



## SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK PRESENTS EARTHWORK BY VISIONARY ARTIST AGNES DENES

Soaring 30 Feet High on the East River Waterfront,  
*The Living Pyramid* Will Be Agnes Denes's  
First Major Public Installation in NYC Since 1982

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Exhibition Dates:  
May 17 – Aug 30, 2015

Public Planting:  
Sunday, May 17th  
3 – 6pm

Park Hours:  
Open daily, 10am – dusk

Admission:  
FREE

New York, NY – March 13, 2015 – This spring a major project by New York City-based artist **Agnes Denes** will add life to the city's skyline with a curving pyramid on Socrates Sculpture Park's East River waterfront in Long Island City, Queens. Titled ***The Living Pyramid***, Denes's large-scale site-specific earthwork will **span 30 feet at its four-sided base and ascend 30 feet high, created from several tons of soil and planted grasses.**

Commissioned by Socrates Sculpture Park, *The Living Pyramid* is **the artist's first major public artwork in New York City in three decades since her iconic urban intervention, *Wheatfield – A Confrontation* in 1982.** Very few artists can fulfill the moniker of "visionary" and fewer still can match Agnes Denes in breadth, scope, outrageousness, and perseverance. Her work is the product of a fiercely intellectual and distinctive study of semiotics, epistemology, mathematics, history and ecology, which are grounded in philosophical inquiry and social observation.

*The Living Pyramid* at Socrates Sculpture Park will unite Agnes Denes's powerful environmental interventions with her ongoing exploration and invention of pyramid structures - a form that has been central to the artist's practice throughout her long and distinguished career. For nearly five decades Denes has used the pyramid both structurally and conceptually to examine environmental priorities and social hierarchies. *In the Realm of the Pyramids: The Visual Philosophy of Agnes Denes*, the first solo exhibition exclusively devoted to her imaginative investigations of this iconic form, will take place at Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects in New York City from March 14 – May 9, 2015.

For the first time this spring, Agnes Denes's visual pyramid concepts will be manifested as site-specific, participatory public art at Socrates Sculpture Park. The pyramid's lifecycle will start in April 2015 as installation begins. As the pyramid progresses, the artist and Socrates invite the public to become part of the installation during a **participatory volunteer planting on May 17<sup>th</sup> from 3 – 6PM, coinciding with the park's spring exhibition and New York's Frieze Art Fair.** As tens of thousands of seeds sprout into grasses and wildflowers, *The Living Pyramid* will continue to grow and evolve, with a full assembly and completion this June. It will remain on view through August 30<sup>th</sup>.

For Agnes Denes, the pyramid is a universal form through which she examines urgent issues of our time. As the artist states, "Some pyramids float in apparent weightlessness, while others are made of the weight of conscience. But what they all convey is the human drama, our hopes and dreams against great odds... This new work *The Living Pyramid* is planted material, with yet a new meaning. Transformed into blossoms, the Pyramid renews itself as evolution does to our species. The rigid angle becomes an arc to reach above, to reach what it wishes to reach."

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By activating the earthwork through social and cultural programs, *The Living Pyramid* will encourage awareness, custodianship, and activism. For the artist, such engagement inspires an ongoing moral obligation and commitment to protect our local and global environment.

After the exhibition, *The Living Pyramid* will be repurposed at Socrates Sculpture Park, adding to the park's landscape and contributing to its reclamation cycle. As the park's **Executive Director, John Hatfield**, said, "As a model of urban reclamation, Socrates Sculpture Park inherently incorporates the politics of location into the contemporary art we present, creating a powerful influence on the perceptions of our world at a place embraced by the broadest spectrum of people possible. These ideals are a reality at Socrates, and *The Living Pyramid* by Agnes Denes is the embodiment of our collective aspirations."

"Agnes Denes creates timeless yet deeply relevant works that presciently embed themselves in cultural, social, political, and environmental landscapes," added **Elissa Goldstone, Exhibition Director at Socrates**. "Throughout her extensive career, Denes has created monuments for the future, and *The Living Pyramid* is the monument of today and tomorrow."

## **SUPPORT**

*The Living Pyramid* is made possible through the generous support of Bloomberg Philanthropies, Charina Foundation, Mark di Suvero, the Sidney E. Frank Foundation, the Maxine and Stuart Frankel Foundation, Agnes Gund, Lambent Foundation, Ivana Mestrovic, Plant Specialists, Shelley and Donald Rubin, the Thomas W. Smith Foundation, and Robert and Christine Stiller. Additional support provided by the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency, and the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council.

## **ABOUT AGNES DENES**

Agnes Denes (b. 1931 in Budapest, based in New York) is a leading figure in American conceptual art who rose to international attention in the Sixties and Seventies. Over the course of a pioneering, far-ranging career, she has employed a broad spectrum of languages and media to explore science, philosophy, linguistics, psychology, poetry, history, and music, in an artistic practice that weds aesthetics to social engagement. Her works, which are often on a monumental scale, bring together ecological, cultural and social concerns, forging an incredibly powerful dialogue between art, nature, and science. Denes has had over 500 exhibitions in galleries and museums around the world; she is also the author of numerous publications and the recipient of prestigious awards such as four National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships and the Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome, among others. She is a Fellow at MIT and Carnegie Mellon University and received honorary doctorates from Bucknell University and Ripon College.

## **ABOUT SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK**

For nearly three decades Socrates Sculpture Park has been a model of public art production, community activism, and socially inspired place-making. Known for fostering experimental and visionary artworks, the park has exhibited more than 900 artists on its five waterfront acres, providing them financial and material resources and outdoor studio facilities to create large-scale artworks on-site. Socrates Sculpture Park is free and open to the public 365 days a year from 10am to sunset and is located at the intersection of Broadway and Vernon Boulevard in Long Island City, New York. **Throughout the exhibition, the park will provide a free weekend shuttle service to/from nearby cultural attractions.**

[socratessculpturepark.org](http://socratessculpturepark.org)