FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Socrates Sculpture Park artist fellows presents their interpretations on climate change in Sink or Swim: Climate Futures

The 2022 Socrates Annual opens September 10, 2022

Long Island City, NY, August 31, 2022 – Socrates Sculpture Park presents The 2022 Socrates Annual Sink or Swim: Climate Futures on view Saturday, September 10, 2022 through March 12, 2023. As a public park and outdoor venue, Socrates is an art space particularly attuned to the effects of climate change. For this year, The 2022 Socrates Annual Fellowship prompted artists to create artwork from the phrase “Sink or Swim.”

We are at once on the tipping point of irreparable ecological devastation and at the dawn of a new age of Green politics and technologies. Reduction of future emissions paired with technologies for carbon sinking (pulling CO2 out of the atmosphere and trapping it in rock or water) may temper the warming phenomena. Otherwise the rising temperatures will further melt our glaciers, increasing ocean levels and leaving coastal cities under water. In this scenario, sinking might well be preferable to swimming.

The 2022 Socrates Annual Sink or Swim: Climate Futures presents five projects addressing the urgency, enormity, and challenges of climate change. Cheyenne Concepcion, Sean Desiree, Koyoltzintli, Randi Renate and Daniel Shieh were selected from over 350 applicants by a curatorial jury consisting of Socrates staff members, Curator & Director of Exhibitions Jess Wilcox, Executive Director Tamsin Dillon, Director of Programs & Engagement Aya Rodriguez-Izumi, and Director of Studio & Fabrication Chris Zirbes. Along with curatorial advisors Solana Chehtman, Director of Artist Programs at Joan Mitchell Foundation (formerly Director of Creative Practice and Social Impact at The Shed) and Daisy Nam, Executive Director at Ballroom Marfa (formerly Curator at Ballroom Marfa). Projects were created onsite at the Park’s outdoor studios with financial support and technical assistance as part of the Socrates Annual Fellowship. Cheyenne Concepcion and Daniel Shieh are the
2022 New York Community Trust Van Lier Artist Fellows, and Randi Renate is the 2022 Devra Freelander Artist Fellow.

The traditional sink or swim metaphor imagines a situation where an individual is left on their own to succeed or fail, but the current climate crisis demands a rejection of individualistic thinking and an emphasis on collective action. These artists tackle how the matrices of race, gender, and class may intersect a Green future and what we can learn from historically vulnerable, but thriving communities to help navigate this challenge.

“I’m thrilled by the ambitious and powerful works these five artists have produced for our annual fellowship exhibition this year. Their response to the theme is a poignant reminder of the evidence of climate change that we see and feel every day,” said Tamsin Dillon, Executive Director of Socrates Sculpture Park. “The works represent a range of interpretations, drawing from diverse communities, traditions, natural and futuristic environments to create unique sculptures and installations. I hope Sink or Swim: Climate Futures, presented by Jess Wilcox our Curator and Director of Exhibitions at the end of her tenure, challenges us to seek solutions and reframe our choices for a more conscious and equitable earth.”

“I’m heartened to have worked with such a talented group of artists who each bring a unique and compelling perspective to confronting climate change,” explained Jess Wilcox, Curator and Director of Exhibitions of Socrates Sculpture Park. “Together these artists’ propose social adaption and resilience, learning from natural world, and reimagining of new and old technologies as necessary steps for living in our future global climate.”

The 2022 Socrates Annual Sink or Swim: Climate Futures is on view Saturday, September 10, 2022 – March 12, 2023. A public opening will be held on Saturday, September 10, in conjunction with our New Agora series from 3 – 7 pm, with a tour and Q&A by the Artist Fellows and an activation of Ticnu by Koyoltzintli from 4 – 5 pm. Socrates Sculpture Park is open 365 days a year, from 9 am to sunset. Admission is free.

For full details visit https://socratessculpturepark.org/exhibition/sink-or-swim

The exhibition press kit available for download here.

ARTWORK DESCRIPTIONS
Cheyenne Concepcion
Disappearing St. Malo
Wood, nylon nets and mylar

This work references the first Filipino settlement in the United States, founded in 1783, located in the bayous of Louisiana and now frequently submerged as sea levels rise. Concepcion re-imagines the settlement’s architecture that resembles the bahay kubo, stilted houses native to the Philippines, with a lifted porch and a hat-shaped thatched roof made of mylar. The work reminds us that rising sea levels threaten cultural heritage as well as private property, but also highlights the ways in which communities have adapted, survived, and thrived amid water environments and adverse circumstances.

*2022 New York Community Trust Van Lier Artist Fellow

Sean Desiree
Let Us Keep You Warm
Wood, plexiglass, aluminum cans, and brass

Utilizing reclaimed Hemlock timber and aluminum cans sourced from the neighborhood, Desiree creates a cold weather shelter for all pedestrians, but with people without homes and public transit users as the focus. Inspired to address the challenges of winter (waiting in frigid bus shelters) for those dedicated to carbon-reduction in transportation, the artist looked to communal activities for generating heat. Solar powered fans blow out the air heated by the black aluminum can composites within wind-blocking walls of the shelter. The artist’s shelter segments evoke a group of figures huddling, a simple act practiced by both humans and animals alike for thermoregulation, reminding us that a sustainable carbon-regulated future depends on communal action.
Koyoltzintli

Ticnu

Clay

This intimate work is presented in an ovoid arrangement and calibrated to coincide with the trajectory of the sun / moon on the equinox of 2022 in the legacy of Andean practice of astronomical alignment. Embodying the concept of Nepantla or “in-between-ness” from the Nahuatl word of “middle”, Koyoltzintli draws from ancestral practices of indigenous land stewardship to acknowledge climate change and initiate the process of environmental remediation. Produced in workshops with the public over the summer, Koyoltzintli presents ceramic ofrendas or “offerings” to the Earth, in forms of local flora and fauna species that are threatened by climate change.

Randi Renate

Are we psychic coral-polyps?

Cedar and casein paint

Inspired by the anatomy and symbiotic existence of coral polyps, Renate’s sustainably sourced, cedar-clad hollow is a space for collective gathering and learning. Coral are potent symbols in narratives about climate change. Rising temperatures and ocean acidification have produced massive die-offs of this fragile ecosystem, which is also the most biodiverse on the planet. The coral’s cooperative mode of thriving—a colony of many individual polyps together acting as a united creature—is a potential model for slowing global warming and repairing the damage we have already done to our planet.

*2022 Devra Freelander Artist Fellow

Daniel Shieh

Passage to TOI-700 d (the New World)

Steel, resin, paint, light

Shieh’s sculpture takes its title from the name of a recently discovered Earth-sized planet with conditions that scientists estimate may be potentially habitable to humans, given the theoretical compatibility of water. The tunnel’s futurist aesthetic evokes the science fiction trope of the human search for life on another planet as a necessary outcome of environmental degradation on Earth. A lens presents an illuminated illusion of a sun at the end of a portal-like structure suggesting that space exploration as a solution for global warming is an illusive mirage.

*2022 New York Community Trust Van Lier Artist Fellow

SUPPORT

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ABOUT SOC RATES

For over 35 years, Socrates Sculpture Park has been a model of public art production, community activism, and socially inspired place-making. Over 1,000 artists have created and exhibited new works on its five waterfront acres and outdoor studio facilities. Socrates is free and open to the public 365 days a year from 9am to sunset.
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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