>Interactions of the Abstract Body</i> White Cube, London			<b>2002</b>	<i>Josiah McElheny</i> Centro Gallego de Arte Contemporánea, Santiago de Compostela, Spain
	<i>Some Pictures of the Infinite</i> Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston			<b>2001</b>	<i>The Metal Party</i> Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco Brooklyn, New York
	<i>Some Thoughts About the Abstract Body</i> Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York			<b>2000</b>	<i>Christian Dior, Jorge Luis Borges, Adolf Loos</i> Donald Young Gallery, Chicago Brent Sikkema Gallery, New York
<b>2011</b>	<i>The Past Was a Mirage I Had Left Far Behind</i> Whitechapel Gallery, London			<b>1999</b>	<i>The Story of Glass</i> Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston
<b>2010</b>	<i>Crystalline Modernity</i> Donald Young Gallery, Chicago				<i>An Historical Anecdote About Fashion</i> Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle
<b>2009</b>	<i>Proposals for a Chromatic Modernism</i> Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York			<b>1997</b>	<i>Three Alter Ego</i> Donald Young Gallery, Seattle
	<i>A Space for Island Universe</i> Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid				<i>Non-Decorative Beautiful Objects</i> AC Project Room, New York
<b>2008</b>	<i>Island Universe</i> White Cube, London			<b>1995</b>	Donald Young Gallery, Seattle
	<i>The Last Scattering Surface</i> Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle			<b>1990</b>	Arneskröv, Sweden, permanent installation, Jägarens Glasmuseet (Hunter's Glass Museum)
	<i>The Light Club of Batavia</i> Donald Young Gallery, Chicago				

## Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2017** *Urban Planning: Contemporary Art and the City 1967–2017*  
Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis
- 2016** *Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art, 1905–2016*  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
- 2015** *Transcending Material*  
Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston
- Night Begins the Day: Rethinking Space, Time, and Beauty*  
Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco
- The Way We Live Now, Modernist Ideologies at Work*  
Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University,  
Cambridge, Massachusetts
- Adventures of the Black Square*  
Whitechapel Gallery, London
- 2014** *A Machinery for Living*  
Petzel Gallery, New York
- 2013** *AFTER*  
Jean-Gabriel Mitterrand Gallery, Paris
- Labor and Wait*  
Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, California
- Slow Burn*  
Fundament Foundation, Tilburg, Netherlands
- 2012** *In the Spirit of Walser*  
Donald Young Gallery, Chicago
- 2011** *The Third Room*  
Kunsthalle Düsseldorf  
Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw
- If you lived here, you'd be home by now*  
Bard Center for Curatorial Studies, Hessel Museum of Art,  
Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
- 2010** *Crystalline Architecture*  
Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York
- The Contemporary Figure*  
Donald Young Gallery, Chicago
- 2009** *Empfindung, oder In der Nähe der Fehler liegen die Wirkungen*  
Augarten Contemporary, Vienna
- Innovations in the Third Dimension: Sculpture of Our Time*  
Bruce Museum, Greenwich, Connecticut
- 2008** *Mildred's Lane*  
Alexander Gray Gallery, New York



	<i>Spring-Wound</i> Orchard, New York		<i>Once Upon a Time: Fiction and Fantasy in Contemporary Art, Selections from the Whitney Museum of American Art</i> New York State Museum, Albany
	<i>Beyond Measure: Conversations Across Art and Science</i> Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge, UK	<b>2002</b>	<i>Family</i> The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut
	<i>Sensory Overload: Light, Motion, Sound and the Optic</i> Milwaukee Art Museum		<i>View Six: Surface to Surface</i> Mary Boone Gallery, New York
<b>2007</b>	<i>Viewfinder</i> Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle	<b>2001</b>	<i>House Guests: Contemporary Artists in the Grange</i> Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto
	<i>Sparkle Then Fade</i> Tacoma Art Museum		<i>Beau Monde: Toward a Redeemed Cosmopolitanism</i> SITE Santa Fe, Santa Fe, New Mexico
	<i>Cosmologies</i> James Cohan Gallery, New York		<i>Body Space</i> Baltimore Museum of Art
	<i>Accumulations: More Than the Sum of Their Parts</i> Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston	<b>2000</b>	<i>Whitney Biennial</i> Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
<b>2006</b>	<i>Dynasty</i> Gallery MC, New York		<i>Three Summer Shows: Francis Cape, Josiah McElheny, and Yinka Shonibare</i> Real Art Ways, Hartford
	<i>Super Vision</i> Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston		<i>Patentia</i> Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art, Stockholm
	<i>Shiny</i> Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus	<b>1999</b>	
<b>2005</b>	<i>Part Object Part Sculpture</i> Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus	<b>1998</b>	<i>At Home in the Museum</i> Art Institute of Chicago
	<i>Faith</i> Real Art Ways, Hartford		<i>Personal Touch</i> Art in General, New York
	<i>Bottle: Contemporary Art and Vernacular Tradition</i> The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut		<i>Inglenook</i> Feigen Contemporary, New York University Galleries, Illinois State University, Normal
	<i>View Eight: A Few Domestic Objects Interrogate a Few Works of Art</i> Mary Boone Gallery, New York		<i>Interlacings</i> Whitney Museum of American Art at Champion, Stamford, Connecticut
	<i>Extreme Abstraction</i> Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo (catalogue)		<i>Young Americans: Part II</i> Saatchi Gallery, London
<b>2004</b>	<i>The Cobweb</i> Centro Gallego de Arte Contemporánea, Santiago de Compostela, Spain	<b>1997</b>	<i>The Last Supper</i> Donald Young Gallery, Chicago
	<i>Printemps de septembre à Toulouse: In extremis</i> Les Abbatoirs, Toulouse, France (catalogue)	<b>1995</b>	<i>Verrückt</i> Kulturstiftung Schloss Agathenburg, Agathenburg, Germany Museum Bad Arolsen, Bad Arolsen, Germany
<b>2003</b>	<i>Borges Exhibition</i> Volume Gallery, New York	<b>1994</b>	<i>First Fundraising Exhibition</i> American Fine Arts Company, New York
	<i>Warped Space</i> CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco (catalogue)		<i>Wunderkammer</i> Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco
	<i>Living with Duchamp</i> The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York (brochure)		<i>Are You Experienced?</i> Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York

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### **Hon. Bill de Blasio**

*Mayor*  
City of New York

### **Anthony Shorris**

*First Deputy Mayor*  
City of New York

### **Hon. Mitchell J. Silver**

*FAICP, PP, RTPI (hon.), FPIA (hon.)*  
*Commissioner*  
New York City Department of Parks & Recreation

### **Hon. Tom Finkelpearl**

*Commissioner*  
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs

### **Pentagram, Ho Seok Lee**

*Design*

### **Keats Myer**

*Executive Director*

### **Brooke Kamin Rapaport**

*Director and Martin Friedman Senior Curator*  
Mad. Sq. Art

### **Julia Friedman**

*Curatorial Manager*

### **Tom Reidy**

*Senior Project Manager*

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# Madison Square Park Conservancy

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Madison Square Park Conservancy is the not-for-profit organization whose mission is to protect, nurture, and enhance Madison Square Park, a dynamic seven-acre public green space, creating an environment that fosters moments of inspiration. The Conservancy is committed to engaging the community through its beautiful gardens, inviting amenities, and world-class programming. Madison Square Park Conservancy is licensed by the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation to manage Madison Square Park and is responsible for raising 100% of the funds necessary to operate the Park, including the brilliant horticulture, park maintenance, sanitation, security, and free cultural programs for Park visitors of all ages.

## For more information

on Madison Square Park Conservancy and its programs, please visit [madisonsquarepark.org](http://madisonsquarepark.org).



## Madison Square Park Conservancy

11 Madison Avenue, 15th Floor  
New York, New York 10010  
[madisonsquarepark.org](http://madisonsquarepark.org)

# Photography & Figure Credits

All works are by Josiah McElheny and ©Josiah McElheny unless otherwise indicated.

**Fig. 1**  
*Prismatic Park*, 2017  
Painted wood and steel and custom-made prismatic, colored glass Music Wall: 9 feet 6 inches x 31 feet x 3 feet 9 inches; Dance Floor: 32 feet diameter; Poetry Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
Collection of the artist



**Fig. 2**  
*Prismatic Park*, 2017  
Painted wood and steel and custom-made prismatic, colored glass Music Wall: 9 feet 6 inches x 31 feet x 3 feet 9 inches; Dance Floor: 32 feet diameter; Poetry Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
Collection of the artist



**Photo**  
Rashmi Gill

**Photo**  
Rashmi Gill

**Fig. 3**  
Resident Artists: Rashaun Mitchell and Silas Riener  
*Prismatic Park*, 2017  
Painted wood and steel and custom-made prismatic, colored glass Music Wall: 9 feet 6 inches x 31 feet x 3 feet 9 inches; Dance Floor: 32 feet diameter; Poetry Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
Collection of the artist



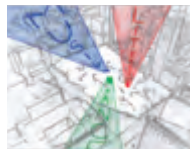
**Fig. 4**  
Fabrication of *Prismatic Park* at Showman Fabricators, Bayonne, NJ, 2017  
Painted wood and steel and custom-made prismatic, colored glass Music Wall: 9 feet 6 inches x 31 feet x 3 feet 9 inches; Dance Floor: 32 feet diameter; Poetry Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
Collection of the artis



**Photo**  
Truth Cole

**Photo**  
Yasunori Matsui

**Fig. 5**  
*Proposal for Prismatic Park*, 2014  
Graphite and colored pencil on paper, 9 x 12 inches  
Collection of the artist



**Fig. 6**  
Resident Artists: Rashaun Mitchell and Silas Riener  
*Prismatic Park*, 2017  
Painted wood and steel and custom-made prismatic, colored glass Music Wall: 9 feet 6 inches x 31 feet x 3 feet 9 inches; Dance Floor: 32 feet diameter; Poetry Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
Collection of the artis



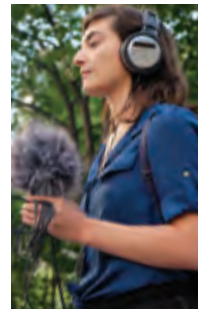
**Photo**  
Truth Cole

**Fig. 7**  
Installation view of *Prismatic Park*, 2017  
Painted wood and steel and custom-made prismatic, colored glass Music Wall: 9 feet 6 inches x 31 feet x 3 feet 9 inches; Dance Floor: 32 feet diameter; Poetry Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
Collection of the artist



**Photo**  
MSPC

**Fig. 8**  
Resident Artist: Lea Bertucci  
*Prismatic Park*, 2017  
Painted wood and steel and custom-made prismatic, colored glass Music Wall: 9 feet 6 inches x 31 feet x 3 feet 9 inches; Dance Floor: 32 feet diameter; Poetry Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
Collection of the artist



**Photo**  
Truth Cole

**Fig. 9**  
*Madison Square Park*, 2017  
© Lynne Tillman



**Photo**  
Lynne Tillman

**Fig. 10**  
*Madison Square Park*, 2017  
© Lynne Tillman



**Photo**  
Lynne Tillman

**Fig. 11**  
*Madison Square Park*, 2017  
© Lynne Tillman



**Photo**  
Lynne Tillman

**Fig. 12**  
*Madison Square Park*, 2017  
© Lynne Tillman



**Photo**  
Lynne Tillman



**Fig. 13**  
*Madison Square Park*,  
 2017  
 © Lynne Tillman

**Photo**  
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**Fig. 14**  
 Resident Artist:  
 CAConrad  
*Prismatic Park*, 2017  
 Painted wood and steel  
 and custom-made  
 prismatic, colored glass  
 Music Wall: 9 feet 6  
 inches x 31 feet x 3 feet  
 9 inches; Dance Floor:  
 32 feet diameter; Poetry  
 Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
 Collection of the artist

**Photo**  
 Jonathan Mark Jackson



**Fig. 15**  
 Eleanor Antin  
 (American, b. 1935)  
*100 Boots in a Field*,  
 from the series *100  
 Boots*, a set of 51  
*photo-postcards*,  
 1971  
 Route 101, California,  
 February 9, 1971, 3:30  
 p.m. (mailed January  
 21, 1974)  
 Halftone photo-  
 postcard  
 San Francisco Museum  
 of Modern Art, Gift of  
 the Artist  
 © Eleanor Antin,  
 courtesy the artist and  
 Ronald Feldman Fine  
 Arts, New York

**Photo**  
 Don Ross



**Fig. 16**  
 Mel Bochner (American,  
 b. 1940)  
*Ten to 10*, 1972  
 Stone, 120 inches overall  
 Whitney Museum of  
 American Art, New  
 York; purchase with  
 funds from the Gilman  
 Foundation, Inc. 77.28  
 © Mel Bochner, courtesy  
 the artist and Peter  
 Freeman, Inc.



**Fig. 17**  
 Hans Haacke (b.  
 Germany, 1936)  
*Detail component 22*  
 from *Shapolsky et al.*  
*Manhattan Real Estate*  
*Holdings, a Real-Time*  
*Social System, as of*  
*May 1, 1971* (1971) Nine  
 photostats, one hundred  
 and forty-two gelatin  
 silver prints, and one  
 hundred and forty-two  
 photocopies, overall:  
 19 3/4 x 41 1/16 inches

Whitney Museum of  
 American Art, New  
 York; purchased jointly  
 by the Whitney Museum  
 of American Art,  
 New York with funds  
 from the Director's  
 Discretionary Fund  
 and the Painting and  
 Sculpture Committee,  
 and the Fundació Museu  
 d'Art Contemporani de  
 Barcelona  
 2007.148a-gg  
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(ARS), New York/  
 VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn .  
 Courtesy the artist and  
 Paula Cooper Gallery,  
 New York



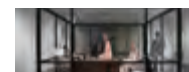
**Fig. 18**  
 Marcel Duchamp  
 (French, 1887-1968)  
*Fountain*, 1917/1964  
 Ceramic, glaze,  
 and paint, 15 x 19 1/4 x  
 24 5/8 inches  
 San Francisco Museum  
 of Modern Art, Purchase  
 through a gift of Phyllis  
 C. Wattis  
 © Artists Rights Society  
 (ARS), New York/  
 ADAGP, Paris/Estate of  
 Marcel Duchamp

**Photo**  
 Ben Blackwell



**Fig. 19**  
*The Club for Modern  
 Fashions*, 2013  
 Installation view at the  
 Arts Club of Chicago  
 Architectural vitrine  
 (in collaboration with  
 John Vinci): wood,  
 sheet-glass, hardware,  
 carpet, furniture, paint  
 and electric lighting; 119  
 3/4 x 194 1/2 x 146 1/2  
 inches  
 Performance: actors,  
 period suits and dresses,  
 movement, duration  
 variable

**Photo**  
 Tom van Eynde



**Fig. 20**  
 Resident Artist:  
 Joshua Bennett  
*Prismatic Park*, 2017  
 Painted wood and steel  
 and custom-made  
 prismatic, colored glass  
 Music Wall: 9 feet 6  
 inches x 31 feet x 3 feet  
 9 inches; Dance Floor:  
 32 feet diameter; Poetry  
 Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
 Collection of the artist

**Photo**  
 Christina Lynch



**Fig. 21**  
 Resident Artist:  
 Ánde Somby  
*Prismatic Park*, 2017  
 Painted wood and steel  
 and custom-made  
 prismatic, colored glass  
 Music Wall: 9 feet 6  
 inches x 31 feet x 3 feet  
 9 inches; Dance Floor:  
 32 feet diameter; Poetry  
 Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
 Collection of the artist

**Photo**  
 Sully Tejada



**Fig. 22**  
 Resident Artist:  
 Netta Yerushalmy  
*Prismatic Park*, 2017  
 Painted wood and steel  
 and custom-made  
 prismatic, colored glass  
 Music Wall: 9 feet 6  
 inches x 31 feet x 3 feet  
 9 inches; Dance Floor:  
 32 feet diameter; Poetry  
 Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
 Collection of the artist

**Photo**  
 Truth Cole



**Fig. 23**  
 Resident Artist:  
 MC Hyland  
*Prismatic Park*, 2017  
 Painted wood and steel  
 and custom-made  
 prismatic, colored glass  
 Music Wall: 9 feet 6  
 inches x 31 feet x 3 feet  
 9 inches; Dance Floor:  
 32 feet diameter; Poetry  
 Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
 Collection of the artist

**Photo**  
 MSPC



**Fig. 24**  
Resident Artist:  
MC Hyland  
*Prismatic Park*, 2017  
Painted wood and steel  
and custom-made  
prismatic, colored glass  
Music Wall: 9 feet 6  
inches x 31 feet x 3 feet  
9 inches; Dance Floor:  
32 feet diameter; Poetry  
Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
Collection of the artist

**Photo**  
Christina Lynch



**Fig. 25**  
Resident Artists:  
Joe McPhee and  
Graham Lambkin  
*Prismatic Park*, 2017  
Painted wood and steel  
and custom-made  
prismatic, colored glass  
Music Wall: 9 feet 6  
inches x 31 feet x 3 feet  
9 inches; Dance Floor:  
32 feet diameter; Poetry  
Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
Collection of the artist

**Photo**  
Truth Cole



**Fig. 26**  
Resident Artists:  
Joe McPhee and  
Graham Lambkin  
*Prismatic Park*, 2017  
Painted wood and steel  
and custom-made  
prismatic, colored glass  
Music Wall: 9 feet 6  
inches x 31 feet x 3 feet  
9 inches; Dance Floor:  
32 feet diameter; Poetry  
Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
Collection of the artist

**Photo**  
Truth Cole



**Fig. 27**  
Resident Artists:  
Rashaun Mitchell and  
Silas Riener  
*Prismatic Park*, 2017  
Painted wood and steel  
and custom-made  
prismatic, colored glass  
Music Wall: 9 feet 6  
inches x 31 feet x 3 feet  
9 inches; Dance Floor:  
32 feet diameter; Poetry  
Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
Collection of the artist

**Photo**  
Truth Cole



**Fig. 28**  
Resident Artist:  
Netta Yerushalmy  
*Prismatic Park*, 2017  
Painted wood and steel  
and custom-made  
prismatic, colored glass  
Music Wall: 9 feet 6  
inches x 31 feet x 3 feet  
9 inches; Dance Floor:  
32 feet diameter; Poetry  
Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
Collection of the artist

**Photo**  
Truth Cole



**Fig. 29**  
*Prismatic Park* (detail),  
2017  
Painted wood and steel  
and custom-made  
prismatic, colored glass  
Music Wall: 9 feet 6  
inches x 31 feet x 3 feet  
9 inches; Dance Floor:  
32 feet diameter; Poetry  
Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
Collection of the artist

**Photo**  
MSPC



**Fig. 30**  
*Prismatic Park* (detail),  
2017  
Painted wood and steel  
and custom-made  
prismatic, colored glass  
Music Wall: 9 feet 6  
inches x 31 feet x 3 feet  
9 inches; Dance Floor:  
32 feet diameter; Poetry  
Pavilion: 14 x 11 x 9 feet  
Collection of the artist

**Photo**  
Rashmi Gill





## Previous Mad. Sq. Art. Exhibitions

<b>2016</b>	Martin Puryear <i>Big Bling</i>	<b>2008</b>	Olia Lialina & Dragan Espenschied <i>Online Newspapers: New York Edition</i> Richard Deacon <i>Assembly</i> Tadashi Kawamata <i>Tree Huts</i> Rafael Lozano-Hemmer <i>Pulse Park</i>
<b>2015</b>	Teresita Fernández <i>Fata Morgana</i> Paula Hayes <i>Gazing Globes</i>	<b>2007</b>	Bill Fontana <i>Panoramic Echoes</i> Roxy Paine <i>Conjoined, Defunct, Erratic</i> William Wegman <i>Around the Park</i>
<b>2014</b>	Tony Cragg <i>Walks of Life</i> Rachel Feinstein <i>Folly</i> Iván Navarro <i>This Land Is Your Land</i>	<b>2006</b>	Ursula von Rydingsvard <i>Bowl with Fins, Czara z Babelkami, Damski Czepek, Ted's Desert Reigns</i>
<b>2013</b>	Giuseppe Penone <i>Ideas of Stone (Idee di pietra)</i> Orly Genger <i>Red, Yellow and Blue</i> Sandra Gibson and Luis Recoder <i>Topsy-Turvy: A Camera Obscura Installation</i>	<b>2005</b>	Jene Highstein <i>Eleven Works</i> Sol LeWitt <i>Circle with Towers, Curved Wall with Towers</i>
<b>2012</b>	Leo Villareal <i>BUCKYBALL</i> Charles Long <i>Pet Sounds</i>	<b>2004</b>	Mark di Suvero <i>Aesop's Fables, Double Tetrahedron, Beyond</i>
<b>2011</b>	Jacco Olivier <i>Stumble, Hide, Rabbit Hole, Bird, Deer, Home</i> Alison Saar <i>Feallan and Fallow</i> Jaume Plensa <i>Echo</i> Kota Ezawa <i>City of Nature</i>	<b>2003</b>	Wim Delvoye <i>Gothic</i>
<b>2010</b>	Jim Campbell <i>Scattered Light</i> Antony Gormley <i>Event Horizon</i> Ernie Gehr <i>Surveillance</i>	<b>2002</b>	Dan Graham <i>Bisected Triangle, Interior Curve</i> Mark Dion <i>Urban Wildlife Observation Unit</i> Dalziel + Scullion <i>Voyager</i>
<b>2009</b>	Shannon Plumb <i>The Park</i> Jessica Stockholder <i>Flooded Chambers Maid</i> Mel Kendrick <i>Markers</i> Bill Beirne <i>Madison Square Trapezoids, with Performances by the Vigilant Groundsman</i>	<b>2001</b>	Navin Rawanchaikul <i>I ♥ Taxi</i> Teresita Fernández <i>Bamboo Cinema</i> Tobias Rehberger <i>Tsutsumu N.Y.</i>
		<b>2000</b>	Tony Oursler <i>The Influence Machine</i>  From 2000 to 2003, exhibitions were presented by the Public Art Fund on behalf of the Campaign for the New Madison Square Park.

