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Joe Riley & Audrey Snyder. Into the ground, 2018. Courtesy the Artists.

THE SOCRATES ANNUAL, FEATURING NEW WORK BY 16 ARTISTS, TO OPEN OCTOBER 7 AT SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK

New York, NY, (September 6, 2018) – Socrates Sculpture Park today announced the 15 distinct artist projects selected for *The Socrates Annual*, opening at the Long Island City park on October 7th, and running through March 11, 2019. Participating artists, whose diverse range of media include resin, rubber, wood, sound, metal, and textile, were selected by Socrates Director of Exhibitions, Jess Wilcox, and the Park's 2018 Curatorial Advisors: **Connie Choi**, Associate Curator, Studio Museum in Harlem, and **Alex Fialho**, Programs Director, Visual AIDS.

The 2018 *Socrates Annual* artists are **Leilah Babirye, Sherwin Banfield, Amy Brener, Lionel Cruet, Nathaniel Cummings-Lambert, Ronen Gamil, Jesse Harrod, Carlos Jiménez Cahua, Leander Mienarus Knust, Antone Konst, Joiri Minaya, Nicholas Missel, Virginia Lee Montgomery, Nancy Nowacek, Audrey Snyder & Joe Riley.**

Building on a decades-long legacy of nurturing artists at early stages of their careers and seeking to expand their sculptural practices, *The Socrates Annual* is the culminating exhibition of 15 artist fellowships that include summer-long outdoor studio space and stipends. The program is distinct in its mission to foster individual artist projects rather than present an overarching theme.



The 2018 participating artists join the ranks of over 280 artists who have received fellowships since the Park's inaugural artist grant in 1995. Past fellows include Sable Elyse Smith (2016), David Brooks (2010), Heather Hart (2006), and Peter Coffin (2002).

"The strength of these artists' work was evident from the onset, and their creative practices have evolved throughout the summer months," says curator and Director of Exhibitions, Jess Wilcox. "Whether inspired by Queens hip-hop or Incan masonry and architecture, Socrates is honored to offer each artist fellow this platform to bring their vision to life."

Artist projects featured in the 2018 *Socrates Annual* are:

Carved with a chainsaw from a giant pine log, **Leilah Babirye's** *Tuli Mukwano* is a dual portrait of two figures existing outside the confines of gender binaries. The title, "We are in Love" in Swahili, stands as a call for the public recognition of LGBTQI people persecuted throughout the world, from Babirye's native Uganda to local communities within the United States.

Sherwin Banfield's *A Cypher in Queens* is a three-part audio sculpture combining the busts of Queens hip-hop legends Jam Master Jay, Phife Dawg, and Prodigy with their music. The sculptural forms are inspired by stacked speaker boxes seen on the streets during Carnival celebrations and slit gongs, tall painted wood musical instruments made by the Tin Mweleun peoples of Ambrym Island in the Pacific Ocean.

Amy Brener's *Fort-dress* is a partial shelter within an abstraction of the female form. Viewers may walk into the back, inhabiting the dress as if wearing it, and look out through its panels made of translucent pink resin and embedded with an arsenal of functional tools and gadgets.

Carlos Jiménez Cahua's *Hatun Rumiyoc, etc.* is a series of cast concrete copies of the famous Incan-carved 12-angled wall stone of Cuzco Peru. The artist's replicas mimic the façade dimensions of the ancient Andean object, but vary in depth and sit in a variety of orientations throughout the landscape, linking the geographically removed site to the Park.

Lionel Cruet's *Reverb/Ensemble Space* is a multi-sensory installation within a porous cube that visitors are invited to enter. Each wall of the cube produces sound, taking cues from musical instruments—tambourines, strings, pipes, guiros—while the sand covered floor provides texture and the translucent tarp ceiling colors the light within.

Nathaniel Cummings-Lambert's *Corral* is a labyrinthine installation inspired by wooden animal pens found in rural landscapes of the western United States as well as the fence, gate, and stile networks that line public footpaths in the United Kingdom. The hybrid labyrinth can be interpreted as a metaphor for accessibility and land rights, but invokes a sense of play that cultivates exploration rather than entrapment.

Home (-) Garden is an installation by **Ronen Gamil** combining a series of aluminum can-clad miniature tents evocative of homeless encampments and surrounded by screening vegetation—a socially produced landscape. The work connects New York's thriving luxury real-estate market with broader urban planning issues, and the active role that these factors play in generating and perpetuating chronic homelessness.



Jesse Harrod's *Flagging 1, 2, 3* is constructed using traditional knot-making techniques. The forms are abstracted shapes derived from sails, shipping and national flags, and the shape that kerchiefs make when hanging out of a pocket. The flag colors are sourced from workshops with community members in the neighborhoods adjacent to the Park, and reference culture and symbols that serve as hidden messages to the local community.

The solar panel atop **Leander Mienarus Knust's** *Re-material Wall* powers an electroforming process that slowly transfers copper molecules from suspended pipes to individual wires each floating in a solution-filled jar. Over time these molecules accumulate and take unique forms as a physical trace of their carrier electricity while the steel rusts, wood warps, vines grow, and piping disappears.

A reimagination of the age-old trope of the transient salesperson, **Antone Konst's** *Free Peddler* is a forum for the exchange of objects. With a shelf for a backpack, stocked by the artist with everyday necessities and bric-a-brac, the figure becomes a reflection of the surplus of tradable goods in contemporary society.

For *Tropticon*, **Joiri Minaya** appropriates a retail backyard greenhouse and cloaks it in one-way perforated vinyl printed with pixelated botanical images. The installation poses questions of visibility—from the outside the interior will be obscured, whereas from within the piece will function as a panopticon—while destabilizing the greenhouse's function as colonial repository of tropical plants.

Nicholas Missel's *The Real Deal* is a pair of enormous limp silicone machines, the Park's compact loader and a decommissioned bulldozer, that will lie sprawled across Socrates' lawn. Cast from working pieces of equipment involved in construction with traces of dirt, rust and debris, the sculptures can be understood as a meditation on global patterns of industrial production, material circulation and consumption, and the sustainability of existence on Earth.

Virginia Lee Montgomery presents *Sword in the Sphinx*, a resin-cast copy of a popular garden sculpture of Madame de Pompadour, a member of the 18th century French court, embedded with an artist-smithed sword. A companion video, *Cut Copy Sphinx*, viewable on the Park's website expands on the piece's themes of myth, reproduction, destruction, power, and ambiguity.

Four hundred gold-clad and patterned textile-clad sandbags comprise **Nancy Nowacek's** *MANEUVER*, which will take on different configurations during participatory moving events throughout the show. Mixing seemingly disparate signifiers for wealth, collectivity, crisis, courage, and development, the piece reflects the complex nexus where real estate, capital, climate change, and assembly intersect.

Joe Riley & Audrey Snyder's collaborative sculpture, *Into the ground*, reflects on how urban ecologies uptake and transform contaminants, and how collective bodies realize agency through ground-up organizing. A rust-dyed cover, created through participatory workshops over the summer, shrouds a car-shaped steel armature, engaging with the Park's history of transformation from landfill to public park.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a digital catalogue to be added to a growing digital library of e-publications and videos available at socratessculpturepark.org/digital.



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ABOUT SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK

Since 1986 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 1,000 artists on its five waterfront acres, providing them financial and material resources and outdoor studio facilities to create large-scale artworks on site. Socrates is free and open to the public 365 days a year from 9am to sunset and is located at the intersection of Broadway and Vernon Boulevard in Long Island City, New York.

- socratessculpturepark.org

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