SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK PRESENTS NARI WARD’S FIRST INSTITUTIONAL SOLO EXHIBITION IN NEW YORK CITY

The Park’s five-acre landscape will be dedicated entirely to Ward’s prolific outdoor works.


Ward recasts tropes of outdoor structures – the monument, the playground, lawn ornaments, architectural barriers, and the advertising sign – into surreal and playful creations. Nari Ward: G.O.A.T., again will examine how hubris creates misplaced expectations in American cultural politics. This exhibition will also bring new insight into the artist’s exploration of identity, social progress, the urban environment, and group belonging.

G.O.A.T. is an acronym for Greatest of All Time, a phrase commonly used in American sports, made famous by Muhammad Ali, and in hip-hop, most notably, as the title of Queens native LL Cool J’s best-selling album. The title alludes to the African-American experience and political theater – common themes in Ward’s work. The figure of the goat features prominently in Ward’s articulation of social dynamics, conjuring the animal’s attributes and symbolic connotations, from an ambitious climber of great heights to an outcast.

Nari Ward: G.O.A.T., again will span Socrates Sculpture Park’s five-acre landscape as the Park’s first presentation of a single artist in its 30-year history.
Ward, who transforms discarded or familiar materials into formal innovations that address society's most urgent questions, underscores the Park's mission of integrating contemporary art into daily life and as a space for cultural exchange and transformation.

“By presenting Ward's outdoor works in an open, public environment like Socrates, we hope to elicit conversation about emotional, economic, and political subjects compelling to a broad spectrum of people," said John Hatfield, Executive Director of Socrates Sculpture Park. "Public art is often experienced as an individual work, but this constellation of new works, each in dialogue with one another, allows the public to participate in a single artist's vision."

“Amidst current national and global debates regarding immigration and race, and set in the context of the most diverse county in the United States – Queens, New York – Nari Ward: G.O.A.T., again will contribute to the dialogue surrounding our increasingly stratified society," said Jess Wilcox, Director of Exhibitions at Socrates.

*Nari Ward: G.O.A.T., again* is organized by Socrates Sculpture Park and curated by Jess Wilcox, Director of Exhibitions. The exhibition is made possible with generous support from the Lambent Foundation, Henry Luce Foundation, and the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, with additional support provided by Galleria Continua, San Gimignano/Beijing/Les Moulins, Lehmann Maupin, New York and Hong Kong, and Spacetime, C.C. The exhibition is also supported, in part, by public funds from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

CONCURRENT NARI WARD EXHIBITION

On April 26, the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston opens *Nari Ward: Sun Splashed*, the most significant exhibition of the artist's work to date. *Sun Splashed* includes artworks made from soda pop bottles, shoelaces, shopping carts, and a fire escape—materials that speak to the artist's distinctive experimentation and resonate with social, political, and cultural meaning. The exhibition focuses on vital points of reference for Ward including his native Jamaica, citizenship and migration, and African-American history and culture, to explore the dynamics of power and politics in society. *Sun Splashed* is organized by Pérez Art Museum Miami Associate Curator Diana Nawi. The Boston presentation, on view through September 4, is coordinated by Ruth Erickson, ICA Associate Curator, with Jessica Hong, Curatorial Associate.

ABOUT SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK

For more than 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 9am to sunset and is located at the intersection of Broadway and Vernon Boulevard in Long Island City, New York.

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