Socrates Sculpture Park names Kaitlin Garcia-Maestas next Curator and Director of Exhibitions

Acting Curator of Visual Arts, including the outdoor art program, at the Momentary, heads to Long Island City, NYC

Long Island City, NY, November 14, 2022 – Socrates Sculpture Park has appointed Kaitlin Garcia-Maestas as its next Curator and Director of Exhibitions. She joins Socrates from the Momentary in Bentonville, Arkansas, where she was Acting Curator of Visual Arts. Garcia-Maestas has organized exhibitions, outdoor installations, and residencies with artists like Tavares Strachan, Matthew Barney, Diana Al-Hadid, Yvette Mayorga, and Andrea Carlson. She begins her tenure at Socrates Sculpture Park in late November.

“I am thrilled to welcome Kaitlin to New York as Curator and Director of Exhibitions at Socrates where she will be a wonderful addition to the team,” said Tamsin Dillon, Executive Director of Socrates Sculpture Park. “Kaitlin has developed a clear and exciting vision as a curator with artists and audiences central to her work in museums, galleries and in outdoor public settings. I am looking forward to working with and supporting her in developing an exciting and ambitious program of art projects that builds on and continues the legacy of Socrates, the only New York City park that is dedicated to the creation and presentation of contemporary public art.”

Garcia-Maestas’ work centers artist-driven projects and initiatives and takes an invigorated approach to exhibition programming and the support and presentation of contemporary artists, with a vision to expand organizations’ mission, values, and reach. Her research and curatorial interests have primarily been devoted to exploring themes of decolonial resistance, displacement, and cultural heritage in the United States and the Americas. Her achievements at the Momentary include the launch of the new contemporary art space in 2020, the development of the outdoor art program, and a robust exhibition program focused on site-specific architectural interventions. While at the Denver Art Museum she worked on several major exhibitions, most notably Mi Tierra: Contemporary
Artists Explore Place, an exhibition featuring site-specific installations by 13 Latinx and Chicanx artists examining themes of displacement and visibility. In 2015, she co-created the Biennial Ambassadors artist residency program, a collaboration between the Biennial of the Americas and SOMA Mexico City.

“I am excited to begin my role as Curator and Director of Exhibitions at Socrates, an organization that acts as a powerful incubator for collaboration, experimentation, and public engagement in visual art,” said Kaitlin Garcia-Maestas. “I have long admired the Park’s artist-centric model, unique outdoor studio space, and commitment to supporting artist with on-site production. Uniquely situated between two rapidly evolving neighborhoods—Long Island City and Astoria—I look forward to contributing to the future of the Park at this pivotal moment of growth and transformation.”

Garcia-Maestas’ curated exhibitions include Diana Al-Hadid: Ash in the Trade Winds, In Some Form or Fashion, Esteban Cabeza de Baca: Let Earth Breathe, and A Divided Landscape, co-curated with Neville Wakefield, Yvette Mayorga: What a Time to Be, and recently Firelei Baez: To breathe full and free: a declaration, a re-visioning, a correction, organized by ICA Boston and the Momentary. Garcia-Maestas has previously held curatorial positions at the Denver Art Museum, the Biennial of the Americas, and MCA Denver.

As Curator and Director of Exhibitions of Socrates, Garcia-Maestas will be responsible for the development of Socrates’ curatorial activities and exhibition program including solo and group exhibitions, the Socrates Annual Fellowship and exhibition, and the Broadway Billboard project. She succeeds Jess Wilcox, who served as Curator and Director of Exhibitions from January 2016 – August 2022.

Since its creation in 1986, Socrates Sculpture Park has been a model of public art exhibition and production, community activism, and socially inspired place-making. Over 1,000 artists have created and exhibited new works, including Nari Ward, Virginia Overton, Guadalupe Maravilla, Agnes Denes, Hugh Hayden, Xaviera Simmons, and Jeffrey Gibson.

ABOUT SOCRATES
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. Covid-19 Updates: Socrates remains open to the public at regular hours, 9am – sunset, with free admission. Park policies and updates regarding health and safety can be found at socratessculpturepark.org/Covid19.

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