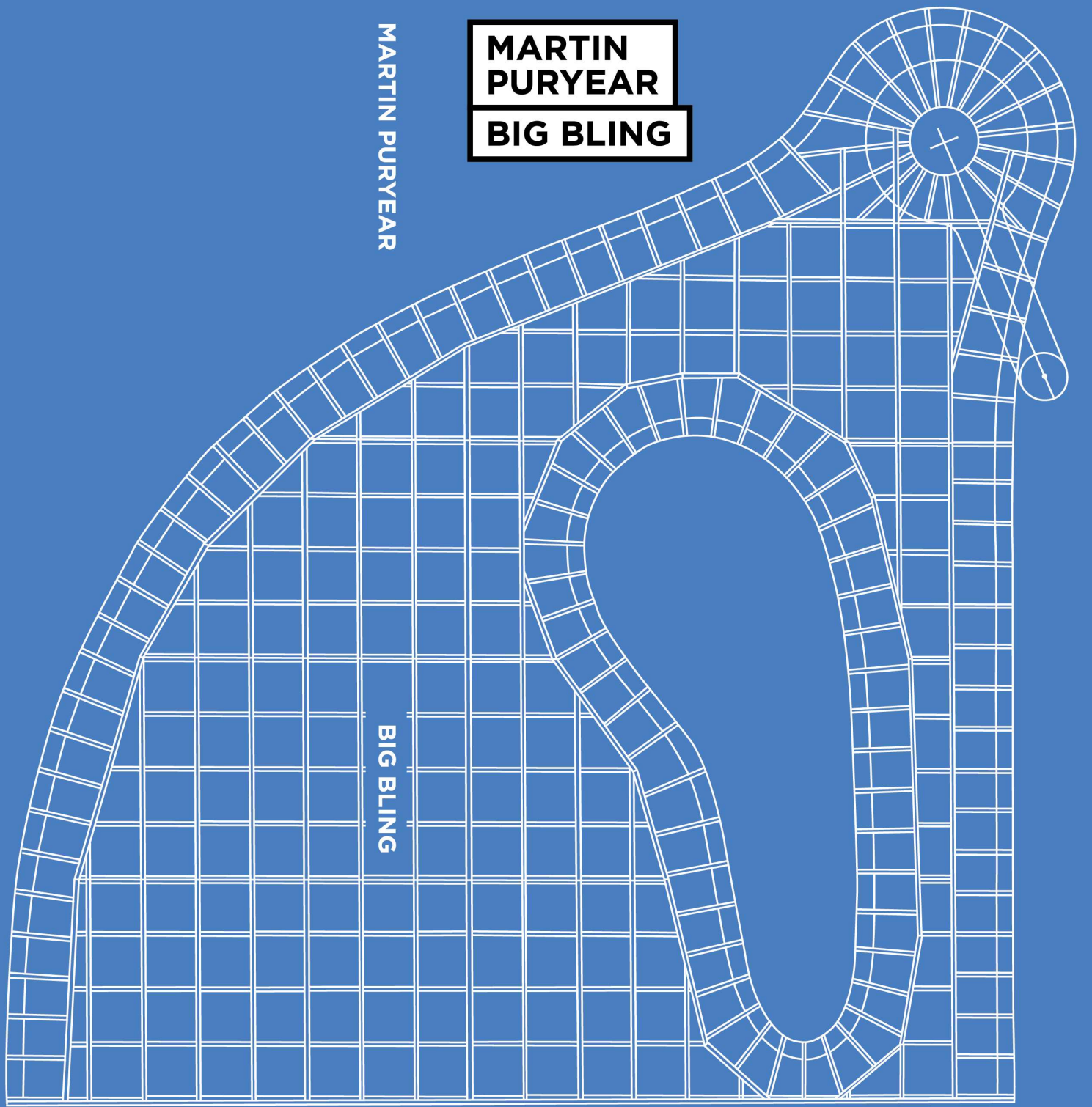


**MARTIN
PURYEAR
BIG BLING**

MARTIN PURYEAR

BIG BLING



Mad. Sq. Art 2016

Martin Puryear

Big Bling

May 16, 2016–April 2, 2017

Madison Square Park

New York

Presented by

Madison Square Park Conservancy



Martin Puryear
Big Bling

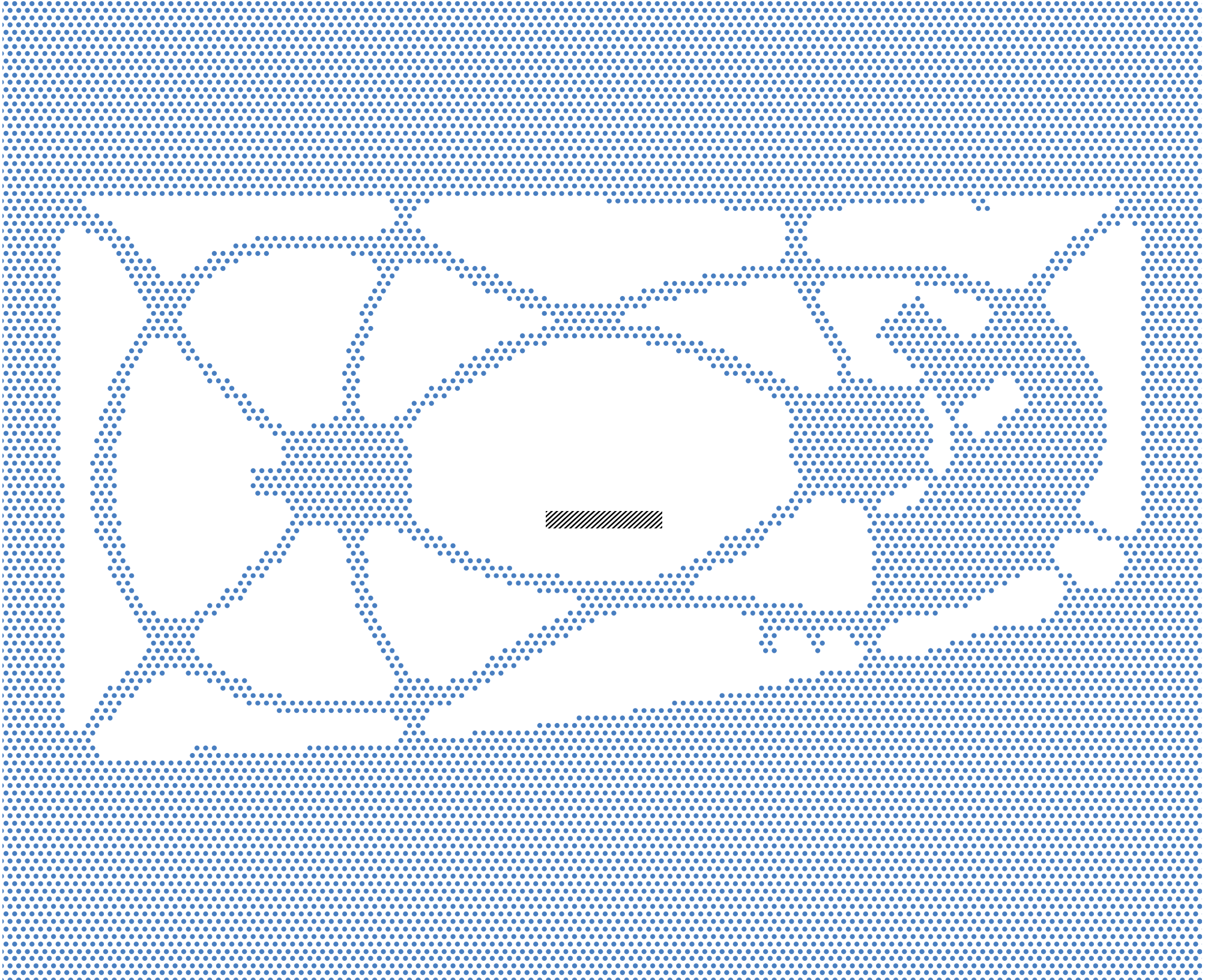
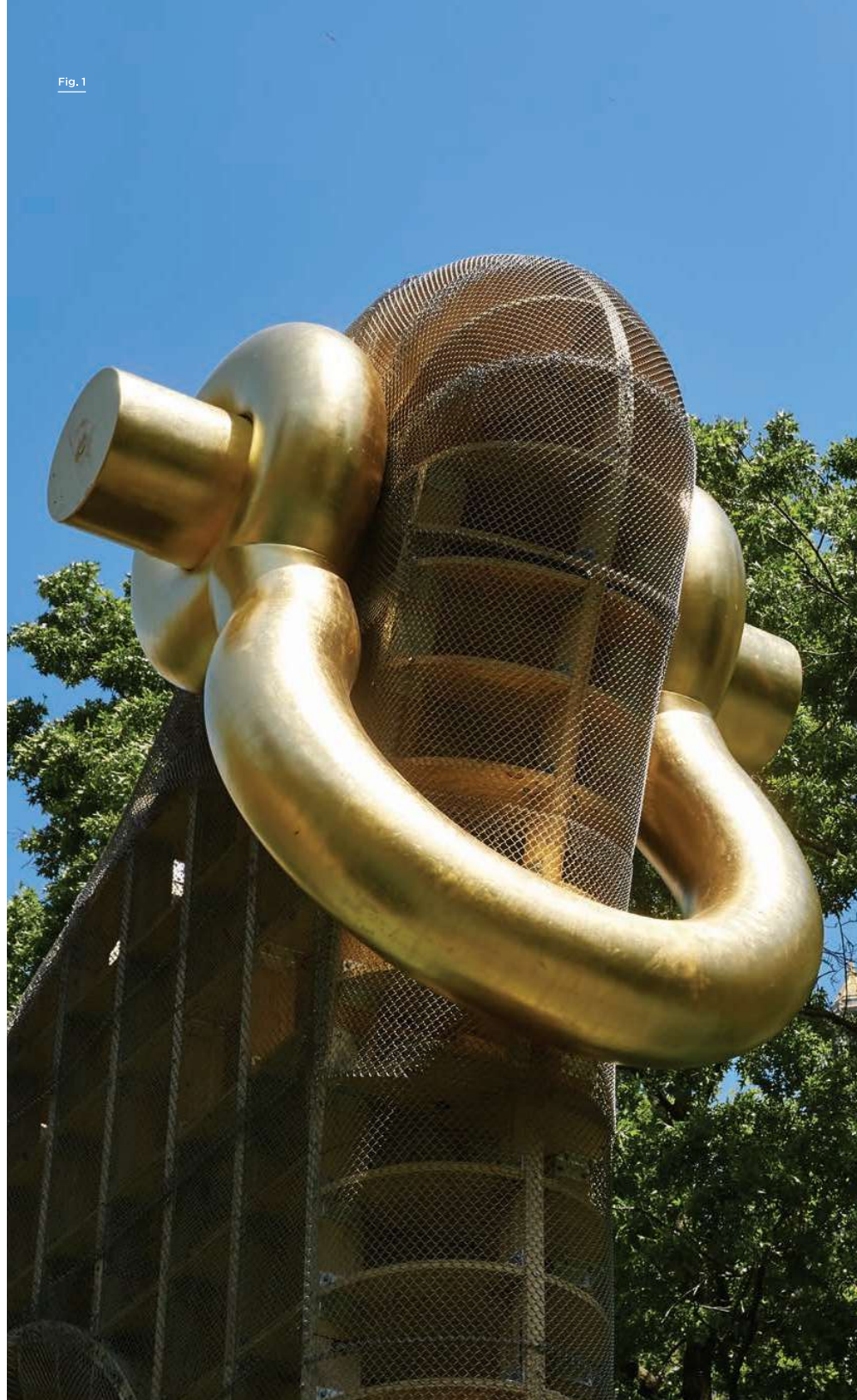


Fig. 1



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Artist's Statement

Although my sculpture *Big Bling* is an industrially produced construction, made in a factory and standing forty feet high, it had its beginnings in my studio as a handmade wooden sculpture just over three feet high, but identical in every respect to its full-size realization.

Apart from the golden element near the top, the sculpture was constructed using standard building materials—laminated curved pine timbers and plywood (pressure-treated to withstand the weather), galvanized steel-bolted connections, and a cladding of chain-link mesh fencing.

Besides the factory that was responsible for the timber construction, the work relied on the assistance of engineers, a crew of riggers with heavy equipment, and a team of model makers to fabricate the golden shackle. (This was digitally enlarged from my carved wooden original, modeled in structural foam, covered in fiberglass, and finally gilded with twenty-two-karat gold leaf.)

Because of its size, the sculpture had never been fully assembled. But one night in early May 2016, shortly after midnight, three flatbed tractor-trailers delivered it to the Park in seven sections. Four long days later the installation was completed.

What for months had been a growing accumulation of wooden parts suddenly was a presence in Madison Square Park.

The public asks:

What does it mean? What does it represent?

And for the artist, the question of meaning becomes:

What does it mean for my sculpture (which I normally make to last as long as possible) to be exhibited for only a few months in the middle of a teeming public space like Madison Square Park, outside the defining protective walls of a museum or art gallery?

Apropos the question of meaning, the poet Archibald MacLeish wrote:

A poem should not mean
But be. ¹

And, indeed, this enormous wooden construction was conceived by me as a kind of visual praise poem, an ode, to New York City.

It was my way of saying:

I see you New York. I see how you grow and
compartmentalize and stratify. I see how you beckon
and promise (and also how you exclude).

And crowning it all like a beacon, I see your wealth, your
gilded shackle, the golden ring (the bling), the prize, our
pride, maybe even our success.

¹
Archibald MacLeish,
"Ars Poetica,"
from *Collected Poems*
1917–1952.

Martin Puryear

Foreword

This catalogue is published on the occasion of realizing a spectacular sculpture, Martin Puryear's *Big Bling*, in Madison Square Park. The Conservancy first approached the artist in late 2013 to discuss his willingness to construct a monumental temporary artwork in the Park.

Fig. 3



In the studio, Puryear makes sculpture that endures. Building a short-lived work outdoors at a teeming public site that 60,000 people traverse daily—some with knowledge of his work, others with no inclination toward contemporary art—would invigorate the artist. Public art is viewed in the context of full democracy: no admission fees, complete accessibility, open to all. Puryear's penchant to describe *Big Bling* as a "construction," but limit any further interpretation, invites viewers to push their impetus and their imagination to think hard about a sculpture that sits so gracefully on the Oval Lawn, and so overpoweringly demands understanding. Perhaps the contrast and contradictions embedded in

this work—stately and overwhelming, rough-hewn and refined, raw and polished, restrained and liberated, figurative and abstract—are the true subject of *Big Bling*, and the ultimate civic obligation.

Like all of Madison Square Park's exhibitions, *Big Bling* could not have been realized without the extraordinary support and counsel of Madison Square Park Conservancy's Board of Trustees, including Board Chair David Berliner. Our Art Committee is a group of indispensable advisors who share their guidance, generosity, and wisdom. We are grateful to John Barry and Christopher Ward of Thornton Tomasetti,

who worked closely with the Conservancy and the artist to realize his vision. Jon Lash at Digital Atelier resolutely guided all aspects of the fabrication of *Big Bling*. Michael Narcisco and Dennis Dwyer at Dun-Rite Specialized Carriers brought their expertise to the installation rigging process. The team at Unalam in Unadilla, New York, worked closely with Puryear to build and construct a magnificent sculpture. At Madison Square Park Conservancy, Julia Friedman, Exhibition Manager, and Tom Reidy, Project Manager, are extraordinary colleagues. Keats Myer, Executive Director, has been enthralled with *Big Bling* from the outset. We are thrilled that the sculpture will travel to the Association for Public Art in Philadelphia, opening in May 2017. Matthew Marks and Stephanie Dorsey of Matthew Marks Gallery have been generous supporters of this project, involved since its inception. Thank you to Jeanne Englert at the Puryear studio, Harry Cooper, Curator and Head of Modern Art at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., shares his insight on Puryear's significance in this volume.

In *Big Bling*, Martin Puryear has pushed a form that has occupied his studio practice for decades into the realm of public art. In doing so, he obliges the individual viewer to engage with and interpret the work. Park visitors have crowded around the sculpture and commented on the raw quality of the materials. They have photographed it and questioned its meaning. *Big Bling* has been received with critical acclaim and serious introspection. If the role of public art is to challenge, energize, inspire, and provoke, then Martin Puryear has realized these objectives. If a goal in the studio is to push an artist's practice into new territory, then perhaps *Big Bling* has offered this to the venerable Puryear.

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



Introduction

When Martin Puryear first conceived of an outdoor public sculpture for Madison Square Park, he summoned a form that had absorbed him since the mid-1980s.¹ Puryear had already created a number of works—sculptures in white pine, tulip poplar, rattan, wire, and iron; drawings in charcoal and Conté crayon; etchings—that relied on a sinuous abstract shape with a curvilinear spine and a central, organic void. He found this form adaptable for a public art project, but with significant alterations. Typically, Puryear makes sculpture for the ages, with enduring materials; this piece would instead be intentionally temporary, built with laminated plywood and chain-link fence. Previous works had been created in Puryear's studio; this one would be fabricated industrially. And the title, *Big Bling*, brought a raffish vernacular to the outdoor sculpture: it allied the artist's choice of street materials with urban slang. The title reflected the placement of a work of public art in an urban setting that accommodates thousands of people every day. The shape and elements of the sculpture are complex in meaning and association—part animal form, part abstraction, and part searing content.

Puryear's initial volley for *Big Bling*—ultimately towering at forty feet on the Park's central Oval Lawn—was an informal image the size of the palm of his hand, drawn on letterhead. He next drew an angular rendering that indicated the linearity of the structure's interior and the curvilinear sweep of the outline. This was helpful to engineers and contractors who worked with him to shape his vision into a large-scale computer template for assembly by sections. Puryear's almost four-foot-tall maquette transformed a two-dimensional idea into a three-dimensional sculpture, but at one-tenth the scale. The birch plywood and maple model wasn't wrapped in the fine mesh that Puryear typically employs in sections of his sculpture. Rather, the wood assemblage emphasized the architectural fortitude of what *Big Bling* would become. Using the maquette and artist's renderings, engineers and fabricators produced a

¹ Three forms predominate in *Big Bling*: the grand curvilinear outline of the plywood and chain-link fence structure; the interior void, which is shaped like an ear, an amoeboid, or a mask; and the golden shackle. For more on Puryear's forms, see Elizabeth Reede, "Jogs and Switchbacks," in John Elderfield et al., *Martin Puryear*, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2007), 93–94. Reede traces Puryear's investigation of key formal elements beginning in the 1970s as "visual consistency." The central hollow in *Big Bling* may summon the elongated shape of a nineteenth-century Fang mask, which according to Reede first appeared in Puryear's work in 1984.

²
Martin Puryear, in conversation with Dr. Kellie Jones, in *Dreaming Public Art*, a symposium organized by Madison Square Park Conservancy and held at the SVA (School of Visual Arts) Theatre in New York City on May 24, 2016.

suitable computer scheme drawn in seven sections for transport and assembly. A golden shackle, the thirteen-foot-high fiberglass object with applied gold leaf, would be installed near the pinnacle of the sculpture. It put the “bling” in *Big Bling*.

Puryear has said publicly that *Big Bling* is “a portrait of New York” and “a visual praise poem to the city.”² He has regularly described the work as a “construction.” Some artists prefer to ascribe a set narrative, story line, or content to their work. Puryear has adopted a platform that enables the art to lead, sanctioning the legitimacy of the viewer’s interpretation or innate understanding; the sculpture stands, not the spin surrounding it.

With *Big Bling* as a paradigmatic example, the Parkgoer’s—or more accurately, the viewer’s—perception has taken off. Some have described the sculpture as an elephant or a Trojan horse. Puryear was intrigued during the installation period when a visitor told him that this outsize sculpture conjured a homegrown wooden roller coaster he’d read about years before in a children’s story. Many people have studied the architectural geometry of the work and compared it to the recurrent windows in Madison Square Park’s surrounding canyon of skyscrapers. Viewers have looked carefully at *Big Bling*’s materials and the trenchant symbolism of encasing a structure in chain-link fencing. For those on the inside, it is a privileged perch. For outsiders, a fence is an acute barrier that repels and prohibits access.

Even with the metaphor involved in using street materials such as plywood and chain-link fence, *Big Bling* wouldn’t realize its power without the shimmering golden shackle near the top. The shackle is brilliant, it lures the eye. An apt juxtaposition is with the Statue of Liberty, a ray of light emanating from its torch. The New York City-born poet Emma Lazarus (1849–1887) wrote of the monument, *Liberty Enlightening the World*, more than a century ago as a guidepost for immigrants to this country, a symbol of emancipation and enfranchisement. In her 1883 sonnet “The New Colossus,” Lazarus described Lady Liberty’s torch as a golden beacon:

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
“Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”³

It will not be lost on scholars of Madison Square Park that the Statue of Liberty’s arm and torch were on view there between 1876 and 1882, in an effort to bring donations for the completion of the 305-foot-tall monument. So while there is camaraderie between a glowing, eternally lit torch and the golden shackle on Puryear’s sculpture, Lady Liberty’s message of welcome is neater than Puryear’s: a torch fords a path, while a shackle is an object of stricture.

“Shackle” is, as Puryear notes, a verb and a noun. To shackle means to restrain, and a shackle is a U-shaped piece of hardware used in building, rigging, and hoisting. Shackle dimensions can be measured in inches or feet. Puryear often cites his indebtedness as a sculptor to the processes of various trades (boat building, furniture or instrument making) where a shackle would certainly be a standard apparatus. But the shackle as an object of servitude brings the art historian Kellie Jones and presumably many other viewers of *Big Bling* to wonder: “When I first heard that that was a shackle . . . I was thinking: Is this really about enslavement? Is this really about bondage? But no, it’s about a piece of hardware. . . . It’s ambiguous.”⁴

³
Emma Lazarus,
“The New Colossus,”
*Selected Poems
and Other Writings*
(Peterborough, Canada:
Broadview Press,
2002), ed. Gregory
Eiselein, [https://www.
.poetryfoundation.
org/poems-and-poets/
poems/detail/46550](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/46550).

⁴
Dr. Kellie Jones, in conversation with Martin Puryear, in *Dreaming Public Art*.

Fig. 5



Fig. 6



⁵
Ta-Nehisi Coates,
*Between the World
and Me* (New York:
Spiegel & Grau,
2015), 20.

There is ambiguity in a thirteen-foot-high golden shackle installed near the top of a forty-foot-tall public art project. Puryear's two-foot-high iron sculpture *Shackled* (2014) is reminiscent of *Big Bling*'s form. The title of that work and the fact that from the beginning the artist referred to the gold-leaf form as a "shackle" prompt one to consider its reference as more than a construction tool. A shackle bears the weight of the loaded term with which Ta-Nehisi Coates and other contemporary writers summon the legacy of slavery:

The streets were not my only problem. If the streets shackled my right leg, the schools shackled my left. Fail to comprehend the streets and you gave up your body now. But fail to comprehend the schools and you gave up your body later. I suffered at the hands of both.⁵

Big Bling has especially incisive and even unanticipated meaning today. Puryear's work may have started with an impetus to foster commentary on inequality in New York and other urban American centers—prohibiting entry, denying admission, precluding the gold ring. While the artist is reluctant to ascribe a symbolic program to the sculpture, it has pushed deep into the conversation about social discrepancies during an angry political season in which issues of race, deportation, and restriction predominate. If *Big Bling*'s wood structure wrapped in chain-link fence compels this interpretation, the work is also steeped in a continuing American story of disparity.

B.K.R.

Fig. 7



Vague dream-head lifted out of the ground,
And thing next most diffuse to cloud

Robert Frost,
"Tree at My Window," 1928

A formal sequence exceeds the capacity of any individual
to exhaust its possibilities in one lifetime.

George Kubler,
The Shape of Time, 1962



Fig. 8

Puryear's Pictures: A Free Association

Martin Puryear's works often point in two directions at once, up and down. Of these, it is the latter that is striking. Plenty of sculptures aspire, but his seem to press into the ground as much as they reach into the air. They are *planted*. The verb summons a double etymology, for the Latin noun *planta* means both "sprout, shoot, or cutting" and "sole of the foot."¹ Little can grow that is not grounded.

This is manifested, even illustrated, by *Face Down* (2008; fig. 8), a small sculpture in white bronze depicting what skateboarders call a faceplant. It is an unusually figurative, unusually funny work for Puryear, one of those revealing anomalies. The face appears flattened onto the floor or else cut off by it so that it continues underneath, completing itself. The result is a cartoony image of a figure taking a fall, or burying its head in the sand, or peering into the earth. Perhaps the figure is trying to see the world in William Blake's grain of sand or to look into Robert Frost's crater of the ant. Perhaps it has had its nose to the grindstone too long. But notice the holes aerating the top of the head like a chia pet before it sprouts or a lamp perforated to send out beams.² These suggestions point upward, infusing and inflating the form. The gourdlike cranium (remember the expression "out of your gourd"?), the cropped neck, and the semicircle of the ear—a synecdoche for the head itself—all rise and swell away from the ground. What goes down must come up. If this head had ideas, they would leak out, seeding the air.

Puryear first conceived this form in 1992–1993 as a precise drawing of a wooden framework. A few years later he started building it, and at some point he decided to place a large ampersand made of tar-covered mesh smack in the middle. The result was the fifteen-foot-long wooden *Vessel* (1997–2002; fig. 9). What kind of vessel is it?

¹ Entry for *plant*, *Online Etymological Dictionary*, etymonline.com, accessed October 30, 2016.

² Puryear has perforated his works before, as in the gessoed pine *Reliquary* (1980; Collection of Gayle and Andrew Camden) and the copper *Untitled* (1997; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo).

Fig 9



³
Compare the prints
from 2001 titled *Jug*.

A hot-water bottle with a stopper? A jug with a spout?³ The wooden beams and the scale of the work recall the framing of a ship, which in turn suggests that the ampersand may be a homuncular rower, bent and coiled, about to pull an absent oar. A figure in a bottle, a slave in a vessel. (The homunculus was often depicted in alchemical texts as a figure gestating inside a glass container.) The semicircles of the ears would make good oarlocks. The ears, by the way, were not in the drawing. Puryear added them in the sculpture, no doubt to strengthen the “head” reading of *Vessel*, to right the balance, to keep the ambiguity afloat.

Fig. 10



There is a term for a configuration carefully designed to sustain two mutually exclusive readings: multistable image. Puryear’s vessel/head looks something like that most famous of multistable images, the rabbit-duck illusion. Depending on whether you see the projecting part of the form as ears or a bill, you will see either a rabbit or a duck, and with a little effort you can toggle

between the two. In both *Vessel* and *Face Down*, the analogous projection can be read as either the neck of a head or the spout of a jug. Depending on this choice, the image will seem downward- or upward-pointing, introverted or extroverted, perhaps even trapped or liberated. These are multistable meanings.

The only other image of a faceplant that I can recall is in the work of Philip Guston, whose lima-bean heads of the 1970s often engage in close encounters with the ground. In *Web* (1975; fig. 10), one of them stares facedown and point-blank into a pool of cadmium red paint or blood. Puryear’s *Face Down* is less cartoony and detailed, but despite these differences the connection is striking because the form-class (to borrow George Kubler’s term⁴) is so rare, the iconographic tradition so narrow. Perhaps Puryear was thinking of Guston.⁵ But influence or borrowing is not my point: what the two artists have in common is not one image in particular but multistable images in general. Like Puryear, Guston is a master of the manifold. Take that thing next to the head in *Web*, which looks like two paws raised in prayer or

⁴
George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962), 33.

⁵
Even if the two artists had not shared a dealer (David McKee) and a collector (Edward Broida), Puryear would have known Guston’s work well, certainly by the time he made *Face Down*.

a simplification of Brancusi’s *Kiss*. As we know from Guston’s other paintings, it can also signify, depending on context, the parted hair of his wife, Musa, or a setting sun. Here we move beyond multistable images with their perceptual tricks to the deeper ground of what Freud called condensation: the packing of multiple identities into a single image thanks to the logic of the unconscious and the economy of the dream work.

And why oh why an ampersand for cargo? An ampersand joins the letters *e* and *t* to form the Latin word *et* (and). It is a symbol of connection and continuation, as its two forward-facing loose ends nicely suggest. And, and, and. . . The mind of this head/vessel is wandering, perhaps dreaming. It is a “very open-minded head.”⁶ A second glance reveals a wooden sphere at the foot of the ampersand, which calls to mind the abbreviation *etc.* (*et cetera*, “and other such things”), which can also be written &c. As we all know, this is a handy device of (non)closure, itself terminating appropriately in a punctual little dot. The dot in *Vessel* is easy to miss since it is the color of the surrounding wood. It is there, I imagine, to remind us that time is limited, that free association is not endless. The ampersand-with-dot logogram thus expresses the tension of freedom and constraint, openness and closure, in the image as a whole.

It is time for a confession. I am treating Puryear’s sculptures as images or pictures almost without material being, and I am associating them mainly to other pictures. I am not sure why, and I am not happy about it. Maybe it is because so much has been written so well about his materials and methods. Maybe it is because my first experience of *Big Bling* (2016), the occasion for this brief essay, was of a looming and ephemeral image at night, fenced off in a big clearing in the center of Madison Square Park, and not at all of an object to be encountered as one body to another (although I later explored it up close on a summer day). Or maybe it is just that the ungraspable pictures formed by Puryear’s objects will not let go of me.

Any consideration of Puryear’s heads will eventually arrive at his *Self* (1978; fig. 11). As the first of the headlike, or at least figurative, sculptures in his work, it is what Kubler would call a prime object, the initiator of a sequence.

⁶
Puryear, on his sculpture *Cedar Lodge* (1977), quoted in John Elderfield, “Martin Puryear: Ideas of Otherness,” in John Elderfield et al., *Martin Puryear*, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2007), 20. For a dreaming vessel in Puryear’s work, see *The Nightmare* (2001–2002; Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Lincoln, Nebraska).



Fig. 11

⁷ The *Saturday Night Live* comedy sketch had its debut in 1977, the year before Puryear made *Self*, but I doubt he had this in mind: there is none of the seriocomic feel of *Face Down* here.

An oblong, hollow, irregular, darkly stained wooden form, it rises directly from the floor to a snubbed peak a little blunter than a Conehead.⁷ Guston comes to my mind again, this time for his so-called hoods, the Klan-inspired alter egos that immediately preceded the lima-bean heads. Like *Self*, the hoods lean and waver, implying movement and sensitivity. Also like *Self*, which is the height of an average person, the legless hoods stand in for the whole body.

There is more to say about Guston, but free association does not wait: Joan Miró's *Tête* (Head) (1940/1974; fig. 12) comes to me next, a strange painting of a brooding, looming, rounded form with a single

bloodshot eye. Miró first painted the work in 1940 while in France, lamenting the fall of Barcelona and the triumph of Franco in his native Spain. He returned to overpaint it more than three decades later, at a time of protest, repression, and uncertainty as the Franco regime entered its final months. The hand or paw gesticulating is almost all that remains of the original image, for the rest has been obliterated by the head of the title.

What connects this image to Puryear's *Self* is not just the evident similarities of the dark form but the questions it raises. What is inside or underneath the opaque head? Is its imposition an act of self-assertion or self-censorship? And most simply (to return to where we started), is it pointing up or down? Its single black eye floats in a red shape that can be seen as a teardrop (falling) or a flame (rising). And let's not ignore the hand that has been carefully preserved from the first state. No mere leftover, it becomes an integral part of the new image, an attachment or a handle much like the spout/neck in Puryear's vessel/head or the cigarette that often emerges from the nonexistent mouths of Guston's grounded lima-bean heads, pointing up, releasing a puff of smoke, keeping things light. Or not so light, if we think of the famous dog that Goya painted on the walls of La Quinta del Sordo, who relates to that rising wave or hill much as Miró's hand relates to the swelling head.

In his 2014–2015 show at Matthew Marks Gallery in New York, Puryear introduced a new prime object into his work, the Phrygian cap, a piece of floppy red headgear with a Roman pedigree that played a major role in the French Revolution and (of particular interest to Puryear) in its antislavery campaigns.⁸ The cap had a parallel life, less well-known, as the *barretina* worn by Catalan men into the nineteenth century and then revived in the twentieth as a symbol of the Catalan independence movement. Miró felt deeply connected to his native Barcelona and especially to his family's country home



Fig. 12

⁸ Alex Potts, "The Persistence of Sculpture," in *Martin Puryear*, exh. cat. (New York: Matthew Marks Gallery, 2014), 17.

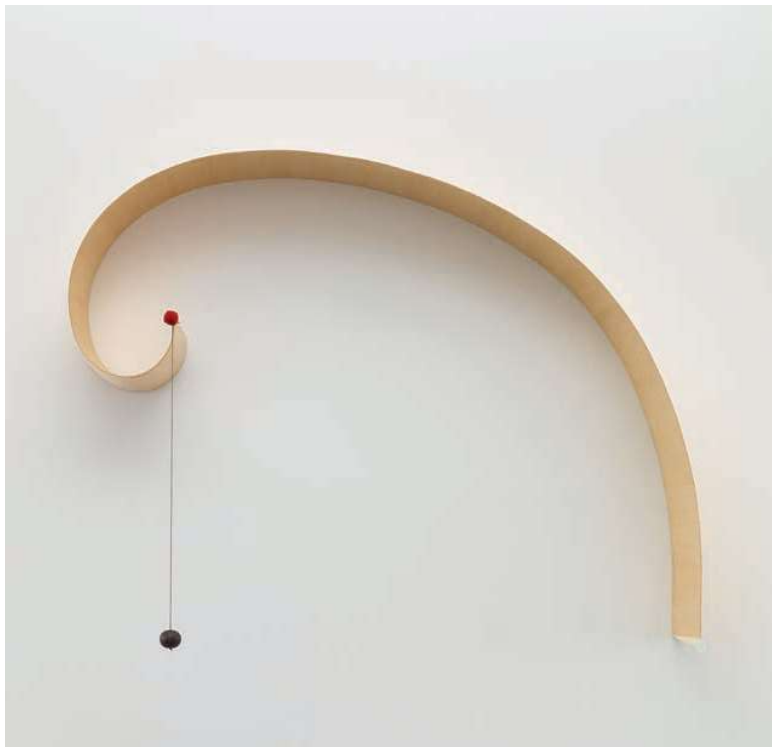
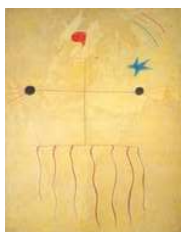


Fig. 13

Fig. 14



⁹ Martin Puryear, in conversation with Dr. Kellie Jones, in *Dreaming Public Art*, a symposium organized by Madison Square Park Conservancy and held at the SVA (School of Visual Arts) Theatre in New York City on May 24, 2016. All subsequent statements by Puryear are from this conversation.

in Mont-roig, and in 1924–1925 he devoted a series of four major paintings to the theme of a Catalan peasant sporting a *barretina*. Puryear's sculpture *Phrygian Spirit* (2012–2014; fig. 13), with its elegant curves and its red and black balls connected by a string, seems to pay particular homage to *Head of a Catalan Peasant* at the National Gallery in Washington (1924; fig. 14), in which black and red elements are connected by fine lines. Here is yet another image in which head stands for body, given that it is possible to read the black eyes as hands and the wispy beard as a set of insect legs.

In addition to the radical history of the Phrygian cap, Puryear is interested in what he calls its “up-and-over shape,” its distinctive flop, which he also connects to Hokusai's wave.⁹ The flop took vivid form in one of the most memorable works in the Matthew Marks show, a sculpture in red-painted cedar titled *Big Phrygian* (2010–2014; fig. 15). Which brings us, by way of rhyming title and rhyming form, to *Big Bling* (2016).

The *Big Bling* sequence began with a few sketches in about 2003 that in 2013 were realized in wood as



Fig. 15

the model for a stone sculpture for a library in Oslo (2013; fig. 16). A small sculpture, *Shackled*, followed in 2014 (fig. 17), and in the same year Puryear made the intricate wood and gold-leaf maquette for *Big Bling*. For all their different materials, these works share a single silhouette: one vertical edge and one sloping edge that meet to define a plane interrupted by an earlike opening. The main difference is at the top, which is cut off at an angle in the first sketches, suggesting the receptive mouth of a vessel, onto which a doughnutlike stopper is then added in the library maquette, a stopper that is then finished in *Shackled* and *Big Bling* by the addition of a shackle whose bit runs through the hole.¹⁰ It is a beautiful, almost biological evolution, and no doubt it will continue.

The *Big Bling* sequence has all the downward pressure we have come to expect in Puryear's work. This is expressed most clearly in *Shackled*, which bears some resemblance to an antique flatiron thanks to its material (iron) and its heavy, integral base. And if that work depicts a tool, the opening suggests an ergonomic handle.

¹⁰ That hole derives from a subseries of drawings of about 2003 featuring three openings in the frontal plane, the ear-shaped one and two circular ones. The upper of these circles would then become the hole of the added stopper. This three-hole version was realized in 2005 in an untitled five-and-a-half-foot-tall sculpture (John and Martha Gabbert Collection) in which the frontal plane, defined in wood, is backed by a swelling spherical openwork of rattan and wire.

Fig. 16



¹¹ This is not the only connection. Puryear has said that the gridded structure of the work “relates to the city”; in addition, the gold top surely refers to the gold crowns on the New York Life Building and the Met Life Tower, both bordering the Park.

Yet for all this weight, the rising curve of the “back” suggests an upward movement that is realized in the sheer height of *Big Bling* itself, which connects it to the old skyscrapers around it.¹¹ This tension of up and down reaches a climax in the shackle, which is a lifting device (as Puryear is quick to point out) and a means of heavy, historical confinement. The shackle looks as if it could be flipped up, but it would take a giant to do so. As it is, the shackle acts as a terminus to the wave of the back edge, a final flop that places *Big Bling* with *Big Phrygian* firmly in the “up-and-over” form-class. It is a story in miniature of rise and fall, victory and defeat, liberty and constraint.

But let’s lighten up: the word *bling*, together with the gold leaf, suggests luxury goods, including handbags and luggage with their leather straps

attached by gold or gold-colored shackles. Puryear speaks about the work and its title as having a “populist” quality, capturing the striving and dynamism of the city, the desire to reach the brass ring, to have tokens of success on our persons. “I hope that it is an ode to New York, a visual praise poem to the city and its energy.” Of course, the virtues of materialism, conspicuous consumption, and so-called upward mobility are debatable, and the sculpture stages the debate. “You can have a conversation,” Puryear remarks. This is the other meaning of “free association,” not the inescapable condition of private dreaming but the democratic right of public assembly.

Big Bling is a figurative as well as a literal scaffolding, a structure upon which meanings can be erected. Its suggestiveness derives from its rich formal and referential pedigree, the way it carries along heads and hoods, tools and vessels, waves and hats, oppression and freedom, deriving from sequences both inside and outside Puryear’s oeuvre. It combines stubborn mulishness with feline potential energy, and also suggests the contained violence of a bull with a ring in its nose. It has the paradoxical stability of a wave,



Fig. 17

which is a fixed shape that moves through a liquid. But the final stop in my train of association, for now, is the word *congeries*, that strangely singular plural for a heterogeneous aggregate that (like this essay) does not quite fall apart or hold together. In its combination of shaped, planed, singular form, which seems like the inevitable product of an evolution, and its teeming plurality of allusion and suggestion, as varied and contingent as our own minds, *Big Bling* presents a welcome inversion of our national motto: Out of one, many.

Harry Cooper
Curator and Head of Modern Art
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Fig. 18



Fig. 19





Fig. 20



Fig. 21



Fig. 22

Fig. 23



Fig. 24



Martin Puryear

WORK IN EXHIBITION

Big Bling, 2016

Pressure-treated laminated timbers, plywood,
chain-link fencing, fiberglass, and gold leaf
40 x 10 x 38 feet

Collection of the artist, courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery

BIOGRAPHY

Born 1941 in Washington, D.C.

Lives and works in upstate New York

EDUCATION

1963

Bachelor of Arts, Catholic University of America,
Washington, D.C.

1968

Royal Swedish Academy of Arts, Stockholm

1971

Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture, Yale University,
New Haven

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The artist thanks his studio assistants Jeanne Englert,
Rob Horton, and Kentaro Takashina.

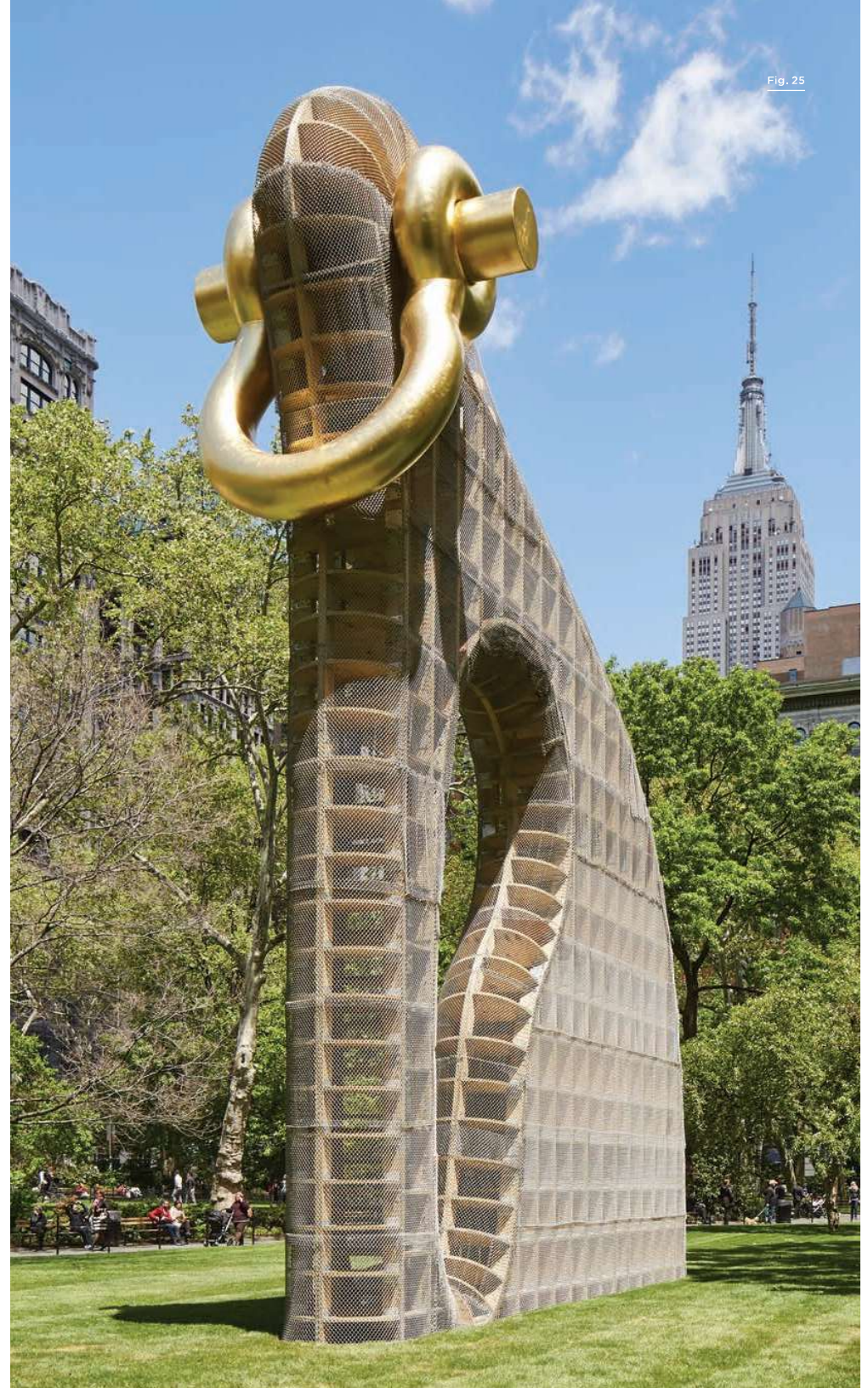


Fig. 25

Selected Solo Exhibitions

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 2016 | <i>Martin Puryear: Multiple Dimensions</i> , Art Institute of Chicago; Smithsonian Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C. |
| 2015 | <i>Martin Puryear: Multiple Dimensions</i> , The Morgan Library & Museum, New York |
| 2014 | Matthew Marks Gallery, New York |
| 2012 | McKee Gallery, New York <i>Vessel</i> , "T" Space, Rhinebeck, New York |
| 2008 | Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art |
| 2007 | The Museum of Modern Art, New York |
| 2005 | Donald Young Gallery, Chicago |
| 2004 | <i>New Work</i> , Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin |
| 2003 | <i>New Work</i> , BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, England |
| 2002 | Des Moines Art Center McKee Gallery, New York |
| 2001 | Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond Miami Art Museum University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive |
| 2000 | <i>The Cane Project</i> , The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York |
| 1997 | Fundación "la Caixa", Madrid Donald Young Gallery, Seattle |
| 1995 | McKee Gallery, New York |
| 1993 | Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art |
| 1992 | Philadelphia Museum of Art Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 1991 | Art Institute of Chicago |
| 1990 | <i>Connections</i> , Museum of Fine Arts, Boston |
| 1989 | Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles |
| 1988 | McIntosh/Drysdale Gallery, Washington, D.C. |
| 1987 | McKee Gallery, New York Donald Young Gallery, Chicago <i>Public and Personal</i> , Chicago Public Library and Cultural Center <i>Sculpture/Drawings</i> , Carnegie Mellon University Art Gallery, Pittsburgh <i>Grand Lobby Installation</i> , Brooklyn Museum, New York |
| 1985 | Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles Donald Young Gallery, Chicago |
| 1984 | <i>Ten-Year Survey</i> , La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, La Jolla; The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield; University Gallery, University of Massachusetts at Amherst |
| 1983 | Donald Young Gallery, Chicago |
| 1982 | Young Hoffman Gallery, Chicago |
| 1981 | Delahunty Gallery, Dallas; and/or Gallery, Seattle |
| 1980 | <i>Options 2</i> , Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago <i>I-80 Series</i> , Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha Young Hoffman Gallery, Chicago |
| 1977 | Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. |
| 1973 | Henri 2 Gallery, Washington, D.C. |
| 1972 | Fisk University Gallery, Nashville Henri 2 Gallery, Washington, D.C. |
| 1968 | Gröna Palleten Gallery, Stockholm |

Commissions & Special Projects

| | |
|------|--|
| 2016 | <i>Big Bling</i> , Madison Square Park Conservancy, New York |
| 2014 | <i>Slavery Memorial</i> , Brown University, Providence |
| | <i>One Handed Stool</i> , New Museum, New York |
| | Bench designs, Glenstone Foundation, Potomac, Maryland |
| 2003 | <i>Guardian Stone</i> , TV Asahi, Tokyo |
| 1999 | <i>That Profile</i> , J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles |
| | <i>This Mortal Coil</i> , Festival d'Automne, Paris |
| 1998 | <i>Bearing Witness</i> , Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, Washington, D.C. |
| 1997 | Courtyard, New School for Social Research, New York |
| | <i>Everything That Rises</i> , University of Washington, Seattle |
| 1996 | <i>Meditation in a Beech Wood</i> , Wanås Foundation, Knislinge, Sweden |
| 1995 | <i>North Cove Pylons</i> , Battery Park City, New York |
| 1994 | <i>Camera Obscura</i> , Denver Civic Center |
| | <i>Untitled</i> , Oliver Ranch, Geyserville, California |
| | <i>Pavilion in the Trees</i> , Fairmount Park, Philadelphia |
| 1991 | <i>Griot New York</i> , Brooklyn Academy of Music |
| 1988 | <i>Ampersand</i> , Walker Art Center, Minneapolis |
| 1987 | <i>Ark</i> , York College, CUNY, Queens |
| 1985 | <i>River Road Ring</i> , Chicago O'Hare Transit Line |
| 1983 | <i>Knoll for NOAA</i> , Western Regional Center, Seattle |
| 1982 | <i>Bodark Arc</i> , Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park, University Park |
| | <i>Sentinel</i> , Gettysburg College, Pennsylvania |
| 1979 | <i>Equivalents</i> , Wave Hill, Bronx |
| 1977 | <i>Box and Pole</i> , Artpark, Lewiston, New York |



Fig. 26

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2016** *Approaching American Abstraction: The Fisher Collection*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
- Abstracting Nature*, Newark Museum
- 2015** *Black Fire, A Constant State of Revolution*, Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska, Lincoln
- Recent Acquisitions of Prints and Drawings Spanning 500 Years*, Portland Art Museum, Oregon
- 10 Sculptures*, Matthew Marks Gallery, Los Angeles
- The Ceramic Presence in Modern Art: Selections from the Linda Leonard Schlenger Collection and the Yale University Art Gallery*, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven
- River Crossings*, Thomas Cole National Historic Site and Olana State Historic Site, Catskill and Hudson, New York
- 2014** Anderson Collection at Stanford University, California
- Represent: 200 Years in African-American Art*, Philadelphia Museum of Art
- Conversations: African and African American Artworks in Dialogue*, Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington, D.C.
- 2013** *Against the Grain: Wood in Contemporary Art, Craft and Design*, The Museum of Arts and Design, New York
- Legacy: The Emily Fisher Landau Collection*, Asheville Art Museum, North Carolina
- Multiplicity: Contemporary Prints from the Smithsonian Art Museum*, Akron Art Museum, Ohio
- 2012** *African American Art Since 1950: Perspectives from the David C. Driskell Center*, David C. Driskell Center, University of Maryland, College Park
- 2010** *A Force of Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey
- Line, Letter and Form*, John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco
- Sculpture*, McKee Gallery, New York
- 2009** *The Sculptor's Hand*, Tasende Gallery, La Jolla, California
- A Matter of Form*, John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco
- The Endless Renaissance*, Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach
- Donald Young Gallery, Chicago

Die Gegenwart der Linie, Die Pinakothek der Moderne, Staatlich Graphische Sammlung München, Munich

Art at Colby: Celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Colby College Museum of Art, Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine

Artists and the Natural World, McKee Gallery, New York

New Prints 2009/Autumn, International Print Center, New York

Sculpture: Chamberlain, Cornell, Flavin, Jenney, Kusama, Lewitt, Melotti and Puryear, Barbara Mathes Gallery, New York

2008 *Origins*, Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, Peekskill, New York

Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture Part II, John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco

Art for Yale: Collecting for a New Century, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven

2007 *Early Signs: Celmins, Puryear, Youngblood*, McKee Gallery, New York

Part One: 1976-1980, Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago

Estampes, Galerie Lelong, Paris

2006 *Against the Grain: Contemporary Art from the Edward R. Broida Collection*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Selections from the Collection of Edward R. Broida, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

2005 *Sculpture: An Intuitive View*, McKee Gallery, New York

Africa in America, Seattle Art Museum

2004 *Contemporary Art and Furniture Design in Dialogue*, Senior & Shopmaker Gallery, New York

Love/Hate: From Magritte to Cattelan: Masterpieces from the Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Villa Manin di Passariano, Codroipo, Italy

Gyroscope, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.

Art by MacArthur Fellows, Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

2003 *Breathless*, Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase College, State University of New York, Purchase

New Prints: Jake Berthot, Vija Celmins, Martin Puryear, McKee Gallery, New York

2002 *110 Years: The Permanent Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth*, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

Gifts in Honor of the 125th Anniversary of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art

In the Spirit of Martin: The Living Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit; Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach; Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis; Brooklyn Museum, New York; Memphis Brooks Museum of Art; Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Alabama

Drawings, Donald Young Gallery, Chicago

To Be Looked At: Painting and Sculpture from the Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Material Differences: Contemporary Viewpoints, Museum for African Art, New York

According with Nadelman: Contemporary Affinities, June Kelly Gallery, New York

2001 *New to the Modern: Recent Acquisitions from the Department of Drawings*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

The Draughtsman's Colors: Fourteen New Acquisitions from Johns to Chong, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

Yale University School of Art Alumni Choice Exhibition, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven

New Land Marks: Public Art, Community, and the Meaning of Place, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia

2000 *Celebrating Modern Art: Highlights of the Anderson Collection*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

NEW Works, McKee Gallery, New York

Strength and Diversity: A Celebration of African American Artists, Carpenter Center, Harvard University, Cambridge

Making Choices, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

1999 *The American Century: Art and Culture, 1950–2000*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

Weaving the World: Contemporary Art of Linear Construction, Yokohama Museum of Art

1998 *Face to Face: Art in the Public*, Marlborough Chelsea, New York

Essence of the Orb, Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York

Narratives of African American Art of the 20th Century: The David C. Driskell Collection, Art Gallery of the University of Maryland, College Park

The African-American Odyssey: A Quest for Full Citizenship, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

1997 *Forma Lignea*, American Academy in Rome

American Stories: Amidst Displacement and Transformation, Setagaya Art Museum, Tokyo

Envisioning the Contemporary: Selections from the Permanent Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago

Selections from the Permanent Collection: Identity/Identidad, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, La Jolla, California

1996 *Masterworks of Modern Sculpture: The Nasher Collection*, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

Abstraction in the Twentieth Century: Total Risk, Freedom, Discipline, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Wanås 1996, Wanås Foundation, Knislinge, Sweden

Art in Chicago, 1945–1995, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago

Faret Tachikawa: City and Art Today, National Technical Museum, Prague

1995 *The Material Imagination*, Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York

New Works on Paper: Sol LeWitt, Robert Mangold, Martin Puryear, Richard Serra, Donald Young Gallery, Seattle

1994 *Western Artists/African Art*, Museum for African Art, New York

Visions of America: Landscape as Metaphor in the Late Twentieth Century, Denver Art Museum

Putting Things Together: Recent Sculpture from the Anderson Collection, Art Museum of Santa Cruz County, California

1993 *Visual Arts Encounter: African Americans and Europe*, Salle Clemenceau, Palais du Luxembourg, Paris

Yale Collects Yale, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven

American Art in the 20th Century: Painting and Sculpture 1913–1993, Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin; Royal Academy of Arts, London; Saatchi Gallery, London

Drawing the Line Against AIDS, 45th Venice Biennale, Peggy Guggenheim Collection

1992 *Allegories of Modernism: Contemporary Drawing*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Process to Presence: Issues in Sculpture, 1960 to 1990, 14th International Sculpture Conference, Locks Gallery, Philadelphia

Donald Young Gallery, Seattle

Documenta IX, Kassel, Germany

1991 *Devil on the Stairs: Looking Back at the Eighties*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Newport Harbor Art Museum, California

Reprise: The Vera G. List Collection, David Winton Bell Gallery, List Art Center, Brown University, Providence

Small Scale Sculpture, Sewell Art Gallery, Rice University, Houston

1990 *Black USA*, Museum Overholland, Amsterdam

| | | | |
|------|--|------|---|
| | <i>Selected Artists from the First 20 Years</i> , Max Protetch Gallery, New York | | <i>Natural Forms and Forces: Abstract Images in American Sculpture</i> , Hayden Gallery, List Visual Arts Center, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge |
| | <i>The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s</i> , New Museum, New York | | <i>Individuals: A Selected History of Contemporary Art, 1945–1986</i> , Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles |
| | <i>Objects of Potential: Five American Sculptors from the Anderson Collection</i> , Wiegand Gallery, College of Notre Dame, Belmont, California | | <i>Installations and Sculpture: Inaugural Exhibition</i> , Donald Young Gallery, Chicago |
| 1989 | <i>Art in Place: 15 Years of Acquisitions</i> , Whitney Museum of American Art, New York | | <i>Personal References</i> , Kansas City Art Institute, Missouri |
| | <i>Traditions and Transformation: Contemporary Afro-American Sculpture</i> , Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York | 1985 | <i>Chicago Sculpture International/MILE 4</i> , State Street Mall, Chicago |
| | Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York | | <i>Sculpture Overview 1985</i> , Evanston Art Center, Illinois |
| | <i>Introspective: Contemporary American Art by Americans and Brazilians of African Descent</i> , California Afro-American Museum, Los Angeles | | <i>Basically Wood</i> , Thomas Segal Gallery, Boston |
| | <i>New Sculpture: Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Martin Puryear, Susana Solano</i> , Donald Young Gallery, Chicago | | <i>Choosing: An Exhibit of Changing Perspectives in Modern Art and Art Criticism by Black Americans 1925–1985</i> , Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago; Chicago State University; Portsmouth Museum, Virginia; Howard University, Washington, D.C. |
| | <i>Prints by Sculptors</i> , Landfall Press, New York | | <i>The Artist as Social Designer: Aspects of Public Urban Art Today</i> , Los Angeles County Museum of Art |
| 1988 | <i>From the Southern Cross: A View of World Art c. 1940–1988</i> , 1988 Sydney Biennale | | <i>Black Creativity, Generations in Transition: 80 Years of Black American Expression</i> , Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago |
| | <i>Private Works for Public Spaces: Drawings, Maquettes and Documentation for Unrealized Public Artworks</i> , R. C. Erpf Gallery, New York | | <i>Anniottanta, Invitational</i> , Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderna, Bologna |
| | <i>Spectrum: Mary Beth Edelson, Martin Puryear, Italo Scanga, Robert Stackhouse</i> , Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. | | <i>Transformations in Sculpture: Four Decades in American and European Art</i> , Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York |
| | <i>The World of Art Today</i> , Milwaukee Art Museum | | <i>Artist and Architects: Challenges in Collaboration</i> , Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art |
| | <i>Innovations in Sculpture</i> , Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut | | <i>Inaugural Exhibition</i> , Tyler Gallery, Temple University, Philadelphia |
| | <i>SKULPTUR: Material + Abstraktion: 2 x 5 Positionen</i> , Aargauer Kunsthaut, Aarau, Switzerland; Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, Switzerland; Swiss Institute & City Gallery, Department of Cultural Affairs, New York | 1984 | <i>An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture</i> , The Museum of Modern Art, New York |
| | <i>Sculpture Inside Outside</i> , Walker Art Center, Minneapolis | | <i>American Sculpture</i> , Donald Young Gallery, Chicago |
| 1987 | <i>Structure to Resemblance: Work by Eight American Sculptors</i> , Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo | | <i>Collaborating: The Power of the Artist and Architect Co-Designing Parks, Plazas, Public Places from New York to Seattle</i> , McIntosh/Drysdale Gallery, Houston |
| | <i>Fifty Years of Collecting: An Anniversary Selection of Sculpture of the Modern Era</i> , Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York | | <i>Proposals and Projects: World Fairs, Waterfronts, Parks and Plazas</i> , Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago |
| | <i>Emerging Artists: 1978–1986: Selection from the Exxon Series</i> , Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York | | <i>"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and Modern</i> , The Museum of Modern Art, New York |
| 1986 | <i>After Nature</i> , Germans Van Eck Gallery, New York | | <i>Transformation of the Minimal Style</i> , Sculpture Center, Long Island City, New York |
| | <i>Sculpture on Stetson: 1986</i> , Two Illinois Center, Chicago | | |

1983 *Five Artists/NOAA Collaboration, Seattle Art Museum Pavilion Invitational Exhibition*, Grace Borgenicht Gallery, New York

Beyond the Monument, Documentation of Public Art Projects and Proposals, Hayden Corridor Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge

Donald Young Gallery, Chicago

1982 *Afro-American Abstraction*, organized by the American Museum Association; MoMA PS1, Long Island City, New York; Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery; Oakland Museum, California; Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, Memphis; The Art Center, South Bend, Indiana; Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio; Bellevue Art Museum, Washington; Laguna Gloria Museum, Austin, Texas

Works in Wood, Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles

Invitational Exhibition, David Winton Bell Gallery, List Art Center, Brown University, Providence

Form and Function, Proposals for Public Art for Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia

The 74th American Exhibition, Art Institute of Chicago

American Abstraction Now, Richmond Institute of Contemporary Art of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond

Mayor Byrne's Mile of Sculpture, International Art Exposition, Chicago

1981 *The New Spiritualism: Transcendent Images in Painting and Sculpture*, Oscarsson Hood Gallery, New York; Jorgensen Gallery, University of Connecticut, Storrs; Robert Hull Fleming Museum, University of Vermont, Burlington

Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

City Sculpture, Chicago Public Library Cultural Center

Instruction Drawings, Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Artists' Parks and Gardens, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago

Sculptural Density, Visual Arts Museum, School of Visual Arts, New York

1980 *The Black Circle*, A. Montgomery Ward Gallery, University of Illinois at Chicago

Chicago, Chicago, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati

Afro-American Abstraction, MoMA PS1, Long Island City, New York; Everson Gallery, Syracuse, New York

1979 *Art and Architecture, Space and Structure*, Protetch-McIntosh Gallery, Washington, D.C.

Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

Custom and Culture, organized by Creative Time, U.S. Customs House, New York

Wave Hill: The Artist's View, Wave Hill, Bronx

1978 *Young American Artists: 1978 Exxon National Exhibition*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

The Presence of Nature, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

1977 *The Material Dominant*, Pennsylvania State University Museum of Art, University Park

The Program in the Visual Arts, Artpark, Lewiston, New York

1974 National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C.

New Talent at Maryland, Art Gallery of the University of Maryland, College Park

1971 *Prints and Paintings by Black Artists*, Union South Gallery, University of Wisconsin, Madison

1969 *Group Exhibition*, Lunn Gallery, Washington, D.C.

1968 *Annual Exhibition*, Royal Swedish Academy of Arts, Stockholm

1965 *Group Show*, U.S.I.S. Gallery, Freetown, Sierra Leone

Annual Exhibition, Royal Swedish Academy of Arts, Stockholm

Stockholm Biennial Exhibition, Liljevalchs Konsthall, Stockholm

1962 *Annual Exhibition*, Baltimore Museum of Art

Puryear, Raymond, Termini, Adams-Morgan Gallery, Washington, D.C.

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Association for Public Art, Philadelphia, will present *Big Bling* beginning in May 2017.



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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 98% 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

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Madison Square Park Conservancy

11 Madison Avenue, 15th Floor
New York, New York 10010
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Photography & Figure Credits

Fig. 1

Big Bling, 2016
Installation view in
Madison Square Park,
New York
Pressure-treated
laminated timbers,
plywood, chain-link
fencing, fiberglass,
and gold leaf
40 x 10 x 38 feet
Collection of the artist
© Martin Puryear,
courtesy Matthew Marks
Gallery



Fig. 2

Big Bling, 2016
Installation view in
Madison Square Park,
New York

Photo
Hunter Canning



Photo

Yasunori Matsui

Fig. 3

Big Bling, 2016
Installation view in
Madison Square Park,
New York

Photo

Rashmi Gill



Fig. 4

Maquette for
Big Bling, 2014
Birch plywood, maple,
and 22-karat gold leaf
40 1/4 x 9 1/8 x 40
inches (maquette);
40 x 10 x 38 feet
(projected size)
Collection of the
artist
© Martin Puryear,
courtesy Matthew Marks
Gallery

Photo

Jamie Stukenberg,
Professional Graphics



Fig. 5

Maquette for *Big Bling*
(detail), 2014

Photo

Jamie Stukenberg,
Professional Graphics

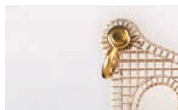


Fig. 6

Shackled, 2014
Iron
27 1/2 x 30 5/8 x 8 3/8
inches
Collection of the artist
© Martin Puryear,
courtesy Matthew Marks
Gallery



All works are by Martin Puryear unless otherwise indicated.

Fig. 7

Maquette for
Big Bling (detail), 2014

Photo

Jamie Stukenberg,
Professional Graphics



Fig. 8

Face Down, 2008
White bronze
14 x 28 x 11 inches
Collection of the artist
© Martin Puryear,
courtesy Matthew Marks
Gallery



Photo

Jamie Stukenberg,
Professional Graphics

Fig. 9

Vessel, 1997–2002
Eastern white pine,
mesh, and tar
84 x 181 1/2 x 68 inches
Smithsonian American
Art Museum, Gift of
Nion McEvoy and
Leslie Berriman in
memory of Nan Tucker
McEvoy, gift of Lucy S.
Rhame, and museum
purchase through
the Luisita L. and
Franz H. Denghausen
Endowment
© Martin Puryear,
courtesy Matthew Marks
Gallery



Fig. 10

Philip Guston
American (1913–1980)
Web, 1975
Oil on canvas
67 x 97 inches
The Museum of Modern
Art, New York, Gift of
Edward R. Broida
© The Estate of Philip
Guston, courtesy
Hauser & Wirth
Digital image © The
Museum of Modern Art/
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Art Resource, New York



Fig. 11

Self, 1978
Stained and painted red
cedar and mahogany
69 x 48 x 25 inches
Joslyn Art Museum,
Omaha
© Martin Puryear,
courtesy Matthew Marks
Gallery



Fig. 12

Joan Miró
Spanish (1893–1983)
Tête (Head),
1940–March 1, 1974
Acrylic on canvas
25 3/5 x 19 7/10 inches
Fundació Joan Miró,
Barcelona
© Successió Miró /
Artists Rights Society
(ARS), New York /
ADAGP, Paris 2016



Fig. 13

Phrygian Spirit,
2012–2014
Alaskan yellow cedar,
holly, ebony, leather,
string, and milk paint
58 3/8 x 74 3/4 x 15 3/4
inches
John and Martha
Gabbert
© Martin Puryear,
courtesy Matthew Marks
Gallery



Fig. 14

Joan Miró
Spanish (1893–1983)
*Head of a Catalan
Peasant*, 1924
Oil and crayon on
canvas
Overall:
57 1/2 x 44 15/16 inches.
Framed:
69 1/4 x 56 1/2 x 4 inches
National Gallery of
Art, Washington, D.C.,
Gift of the Collectors
Committee 1981.9.1
© Successió Miró /
Artists Rights Society
(ARS), New York /
ADAGP, Paris 2016



Fig. 15

Big Phrygian, 2010–2014
Painted red cedar
58 x 40 x 76 inches
Glenstone Museum,
Potomac, Maryland
© Martin Puryear,
courtesy Matthew Marks
Gallery



Fig. 16

*Maquette for Deichman
Library, Oslo*, 2013
American tulip poplar
29 1/2 x 14 3/4 x 28 7/8
inches
Collection of the artist
© Martin Puryear,
courtesy Matthew Marks
Gallery



Photo

Jamie Stukenberg,
Professional Graphics

Fig. 17

Shackled, 2014
Iron
27 1/2 x 30 5/8 x 8 3/8
inches
Collection of the artist
© Martin Puryear,
courtesy Matthew Marks
Gallery



Fig. 18

Big Bling, 2016
Installation view in
Madison Square Park,
New York

Photo

Rashmi Gill



Fig. 19

Fabrication of *Big Bling*,
2016

Photo

Yasunori Matsui



Fig. 20

Big Bling, 2016
Installation in progress
in Madison Square Park,
New York

Photo

Yasunori Matsui



Fig. 21

Big Bling, 2016
Installation in progress
in Madison Square Park,
New York

Photo

Yasunori Matsui



Fig. 22

Big Bling, 2016
Installation in progress
in Madison Square Park,
New York

Photo

Yasunori Matsui



Fig. 23

Big Bling, 2016
Installation view in
Madison Square Park,
New York

Photo

Hunter Canning



Fig. 24

Big Bling, 2016
Installation view in
Madison Square Park,
New York

Photo

Jordan Tinker



Fig. 25

Big Bling, 2016
Installation view in
Madison Square Park,
New York

Photo

Yasunori Matsui



Fig. 26

Big Bling, 2016
Installation view in
Madison Square Park,
New York

Photo

Yasunori Matsui



Previous Mad. Sq. Art. Exhibitions

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 2015 | Teresita Fernández <i>Fata Morgana</i> Paula Hayes <i>Gazing Globes</i> |
| 2014 | Tony Cragg <i>Walks of Life</i> Rachel Feinstein <i>Folly</i> Iván Navarro <i>This Land Is Your Land</i> |
| 2013 | 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> |
| 2012 | Leo Villareal <i>BUCKYBALL</i> Charles Long <i>Pet Sounds</i> |
| 2011 | Jacco Olivier <i>Stumble,</i> <i>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> |
| 2010 | Jim Campbell <i>Scattered Light</i> Antony Gormley <i>Event Horizon</i> Ernie Gehr <i>Surveillance</i> |
| 2009 | Shannon Plumb <i>The Park</i> Jessica Stockholder <i>Flooded Chambers Maid</i> Mel Kendrick <i>Markers</i> Bill Beirne <i>Madison Square Trapezoids,</i> <i>with Performances by the Vigilant Groundsman</i> |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 2008 | 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> |
| 2007 | Bill Fontana <i>Panoramic Echoes</i> Roxy Paine <i>Conjoined, Defunct, Erratic</i> William Wegman <i>Around the Park</i> |
| 2006 | Ursula von Rydingsvard <i>Bowl with Fins, Czara z Babelkami,</i> <i>Damski Czepek, Ted's Desert Reigns</i> |
| 2005 | Jene Highstein <i>Eleven Works</i> Sol LeWitt <i>Circle with Towers, Curved Wall with Towers</i> |
| 2004 | Mark di Suvero <i>Aesop's Fables, Double Tetrahedron, Beyond</i> |
| 2003 | Wim Delvoye <i>Gothic</i> |
| 2002 | Dan Graham <i>Bisected Triangle, Interior Curve</i> Mark Dion <i>Urban Wildlife Observation Unit</i> Dalziel + Scullion <i>Voyager</i> |
| 2001 | Navin Rawanchaikul / ♥ <i>Taxi</i> Teresita Fernández <i>Bamboo Cinema</i> Tobias Rehberger <i>Tsutsumu N.Y.</i> |
| 2000 | 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.

