SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK
2002 EMERGING ARTIST FELLOWSHIP EXHIBITION

PAOLO ARAO
MATTHEW BAKKOM
ALEJANDRO CESARCO
PETER COFFIN
ELIZABETH DEMARAY
JEFFREY HATFIELD
ERIC HONGSITO
CAITLIN MASLEY
JENNIFER MONICK
JENNIFER ZACKIN
CONTENTS

3. INTRODUCTION by Alyson Baker
5. ESSAY by Laura Hoptman

8. PAOLO ARAO
10. MATTHEW BAKKOM
12. ALEJANDRO CESARCO
14. PETER COFFIN
16. ELIZABETH DEMARAY
18. JEFFREY HATFIELD
20. ERIC HONGSITO
22. CAITLIN MASLEY
24. JENNIFER MONICK
26. JENNIFER ZACKIN

29. Exhibition Checklist
30. Acknowledgments
32. Notes on Contributors
    Credits

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INTRODUCTION

by Alyson Baker

When Mark di Suvero founded Socrates Sculpture Park in 1986 his goal was to "help artists realize their visions which their creative imagination proposes, so that society shall become healthier, more cooperative, happier, and more unified."* This vision came to fruition on an abandoned city lot along the East River in Long Island City when a coalition of artists, community members, and elected officials transformed an illegal dumpsite into an open studio and exhibition space for artists and a neighborhood park for local residents. Over time, this innovative public/private partnership has made Socrates an internationally recognized outdoor museum that also serves as a vital New York City park offering a wide variety of free public programs.

Established ten years after Socrates Sculpture Park first opened, the Emerging Artist Fellowship Program is among the Park’s best articulations of this original mission. It provides young artists with the opportunity to pursue open artistic exploration, to expand the breadth of their artistic practice, and to create sculptures on a scale that might otherwise be impossible to realize. In support of these challenges, EAF artists are awarded a production grant; a residency in the outdoor studio; and access to the tools, facilities, materials as well as the technical and administrative assistance needed to create new works for exhibition in the Park.

For many artists, participation in the Emerging Artist Fellowship Program offers a first opportunity to create work on a monumental scale, learn about the issues involved in presenting sculpture in a public, outdoor space, and have their work seen by an international audience. In this way, Socrates is an important step in the evolution of their work, providing support that extends beyond the artists’ tenure at the Park and continues to benefit them throughout their career.

The spirit of the community partnerships, the cultivation of artistic expression, and the vision of urban renewal that originally changed this rubble strewn city lot into a dynamic and inspiring sculpture park still resonates in today’s exhibitions and programs. The EAF artists that gather here each spring become a part of the neighborhood, adding to its dynamic diversity and enlivening the Park.

This year, a grant from the Lily Auchincloss Foundation has augmented continued funding from the New York Community Trust and the Jerome Foundation, allowing Socrates to increase the EAF grants and expand the program to include ten fellowships. The Park is grateful for their assistance and to all the patrons who have made this program possible; their generosity has been a valuable asset in the development of this program. The Park exists because of their shared belief that reclamation, revitalization and creative expression are essential to the survival, humanity and improvement of our urban environment.

* from Mark di Suvero’s introduction, to the catalogue Athena Foundation 1977 – 1986
YOUR ART HERE!

by Laura Hoptman

Is there any other institution, in New York or elsewhere, that encourages emerging sculptors to be as ambitious?

New York is the greatest environment for a young artist. There are few places in the world today where there is such a sophisticated and well developed community of critics, connoisseurs, aficionados, consumers, kibitzers, or just curious members of the public eager for a provocative visual arts experience. New York is a place where people actually go to your exhibitions, where you might even hear people talking about your show on the G train. There are myriad kinds of venues to exhibit work including, if you are dead, enormous encyclopedic museums. If you are not, there are midsize borough museums, specialty museums that concentrate on drawing, on contemporary art, on American art, on the work of the African Diaspora, on art from particular countries or regions, on sex and on religion. There are commercial galleries, and there are artist-run spaces. There are even universities, public schools, parks, banks, hospitals, restaurants and condominium lobbies that have exhibition programs. New York also has artists. Lots and lots of them. There are tens of thousands of working visual artists in the five boroughs of New York, and this does not even take in to account the art students, the performers, musicians, writers, dancers, clowns, and sword swallowers who live here and who are also artists in their own way. There are entire neighborhoods where artists dominate, and more where their aura lingers, the better to tempt the highly resourced, art-interested purchasers of life-style based real estate. City publications like New York magazine use art galleries and studios as backdrops for fashion shoots, and artists and art people model for local ad campaigns. Thanks to this kind of visibility, to an enthusiastic public willing to cough up $20 and wait on line, and to the exuberant market for it and surrounding pretty much all that it touches, art is an almost a legitimate profession here in New York. When you say you’re a painter in these parts, people don’t immediately ask whether you do exteriors. Such a large number of artists perhaps most importantly, gives younger artists a community. Whereas institutions, curators, collectors and critics might provide infrastructure, this community gives context, purpose, and hope to the new arrivals. Proof that it can be done. Proof that it is worth it.

This proof is crucial because New York is also the worst environment for a young artist. Space to live is expensive. Space to work—even crappy space in a crappy neighborhood is expensive as well, and oftentimes it comes without basic amenities. Who would think in our shiny new century that people work in places without heat in the winter or running water? Without a window? In basements? (hint: Artists do in New York). Space is expensive in New York, and for a sculptor, that also means that storage of materials and of finished artworks can be cost prohibitive. Speaking of materials, they are plentiful here, but they are expensive, to buy as well as to transport. For anyone who has paid $100 for a delivery of an appliance 30 blocks, imagine having wood, metal, stone, or a couple of a large stretchers, delivered to the seventh stop on the L train. Once every month or so. Exhibition opportunities are plentiful, but they also are competitive and often not particularly remunerative. In particular, if you make big work, it can be tough to find a space to put it. New York is a great city, a large city, but it is on the whole, an interior city. For those whose work is meant to be outside, it can be a challenge to find a place for it as the number of institutions and organizations that cater to outdoor work is small.

In sum, New York is both the best and worst place to be a young artist, but what tips the scales towards the former, are small, miraculous places like Socrates Sculpture Park and programs like its Emerging Artist Fellowships. Socrates was founded by artists and as a result it has got just right what new sculptors really need in our city. The fellowship offers the perfect creative environment for large scale outdoor sculpture; space to work, some money to buy materials, expert help in fabrication and installation, and an unbeatable outdoor exhibition
space. Fellows are supported by a staff of artists, engineers and craftspeople who really know what they are doing, inspired by the improbability of a lovely green space on the water with an awe-inspiring view, and challenged by sublime precedents set by founder Mark di Suvero and many others, and as a result many of them make the first best works of their careers. In 2002, ten artists hailing from all parts of the world and working in all manner of materials each rose to the occasion to execute their most ambitious works to date. If there was any commonality amongst the diverse sculptures and installations, it was that each work reflected an acute awareness of the peculiar attributes of Socrates Sculpture Park. Gone was the urban veneer of typical public art projects that struggle to compete with the slick geometry of the city. The 2002 EAF artists wrapped trees (Jennifer Zackin) and imprinted the ground with repeating circular patterns (Jennifer Monick), bedizened the lawn with colored balls (Eric Hongisto) or elevated the lawn to a work of art (Elizabeth Demaray), and provided seating places so that visitors could linger (Paolo Araj). Others built tall, relishing the absence of a roof on this one-of-a-kind exhibition space. Under the sky in 2002 rose a minimal campanile (Matthew Bakkom), and a polished steel radio tower incongruously hung with birdhouses (Peter Coffin). Still others utilized materials indigenous to the site like grass, wood and water. The impulse to build large was in evidence, but there was also the recognition—so evident now in sculpture created in this second half of the decade—that the moment for monuments is at an end. Alejandro Cesarco’s project was cast bronze, but he chose to omit the statue, and concentrate on the plaque; Caitlin Masley’s work invoked the patriotic monument, but ironically, with a trompe l’oeil photo-reproduction on vinyl. Finally, Jeffrey Hatfield’s work presented a structure frozen in the process of its disintegration, blown apart by several tons of salt, a choice of material that like water is elemental, but can’t help but be moving.

In retrospect, the concentration of these outdoor sculptures on the nature, on disintegration, on voids rather than solids, created only a handful of months after the most unmonumental action in recent memory— the destruction of the World Trade Towers, is a poignant reminder how crucial artists and the art that they make are to the city, because they commemorate and reflect New York at its best and at its worst. What a grace to know that there will always be a place for them to overcome the worst and reach for the best in a green, open space overlooking our still-sparkling skyline.
Individually, these fifteen cedar benches operate as functional seating in scenic and meditative locations throughout the Park. As a whole, the group of identical benches is a sculptural installation, creating an undulating rhythm as their varying heights imply that some are rising out of the ground while others and dropping to meet it.
This bell is made from an entire 35mm motion picture film reel of *Gone with the Wind*. Suspended on two large posts in a raised area along the waterfront, it silently moves in response to the wind from the river.
Cesarco's work often deals with collective memory. Here, an installation of three cast bronze plaques were placed on the fence along the waterfront. The text on the plaques, lines from a familiar song, are meant to trigger a sentimental mood that will accompany the viewer as they move through the Park.
A bouquet of flowers was sent to a selected group of women. A card with the following text accompanied the flowers: THIS SCULPTURE BY ALEJANDRO CESARCO IS SPONSORED BY SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK

Flowers were sent to:
Vija Celmins, Elizabeth Peyton, Roni Horn, Yvonne Rainer, Lynne Tillman, Louise Lawler, Yoko Ono, Rachel Harrison, Andrea Fraser, and Sherrie Levine.
This chrome plated radio tower broadcasts the artists' automated, computer generated voice in a limited perimeter from the center of the Park. The information provided is a constantly updated notice of the time – exactly nine minutes fast – creating a future zone within the Park.
This elevated landscape creates a below ground perspective allowing the viewer to look up at the sky through a hole in the grass, or to step up through the landscape to see the Park's horizon from a low plane, as though from across a vast field. The native grasses in this sculpture were grown to maturity from seedlings and reference Long Island's City's original waterfront habitat.
This sculpture captures the midway point of a traditional barn raising technique. By allowing this static moment to balance in place without the participation of builders, this piece becomes a full scale, three-dimensional snap shot of architecture in transition. While this sculpture preserves a single teetering moment, it also contains salt - a traditional food preservative.
For this installation, the artist has translated his paintings into a playful assemblage of sporting balls. From bowling balls to marbles, the objects of games have become a celestial map - a macrocosm within the Park's landscape. Part abstract relief, it operates as a mosaic of color and scale while recalling a myriad of competitive and recreational activities.
This large-scale photo installation, running 165 feet along the north fence of the Park, creates the illusion of space and propels viewers toward the vista of a topiary garden. The lush greenery and manicured walkways depicted in the image creates a startling contrast to the surrounding industrial landscape.
This sprawling installation of worn and discarded bicycle tires spreads through the grass and creeps onto the banks of the river. A subtle overlay on the landscape, it creates unexpected geometric patterns connecting the organic material of the Park to its industrial surroundings.
For this meticulously crafted installation, the artist has wrapped an entire group of trees with cotton rope, carefully demarked a series of perfectly aligned parallel lines, and hand painted matching horizontal bands on each tree. The result is a magical, vibrant and constantly shifting intervention into the landscape that has evolved in concert with the changing seasons.
EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

PAOLO ARAO  pgs 8-9
Fifteen, 2002
cedar
varying heights x 17 1/2" x 48", 15 parts total

MATTHEW BAKKOM  pgs 10-11
Belles into Canons, 2002
35mm motion picture film print
(reel 3 of Gone with the Wind),
wood posts, pipe
11' x 13" x 42"

ALEJANDRO CESARCO  pgs 12-13
You've Got A Friend, 2002
3 cast bronze plaques
1 1/4" x 14" x 1/4" each
Flowers, 2003
10 receipts, ink on paper, 10 c-prints
24" x 24" each
Courtesy the artist and Murray Guy

PETER COFFIN  pgs 14-15
Untitled (Fixed Tower, Fast Times), 2002
chrome-plated steel, wood, PC, radio transmitter
broadcasting locally at 90.0 FM
30' x 3' x 3'

ELIZABETH DEMARAY  pgs 16-17
Raised Bed, 2002
(from The Window Box Project, dedicated to planting
the indigenous grasses of New York and New Jersey
in window boxes in Queens)
steel, wood, indigenous grasses
variable height x 132" x 82"

JEFFREY HATFIELD  pgs 18-19
Lot of Salt, 2002
salt, wood
20' x 32' x 28'

ERIC HONGISTO  pgs 20-21
Probabilities, Potentialities and Possibilities, 2002
concrete, beads, assorted sporting balls
10" x 70' x 125'

CAITLIN MASLEY  pgs 22-23
Wet Dream #6 (somewhere between Kant and
Corbusier), 2002
photograph on vinyl
9' x 165'

JENNIFER MONICK  pgs 24-25
Soft Hemisphere, 2002
bicycle tires
dimensions variable

JENNIFER ZACKIN  pgs 26-27
Pachakúti, 2002
rope, textile dye
6' high, overall dimensions variable
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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