SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK
2004 EMERGING ARTIST FELLOWSHIP EXHIBITION
SEPTEMBER 12, 2004 – MARCH 6, 2005

JUSTIN BEAL
ISIDRO BLASCO
ANNA CRAYCROFT
JACOB DYRENFORTH
ORLY GENDER
MARIE LORENZ
CHRISTIAN NGUYEN
KARYN OLIVIER
LESLEY REED
MARK SHUNNEY
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INTRODUCTION

by Alyson Baker

Socrates Sculpture Park’s Emerging Artist Fellowship Program offers young artists a unique opportunity to work outside the confines of a traditional studio environment, to follow new directions in their work, and to exhibit in an outdoor environment. The program has become a proving ground where artists can expand the scope of their practice, experiment with new materials and working methods, and learn about the particular challenges of creating and installing public sculpture.

Artists who receive Emerging Artist Fellowships are required to meet the demands of making and presenting their work in a rugged, urban setting. They need to be both creative and pragmatic in order to make sculptures for an open, public space. Because their installations have to withstand the effects of weather and public use, the fellowship recipients must be able to address engineering and safety concerns in concert with their artistic vision. The process of translating both the content and concept of their work into materials and production techniques that can meet these standards can be extremely difficult, but also a tremendous learning experience. There is a great deal of trial and error that happens at the Park, and not all the works that are produced here are successes on all levels. It is only through working on site that the artists can come to understand the factors that effect installations in this setting, and the works evolve in response to the environment.

The EAF Program continues to be one of the most important initiatives of the Park and has proven to be a positive and influential experience for the artists who participate. Many of the Fellowship artists go on to exhibit in prominent museums and galleries, win important commissions, and influence the direction of public art in the United States and around the world. The EAF artists have helped define Socrates’ role in the greater art community, earning it a reputation for being a laboratory where experimentation and innovation expand, reinvent and redefine the tradition of art in public spaces.

Continued funding from the New York Community Trust and the Jerome Foundation has had an enormous impact on the EAF Program, allowing it to expand to meet the needs of the artists and their audiences. Their ongoing support, and additional resources provided by the Lily Auchincloss Foundation and Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, have been a tremendous asset to the program. The Park is also grateful for new funding from the Altria Group, the Roy and Niuta Titus Foundation and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts – their participation in the program is a great honor and has helped Socrates redefine the role of the sculpture park and allow the EAF artists to broaden the parameters and scope of works that are created for the public realm.
WHERE THERE'S A WILL...
by Stephanie Cash

Public art can be a very bad thing. Pedestrian, sentimental figurative sculptures and run-of-the-mill abstract works grace countless civic plazas and public spaces across the country. These works are intended for the masses, and often funded by their own tax dollars, so why does the average passerby scarcely even notice them? Perhaps because insipid, uninspiring public art is easy to ignore. It's background. It's what we've come to expect and therefore doesn't require special notice or consideration. So it's refreshing when a public work grabs attention, good or bad, and forces head-scratching passersby to stop and think about this "thing" that has been put in their path.

Aesthetics aside, public art is often accompanied by raging disputes over what constitutes "good" art, who has the right to select what art the public will see, and whether it should be chosen by a panel of "experts," the public itself, or some combination of both, as with the World Trade Center Memorial design.

Located on the East River in Long Island City, Socrates Sculpture Park has long challenged this pallid notion of public art. Established in 1986 by Mark di Suvero, no stranger to monumental, publicly sited, hard-to-ignore works, Socrates has for two decades nurtured the creativity of such established artists as Eduardo Chillida, Tom Otterness, Magdalena Abakanowicz, Nancy Rubins, George Segal and Chakaia Booker, as well as such younger artists as Jean Shin, Mark Dion, Adam Cvičanovič and Sanford Biggers, providing them with all the benefits of creating work for the public sphere, without the bureaucratic obstacles. Here artists are able to experiment with ideas, materials and processes—sometimes even creating three-dimensional work for the first time—with the freedom and risk-taking too often lacking in governmental or corporate commissions.

And the sculptures seen at Socrates are public art in the truest sense. The works are fabricated and exhibited at Socrates, so the public is able to watch the creative process, with all the potholes and bumps that might entail. The park has also employed individuals from the surrounding public houses, perhaps giving many their first exposure to the visual arts and a behind-the-scenes experience to boot.

Though Socrates's existence was threatened in the early-1990s by encroaching real-estate development, it's designation as a city park in 1993 gave art the upper hand over commerce. Now it is poised to receive a new and expanding crop of local residents as the surrounding neighborhood undergoes its own transformation, with Socrates bridging the before and after, the new and old.

At the time of the park's founding, the site was a rubbish-filled, industrial wasteland. So it's appropriate that Socrates, itself an experiment in urban renewal, be a place that nurtures transformations. Under the aegis of the Exhibition Program, Socrates has been giving Emerging Artist Fellowships since 1996, providing artists with financial support, a residency in the outdoor studio, and access to facilities, materials and technical assistance. In 2001, Socrates integrated the Emerging Artists Fellowships into its exhibition program, giving young artists, often without gallery representation, a place to experiment and learn the ins and outs of creating works for the public.

Undoubtedly as with other years, 2004 boasted a large number of deserving applicants for the EAF. As a member of the advisory committee, I can attest that selecting the winning bunch was no easy task. The myriad ways that artists tailor their works to the Socrates site—its history, location, geography and outdoor conditions—has always been fascinating and the resulting installations thought-provoking, and this particular year was no exception.
Justin Beal and Isidro Blasco created projects that seemed inversely related. Blasco’s *Just Before* was a deconstructed white, shingle house reconfigured as a visually dissonant dwelling, like a mixed-up, vernacular Frank Gehry. Beal’s *Save the Park*, on the other hand, was a small shed of the type often found on construction sites. Cobbled together from salvaged wood, steel and plastic scavenged from the surrounding neighborhood, it subtly prompted a reconsideration of the debris littering city streets, and made a star of the throwaway architecture on the periphery of our urban experience.

Drawing an historic reference to the area, Anna Craycroft’s *Lol The Fiery Whirlpool*, a 20-foot-tall, half-scale, laser-cut steel lighthouse, was inspired by Roosevelt Island’s Gothic-style Blackwell Lighthouse, just across the river. With the lighthouse visible in the distance, Craycroft’s work visually linked the two sites, shifting viewers’ attention beyond the park while providing a tidbit of New York history. Also touching on a nautical theme, Marie Lorenz’s dirt-filled ship made of hay, wood and burlap seemed to have run aground on the shores of Socrates. Titled *Man is Man Wherever You Find Him*, the work is based on a reed boat used by Thor Heyerdahl, who in 1970 sailed from Morocco to Barbados—with a crew selected for its national, racial and religious diversity—to prove the feasibility of human travel across oceans in ancient times.

Jacob Dyrenforth, whose works often riff on pop culture, humorously played on the Park’s setting against the backdrop of Manhattan. *Opening Credits (New York)* is a painted 3-D replica made of cement, steel and plywood of the Paramount Motion Pictures logo. Positioned in the park to frame the Manhattan skyline beyond, the mini-mountain seemed an homage not just to the movie studio but to the city itself. Christian Nguyen presented four *Stations*, wooden staircases, from gently rising to towering and inaccessible. Intended to symbolize mountains and transcendence, they led to nowhere and offered views of nothing in particular. Visitors were invited to climb the steps and take the position of the contemplative man surveying nature from atop a mountain, as seen in the paintings by Caspar David Friedrich that inspired the artist.

Karyn Olivier’s *It’s Not Over ‘til It’s Over* was both amusing and melancholy. Instead of a herd of colorful horses, the carousel featured a single chair and, like a playground merry-go-round, ran on manpower. The festive children’s ride was transformed into a quiet, even lonely, spot where one might, perhaps, conjure childhood memories or yearn for a playmate to spin one around. Mark Shunney’s *Stage(d)* consisted of a tentlike structure suggesting a Quonset hut, which sheltered a sloping stage with an embedded microphone and speaker. Brave visitors could take the stage at will in the makeshift theater, whether to pontificate or entertain. Leslie Reed opted for a subtle presence at the park’s edge with 50 cast-silicone replicas of rock, blue and spider crabs scattered along the rocky shoreline. The all-white “ghost crabs,” representative of species native to the region, served as a reminder of the once-teeming wildlife in the city’s waterways.

For *About To*, Orly Genger hand-crocheted colorful nylon climbing rope, which hung from and spiraled around a 15-foot-tall pole. She has since produced similar but much more ambitious installations for the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, BravinLee Programs at Riverside Park, and Larissa Goldston Gallery, demonstrating the formative role Socrates fellowships can play in artists’ early careers.

Thanks to such innovative organizations as Socrates and the forward-thinking individuals who continue to cultivate and staff them, public art will be pushed along in new and interesting directions by artists who aren’t content with the status quo. And that’s a good thing for everyone.
Save the Park is a small shack modeled on the types of vernacular structures often found on the periphery of industrial sites. It is created from salvaged materials found within the neighborhood of the Park.
*Just Before* is a disassembled and reconstituted wooden shed. This broken and reinvented form alters and expands the original structure.
Lo! The Fiery Whirlpool! is a monument to Roosevelt Island's Blackwell Lighthouse and the era when it was built. This sculpture, which takes the form of a Gothic-style steel lighthouse, is another structure in the growing landscape of a fictional forgotten property resurrected through Craycroft's series of artworks entitled "The Palace Project" which includes commemorative sculptures, videos, installations, and paintings.
Opening Credits (New York) is a carefully constructed three-dimensional replica of the Paramount Motion Pictures logo from the late 1970s — considered by many critics to be the high point in Paramount's production history. Viewed from the Park's north entrance, Dyrenforth's work frames the Manhattan skyline, playing off the theatrical backdrop afforded by the Park's location on the East River waterfront.
About To takes the form of hand crocheted rock climbing rope encasing and cascading from a vertical structure. The combination of a traditional textile craft and a high tech material associated with contemporary extreme sports creates an unexpected dialogue between two disparate practices.
Man is man wherever you find him takes its title from a 1971 National Geographic article by Thor Heyerdahl about his historical Atlantic voyage. Lorenz's sculpture, with its rice straw hull and wooden mast, is an interpretation of Heyerdahl's boat, the "Ra II," and serves as a metaphor for navigation of cultural and physical geographies.
Stations presents an installation of four wooden staircases, each representing one of the four elements: air, earth, fire, and water. Nguyen's work, influenced by the German Romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich, addresses the staircase as a man-made symbol of the mountain, representing the possibility of transcendence and self-development and, as viewed in the context of the cityscape across the river, as a metaphor for contemporary urban culture.
It's not over 'til it's over is a carousel with a solitary chair replacing the colorful herd of horses that normally populate these festive carnival rides. Olivier has created a reflective interpretation of a childhood experience, inviting a quiet, contemplative and singular interaction with a carefully constructed, dreamlike installation. The viewer is invited to step up, take a seat and patiently observe their changing view as they slowly revolve clockwise around a center point.

Karyn Olivier received the 2004 Roy and Niuta Titus Emerging Artist Fellowship.
Littoral Resonance: cancer irroratus, callinectes sapidus, libinia emarginata, 2004

Littoral Resonance: cancer irroratus, callinectes sapidus, libinia emarginata is an installation of more than 50 crabs, individually cast in silicone, along the Park's shoreline. These "ghost crabs" are replicas of common crabs native to the east coast of North America: the rock crab, blue crab, and spider crab.
Stage(d) takes the form of a stage with an embedded microphone and speaker covered by a Quonset hut. The work serves as a dialogue between historical public sculpture, local architecture and New York City. Sited in the shadow of the former Sohmer Piano Factory (now Adirondack Direct), the stage acts an amphitheatre and its ramp construction echoes the slanted floors of the factory. Its colors are taken from a line of paint invented by Le Corbusier, one of the grandfathers of modern design and urban planning.
EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

JUSTIN BEAL  pgs 8-9  
Save the Park, 2004
Salvaged wood, steel, plastic
8' x 16' x 8'

ISIDRO BLASCO  pgs 10-11
Just Before, 2004
Wood, paint
12' x 27' x 19'

ANNA CRAYCROFT  pgs 12-13
Lo! The Fiery Whirlpool!, 2004
Steel, bricks
20' tall, overall dimensions variable

JACOB DYRENFORTH  pgs 14-15
Opening Credits (New York), 2004
Cement, steel, plywood, masonry paint
25' x 25' x 13'

ORLY GENDER  pgs 16-17
About To, 2004
Rock climbing rope
15' tall, overall dimensions variable

MARIE LORENZ  pgs 18-19
Man is man wherever you find him, 2004
Carved hill, rice straw, plastic sail
20' x 30' x 15'

CHRISTIAN NGUYEN  pgs 20-21
Stations, 2004
Wood
Dimensions variable

KARYN OLIVIER  pgs 22-23
It's not over 'til it's over, 2004
Mixed media
14' x 24' diameter

LESLEY REED  pgs 24-25
Littoral Resonance: cancer irroratus, callinectes sapidus, libinia emarginata, 2004
Silicone
50 pieces, each approx. 5" diameter,
overall dimensions variable

MARK SHUNNEY  pgs 26-27
Stage(d), 2004
Mixed media
14' x 24' x 20'
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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