SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK AND NYC PARKS JOINTLY ANNOUNCE ‘THE CUBES’
THE FIRST PERMANENT HOME FOR SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK IN LONG ISLAND CITY
DESIGNED BY ARCHITECTURE FIRM LOT-EK

In response to the expanding mission and reach of Socrates Sculpture Park, ‘The Cubes’ is a 2,640 square foot two-story building, which will deepen the impact of The Park which is celebrating its 30th Anniversary this year.

New York, NY (September 16, 2016): Socrates Sculpture Park and NYC Parks released today the first design renderings for “The Cubes,” a new 2,640 square-foot, two-story building that will become a permanent home for Socrates Sculpture Park, designed by the innovative architecture firm LOT-EK. Multi-functional by design, the space will provide new facilities for the park’s arts education, gallery and administrative offices, creating new opportunities for year-round public programming. The building’s origin, materials, and design invokes Socrates Sculpture Park’s founding principles, which stresses reclamation, adaptable re-use, and the neighborhood’s industrial roots.

The Cubes will better serve the growing demands of the Park, currently attracting more than 150,000 people annually with its contemporary art exhibitions and programming. Over the last three decades, the Park has presented outdoor public artworks by more than 1,000 artists, developed an educational program that serves more than 10,000 youth annually, and presents a dynamic array of public programming, including an acclaimed international film festival, dance, opera, jazz, and theater, as well as large-scale community events and a local job creation program.

Celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, Socrates Sculpture Park is an essential cultural anchor for the borough of Queens. Its pioneering efforts in the realm of the arts...
and community engagement have transformed it from an industrial landfill into an arts organization unlike any other in New York City.

“We are thrilled to create a new home that will expand our programmatic possibilities and secure our future as an arts organization in New York City,” says Executive Director, John Hatfield. “LOT-EK’s design is an innovative contemporary work of architecture that conceptually and aesthetically reflects the Park’s history, connects to the Park today, and provides a platform for its future.”

“We are exceptionally grateful to our partners, NYC Parks and Commissioner Mitchell Silver for their partnership on this transformative project, and for the longstanding and unwavering support of Council Member and Majority Leader Jimmy van Bramer and Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, who have provided critical funding to make this project a reality and, more importantly, championed its impact on the cultural landscape of Long Island City.”

“Once an industrial landfill, Socrates Sculpture Park is now one of the city’s most exciting, interactive, and accessible spaces for public art,” said NYC Parks Commissioner Silver. “With the installation of The Cubes, Socrates will be able to host year-round programming, reaching even more New Yorkers. We’re grateful for our partnership with Socrates Sculpture Park and look forward to growing and expanding this cultural gem on the waterfront.”

“This new building will allow Socrates Sculpture Park to expand its fabulous programming to reach even more New Yorkers. What was once the site of an illegal landfill is now an innovative, important cultural space. I’m proud to have worked with the Parks Department to bring The Cubes to Socrates Sculpture Park and look forward to visiting the new space once it’s complete.” – Council Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer

“The growth of Socrates Sculpture Park from an abandoned landfill and illegal dumpsite into one of New York City’s internationally recognized cultural destinations is a reflection on the great borough of Queens and our emphasis on supporting arts and culture at all levels,” noted Queens Borough President Melinda Katz. “The very fabric of this new building continues to tell the story of Socrates Sculpture Park and allows it to expand its story to educate and inspire. Art transforms lives and so we are proud to present great art and provide access to it here in Queens.”

About the Building
LOT-EK’s innovative design and material choices of The Cubes underscore the Park’s history of reclamation and revitalization and its mission of presenting contemporary public art, fostering environmental stewardship, and community building. The Cubes originally began its existence as a commission by The Whitney Museum of American Art, then a 720 square foot structure, which comprised six shipping containers and housed the museum’s education programs. When the Whitney was planning to vacate the Breuer building on Madison Avenue for its new home on Gansevoort Street, the Museum offered the structure as a donation to Socrates Sculpture Park. This extraordinary opportunity led to an expansion plan to adapt the containers and fulfill the Park’s strategic and programmatic goals, including the creation of its first indoor space. Socrates Sculpture Park has historically and currently utilizes shipping containers for adapted reuse throughout the park, as equipment and material storage units for open air artist studios and education areas.
LOT-EK’s architectural concept has expanded and evolved the original design of the Whitney commission by adding twelve additional shipping containers for a total of eighteen, stacked on two levels to form a singular structure. Diagonal, continuous bands of glass along the sides and roof of the structure provide natural light and transparency, offering building visitors a view of the landscape and skyline outside, and park visitors a view of activities inside. These chevron windows offer floor-to-ceiling views of the park while reserving ample wall space within the building for indoor exhibitions; moreover, the striking V-shapes mirror the structure of the steel artist shed located nearby.

Located at the main entrance of Socrates Sculpture Park at Vernon Boulevard, “The Cubes” will house the park’s administration and educational programs and will be the first permanent structure in the Park’s thirty-year history. The new facility will include 960 square feet of flexible multi-purpose interior space that will house indoor education programming for classes of up to 70 children and teens and also a space for the indoor presentation of videos, drawings, photographs and process source materials by artists on view in the park; 1,200 square feet of permanent office and administration space that will secure the park’s long-term sustainability; and a 480 square-foot shaded deck area for outdoor classes and programming. The roof will be outfitted with solar panels to be used as a teaching tool for sustainable practices.

About Socrates Sculpture Park
Sculptror Mark di Suvero founded Socrates Sculpture Park in 1986, transforming an illegal dumping ground into an arts destination where artists realize ambitious projects in the public realm. For thirty years 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. Past artists include Mark di Suvero, Vito Acconci, Gregory Crewdson, Melvin Edwards, Agnes Denes, Meg Webster, Hank Willis Thomas, Sanford Biggers, and Paweł Althamer, among many others.

Marking the park’s 30th anniversary this year, Socrates Sculpture Park is currently exhibiting Concave Room for Bees, a new earthwork by Meg Webster. Each year, Socrates accepts proposals from emerging artists for its annual Emerging Artist Fellowships. The annual EAF exhibition, opening September 25th, is a cornerstone of Socrates Sculpture Park’s robust visual arts programming, widely acclaimed for the ambition, breadth, and innovation of selected contemporary works.

socratessculpturepark.org

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