



Ana María Hernando (Argentinean American, b. 1959)

*To Let the Sky Know / Dejar que el cielo sepa*, 2024

## Artist Statement

My Madison Square Park project will present a cascading bouquet of lilac and yellow tulle that moves with the wind, and a field of floating circles in orange, white, and pink tulle. A few other circles will appear in more contained locations. The flare of colors will let the sky know that our longing for birds, flowers, and one another is always within us, and that this longing makes us stronger.

There is something unique about Madison Square Park: so many make it their place of solace, a social space throughout the seasons, their touch with the undomesticated. People pass through and trail their thoughts across this park; their voices travel from here to futures we cannot yet imagine. I feel a ray of grace to be in conversation with them, to be close through color, the movement of tulle in the wind, and the surprise of an unexpected newness. This project is an invitation to seeing with the body and seeks to nurture the visitor in that primal need of moving with life.

Installing tulle sculptures outside brings the work in full conversation with the elements, to be fluid amid the inevitable changes, with a sense of surrender and curiosity about how the work might be transformed. It opens a true relationship with the will of the outdoors. For me this is the most vulnerable part of the project, and its beauty and wildness.

My work always relates easily to spring and to light. To do a project in winter means a different relation to nature. I was born in the spring of the southern hemisphere, in Buenos Aires, when the light is full of freshness, and hope vibrates all around. It's the time when the aroma of gardenias begins to fill the air. Jacaranda flowers inundate the streets, cover the sidewalks, and hide the view of the sky.

My sculptural pieces are directly aligned with the notion of abundance, and the unstoppable force that transforms living things and moves them forward. In love with the natural world and often informed by it, my work has always provoked within me a desire to converse beyond the formal, to show wonder at the aliveness of being.

I am a multidisciplinary artist, a painter and a sculptor who loves fabrics, threads, and words. I grew up surrounded by textiles: my grandmothers and my mother would get together in the afternoons to sew and crochet, and as a teenager I spent summers sewing in my maternal grandparents' small textile factory. Because of the influence of the women in my family, and my recognition from working at the factory that we can make something better together than alone, I am attracted to and admire circles of women who have gathered over the centuries to collaborate and accompany one another. In my work I look for these collaborations, these moments of togetherness, from cloistered nuns and their families in Buenos Aires, who have embroidered for my pieces, to the dignified women of the Andes, whose wares I have included in installations, to volunteers who come to sew with me to make a mountain of tulle. The Madison Square Park project is possible only because of the efforts of teams in New York City and Colorado. But the most poignant collaboration for *To Let the Sky Know* might end up being with nature's will and her opinions.

We are thirsty for a wild kindness, desperately in need of simple beauties, to be nurtured with goodness, to awaken from darkness. We may move through our world with an anxiety for endings, yet as I consider this installation, I hope it can inspire us to stay nourished by life's force, to not abandon dreams, to remain graceful in the heart and innocent enough to fall in love.