

MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY

MAJOR COMMISSIONS BY MARÍA MAGDALENA CAMPOS-PONS, NICOLE EISENMAN, ANA MARÍA HERNANDO, AND ROSE B. SIMPSON MARK 20th ANNIVERSARY OF MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY'S PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

**Commemorating Two Decades at the Forefront of Public Art, 2024 Season Includes
Three Wide-Ranging Exhibitions, a Processional Performance, a Retrospective
Publication, and Programs Featuring Alumni Artists**



L-R: María Magdalena Campos-Pons (photo by John Russell; courtesy of Vanderbilt University), Nicole Eisenman (photo by Brigitte Lacombe; courtesy of the artist), Ana María Hernando (photo by Kristen Hatgi; courtesy of the artist), Rose B. Simpson (photo by Minesh Bacrania; courtesy of the artist)

New York, NY | November 8, 2023—Throughout 2024, Madison Square Park Conservancy celebrates the twentieth anniversary of its distinguished public art program with a singular slate of commissions and initiatives that reflect on the program's history and impact while ushering in the next generation of artists to create transformative work for the park. To commemorate the occasion, the Conservancy has commissioned new works by four visionary artists representing a spectrum of creative practices, including major sculptural projects by Nicole Eisenman and Rose B. Simpson, a vibrant tulle-based installation by Ana María Hernando, and a dynamic processional performance by María Magdalena Campos-Pons. Simpson's and Campos-Pons' projects will extend beyond Madison Square Park into Inwood Hill Park and Harlem Art Park, respectively, marking the Conservancy's first collaboration with other public parks throughout the city and expanding the program's reach into new spaces and communities.

In conjunction with the program's anniversary year, the Conservancy is also producing its first retrospective publication, documenting two decades of public art in the park; releasing a short documentary chronicling the history of the program; and showcasing alumni artists through audio interviews and a public art symposium.

"For this milestone year, we are partnering with four artists—all women—who demonstrate the diversity of contemporary artistic practice and reflect our vision of what public art is: stunningly imaginative, innovative, democratic, and inclusive," said Brooke Kamin Rapaport, Artistic Director and Martin Friedman Chief Curator of Madison Square Park Conservancy. "The Conservancy's commissioning program has energized the experience of our park and had a

MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY

powerful impact on the artists who have worked here, many of whom were creating their first public art project or taking an experimental leap in their practices in terms of materiality, subject matter, or scale. As we study these achievements, we are envisioning new ways to advance our mission, including first-time partnerships with other public parks throughout the city."

"Madison Square Park Conservancy's art program reflects our conviction that engaging the public through art and culture enhances civic life," said the Conservancy's Executive Director Holly Leicht. "For 20 years, our public art exhibitions have delighted, inspired, and sometimes challenged the more than 50,000 visitors who pass through our park daily. We are proud to provide a unique and prominent platform for contemporary artists worldwide, and to further the discourse about public art within and beyond our community."

The 2024 season launches in January with an exhilarating project by Ana María Hernando that enlivens Madison Square Park's winter landscape with lush tulle forms in the colorful hues of warmer seasons. In the spring, Rose B. Simpson (Santa Clara Pueblo) explores Indigenous past, present, and future with towering sculptural sentinels in both Madison Square Park and Inwood Hill Park, a significant site in Lenape history. In September, María Magdalena Campos-Pons convenes artists, musicians, poets, and the public for a participatory performance procession from Harlem Art Park to Madison Square Park. The year concludes with an exhibition by Nicole Eisenman featuring a toppled 100-foot-long crane adorned with sculptural "barnacles," which simultaneously references and dismantles examples of the human figure in sculpture.

Since its first public art exhibition in 2004, Madison Square Park Conservancy has commissioned fifty projects by leading contemporary artists working across media and genre including Diana Al-Hadid, Tony Cragg, Abigail DeVille, Leonardo Drew, Teresita Fernández, Antony Gormley, Hugh Hayden, Maya Lin, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Josiah McElheny, Martin Puryear, Alison Saar, Shahzia Sikander, Ursula von Rydingsvard, and Leo Villareal. Over the past twenty years, the park has become a testing ground for artistic innovation, offering artists the opportunity to experiment with new techniques, materials, scale, and content in unprecedented ways and allowing the public to experience thought-provoking exhibitions free of charge and without barriers to access.

In 2019, the art program received international acclaim when the Conservancy served as the commissioning institution for the U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Biennale with an exhibition of new work by Martin Puryear. This marked the first time that an organization whose visual art program focuses exclusively on public art has received this honor.

Madison Square Park Conservancy's art department includes Brooke Kamin Rapaport, Artistic Director and Martin Friedman Chief Curator; Tom Reidy, Director of Capital and Special Projects; and Truth Murray-Cole, Senior Curatorial Manager. Yah Jeffries is the Senior Art Department Manager. Holly Leicht is the Conservancy's Executive Director.

More information about Madison Square Park Conservancy's 2024 art programming follows below.

MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY

Ana María Hernando: *To Let the Sky Know/Dejar que el cielo sepa*

January 16–March 17, 2024

In her first solo exhibition in New York, artist Ana María Hernando weaves vibrantly-colored tulle—the sumptuous fabric netting—into fluid sculptural elements that draw inspiration from natural forms including clouds and waterfalls. *To Let the Sky Know/Dejar que el cielo sepa* conjures a vibrant environment in the park during the gray winter months, offering visitors a visual and spiritual oasis that beckons with hope and optimism during dark and tumultuous times. Hernando has incorporated textiles in her practice for more than 20 years and continues to recontextualize traditional narratives of tulle as a prototypically feminine material in her work.

Rose B. Simpson: *Seed*

April 11, 2024–September 22, 2024

Seed explores the personal and collective experiences that have influenced artist Rose B. Simpson’s life and work with a series of new large-scale sculptures appearing in two major public parks in Manhattan. In Madison Square Park, Simpson assembles seven monumental androgynous sentinel figures fabricated in steel with bronze adornments around a central sculpture of a young female figure emerging from the earth. While the sentinels look ahead to the present and into the future, a face on the back of each figure peers into the layers of history that form America’s colonial past. As part of the exhibition, Simpson is also installing two life-size bronze sentinels in Inwood Hill Park, a contested space in Native American history as the site where Dutch colonial governor Peter Minuit “purchased” Manhattan Island from the Lenape in 1626. This marks Madison Square Park Conservancy’s first collaboration with another New York City public park.

María Magdalena Campos-Pons: *Procession of Angels*

September 2024

Acclaimed multidisciplinary artist and newly named MacArthur Fellow María Magdalena Campos-Pons convenes artists, musicians, poets, and the public in a seven-mile performance procession that begins in Harlem Art Park and concludes with a poetry reading and musical celebration in Madison Square Park. The performance invites participants to experience the diverse communities and neighborhoods of Manhattan in a joyful and revealing pilgrimage connecting historically significant sites along the way, including the former site of the Colored Orphan Asylum and the monument to nineteenth-century Cuban political leader José Martí.

Nicole Eisenman: *Stopped Crane*

October 24, 2024–March 9, 2025

Nicole Eisenman, best known for incisive works that capture the human experience in unexpected, grim, and humorous scenes, continues her innovation through sculpture with a new commission that destabilizes familiar heroic objects associated with exploration and advancement. On view in the park’s Oval Lawn, Eisenman offers visitors the opportunity to

MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY

explore and engage with a toppled 100-foot-long industrial crane embellished with rough-hewn sculptural “barnacles.” The artist draws inspiration from art history—referencing Duchamp’s readymades, Manet’s *Le Déjeuner sur l’herbe*, and Rodin’s figures. Eisenman’s project lends humanity and humor to these references, challenging our notions of progress and achievement.

Additional Initiatives

As part of the twentieth anniversary of the public art program, Madison Square Park Conservancy and Gregory R. Miller & Company will release *Public Art in Public Space: Twenty Years Advancing Work in New York’s Madison Square Park*, a major publication that includes essays from the Conservancy’s Artistic Director and Martin Friedman Chief Curator Brooke Kamin Rapaport as well as notable cultural leaders including Joe Baker (Delaware), Dr. Arlene Dávila, John Hanhardt, Nancy Princenthal, Dr. Lowery Stokes Sims, and Herb Hoi Chun Tam. The publication will feature the artist statements and images from 50 artist projects realized between 2004 and 2024.

The Conservancy is also producing a short video documentary highlighting all past projects and featuring interviews with three alumni artists—Maya Lin, Martin Puryear, and Rose B. Simpson—speaking on the impact that their Madison Square Park project has had on their ongoing practice. Another group of alumni artists will be interviewed for audio conversations that will be released monthly throughout the year.

On October 24, 2024, the Conservancy will convene alumni artists for its annual public art symposium at SVA Theatre in New York to engage in deeper conversations and reflections about the impact of publicness on their practices.

About the Artists

María Magdalena Campos-Pons (b. 1959, Matanzas, Cuba; lives and works in Nashville, Tennessee) has had solo exhibitions at the Indianapolis Museum of Art; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; and the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem; and has participated in the 14th Gwangju Biennale, Prospect.4 Triennial, and Sharjah Biennial 15. She has presented performances at venues including Dakar Biennale; Documenta 14, Kassel, Germany and Athens, Greece; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Havana Biennial; Johannesburg Biennale; National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC; and the Venice Biennale. Campos-Pons’ works are in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago; The Museum of Fine Arts Boston; the Perez Art Museum, Miami; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; the Speed Art Museum, Louisville; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, United Kingdom; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. In the fall of 2023, the Brooklyn Museum and J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles presented *María Magdalena Campos-Pons: Behold*, a major traveling multimedia survey of her work, the first since 2007. Campos-Pons was awarded a 2023 MacArthur Fellowship.

Nicole Eisenman (b. 1965, Verdun, France; lives and works in Brooklyn, New York) has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and the Carnegie Prize, and her work has been included in three Biennials at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and featured in the 2019 Venice Biennale’s main exhibition. In 2015, Eisenman was named a MacArthur Foundation Fellow. Eisenman has had recent solo exhibitions at the the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, Norway; Fondation Vincent Van Gogh, Arles, France; Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Germany; Kunstmuseum Den Haag, Netherlands; and New Museum, New York. An important survey of her work opened in 2023 at the Museum Brandhorst, Munich, Germany

MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY

and traveled to Whitechapel Gallery, London, United Kingdom; in 2024, the exhibition travels to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

Ana María Hernando (b. 1959, Buenos Aires, Argentina; lives and works in Denver, Colorado) explores women's rich histories, daily lives, and relationship to hand-worked textiles and wares. Hernando is the recipient of numerous awards including a 2023 Joan Mitchell Fellow, the 2020 Prix Henry Clews in Sculpture for La Napoule Art Foundation, with a one-year residency and solo show at their château in Mandelieu-la-Napoule, France and First Prize for the 2021 Biennial of the Americas. Solo exhibitions include Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art; University of Colorado Art Museum, Boulder; Denver Botanic Gardens; Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City; Museum of Contemporary Art Denver; Oklahoma Contemporary, Oklahoma City; Robischon Gallery, Denver; Sun Valley Museum of Art, Ketchum; Tweed Museum of Art, Duluth; and a forthcoming exhibition at Gallery Elle, Zürich, Switzerland, opening in 2024. She will represent Colorado in the National Museum of Women in the Art's *New Worlds: Women to Watch 2024*, one of the first major exhibitions to follow NMWA's reopening after renovation.

Rose B. Simpson (b. 1983, Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico; lives and works in Santa Clara Pueblo) has had solo exhibitions at The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia; Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston; Nevada Art Museum, Reno; Wheelwright Museum, Santa Fe; and Savannah College of Art and Design Museum of Art. Her work is in the collections of the Cleveland Museum of Art; Denver Art Museum; Hood Museum of Art, Hanover; Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Nevada Art Museum, Reno; Benton Museum of Art at Pomona College, Claremont; Portland Art Museum; Princeton University Art Museum; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

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MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY

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Madison Square Park Conservancy is a public/private partnership with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation.

About Madison Square Park Conservancy

Madison Square Park Conservancy (MSPC) is the not-for-profit organization that raises one hundred percent of the funds to maintain, operate and program Madison Square Park, a dynamic 6.2-acre public green space in the heart of Manhattan. As stewards of this urban oasis, MSPC strives to create an environment that fosters moments of inspiration through visionary public art, acclaimed gardens, inviting amenities, and thought-provoking programming.

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Media Contacts:

Resnicow and Associates

Juliet Sorce, 212.671.5158 or jsorce@resnicow.com

Delaney Smith, 212.671.5160 or dsmith@resnicow.com

Jenny Levine 212.671.5189 or jlevine@resnicow.com

Aureole Ribes 212.671.5167 or aribes@resnicow.com