SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK TO PRESENT
LANDMARK

30th Anniversary Exhibition Celebrates Socrates Sculpture Park’s Singular History and Vision

On View May 8 – August 28, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK, March 15, 2016 – Marking Socrates Sculpture Park’s 30th anniversary this year, the institution presents LANDMARK, a series of artist commissions and projects that transforms the land both physically and symbolically. Once an industrial landfill and illegal dumping ground, Socrates Sculpture Park has transformed itself into New York City’s preeminent sculpture park and social space for public art, community engagement and urban discovery. LANDMARK directly addresses the idea of place as intimately tied to social and ecological structures, to maintenance and stewardship, and to evolution over time.

There will be a private press preview on Saturday, May 7th from 10:30-12:30 p.m. Please RSVP to Alexandra Israel (alexandra@hellothirdeye.com) or Peter Kaiser (peter@hellothirdeye.com). The public opening shall take place on Sunday, May 8th.

LANDMARK features eight different artist projects including a newly commissioned major earthwork by Meg Webster. Additional artists in the exhibition include Abigail DeVille, Brendan Fernandes, Cary Leibowitz, Jessica Segall, Casey Tang, the curatorial collective ARTPORT, making waves, and a Broadway Billboard by Hank Willis Thomas. Since its inception in 1986, Socrates Sculpture Park and the surrounding area of Queens, New York has rapidly changed. Whether by engaging directly with the land or commenting on the neighborhood’s cultural and economic shifts, each artwork in LANDMARK reflects historic transformations in the making.

At 70-feet in diameter, Concave Room for Bees, a new earthwork by Meg Webster is a living sculptural installation that will evolve over time. The circular earth bowl, comprising more than
300 cubic yards of fertile soil reaching five-feet high, is planted with flowers, herbs, and shrubs that attract pollinating creatures. Visitors are encouraged to enter the work and experience it, confronted by a multisensory mix of botanical aromas, insect hums, dewy air, and vibrantly colored flora. After the exhibition, the soil will be dispersed across the landscape, addressing the park's urgent need for nutrient rich topsoil.

In addition to Concave Room for Bees by Meg Webster, LANDMARK projects will directly address the intricate interaction between human and environmental forces:

- A new work by Abigail DeVille utilizes found materials and simultaneously bears witness to and transforms public neglect, decay and marginalization. Resonating with the site's historic role as ferry slip and landfill, as well as its new position in a post-industrial neighborhood, the sculpture will address issues of migration and immigration.
- Jessica Segall's *Fugue in B♭* is a salvaged piano harp turned into an observational musical beehive. As the active bee colony interacts with the piano chords, the piece becomes a sound installation, as well as an homage to nineteenth-century Astoria which was once a major industrial port and hub of piano manufacturing.
- Casey Tang's *Urban Forest Lab* has grown into a self-sustaining entity over the years. Through successive plantings of different flora, the forest garden becomes a living repository of perennial vegetables, where visitors can explore various concepts of sustainability, as well as human relationships with nature, ecology, agriculture, and food.
- Housed in a shipping container is an anthology of the video series *Cool Stories for When The Planet Gets Hot*, presented by ARTPORT making waves. Compiled from the organization's biennial competitions of art videos that address climate change, these stories link the park's local plot of land to the global dialogue surrounding climate change, stewardship and sustainability.

Elevated at the main entrance of the park is Hank Willis Thomas’ *From Cain’t See in the Mornin’ Till Cain’t See at Night* (from Strange Fruit), part of Socrates Sculpture Park's Broadway Billboard series. Thomas' striking billboard confronts the viewer head on as the first image the visitor sees upon entering the park, stimulating a dialogue on the relationship between land, labor, American history, and culture.

As part of LANDMARK, artists have also contributed subtle gestures or interventions that address the park's social role within the community. Customized caution tape by Brendan Fernandes confounds an administrative mechanism, provoking questions about the language of authority and assumptions about borders and boundaries. Cary Leibowitz emblazons the park's Bobcat loader with playful bumper stickers that undercut [the seriousness of] this prototypical emblem of masculinity.

Highlighting Socrates as both a social space and place for making, Open Seating is a series of open design chairs created by Jonathan Odom and painted by volunteers, staff and youth participants in the park's education programs.

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ABOUT SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK

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. Socrates 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.

soxatessculpturepark.org

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