



For Immediate Release



Sable Elyse Smith (rendering), C.R.E.A.M., 2018

AGORA

Featuring works by Maria Thereza Alves, Andrea Bowers, Mariechen Danz, Pope.L, Duane Linklater, Naufus Ramirez-Figueroa, Marinella Senatore, Timur Si-Qin, Sable Elyse Smith

A group exhibition exploring the role of art and artists in defining, creating, and using public space

April 19, 2018 – March 2019

Various locations along the High Line

New York, NY (March 26, 2018) – Presented by Friends of the High Line, High Line Art is pleased to announce *Agora*, a group exhibition that looks at the role of art in defining, creating, and using public space. The exhibition takes its name from the ancient Greek word referring to the square, that public gathering area that was, in old city-states like Athens, the core for commercial, artistic, political, and spiritual life of the city. For centuries, artists have used public locations – and the public in general – as sites and actors for their work. Transforming these

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places into theaters and arenas for the realization of performances and collective actions, artists mobilize a kind of collective voice of the people. Through these collective actions, and the manipulation of our expectations of what does and does not belong in these ostensibly collectively owned spaces, they challenge what these spaces are, how they're made, and who they're made for. From single speaker's corners to sprawling protests; from grand parades and processions to performances carried out in secrecy; from bronze historical equestrian statues to initials etched on edges of pavement; and from WPA murals to graffiti tags, the forms artists' works take in the public space vary widely in scale, volume, and form. However, across time they share common themes: challenging why and how public and private space, life, and activities are separated; how boundaries are drawn, built, and transgressed; who is allowed to stand and speak, and where.

The exhibition looks at the power of art to change society, what the role is of art in public space, and whether art be a form of protest. Artists working in public often take a political tone, mobilizing the public for social and political change, and for the possibility of realizing an alternate future. On the High Line, a public space and natural platform for the projection of voices into urban space, nine artists share their experiences inhabiting, speaking out in, and challenging the assumed boundaries of public space.

Maria Thereza Alves (b. 1961, São Paulo, Brazil) addresses the relationship between imperialism, conquest, and the erasure/silencing of indigenous people. For the High Line, Alves presents an iteration of her ongoing project launched in 2002 entitled *Seeds of Change*, which follows the movements of seeds distributed by cargo ships that carry people and goods around the globe. The work revolves around migration, identity, and colonialism, posing the complex question of when exactly seeds – and by extension, people – become “native.” The project is spearheaded by the Vera List Center for Art and Politics and is a collaboration between Vera List, Friends of the High Line, Pioneer Works, and Weeksville Heritage Center.

Andrea Bowers (b. 1965, Wilmington, Ohio) is a Los Angeles-based artist working in video, drawing, and installation. Combining art and activism, Bowers draws attention to contentious topics such as immigration policy, gender inequality, and environmental legislation. For the High Line, Bowers proposes a continuation of her ongoing work supporting DREAMers, individuals in the U.S. who were brought to the country at an early age without documentation but have assimilated to U.S. culture and have been educated by U.S. school systems. Her project for the High Line is a neon sign featuring a slogan in support of the DACA legislation.

Mariechen Danz (b. 1980, Dublin, Ireland) is a Berlin-based artist who focuses on the human body, the history of anatomy, and the transmission of knowledge. For the High Line, Danz presents a new iteration of *Dig of No Body*, a sculpture that references anatomical learning models and segregates the human body into individual parts, like a life-sized soil-sample in movable layers. The work calls to mind our changing relationship to the earth and the popular contemporary epochal name “Anthropocene” that suggests humans' creation of a new geographical era.



Naufus Ramirez-Figueroa (b. 1978, Guatemala City, Guatemala) takes historical events from Guatemala and explores them in performance and sculpture, often concentrating on how the body experiences colonialism and various moments in history. For the High Line, Ramirez-Figueroa casts a child's bed in aluminum, with a small abstracted figure appearing to sleep inside. The work references the illegal orphanages that appeared in Guatemala after the over thirty-year civil war from 1960-96. The orphanages – many of which were highly militant, or former homes of guerilla camps – were the subject of horrendous mythologies, or proven stories of children put up for profitable international adoption instead of being returned to their closest relatives.

Pope.L (b. 1955 Newark, New Jersey) is an artist working in performance, theater, installation, video, and painting. His works include physically demanding actions, as well as sculptures and performances that explore race and language, among many other topics. For the High Line, Pope.L proposes a large neon sign that reads "RiGT TURN for REPARATIONS" in flickering red and green letters. The apparent typo is intended to make viewers stop in their tracks, while the red and green suggest the jolting stop-and-go direction of progress, either apparent or impossible.

Duane Linklater (b. 1976, Moose Factory, Canada) is Omaskêko Ininiwak from Moose Cree First Nation. He explores the relation between indigenous people and museums, especially the differences in how the two value indigenous institutions and art objects. For the High Line, Linklater proposes a series of towering tripods that reference the elemental structure of teepees. Linklater describes the teepee as a form of provisional, mobile architecture that is set in contrast to the bombastic development happening throughout New York, and along the High Line.

Timur Si-Qin (b. 1984, Berlin, Germany) creates artwork that posits advertising and commercial marketing as a result and extension of biology. In his piece *Biogenic Mineral*, for example, he uses rock-like sculptures created in a factory to evoke a sense of nature and geological evolution, underscoring that consumer culture and evolution are deeply intertwined. For the High Line, Si-Qin presents *Forgiving Change*, aluminum casts of a burned tree branch from Pepperwood Reserve, a site of one of the many forest fires that crossed the west coast of North America in 2017.

Marinella Senatore (b. 1977, Cava de' Tirreni, Italy) is an artist working in performance and sculpture. In her work, Senatore is interested in creating a conversation between herself and the people experiencing it. For the High Line, Senatore proposes an installation of festive lights under the park at Gansevoort Plaza similar to the celebratory ones made by local artisans in Puglia, Italy. The installation takes the title *give your daughters difficult names*, from a quote by the feminist poet Warsan Shire and create a space of gathering and congregation – a public piazza for people to use.

Sable Elyse Smith (b. 1986, Los Angeles, California) examines the trauma and emotional turmoil that incarcerated individuals and their loved ones experience. Using video, sculpture, photography, and text, Smith draws from her personal memories of visiting her father – an inmate in the California state prison system – over the past 20 years. For the High Line, Smith creates *C.R.E.A.M.*, an altered replica of the original Hollywood sign that reads *IRONWOODLAND* – referencing both the Ironwood State Prison and "Hollywoodland" – the name of the segregated real estate development that was advertised by the original sign. The piece draws attention to the contradictory nature of institutions that not only develop real estate but also prisons as well.



ABOUT HIGH LINE ART

Presented by Friends of the High Line, High Line Art commissions and produces public art projects on and around the High Line. Founded in 2009, High Line Art presents a wide array of artwork including site-specific commissions, exhibitions, performances, video programs, and a series of billboard interventions. Curated by Cecilia Alemani, the Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director & Chief Curator of High Line Art, and produced by Friends of the High Line, High Line Art invites artists to think of creative ways to engage with the uniqueness of the architecture, history, and design of the High Line and to foster a productive dialogue with the surrounding neighborhood and urban landscape.

For further information on High Line Art, please visit art.thehighline.org.

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ABOUT FRIENDS OF THE HIGH LINE

Friends of the High Line raises nearly 100% of the High Line's annual budget. Owned by the City of New York, the High Line is a public park programmed, maintained, and operated by Friends of the High Line, in partnership with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation.

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