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Media Contact & Press Kit:

Sara Morgan | sm@socratessculpturepark.org | 718.956.1819 x105 | bit.ly/MonumentsNow



Jeffrey Gibson in his studio with a model of *Because Once You Enter My House It Becomes Our House*.
Courtesy of the artist; Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York; Kavi Gupta, Chicago; Roberts Projects, Los Angeles

Socrates Sculpture Park commissions new monuments from Jeffrey Gibson, Paul Ramírez Jonas, and Xaviera Simmons, with major support from the Ford Foundation, VIA Art Fund, and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Exhibition on view May 16, 2020 – March 2021.

New York – February 6, 2020 – As we enter a contested election year and find ourselves reevaluating American identity and values, a new exhibition at Socrates Sculpture Park, *MONUMENTS NOW*, will seek to address the role of monuments in society and commemorate underrepresented narratives.

A year-long exhibition that evolves over three cumulative phases, *MONUMENTS NOW* opens on May 16, 2020 with new commissions for contemporary monuments by Jeffrey Gibson, Paul Ramírez Jonas, and Xaviera Simmons; continues in September 2020 with the unveiling of monument sculptures by artists selected through an open call competition; and then incorporates a monument collectively realized by local teenagers in October 2020. A robust offering of artist-driven public programs – including performances and educational workshops – accompanies the exhibition. Major support comes from the Ford Foundation, VIA Art Fund, and the Andy Warhol Foundation, with additional funding from the Henry Luce Foundation for an artist-focused publication.

The first phase of the exhibition, *MONUMENTS NOW: Jeffrey Gibson, Paul Ramírez Jonas, Xaviera Simmons*, will feature three distinct visions for monuments. Artist **Jeffrey Gibson** – a recipient of a 2019 MacArthur Foundation “Genius Grant” – will present a monument to inclusion and diversity: *Because Once You Enter My House, It Becomes Our House*. Drawing from Indigenous Mississippian culture, architecture, activist graphic traditions, and queer performative strategies, the large-scale public sculpture projects a future vision of the world that embraces complexities within collective identity. **Paul Ramírez Jonas** imagines his *Eternal Flame* monument as a communal grill. The form honors the role of

cuisine and cooking in cultural cohesion and expression among immigrant communities and identities. *Eternal Flame* is designed to invite dialogue and exchange. **Xaviera Simmons'** contribution is a series of sculptural forms – each baring landscapes of text culled from historical documents foundational to racial disenfranchisement in the United States. The works are a monument to promises denied, offering insight into governmental policies that continue to shape the racial caste system we live within presently.

For the second phase of the exhibition – *MONUMENTS NOW: Call and Response* – the Park released an open-call for monuments. Nearly 250 proposals were submitted and the ten artists selected for the exhibition will be announced in March 2020. Their completed projects will be installed in September 2020 alongside Gibson's, Ramírez Jonas', and Simmons' work. For the third and final exhibition phase, *MONUMENTS NOW: The Next Generation*, high school students participating in the Park's arts education program, Socrateens, will collectively research and realize a monument sculpture (on view beginning October 2020) and accompanying zine. All three phases of *MONUMENTS NOW* – 1. *Jeffrey Gibson, Paul Ramírez Jonas, Xaviera Simmons*; 2. *Call and Response*; and 3. *The Next Generation* – will remain at the Park through March 2021.

“As a forum for public art, and as a cultural anchor in the most diverse county in America – Queens, New York – Socrates is the ideal venue to present nuanced artist-driven perspectives on the controversial issue of monuments and to facilitate discussion about cultural values,” says John Hatfield, Executive Director of Socrates Sculpture Park.

“At a time when monuments are under intense scrutiny, this exhibition provides artists from diverse backgrounds a unique opportunity to redefine the monument, and its role in remembering our country's past, as well as its effect on our present and future. Socrates Sculpture Park, with its nimble approach, is a perfect incubator for artists who can influence the field of monument-creation and public art.” says Kendal Henry, Director of Percent for Art Program at the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs.

The *MONUMENTS NOW* exhibition will also allow opportunities for public response and engagement in acknowledgment of how monuments are created not just by artists but also by society.

SUPPORT

MONUMENTS NOW is organized by Socrates Sculpture Park and curated by Jess Wilcox, Curator & Director of Exhibitions. It is made possible with generous support from the Ford Foundation, VIA Art Fund, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Lily Auchincloss Foundation, The Milton & Sally Avery Arts Foundation, The Cowles Charitable Trust, The New York Community Trust Van Lier Fellowships, and the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation. Additional support for an accompanying publication is made possible by the Henry Luce Foundation. Socrates' Exhibition Program is funded by the Charina Foundation, The Sidney E. Frank Foundation, Maxine and Stuart Frankel Foundation, Agnes Gund, Lambent Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas W. Smith, Mark di Suvero and Spacetime C.C. Socrates Sculpture Park is funded, in part, by public funds from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, the New York State Council on the Arts with support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, & the National Endowment for the Arts.

ABOUT SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK

For more than 30 years, Socrates Sculpture Park has been a model of public art production, community activism, and socially inspired place-making. 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. It is located at 32-01 Vernon Boulevard (at Broadway) in Long Island City, New York.

Socrates Sculpture Park is a not-for-profit organization licensed by NYC Parks to manage and program Socrates Sculpture Park, a New York City public park.

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Social: FB /SocratesSculpturePark | IG @SocratesPark | Twitter @SocratesPark | #MonumentsNow