



MADISON SQUARE  
PARK CONSERVANCY  
ELEVEN MADISON AVENUE, 15TH FL  
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**THE EVOLVING ROLE OF PUBLIC ART EXAMINED BY ARTISTS AND THOUGHT LEADERS  
IN MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY'S ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM  
ON JUNE 21, 2019, AT SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS**

**Free and Open to the Public, *Innovating Public Art* features:**

- **Conversation** with artist **Martin Puryear**, 2019 U.S. Representative at the Venice Biennale, and architects **Tod Williams** and **Billie Tsien**, Exhibition Designers, U.S. Pavilion, 2019 Venice Biennale
- **Panel discussion** moderated by *New York Times* art critic **Holland Cotter** with Met Museum Director **Max Hollein**, **Ryan Dennis** from Project Row Houses, and artists **Firelei Báez** and **Alex Da Corte**
- **Presentations** by **Stéphane Aquin**, Chief Curator from the Hirshhorn, and artists **Abigail DeVille**, **Leonardo Drew**, and **Cristina Iglesias**

May 22, 2019 | New York, NY – Madison Square Park Conservancy announced the program for its fifth annual public symposium, which brings together leading artists, art world professionals, and journalists to consider pressing issues in public art. *Innovating Public Art* examines how the commissioning and creation of public art has evolved from being a force for commemoration into a catalyst for conversation, focusing on work that challenges the public and incites debate. The event includes artists who have realized public work—including Martin Puryear, who is representing the United States at the 2019 Venice Biennale, and Leonardo Drew, whose monumental public work *City in the Grass* opens in Madison Square Park on June 3—as well as curators who program outdoor projects, museum directors who are reimagining their institutional responsibilities, and innovators whose work centers on public art in communities and neighborhoods.

Free and open to the public, *Innovating Public Art* is organized by Madison Square Park Conservancy in collaboration with the School of Visual Arts and will be held on Friday, June 21, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, in the SVA Theatre.

The symposium is anchored by a conversation with artist **Martin Puryear** and architects **Tod Williams** and **Billie Tsien**, the exhibition designers of *Martin Puryear: Liberty/Libertà*, currently on view in the U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Biennale through November 24, 2019. Commissioned and curated by **Brooke Kamin Rapaport**, Deputy Director and Martin Friedman Senior Curator of Madison Square Park Conservancy, and organized by the Conservancy in cooperation with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the exhibition marks the first time in the history of Biennale Arte that the U.S. Pavilion has been organized by a public art institution.

The symposium also includes a series of presentations along with a dynamic panel discussion, moderated by *New York Times* art critic Holland Cotter, with artists and museum leadership

considering innovations in the field, the opportunities and challenges for artists when realizing work in the public sphere, and how and why public art can play a role in an institution's civic responsibility. Previous public art symposia organized by Madison Square Park Conservancy have included *Explaining Public Art* (2015), *Dreaming Public Art* (2016), *Accessing Public Art* (2017), and *Removing Public Art* (2018).

Full program details follow below.

### ***Innovating Public Art***

#### Date, Time, Location:

Friday, June 21, 2019

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

SVA Theatre at the School of Visual Arts

333 West 23rd Street

New York, NY 10011

#### Welcome:

Sheila Davidson, Board Chair, Madison Square Park Conservancy

Ron Pizzuti, Chair, Art Committee, Madison Square Park Conservancy

Keats Myer, Executive Director, Madison Square Park Conservancy

#### Remarks:

Brooke Kamin Rapaport, Deputy Director and Martin Friedman Senior Curator

#### Panel Discussion:

Moderator: Holland Cotter, Co-Chief Art Critic, *The New York Times*

Firelei Báez, Artist, New York

Alex Da Corte, Artist, Philadelphia

Ryan Dennis, Curator and Programs Director, Project Row Houses, Houston

Max Hollein, Director, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

#### Conversation:

Martin Puryear, Artist and U.S. Representative, 2019 Venice Biennale

Tod Williams, Partner, Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects, New York and Exhibition Designer, U.S. Pavilion, 2019 Venice Biennale

Billie Tsien, Partner, Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects, New York and Exhibition Designer, U.S. Pavilion, 2019 Venice Biennale

#### Presentations:

Stéphane Aquin, Chief Curator, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.

Abigail DeVille, Artist, New York

Leonardo Drew, Artist, Brooklyn

Cristina Iglesias, Artist, Madrid

Free and open to the public, but a reply is necessary.

Please RSVP at <https://www.madisonsquarepark.org/innovating-public-art>

## ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

**Stéphane Aquin** is the Chief Curator of the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Prior to joining the Hirshhorn, Aquin was curator of contemporary art at the Montreal Museum of Fine Art. He earned a master's degree in art history from the Université de Montréal in 1987 and has pursued doctoral studies in sociology there as well. A prominent scholar of contemporary art, he has written catalogue essays on Peter Doig, Jean Paul Riopelle, Dorothea Rockburne, Carolee Schneemann, and others.

**Firelei Báez** examines the politics of place and heritage in her large-scale sculptures, works on paper and canvas, and immersive installations. In 2019, she has solo exhibitions at the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam and the Mennello Museum of Art in Orlando, FL. Báez's monumental outdoor sculpture *19.604692°N 72.218596°W* is included in High Line Art's 2019 exhibition *En Plein Air*, and her current commission for The Modern Window at the Museum of Modern Art in New York is on view through November 2019. Born in the Dominican Republic and based in New York, Báez received a BFA from The Cooper Union's School of Art, an MFA from Hunter College, and studied at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture.

**Holland Cotter** is co-chief art critic of *The New York Times*, where he has been on staff since 1998. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Criticism in 2009. Cotter writes on a wide range of art, old and new, and he has made extended trips to Africa and China for *The Times*. A fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he has degrees from Harvard College, Columbia University, and the City University of New York.

**Alex Da Corte**, an artist based in Philadelphia, uses objects and materials disconnected from their original functions to create large-scale installations that often include wall-based works, floor pieces, sculptures, lights, colors, and scents. Recent solo exhibitions include shows at the New Museum, New York (2017); The Secession, Vienna (2017); HEART Museum of Contemporary Art, Herning (Denmark) (2016); and MassMoca, MA, U.S. (2016). He received his BFA from the University of the Arts, Philadelphia in 2004 and his MBA from Yale University in 2010.

**Ryan Dennis** is Curator and Programs Director at Project Row Houses in Houston. Her work focuses on African American contemporary art with an emphasis on socially-engaged practices, site-specific projects, and public interventions. Since joining Project Row Houses in 2012, she has organized and co-organized 10 rounds of PRH group exhibitions with local, national, and international artists. Her writings have appeared in catalogues and journals and she has been a visiting lecturer and critic at art schools and art institutions. She has taught courses on community-based practices and contemporary art at the University of Houston.

**Abigail DeVille** is a New York-based artist whose practice explores contemporary issues of displacement, migration, marginalization, and cultural invisibility. She has been in exhibitions at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Studio Museum in Harlem; the Pinchuk Art Centre (Kiev); the New Museum (New York); and the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. She is the recipient of the 2014-15 fellowship at The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard, the 2015 Creative Capital grant, and the 2015 OBIE Award for Design. DeVille is also the 2017-18 Chuck Close Henry W. and Marion T. Mitchell Rome Prize Fellow.

**Leonardo Drew** is a New York-based artist known for his unique manipulation of materials and creation of additive sculptures and installations. His major public commission, *City in the Grass*, opens June 3 and is on view through December 15, 2019 in Madison Square Park. Recent solo museum exhibitions include de Young Museum, San Francisco (2017); SCAD Museum of Art at the Savannah College of Art and Design (2013); Beeler Gallery at the Columbus College of Art & Design (2013); Blaffer Gallery at the University of Houston (2009), Palazzo Delle Papesse, Centro Arte Contemporanea, Siena (2006); Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin (2001); and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C. (2000). He attended the Parsons School of Design and received his BFA from the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in 1985.

**Max Hollein** is Director of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Hollein began his career as Chief of Staff to the Director at New York's Guggenheim Museum and then became Director and CEO at the Schirn Kunsthalle, the Städel Museum, and the Liebieghaus in Frankfurt, Germany. He also served as Director and CEO of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Born in Vienna, Hollein received his Master of Art History at the University of Vienna and his Master of Business Administration at the Vienna University of Economics.

**Cristina Iglesias** is a Madrid-based sculptor who creates large-scale, minimalist sculptures that juxtapose imposing forms made of concrete, iron, or aluminum with intricately-etched surfaces and sumptuous materials such as glass, alabaster, and tapestry. Solo exhibitions of Iglesias's work have been mounted at the Centro Botín, Santander, Spain (2018, 2017); Musée de Grenoble, France (2016); Museo Casa de la Moneda, Bogota, Colombia (2015); and the Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels, Belgium (2014). Her work is included in the permanent collections of the Norman Foster Foundation and the Fundación Juan March, Madrid.

**Martin Puryear** is an American sculptor whose work is recognized for the subtlety and power of its form and inherent symbolism. Puryear is currently representing the United States at the 2019 Venice Biennale, commissioned by the Conservancy, and collaborated with the Conservancy on a major public art work *Big Bling* in 2016. He previously represented the United States at the 1989 Bienal de São Paulo, where he was awarded the grand prize. Major recent solo exhibitions have included a retrospective organized by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, (2007); *Martin Puryear: Multiple Dimensions*, an exhibition of his drawings and prints, organized by the Art Institute of Chicago (2015); and a solo presentation at the Museum Voorlinden in Wassenaar, The Netherlands (2018). Puryear earned his B.A. from the Catholic University of America (1963) and his M.F.A. from Yale University (1971) and attended the Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts (1966–68). He has been the recipient of prestigious awards, including a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship Award (1989), and the National Medal of Arts (2011).

**Brooke Kamin Rapaport** is Deputy Director and Martin Friedman Senior Curator at Madison Square Park Conservancy, New York, and the Commissioner and Curator of the U.S. Pavilion at the 2019 Venice Biennale. Since joining the Conservancy in 2013, she has overseen its program of commissioned public sculpture exhibitions by contemporary artists including Diana Al-Hadid, Tony Cragg, Leonardo Drew, Teresita Fernández, Josiah McElheny, Iván Navarro, Giuseppe Penone, Martin Puryear, and Arlene Shechet. Through Madison Square Park Conservancy, she

established Public Art Consortium, a national initiative of museum, public-art-program, and sculpture-park colleagues.

**Tod Williams and Billie Tsien** began working together in 1977 and co-founded their architectural practice in 1986. Their New York studio Todd Williams Billie Tsien Architects focuses on work for institutions, including schools, museums, and non-profits. Their buildings are carefully made from the inside out in service to both art and functionality, with holistic consideration of light, texture, and detail. Williams and Tsien have taught at The Cooper Union, Harvard University, Cornell University, and Yale University. Both are recipients of more than two dozen awards from the American Institute of Architects and are inductees to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the National Academy, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Williams received his undergraduate, MFA, and Master of Architecture degrees from Princeton University. Tsien received her undergraduate degree in Fine Arts from Yale University and her Master of Architecture from UCLA.

### **SYMPOSIUM SUPPORT**

*Innovating Public Art* is made possible by the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation. Major support for Mad. Sq. Art is provided by Sasha C. Bass, Toby Devan Lewis, Ronald A. Pizzuti, Thornton Tomasetti, Tiffany & Co., Anonymous, and by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council.

Substantial support is provided by George W. Ahl III, Charina Endowment Fund, Eataly, Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, the Jacques and Natasha Gelman Foundation, The Sol LeWitt Fund for Artist Work, Mad. Sq. Art Council, Danny and Audrey Meyer, The New York EDITION, the Rudin Family, and Sorgente Group of America.

### **ABOUT MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY**

Madison Square Park Conservancy cultivates and enlivens Madison Square Park, a dynamic seven-acre public park in New York City's Flatiron District and one of the city's most treasured greenspaces. Through its public art commissions, horticultural stewardship, and engaging programming, and under the leadership of Executive Director **Keats Myer**, the nonprofit creates an urban oasis that welcomes a diverse community of over 60,000 visitors each day.

Since 2004, the Conservancy has become a leader in commissioning new works of public art, curating and presenting over 35 major site-specific installations and solo exhibitions through its Mad. Sq. Art programming. Led by Brooke Kamin Rapaport, Deputy Director and Martin Friedman Senior Curator, the program invites leading artists to push the boundaries of their practice and create risk-taking new works that experiment with materiality, scale, and theme in response to the park's unique environment. The ambition of the commissioning program expands each year alongside the diverse range of innovative artists selected, who have included Diana Al-Hadid, Tony Cragg, Iván Navarro, Martin Puryear, Arlene Shechet, and Ursula von Rydingsvard.

In June 2019, the Conservancy is presenting a new commission by Leonardo Drew. His multilayered work, *City in the Grass*, will be the artist's first major public project. For more information please visit: <https://www.madisonsquarepark.org/mad-sq-art>

## **ABOUT SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS**

School of Visual Arts has been a leader in the education of artists, designers, and creative professionals for more than six decades. With a faculty of distinguished working professionals, a dynamic curriculum and an emphasis on critical thinking, SVA is a catalyst for innovation and social responsibility. Comprised of more than 6,000 students at its Manhattan campus and 35,000 alumni in 100 countries, SVA also represents one of the most influential artistic communities in the world. For information about the College's 31 undergraduate and graduate degree programs, visit [sva.edu](http://sva.edu).

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