fact of the matter
Socrates Sculpture Park
at 1285 Avenue of the Americas Gallery
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January 21 - May 16 2014

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support & thanks
Socrates Sculpture Park is honored to present *Fact of the Matter* at 1285 Avenue of the Americas Gallery as our first Manhattan presentation in over two decades. The only other off-site exhibition, *Outside In*, was presented in 1987, at the organization’s nascency.

When we first began conversations about organizing an exhibition for 1285 Ave of the Americas Gallery, we immediately established that this exhibition should reflect the scale and dynamism of the public artwork that Socrates is well known for. Through the expansive gallery area, we wanted to invoke the transparency and openness of the park’s outdoor studio and exhibition programs. With this in mind, we formulated *Fact of the Matter*, an exhibition that explores the intimate and physical relationship between artists and their materials. We wanted to show how this relationship transforms artists’ intentions into physical objects and reveal how those objects advance the thought process for each artist.
The exhibition showcases the work of: **Jarrod Beck, Chakaia Booker, Mark di Suvero, Tony Feher, Hugh Hayden, Jeffry Mitchell, Richard Nonas, Alyson Shotz, and Ursula von Rydingsvard.**

Each of these artist’s finished works result from an intensive and broad investigation of our material world. Presented together as a part of *Fact of the Matter*, these works ultimately become a conversation about the relationship between matter and maker. Because each artist in *Fact of the Matter* has also presented work at Socrates, the exhibition reflects the park’s history and ongoing commitment to sculpture.

1285 Avenue of the Americas Art Gallery is an inspiring partner, and we are deeply indebted to their commitment to support and present innovative exhibitions by a wide variety of cultural organizations.
Fact of the Matter, on view from January 21 through May 16, 2014, is sponsored by 1285 Avenue of the Americas Gallery in partnership with Jones Lang LaSalle, as a community-based public service. This exhibition was also made possible by the generosity of those who support Socrates’ Exhibition Program, including: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Charina Endowment Fund, Lambent Foundation, the Maxine and Stuart Frankel Foundation, Agnes Gund, Plant Specialists, Shelley and Donald Rubin, the Thomas W. Smith Foundation, and Spacetime C.C.

A special thanks to Colin Thomson, Director of 1285 Avenue of the Americas Art Gallery, for his invaluable contribution and support. And to Linda Florio of Florio Design for enthusiasti-
cally translating Socrates and *Fact of the Matter* into stunning designs.

Socrates is especially indebted to the participating artists in the exhibition: Jarrod Beck, Chakaia Booker, Mark di Suvero, Tony Feher, Hugh Hayden, Jeffry Mitchell, Richard Nonas, Alyson Shotz, and Ursula von Rydingsvard. Without their passionate exploration, examination, and translation of the everyday world into works of wonder and rapture, this exhibition would not be possible. As with all of Socrates’ projects, we thank our Board of Directors for their unwavering support, leadership, and vision.

John Hatfield, Executive Director,
Elissa Goldstone, Exhibition Program Manager
fact of the matter
From a physicist’s perspective, matter and energy are inseparable; one can not exist without the other. *Fact of the Matter* explores this inextricable link between material and energy through the work of nine sculptors: *Jarrod Beck, Chakaia Booker, Mark di Suvero, Tony Feher, Hugh Hayden, Jeffry Mitchell, Richard Nonas, Alyson Shotz,* and *Ursula von Rydingsvard*. Their intellectual and emotional efforts, expended in the conception and production of an artwork, elevate physical matter into sculpture that reveals the hidden potential of our material world.

“Artistic investigation into the physics of space and matter, the building blocks of our physical world, are central to my practice as a sculptor.”

—Alyson Shotz
“The tires, which have many variations of textures from being busted and worn, and whatever tread patterns remain after they have been worn and used by the previous owner. So all of that feeds my energy, which in turn helps to inform me on how this energy can be used to create the composition of the sculpture.”

—Chakaia Booker

For the nine artists in Fact of the Matter acting on, shaping, and arranging raw material transforms their intentions into physical objects of meditation, aggression, and beauty. All of the sculptures presented here are a by-product of an ongoing and intimate dialogue between the artists and their chosen materials: steel, plastic, foam, ceramic, feathers, tires, or wood. After a sculpture is installed, the artist leaves the viewer to pick up and continue the conversation in their own way.
“It is the reformation of material which is what sculpture is all about… we reform it as a tuning fork to a knowledge of form within.”

—Mark di Suvero

The sculptors in Fact of the Matter have a love-hate, obsessive-compulsive, cooperative-combative relationship to the materials of their work. Art in this form is a dialogue between the animate and inanimate, the artist and the object. Over the years, each of these artists has conducted through experience, trial and error, frustration and revelation, an immersive dialogue with their material muse.

“Nothing can exist in my head without opposites. Opposites don’t have to be complete opposites, but they can be things that don’t ordinarily belong together. Within a piece that has a
tremendous amount of agitation and agony, there can also be something very hushed and very quiet and very lyrical and very humane. Also within the context of something that feels as though it’s full of violence that within it one can have something that feels humble.”

—Ursula von Rydingsvard

Each sculpture in the exhibition works in concert and/or contrast with the architectural space—by pushing, pulling, and enveloping an area. Its scale and physicality relates to our bodies and surroundings, subtly, yet emphatically, asserting its own presence as object, forcing the viewer to connect and respond through their own presence.

“I trust only the sculpture that is immediately and wholly there. I trust
sculpture that does not grow, but simply appears—shuddering, like a knife stabbed into wood. I trust the immediate coming-together, the coalescing to unique and flashing singlethingness, the jump to new-born separate-objectness that makes sculpture powerful.”
—Richard Nonas

The sculptures in *Fact of the Matter* have eclectic art historical antecedents that include the symbolism and effigy of figuration, the radicalism of modern art, the alchemy of Arte Povera, the purity and essentialism of Minimalism, and the found and repurposed of assemblage or readymade. Beyond these references and strategies, each artist pursues his or her own vision and desire through a myriad of subjects including physics, ecology, architecture, spirituality, time, race, history, sex, aesthetics, and space. While these passions,
backgrounds, and interests diverge, the artists in *Fact of the Matter* share committed engagements with their material of choice, resulting in possessed, compelling, electrified, and arranged forms.

“I accumulate items, some quite intentionally and some rather haphazardly. I uncover and sort through. Out of chaos can come a refined and specific assessment. It requires an enormous amount of objects, of matter, but from that comes things that are extremely simplified, reduced down to very specific points of view, almost to their atomic nature. You have to mine many tons of ore to get copper for one penny, and I think it’s the same for me.”

—Tony Feher
Jarrod Beck

Scorched wood
16’ × 22’ × 10’
Courtesy of the artist

*Transform Faulting* is a new site-specific installation created specifically for Fact of the Matter. Jarrod Beck’s large-scale installations grapple with the space between construction and collapse, often incorporating traditional building materials, including wood and plaster.


Beck exhibited at Socrates as a part of the *2012 Emerging Artist Fellowship Exhibition.*
Chakaia Booker

*Manipulating Fractions*, 2004  
Rubber tires, stainless steel, and wood  
Dimensions variable

*Feeding Frenzy*, 2012  
Rubber and metal  
39” x 63” x 3”

Both courtesy of the artist.

Chakaia Booker’s work rises from an amalgam of cultural and aesthetic influences and interests. Booker’s intention is to translate simple yet complex materials into imagery that stimulates people to reconsider the expressive nature of art and how broad complex cultural transformations can continue to be expressed through common materials.

Born 1953 in Newark, New Jersey. She lives and works in New York and Allentown, PA.

Booker exhibited at Socrates as a part of the exhibitions *International ’94* and *International ’97* in 1994 and 1997, respectively.
Mark di Suvero

Forcole, 2009
Steel and stainless steel
75” × 68” × 106”
Courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery.

A pioneer in the use of steel, Mark di Suvero creates architectural-scale sculptures that connect earth and sky, space and time, many with moving elements that invite viewer participation.

Born 1933 in Shanghai, China. He lives and works in New York.

Tony Feher

*Blossom, 2008*

**Extruded polystyrene**

48” × 96” × 24”

Courtesy of the artist and Sikkema Jenkins & Co.

Tony Feher is known for abstract, minimalist sculptures and installations created from consumer or industrial materials, which dramatically and playfully engage the spaces they inhabit.


Feher exhibited at Socrates in 2008 as part of the exhibition *Waste Not Want Not.*
Hugh Hayden

*Untitled (peacock 1)*, 2013
India Blue Peacock feathers on dowel and ash bark
44” × 26” × 7”

*Zelig*, 2013
Sharp-tailed Grouse feathers on log
10.5” × 18.5” × 15”

*Proposition 8 (Valley Quail on Manzanita branches)*, 2013
California Valley Quail feathers on manzanita branches
48” × 72” × 33”

*Untitled*, 2013
India Blue Peacock feathers on Realtree© Advantage Classic camouflage fabric
36” × 36” × 2”

All courtesy of the artist.

Hugh Hayden’s artwork explores the relations of subcultures to omnipresent natural and social contexts and employs methodical processes to conflate histories, materiality, and science into new visceral narratives.

Born 1983 in Dallas, Texas. He lives and works in New York.

Hayden exhibited at Socrates as a part of the 2012 Emerging Artist Fellowship Exhibition.
Jeffry Mitchell

the Kitten
14” x 14” x 16”

the Carpenters
18” x 14” x 17”

the Expulsion
18” x 15” x 17”

In the Garden
16” x 14” x 16”

the Doctors
14” x 15” x 17”

two Figures
18” x 16” x 18”

the Gardeners
18” x 18” x 16”

All glazed earthenware, 2013.

All courtesy of the artist
and Ambach & Rice, Los Angeles.

Jeffry Mitchell makes intensely seductive objects that exploit the traditional decorative qualities associated with ceramics.

Born 1958 in Seattle, Washington, where he continues to live and work.

Mitchell exhibited at Socrates in 1990 as a part of the exhibition No Man’s Land.
Richard Nonas

*Torn*, 2012
Wood
3 units
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of Filippo Fossati and James Fuentes.

Richard Nonas creates minimalist sculptures through complex combinations of geometric forms, in wood or metal. His work is intensely site-specific, allowing for arrangements and relationships that heighten the tension between elements.

Born 1936 in New York, where he continues to live and works.

In 1987, Nonas’s work was featured in two Socrates exhibitions, *Outside In* and *Walk On / Sit Down/Go Through.*
Alyson Shotz

*Wavelength 2, 2008–2013*

*Dichroic acrylic on aluminum tube and steel

66” × 108” × 69”*

Courtesy of the artist and Derek Eller Gallery, New York.

Much of Alyson Shotz’s work is about visualizing invisible forces of gravity, space, and light. Inquiries into the physical nature of the universe are primary to her practice as an artist.

Born 1964 in Glendale, Arizona. She lives and works in Brooklyn.

Shotz exhibited at Socrates in 2003 as part of the exhibition *Yard.*
Ursula von Rydingsvard

*Five Plates, 2005-2013*
*Cedar and graphite*
*12” × 132” × 118”*

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Lelong.

Ursula von Rydingsvard is best known for creating large-scale, often monumental sculpture from cedar beams, which she painstakingly cuts, assembles, and laminates, finally rubbing powdered graphite into the work’s textured, faceted surfaces.

Born 1942 in Deensen, Germany. She lives and works in New York.

In 1987, von Rydingsvard’s work was featured in the Socrates exhibition *Outside In.*
in the park &
at the studio
Each of the artists in *Fact of the Matter* has previously exhibited at Socrates Sculpture Park, reflecting the park’s 28 years of exhibition history and its commitment to contemporary art and the creative process. The park’s outdoor studio and fluid installation cycle allow visitors to experience not only the completed installation or sculpture, but also the internal conversation and process that preceded it, moving between animate and inanimate, artist and object, matter and the energy. With this transparency in mind, the exhibition includes an installation of monographs and photographs that explore the artists’ relationships to their materials and processes.

The following pages represent some of the images that were on view as a part of this exhibition and the artists’ previous installations at Socrates Sculpture Park.
Fact of the Matter, installation view.
Jarrod Beck burning wood.
*Quarry*, 2012 by Jarrod Beck at Socrates Sculpture Park.


_Agriculture (Gate to Gate)_ 1987, by Richard Nonas at Socrates Sculpture Park.

The Polish Wing, 1987, by Ursula von Rydingsvard presented as part of Socrates’ off-site exhibition Outside In at City Gallery, New York, New York.
about
SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK
For over 28 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 over 1,000 artists on its five waterfront acres, providing resources to create large-scale art works on-site.

Open 365 days a year, the park also offers art-making workshops for children, teens, and adults, event-based programming, and an outdoor international film series — all free and open to the public.

The park’s existence is based on the belief that reclamation, revitalization, and creative expression are vital to the survival, humanity, and improvement of our urban environment.
support & thanks
Fact of the Matter is organized by Socrates Sculpture Park, and sponsored by 1285 Avenue of the Americas Art Gallery, in partnership with Jones Lang LaSalle, as a community-based public service.

The Exhibition Program at Socrates Sculpture Park is supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies, Charina Endowment Fund, Mark di Suvero, The Maxine and Stuart Frankel Foundation, Agnes Gund, the Henry Luce Foundation, Ivana Mestrovic, and the Thomas W. Smith Foundation.

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Socrates Sculpture Park is grateful for the support of its generous and dedicated Board of Directors and Staff.

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Images are courtesy of Nate Dorr, and the artists and Socrates Sculpture Park.

Fact of the Matter is curated by John Hatfield, Executive Director, and Elissa Goldstone, Exhibition Program Manager, Socrates Sculpture Park.