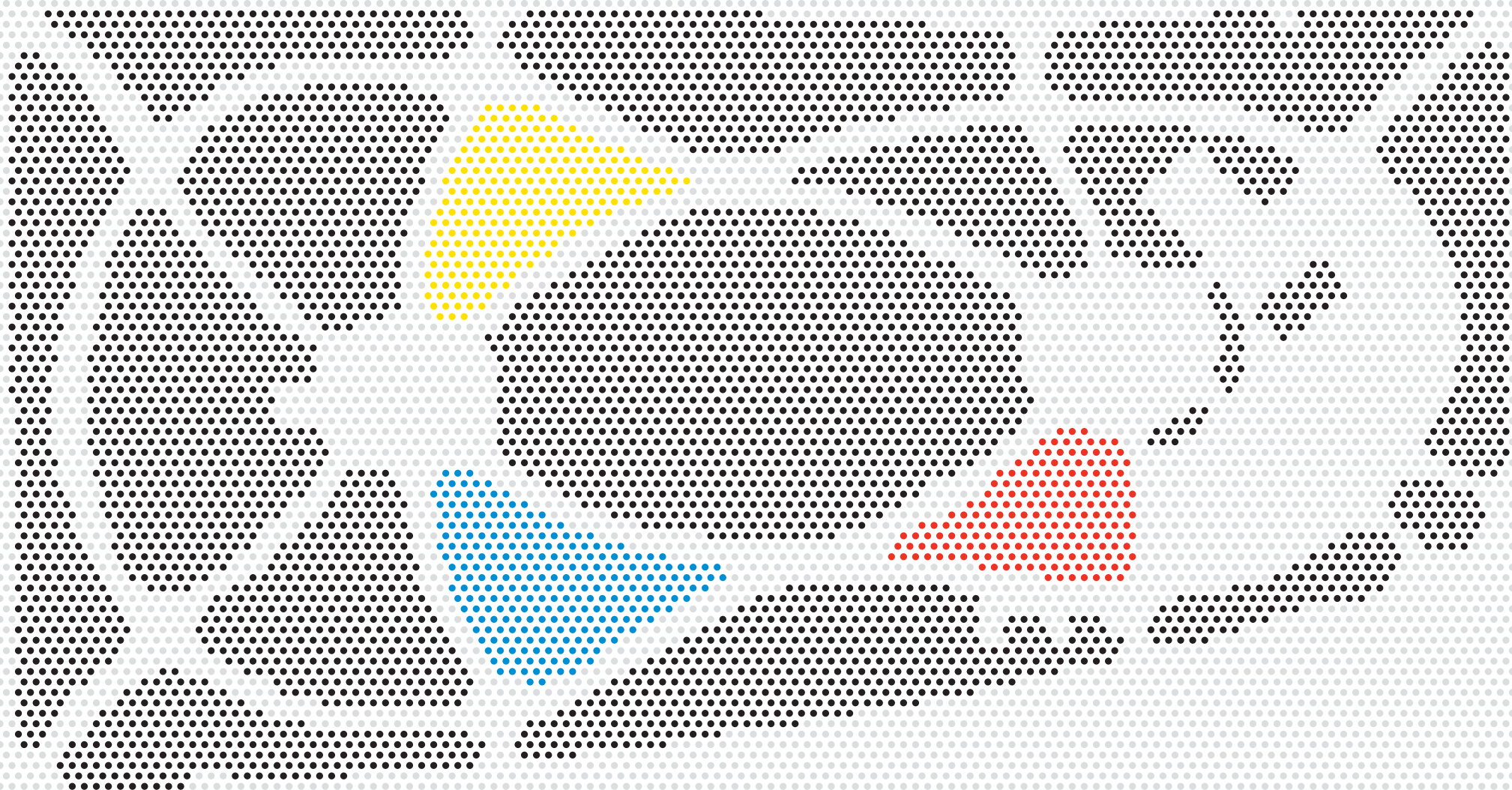




ONLY GINGER RED, YELLOW AND BLUE







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FOREWORD

ORLY GENDER

RED, YELLOW AND BLUE

Orly Genger (American, born 1979) has used common house paint as a stunning overlay to create monumental, cascading walls of primary colors: red, yellow, and blue.

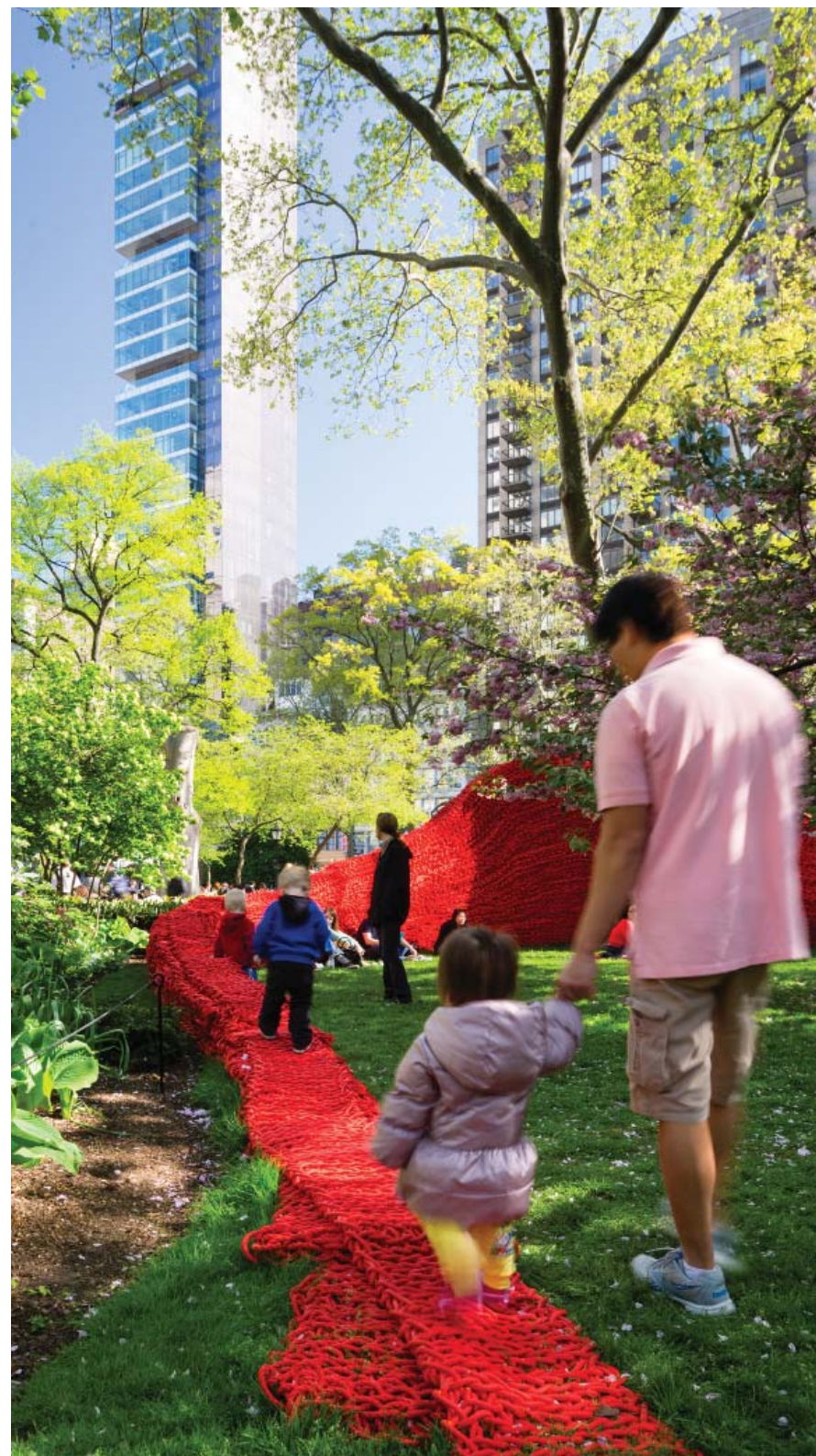
Genger makes no secret of her material—in fact she celebrates it: lobstermen's rope used to haul catch from the depths of the Atlantic off the New England coast. Once painted, these swaths of brilliant color highlight the labor-intensive project that took her more than two years to complete. Genger and studio assistants hand-crocheted the durable rope to create lengths of material that would ultimately become the largest outdoor sculpture the artist has ever made, *Red, Yellow and Blue*, first shown in Madison Square Park. The facts and figures surrounding the development and scope of this work are remarkable: two and a half years of handmade production, a team of seven assistants, and 1.4 million feet of painted lobster rope. One hundred and fifty-six pallets were trucked from Genger's Brooklyn studio to Madison Square Park. The work is a triumph of the artist's tenacious process and personal endurance. She has long incorporated her body into her work—in performative and sculptural ways—and *Red, Yellow and Blue* is a culminating project where the physical process of creation has become one with the art.

Since the installation was inaugurated by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Genger, the public has become equally physically involved. They have straddled the piece and attempted to scale its heights. They sunbathe near

the work and find refuge in the shadows it casts. Fashion designers have inquired about the artist's techniques. Children are inspired by the primary colors, and adults wearing like-colored clothing have been photographed in front of each section. Genger's work has provoked widespread visuals across social media, on Facebook and Twitter and in the blogosphere. *Red, Yellow and Blue* has captivated the Internet as much as it has individual park visitors.

It has been a revelation to watch a young artist participate in a world-class public art program with a resolve that matches the intensity of her work. Orly Genger had the perseverance to produce a rapturous sculpture that holds its own among some great early-twentieth-century American architecture surrounding the park. Larissa Goldston has been a long-term supporter of the artist and this project. We could not have been as successful as we have been without affirmation from the munificent Board of the Madison Square Park Conservancy and our Art Advisory Committee. We are all moved by Orly Genger's formidable substance and spirit.

Debbie Landau
President
Madison Square Park Conservancy









ROPING IN THE AUDIENCE AT MADISON SQUARE PARK

ANNE L. STRAUSS

Artist Orly Genger (American, born 1979) has been creating increasingly large and ambitious installations with colorful masses of hand-knotted rope—her signature medium—over the past ten years. Outdoor work on a monumental scale has recently been a particular focus. Through her recurring use of coarse rope, vivid color, and grand scale, Genger reshapes space and actively engages the viewer. Her three-part intervention *Red, Yellow and Blue* (2013) currently enlivens New York City's Madison Square Park and invites audience interaction.

Red, Yellow and Blue, Genger's largest project to date, is presented from May 2 through September 8, 2013, in the most dynamic cityscape in which she has ever worked—Madison Square Park. The 6.2-acre public park in Manhattan, bordered by 23rd and 26th Streets to the south and north, Madison Avenue to the east, and Fifth Avenue and Broadway to the west, receives some 50,000 visitors daily. Genger's first major public installation in New York City, where she was born and raised, the project grew out of her initial large-scale hand-woven multicolored nylon rope outdoor sculpture *Mr. Softy* (2005), which was presented at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, Connecticut (May 1–October 2, 2005). Her most labor-intensive work to date, more than two years in the making, *Red, Yellow and Blue* is both macro in its scale and site and micro as it invites the viewer to enter and discover what it is made of. Visitors are part of the exchange in this interactive environment. Color, material, texture, and visitor engagement are all key components.

The project is the largest in the Madison Square Park Conservancy's ten-year history of public art programming and is the first to go on tour. *Red, Yellow and Blue* will be reconfigured at deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum in Lincoln, Massachusetts, after its New York run.

The scale of the commission called for acquiring and working with the largest quantity of rope that Genger has ever dealt with. She typically uses smooth, thick nylon mountain climbing rope, but here her material is used lobster-trap rope collected from various locations along the Eastern Seaboard. Over more than two years she processed 1.4 million feet—some 265 miles—of hand-knotted repurposed lobster rope, weighing 100,000 pounds and covered with more than 3,500 gallons of red, yellow, and blue house paint. The rope was then layered and wrestled into place to create three separate, freestanding, undulating chambers, each with its own entrance, for the public to enter and engage with. The *Red* and *Yellow* works, located in the southwest and northeast quadrants of the park, respectively, suggest rolling and cresting waves that rise to heights of between 7 and 14 feet, while the *Blue* work, in the northwest area, resembles a hedge or wall and stands 7 feet, 6 inches tall at its highest point. There is a distinctive personal style, and the artist's transformation and manipulation of her chosen medium are clearly evident, to dramatic effect, in this multipart work. It has at once an imposing physical presence and a fluidity, a softness, and a sense of welcoming accessibility, resonating with its pulsating palette of intense primary colors.

A team of studio assistants was hired to hand-knot, along with the artist, the colossal quantity of rope. Using a crochet stitch blown up to very large proportions, Genger produced varying lengths of rope panels—some 150 feet long—to be used as building blocks for *Red, Yellow and Blue*. A crew of two to seven people at a time worked in five-hour shifts, almost every day of the week, over two and a half years, on the arduous and repetitive collaboration, which took some 9,000 hours to complete in the artist's Greenpoint, Brooklyn studio space. The crocheted panels were spray-painted on the studio floor and loaded onto a total of 156 pallets, then stored in preparation for the installation in Madison Square Park, where, with the artist supervising a separate installation crew over two weeks, the fifty tons of painted rope components were layered and sculpted into massive mounds and free-form flows and then painted again. Traces of physical labor as well as the imprint of the artist are apparent in this hand-wrought work created from recycled material that would otherwise have been discarded, which is now left for the public to navigate and experience physically and sensorially.

The three separate structures envelop each of three distinct lawns in Madison Square Park and together occupy some 4,500 square feet of space. Genger has said, "For Madison Square Park I wanted to create a work that would impress in scale but still engage rather than intimidate. ... [I'm working] at an unprecedented scale." The red, yellow, and blue works successfully animate the spaces they occupy and welcome the

public to enter. They can take on the appearance of a living thing—pulsating with color and activated by people engaging with them—and at the same time offer intimate chambers that contain and embrace visitors. The *Red* work hugs a tree, and grass had already grown up through the splayed-out rope panels at ground level of each of the structures within days of their installation—all suggesting ways that this work is settling into, and becoming one with, the site.

As visitors approach Madison Square Park they are met with waves of color from *Red, Yellow and Blue*, the title of which is in homage to artist Barnett Newman's (American, 1905–1970) *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue* series of four large-scale paintings (1966–70), now owned by a private collection, the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, and the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin. Each of Genger's sculptures calls out in all its colorful and attention-getting palette of primary colors, which can be read from a great distance and seizes the viewer's attention. The artist is very deliberate about her color choice, which is typically quite vivid and extreme. Whereas for indoor pieces she may select a single color—for example, red in the installation *Big Boss* (2009–10) at MASS MoCA in North Adams, Massachusetts [Fig 1], or black for the Indianapolis Museum of Art commission *Whole* (2008)—she typically selects a multicolored palette, exemplified by the intense retinal impact offered by *Red, Yellow and Blue*, for maximum effect in outdoor works.

The public's engagement with the project began as soon as the material was delivered on pallets to Madison Square Park at the outset of the two-week-long installation. People are naturally drawn to a work in progress, and especially in New York, they aren't bashful about approaching a work crew with questions, comments, and observations. At Madison Square Park, they stepped over fences, and squeezed through barricades to offer their thoughts. Their most frequently asked questions as *Red, Yellow and Blue* was being assembled: "What is it?" "Who's the artist?" "How long will it be here?" "Can I climb on it?" Observers instinctively want to compare what they see unfolding with other works or phenomena. In this instance, comparisons were made with other contemporary artists who work in the Minimalist tradition or with utilitarian materials as their media, and even with a visitor's remembered travels to the Red Sea. Genger, while overseeing the entire installation, turned her thoughts to inevitable safety and maintenance concerns that come with putting a public work of art on view. She also acknowledged that in a matter of days, upon the inauguration of the project, she would need to step back and give her work over to the public audience to engage with.

Viewers, drawn in from outside Madison Square Park upon glimpsing the large areas of bright and undulating color, initially do not know what Genger's structures are made of. The works are irresistible to the touch, given their tactile quality. Visitors instinctively reach out to touch, lift and



Fig 1. Orly Genger. *Big Boss* (2009-10). Rope with latex paint. Dimensions variable. MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA. Photo: Arthur Evans. Courtesy Larissa Goldston Gallery.

tug, push down, sit and climb on, lean against and lie on the work while photographing and being photographed doing so. There is a perceived greater freedom and relaxation of rules when exploring art exhibited outdoors rather than indoors. Overheard at the entrance to the *Red* piece just days after the exhibition was inaugurated, a mother's comment to her young son: "Oh! The sign says 'No Climbing Permitted.' We've been breaking the rules!" As soon as the project was launched, young children immediately began to run and climb along the looping top of the *Yellow* structure from one end to the other, which was almost unavoidable, given its smaller scale and its adjacency to a playground. Monitoring for safety comes into play with such an installation. A woman visitor, sitting high atop the *Red* piece—level with the top of a lamppost—was encouraged down from her perch by a Parks Enforcement official. Several docents, in addition to the Parks Enforcement team, were hired for informational purposes and to assist in monitoring visitors' behavior for the duration of the exhibition.

With this Madison Square Park Conservancy commission, Genger has placed a series of interactive topographies in a busy urban setting for visitors to discover and interpret. She piques the passerby's curiosity and

points to where one may enter each piece, but she leaves the experience up to individual visitors to participate in and interpret on their own terms. Genger is interested in the notion of movement in her work, both compositionally in the structures themselves and experientially in how visitors move about within them. Physicality is a theme that has run through the project from the outset—from the physical act of gathering the material and making the work to the public's physical interaction with the final creation. Ultimately, *Red, Yellow and Blue* can be many things to many viewers: playful and serious; amorphous and referential; abstract and figurative; painterly, sculptural, and architectural all at once; organic and industrial; with a variety of aspects to delve into and contemplate, including scrutiny of process, focus on color, and delight in discovery of elements of surprise and whimsy embedded in the piece. With her singular material—knotted rope—Orly Genger has activated a Manhattan site with an alluring, inviting spectacle that offers the opportunity for imaginative engagement.

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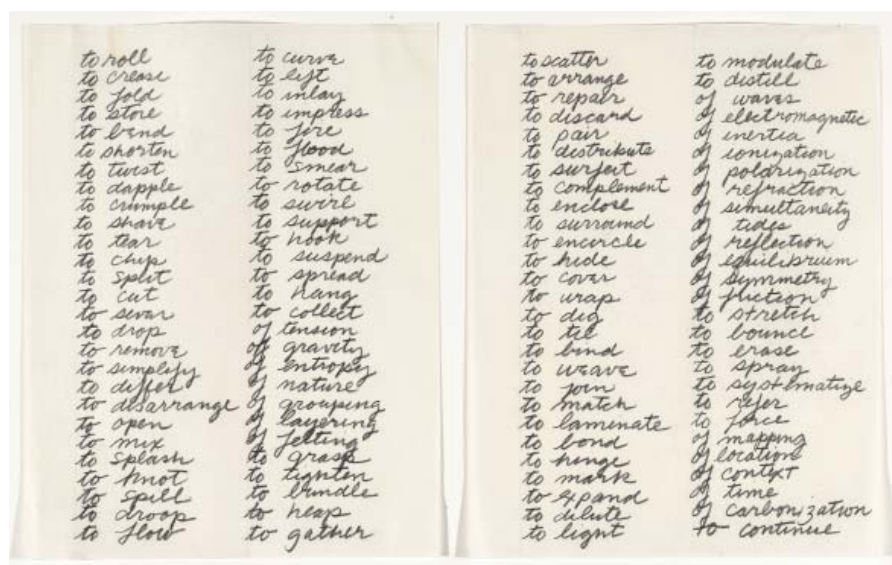


Fig 1. Richard Serra. *Verb List*, 1967-68. Graphite on paper, 2 sheets, each 10 x 8" (25.4 x 20.3 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the artist in honor of Wynn Kramarsky. ©2013 Richard Serra / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York and The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY.

To gather, to heap, to bundle, to bend, to twist, to tie, to knot, to weave, to lift, to support, to spread, to curve, to spill. These verbs describe many of the ways that Orly Genger manipulated vast quantities of rope by hand over the course of two years to produce *Red, Yellow and Blue*, her largest and most ambitious sculptural installation to date. They are culled from a compendium of eighty-four verbs and other phrases from Richard Serra's now iconic 1967-68 *Verb List* [Fig 1.], drawn in his own cursive script in four tidy columns on two sheets of paper. As Serra recently elaborated: "The *Verb List* gave me a subtext for my experiments with materials. The problem I was trying to resolve in my early work was: How do you apply an activity or a process to a material and arrive at a form that refers back to its own making?"¹ Serra's application of these verbs to a wide variety of materials, from rubber and lead to Cor-Ten steel, has yielded more than fifty years' worth of sculpture. But *Verb List* has also served as a touchstone for countless other artists, offering a transformational shift in how they can think about and make works of art, wresting emphasis away from finished objects to the dynamic processes that generate them. Formally, the scale and shape of Orly Genger's walls of rope are often compared to Serra's Cor-Ten steel monoliths, yet more instructive parallels may be drawn between their shared explorations of direct physical engagement of materials, their interest in sculpture that makes evident the process that engenders it, and the experiential nature of the sculptural spaces that both artists create.

Genger's *Red, Yellow and Blue* is also indebted to the Land art movement of the late 1960s and 1970s and its shift of sculpture away from the realm of the object into the expansive arena of the landscape. Although pioneers such as Michael Heizer and Robert Smithson fashioned much of their work in remote locations in the American Southwest and on the scale of ancient monuments (in this respect, Genger's sculptural installations have more in common with the human scale of earthworks by Nancy Holt and Alice Aycock), the powerful simplicity of form and gesture in Heizer and Smithson's earthworks is echoed in *Red, Yellow and Blue*. It's not surprising that an early rope installation of Genger's prompted one critic to draw an analogy between the work and Walter De Maria's iconoclastic 1977 *Earth Room*, a 3,600-square-foot room in SoHo with a floor covered wall-to-wall in a thick layer of dirt.² Although Genger's immense rope installations are certainly in dialogue with Land art, Minimalism, and Post-Minimalism, the exuberant spirit of *Red, Yellow and Blue* signals a playful departure from these precedents.

Only Genger has been working with rope for nearly a decade. Fittingly, she adopted the material in 2004 in response to a commission from Socrates Sculpture Park to make her first outdoor sculpture. That work, *About To*, consists of a dramatic 15-foot column of unpainted lime-colored knotted nylon climbing rope that pools along the grass of the Long Island City park into a purple-and-lime spiral. [Fig. 2] Although the scale and ambition of her work have expanded dramatically since that project—

necessitating a switch from climbing rope to less expensive lobster rope—rope was an ideal counterpart to the yarn she worked with previously. Many of Genger's rope installations have been black or monochromatic, but for outdoor work she has embraced a wide spectrum, at first taking advantage of the bold colors present in climbing rope, and subsequently painting the material herself. In *Mr. Softy* (2005), for the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, Connecticut [Fig. 3], for example, brightly colored amoebic shapes of rope spill over the low steps behind a historic white clapboard building on the museum grounds. In her installation *Puzzlejuice* (2006) [Fig. 4], at Riverside Park on Manhattan's Upper West Side, sections of rope in an array of colors were draped over rocks near the jogging and biking path along the Hudson River, forming a blanket-like mound. In these early works, the visual connection to knitting and yarn is unmistakable. Some of the individual sections of rope are striped, playfully polka-dotted, or bordered in a contrasting complementary color, to resemble oversized wool scarves. In Madison Square Park by contrast, the rope has an architectural solidity and presence. "I associate with steel more than I do with crocheting," Genger asserted in a 2010 interview. "I just don't see it as some sort of knitted material. I see it as using material to build. It's on such a different scale."³ Although Genger knotted the rope at Madison Square Park by hand with the help of studio assistants, the physically demanding nature of her process ultimately has much more in common with wrestling than it does with knitting.



Fig 2. Orly Genger. *About To*, 2004. Rock climbing rope, 15 feet tall, overall dimensions variable. Socrates Sculpture Park, Long Island City, New York, NY. Courtesy Socrates Sculpture Park.



Fig 3. Orly Genger. *Mr. Softy*, 2005. Nylon rope with latex paint, dimensions variable. Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT. Photo: Tom Powel Imaging. Courtesy Larissa Goldston Gallery.



Fig 4. Orly Genger. *Puzzlejuice*, 2006. Nylon rope with paint, dimensions variable. Riverside Park, New York, NY. Courtesy Larissa Goldston Gallery.

For *Red, Yellow and Blue* at Madison Square Park, Genger gathered, heaped, and bundled (to use Serra's verbs) reclaimed lobster rope, coaxing the coarse, obstinate material into three chambers of space that recall other verbs on Serra's list, namely "to enclose" and "to surround." The lobster rope's original purpose was to entrap; Genger's amphitheaters of color offer instead a trio of welcoming spaces. The walls of each of the three spaces vary in color, height, and shape, but in each case an opening interrupts the enclosure to invite passersby in. In some cases, abrupt breaks in the walls provide portals; in other cases, the openings occur where the rope has tapered to a low stop.

Genger's decision to assign each of the three structures in Madison Square Park a primary color is as multilayered as the sculptures themselves. The choice of hues—cherry red, rain-boot yellow, and electric blue—has the familiar immediacy of childhood crayons. The color selection is, moreover, a tribute to Barnett Newman's series of paintings *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue* (1966–70).⁴ These four large-scale works are now heralded as among the Abstract Expressionist painter's most significant, yet during Newman's lifetime the audacity of his broad, unmodulated expanses of color was slow to gain critical or public appreciation. The title of Newman's quartet series (and by extension, Genger's trio) suggests a spirit of determination, the sense of tackling a challenge head-on, and just going for it. Genger's nod to Newman also underscores the way she has brought painting alongside sculpture into the public realm.

The bold colors of Genger's installation pop against the gray Manhattan skyscrapers that form the work's backdrop. But perhaps the greatest success of *Red, Yellow and Blue* is the way it provides oases for people to take a break from the visual noise of Manhattan. On a given day, a mother and her sons eat ice cream cones on a low section of *Yellow*; friends assemble to take a group photograph in front of *Red*; a father watches his daughter use an area of the rope wall to practice headstands; commuters lean against another section of wall to check their text messages; people claim an interior patch of shade to read; and two teenagers share headphones to listen to music.⁵ While these activities occur in all three sections of the work, the site-responsive nature of the installation lends each space its own distinct character. *Yellow* is the lowest of the three enclosures. Its height, color, rolling profile, and location adjacent to a playground make it well-suited to children, as the strollers and squeals that fill it regularly attest. And Genger's decision to place *Red* at the base of the park near 23rd Street is perfect for capturing people's attention in one of Manhattan's busiest crosstown thoroughfares. The wall meandering around trees in *Red* even mimics the zigzagging paths of New Yorkers navigating their commutes. The high walls also furnish an ideal sanctuary for people who enter the space. By contrast, *Blue*, located in a less busy northwest stretch of the park, feels like the quiet car on the train—its tall walls vary less in height, and it often fills with people reading or occasionally even taking an afternoon nap.

While successful large-scale sculptural installations are often referred to as site-specific, *Red, Yellow and Blue* is ultimately more site-responsive than site-specific. In it Genger demonstrates a careful consideration of how Madison Square Park is habitually used and an imaginative rethinking of new ways in which it can be activated. When the work is reconfigured for deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum in Lincoln, Massachusetts, the artist will reconstitute the installation to respond to the different nature of that landscape. For all of the labor and active verbs that went into Genger's planning and producing the installation, the verbs that ultimately matter most are those enacted by the visitors who choose to experience it.

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¹ Gary Garrels in "An Interview with Richard Serra (2010)" in Gary Garrels, Bernice Rose, and Michelle White, eds., *Richard Serra Drawing: A Retrospective* (Houston: The Menil Collection and Yale University Press, 2011), 65.

² Roberta Smith, "Space Redefined in Chelsea," *The New York Times*, April 13, 2007, p. E29. Smith's review was of Genger's *MASSPEAK*, a sprawling installation of black rope that occupied Larissa Goldston Gallery in New York.

³ Orly Genger, interview with Jane Panetta and Veronica Roberts. *Museo Magazine* XIV (April 2010). <http://www.museomagazine.com/ORLY-GENGER>.

⁴ The title of Newman's iconic series of paintings is a riff on the title *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*—the Edward Albee play that premiered on Broadway in 1962. The play title was in turn a pun on "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?"—the title of a song from the 1933 Walt Disney cartoon *Three Little Pigs*, which became an instant classic.

⁵ *Red, Yellow and Blue* invites engagement more than any previous outdoor work Genger has made, in part because of its scale, the variety of the spaces, and how people are encouraged to touch—and even sit on—the work. Her observations of the ways in which the public interacted with earlier outdoor work made clear the greater potential that she could harness. As Genger commented in 2009: "When I showed a piece [*Puzzlejuice*] in Riverside Park in New York . . . I saw a group of school children climbing all over it and touching it in a way that I hadn't seen before. Then I realized they were blind. I feel lucky to have witnessed that." "Orly Genger in Conversation with Ana Finel Honigman." Saatchi Online, March 18, 2009. http://magazine.saatchionline.com/spotlight/behind-the-canvas/orly_genger_in_conversation_wi.









Artist Orly Genger sat with Madison Square Park Conservancy President Debbie Landau on June 5, 2013, in New York to discuss *Red, Yellow and Blue*. Landau has been President of the Conservancy since 2002, and Orly Genger's project marks the twenty-sixth installation by a contemporary artist in Madison Square Park. Following is an edited version of their conversation.

Debbie Landau: When you first toured the park, two-and-a-half years ago, what was your thought process? What were your initial impressions?

Orly Genger: I walked through the park and I was thinking of how to make a piece that was really site-specific, not something that could be anywhere else. So I spent some time in the park: looked and watched people. I noticed two things at the time. One was that I felt that the ground was flat. My instinct told me I wanted to do something that gave a vertical element to the park, something organic and vertical from the ground up. The other thing was that people often commuted through the park to cross from east to west and seemed to have usual routes that they stuck to. I wanted to give people a reason—more of a reason—to actually stop in the park and spend some time there. And not only in one spot, but to actually travel within the park. I wanted to give them, in this case, three reasons to stay inside.

Q: When artists come to work in the park for Mad. Sq. Art, their ideas develop; sometimes the first concept isn't the last. How did your ideas develop? Did they change a lot before you arrived at your final concept?

A: I proposed two ideas to the Conservancy. One was very similar to what is now on view. The other was for a piece that was in the center of the park and less site-specific. Ultimately, the more challenging idea was the one we went with.

Q: It's fascinating that you used lobster rope for your medium. How did you arrive at that material?

A: I had used lobster rope in a project at MASS MoCA in 2010. I came to it mostly for economic reasons. I needed a tremendous amount of material and didn't have the budget for the rope that I had been working with, which was climbing rope. Someone on the MASS MoCA board found a contact who knew about a foundation that was involved in collecting lobster rope in Maine, where lobstermen could no longer use it. This also happened to be a great way to give another life to something that otherwise would have probably been discarded or thrown to the bottom of the ocean.

Q: What was it like when it arrived at your studio? Did it smell?

A: The first shipment was the quote unquote "freshest." It came straight from the ocean, so it was drenched and it stank like the ocean. There were fish scales stuck inside, lobster claws, parts of boat, metal parts of boat. It was quite messy. During the winter, the rope arrived frozen with snow on top, so we gave it a few days to thaw.

Q: You've already answered how you discovered the Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation. For the lobstermen, it must have been an extraordinary experience, having a New York artist support their livelihood.

A: From what I understand, from Laura Ludwig [former Project Manager of the Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation], a lot of the lobstermen keep to themselves. I would imagine that it would be something of a surprise for them to see their rope transformed into sculpture in the middle of New York City.

Q: One of the interesting things about how Mad. Sq. Art decides on artists and projects is that it has an art committee of advisors. Some of the advisors had seen your work at MASS MoCA and at Larissa Goldston



Gallery here in New York. They understood exactly how it works and how it withstands people's touching it or sitting on it, but some on the committee had questions. Do you remember the kinds of questions that I had to relay to you?

A: The first question was whether the rope, the material, would last outside in the elements. Given the fact that the rope was in water for a very long time, there was no issue of its being outside, and the paint that I used was house paint—it's the same sort of paint that people paint their houses with. But because the work was not to be made of metal and we're used to seeing metal outside, there was a natural concern: How is this material going to withstand the elements? And we did a test.

Q: Tell me about that, because we don't often do tests.

A: We brought a car full of rope, basically— the knotted, layered rope—to [Conservancy Board Chairman] David Berliner's home in upstate New York. And we laid it out. We painted it there, similarly to how we would do in the park two years later. We left it out for I don't remember how many months, but as I recall, a hurricane came through at one point. And the piece survived and looked great.

Q: Is *Red, Yellow and Blue* your largest work to date? Did the opportunity to create a work of this magnitude propel you as an artist?

A: Absolutely. This is my largest work to date. I felt incredibly lucky for the opportunity to realize a piece on this scale. Not only that, but to show it in the middle of New York. It inspired me to push the limits of what I had done in the past and what I thought I could do.

I think I learned a lot. I would do some things a little differently to streamline the process. But in every project, you learn something for the next one.

Q: *Red, Yellow and Blue* took about two-and-a-half years to crochet—that's the word you often use. How much of the work were you doing alone? Did you have assistants? What percentage of the time did you personally work on it—you were there seven days a week, right?

A: Over those two and a half years, the number of people who were helping me varied. In the beginning, it was a lot fewer. Toward the end, it was as many people as I could find. It varied from one other person to seven or eight people in the studio helping me. When I got my Greenpoint studio a few years ago, I thought it was so massive. When I started working on this project, I thought: Wow, this is a small studio.

There were two stages to the process: one was the knotting and the other was the priming and painting. There wasn't enough room to do both at the same time. We would spend the daytime hours knotting the rope and work through the night priming and painting.

Most of the assistants—I got them through Craigslist—were wonderful. Some stayed for a week, some for three months, some for two years. Most of them were students, art students, or had just graduated. All of them were doing it for the experience of being part of a project. Everyone who was there wanted to be there, which made it a very special environment to work in.

Q: Did you think of the assistants working with you as a contemporary sewing circle? There is a long tradition of women sitting together and creating the domestic arts. Here it was more vigorous: knotting.

A: Here the work was a lot more physical, a lot more physically challenging. I never viewed it as meditative. You're very physically engaged with what you're doing, and it's for hours at a time.

Q: You were in the park for two weeks installing the work, which was essentially being an artist in residence. How did park visitors react then? Did their questions ever interfere with the process?



A: I had installed in public in the past, so I was not totally surprised. While we were installing, the park was open and people could see what we were doing. People were curious, and asked questions: What is this? What is this going to be? Why is it here?

People had comments, both positive and negative. When you work outside in public, you realize how much people feel invested in the work and feel somewhat of an ownership, because it's a public space. It's in their space, so they feel comfortable coming up to you and telling you their opinion, whereas inside a gallery or museum, most people would not.

Q: Were there any responses or questions that struck you in particular?

A: I remember the ones that are, to me, negative, which were funny. An elderly woman said she preferred it when the park was full of drugs and prostitutes. Some people need time to get comfortable with new things in the park. Also, this was large-scale and it was all over the park. You couldn't miss it. People who got to see the installation process felt more emotionally invested in the piece when it was installed, because they had seen how much hard work had been put into it.

Q: I wonder, when looking at *Red, Yellow and Blue*, if you had specific works of art in mind? Does it refer to modernism? Some critics have mentioned it as a comment on Richard Serra's enormous Cor-Ten steel walls or as an updated critique on Minimalism. And the title of the work, of course, relates to Barnett Newman's painting series *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue*.

A: The colors were originally inspired by his series, yes. Quite a few artists over the years have engaged that title and transformed it into their own work. The Newman series was a starting point for me, but I was attracted to using the primary colors mainly because I felt they were the most accessible and I wanted to make the work, since it was in a public park, feel approachable. And I definitely feel a connection to Minimalism.

Q: How does this work relate to earlier work of yours?

A: In previous large-scale work, I was more involved in playing with the relationship of scale and intimidation. But with this, I wanted to create a less daunting experience. I wanted people to feel held or embraced by the walls and put in a safe place, not feel oppressed.

Q: What happened when it officially opened? What did you experience?

A: It was very exciting. I'm still figuring it out. It's hard to separate from it. I feel very involved with it, almost like I'm still in process with it.... The most exciting part for me is to see people interact with it.

Q: One great aspect of Mad. Sq. Art is that it's a "museum without walls." Some of the art you can touch, or sit on. People who go to museums are trained not to touch.

A: Yes, and the hope is that it appeals to all kinds of people, and all ages.

Q: Clearly you're still sorting out how you can let go of the process and see the work in its own right. It was basically an uninterrupted two and a half years for you. I'm sure it was very fatiguing. But when the work opened, you said something poignant: "Now it's theirs." Can you elaborate on that?

A: Once the work was installed, I had to let go. That was always the plan. It was made to be out there. It was made for people. And now it's theirs. My job was to let go, and to make sure it was maintained in a way it would be at its best, would stay at its best. I no longer own it, in a sense.

Q: What's happening with this work next?

A: It will be traveling to deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum [in Lincoln, Massachusetts], and will open there in November 2013 and be up for one year. It will be installed in a whole new way on the museum grounds. It will continue to have a life, but a new kind of life.

Q: Is this experience, this body of work, informing what you are doing next?

A: I think it will, especially because of what I learned during the process: how to do things in a more efficient way. But I'm just at the beginning stages of other projects, so we'll see.















EDUCATION

- 2002 School of the Art Institute of Chicago
2001 B.A., Brown University, Providence, RI

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS AND PROJECTS

- 2014 The Contemporary Austin
2013 *Red, Yellow and Blue*, Madison Square Park, New York;
deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA
Iron Maiden, Larissa Goldston Gallery, New York
2011 *Big, Open, Empty*, Larissa Goldston Gallery, New York
Gavlak Gallery, Palm Beach, FL
2009 *Move*, Larissa Goldston Gallery, New York
2008 *Whole*, Indianapolis Museum of Art
Devin Borden Hiram Butler Gallery, Houston
Cornell Fine Arts Museum at Rollins College, Winter Park, FL
2007 *Posedown*, Lemberg Gallery, Ferndale, MI
MASSPEAK, Larissa Goldston Gallery, New York
2005 The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT
Locust Projects, Miami
2004 Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS AND PROJECTS

- 2012 *Makeup on Empty Space*, Larissa Goldston Gallery, New York
2011 *Sentimental Education*, Gavlak Gallery, Palm Beach, FL
MAKE Skateboards, I-20 Gallery, New York
Disorderly Conduct, Larissa Goldston Gallery, New York
January White Sale, Loretta Howard Gallery, New York
Figuration, Lemberg Gallery, Detroit
2010 *Material World: Sculpture to Environment*, MASS MoCA
(Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art), North Adams, MA



Courtesy of Ruth Fremson/The New York Times

2009 *Energy Effects: Art and Artifacts from the Landscape of Glorious Excess*, Museum of Contemporary Art Denver
Brucennial, New York
Fresh from Chelsea, University Gallery and Grinter Gallery, University of Florida, Gainesville
The Fields Sculpture Center at OMI International Arts Center, Ghent, NY
Dritto Rovescio, Triennale di Milano, Milan, Italy
Talk Dirty to Me, Larissa Goldston Gallery, New York

2007 *Audacity in Art: Collector's Choice III, Selected Works from Central Florida Collections*, Orlando Museum of Art, FL

2006 *Queens International 2006*, Queens Museum of Art, New York
Studio in the Park, Riverside Park, New York
Women in the Bedroom, Larissa Goldston Gallery, New York

2004 *EAF04: 2004 Emerging Artist Fellowship Exhibition*, Socrates Sculpture Park, Long Island City, NY

2003 *Haifa Second International Installation Triennale*, Haifa Museum of Art, Israel
The Reconstruction Biennial, Exit Art, New York

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2011 Vogel, Carol. "Rope as Architecture." *The New York Times*, November 22, 2012.
Davis, Ben. "Give Orly Genger Enough Rope!" *Artinfo*, May 9, 2011.
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Indrisek, Scott. "Reviews: Orly Genger / Carolyn Carr." *Modern Painters*, April 2011.

2010 Edwards, Meghan. "Show of Force." *Interior Design*, September 2010.
Goldstein, Andrew M. "Material World: Sculpture to Environment, Review." *Artinfo*, June 10, 2010.
Gordon, Amanda. "Roping Them In." *City Arts*, January 12, 2010.
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2009 Annichiarico, Silvana. *Dritto Rovescio*, exhib. cat. Triennale di Milano, Milan: Electa, 2009.
Edwards, Meghan. "On the Ropes." *Interior Design*, March 2009.
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Wolin, Joseph R. "Orly Genger, Move." *Time Out New York*, October 14–20, 2009.

2008 Bishop, Philip. Review of exhibition at Cornell Fine Arts Museum. *Orlando Sentinel*, March 23, 2008.
MacAdam, Barbara A. "The Shape of Things to Come." *ARTnews*, April 2008.

2007 Ames, Katrine. "All Around the Town." *House & Garden*, November 2007.
Baker, R. C. "Best in Show." *The Village Voice*, April 25–May 1, 2007.
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Schwendener, Martha. "Flair and Flash, Not Frumpiness." *The New York Times*, January 27, 2007.
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2006 Smith, Roberta. "Space Redefined in Chelsea." *The New York Times*, April 13, 2007.
Abichandani, Jaichri. *Queens International 06: Everything All at Once*, vol. 3 (2006).
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Schwendener, Martha. "Art from Everywhere, All from Queens." *The New York Times*, December 15, 2006.
Vogel, Carol. "Inside Riverside Park." *The New York Times*, May 5, 2006.

2005 "The Heart of the Matter." *Interior Design*, 2005.
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Weinberg, Michelle. "Crustacean in the Hall of Furies and Orly Genger." *Miami New Times*, April 7–13, 2005.

2004 Gopnik, Blake. "For Art Lovers, a Chelsea Morning." *The Washington Post*, September 26, 2004.
Graham, Ruth. "Profile: Orly Genger, Cut from a Creative Cloth." *The Sun* (New York), August 23, 2004.
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2003 Saltz, Jerry. "Rays of Light." *The Village Voice*, January 22–28, 2003.
Smith, Roberta. "A Space Reborn, with a Show That's Never Finished." *The New York Times*, April 4, 2003.
Talmor, Daniella. *Haifa Second International Installation Triennale* (Haifa Museum of Art, 2003). Wandering Library, Temporary Edition.

LECTURES / VISITING ARTIST / AWARDS

2012 MassArt

2011 Rappaport Prize, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA
Museum of Arts and Design, New York
Montclair Art Museum, NJ
Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University, Columbus

2010 Museum of Contemporary Art Denver

2008 Indianapolis Museum of Art

2007 College for Creative Studies, Detroit
Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI

2005 The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT
University of Pennsylvania

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo
The Brooklyn Museum
Hammer Museum, Los Angeles
Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH
Indianapolis Museum of Art
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
The New York Public Library
Queens Museum of Art, New York
Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art, Providence
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven

PREVIOUS MAD. SQ. ART EXHIBITIONS

2013	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, 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, 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, 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.

MAD. SQ. PK. CONSERVANCY

The Madison Square Park Conservancy is the public/private partnership with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation that was established in 2002 as a nonprofit organization to operate historic Madison Square Park. The Conservancy is dedicated to keeping historic Madison Square Park a bright, beautiful and active public park. The Conservancy raises the funds that support lush and brilliant horticulture, park maintenance, and security. The Conservancy also offers a variety of cultural programs for park visitors of all ages, including Mad. Sq. Art.

Mad. Sq. Art Advisory Committee:

David Berliner	Richard Koshalek	Ronald A. Pizzuti
Roxanne Frank	Debbie Landau	Betsy Senior
Martin Friedman	Toby Devan Lewis	Susan Sollins
Liane Ginsberg	Danny Meyer	



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madisonsquarepark.org

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For more information, visit madisonsquarepark.org.



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Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Patricia E. Harris, First Deputy Mayor
Veronica M. White, Commissioner, Parks & Recreation
Kate D. Levin, Commissioner, Cultural Affairs

