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**For Immediate Release**

## **The Spur, the newest section of the High Line, opens today**

**City Council Speaker Corey Johnson, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, and NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver joined High Line Co-Founder and Executive Director Robert Hammond for the Opening Ceremony on June 4, 2019**

**New York, NY (June 5, 2019)** – Yesterday the High Line hosted an opening celebration for its newest section, the Spur. The event brought together the elected officials, artists, advocates, supporters, community members, and architects who made this project a reality. A ribbon-cutting ceremony ended the speaking program, welcoming visitors into the new space. The Spur officially opens to the public tomorrow, June 5. City Council Speaker Corey Johnson, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, and NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver joined High Line Co-Founder and Executive Director Robert Hammond, Co-Founder Joshua David, past and present High Line Board leadership, and artist Simone Leigh and poet Claudia Rankine to cut the ceremonial ribbon.

Toshi Reagon performed “I Walk the West Side Line” during the opening celebration—a live, sonic reinterpretation of Claudia Rankine’s *We Are Here*. “I Walk the West Side Line” was performed by: Toshi Reagon, composer, guitar, vocals; Jeremy Baptiste-Toussaint, electronics; Helga Davis, vocals; Josette Newsam-Marchak, vocals; and Juliette Jones, violin.

Robert Hammond says, “This is an incredible moment. Not just because it’s the opening of the Spur and the inauguration of the High Line Plinth; but because we’re completing the vision that Joshua David and I set into motion 20 years ago when we first walked up on the abandoned rail lines. Together—with government officials, colleagues, neighbors, volunteers, supporters, and others—we preserved the entire historic elevated rail line and transformed it into a public space for all to enjoy.”

Joshua David says, “When the High Line welcomed its first visitors 10 years ago, we never imagined that it would become an icon of New York and one of the city’s most visited sites. Now the Spur, with its 360° views of New York City, provides visitors new ways to connect with one of the most dynamic urban environments in the world. With Simone Leigh’s *Brick House*



as the focal point of the Spur, it's already become part of the cityscape."

Mario Palumbo, Chair, High Line Board of Directors, says, "We see the Spur as our town square—a flexible canvas that presents new opportunities for welcoming audiences and presenting ambitious projects and ideas. It's now ready to share with New York and we hope that all audiences will feel welcome here and be inspired."

Council Speaker Corey Johnson, adds, "The Spur shows the power of advocacy and the power of thinking big. The High Line opened 10 years ago and the community kept pushing to save the Spur. Today we celebrate the opening of this last section, which will be an anchor for art and cultural events on the High Line."

Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President, says, "Over the last ten years, the High Line has become a place for New Yorkers and visitors to get a new view of Manhattan," said Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer. "The High Line is a perfect example of the magic that can happen when communities organize and work in partnership with the city government."

Mitchell J. Silver, NYC Parks Commissioner, comments, "The High Line is one of the most iconic and unique parks in the world. Whether you're a New Yorker or a visitor, this park offers so many different views and experiences. From its incredible gardens, its amazing art, and its great programming, there's something for everyone, and the Spur complements the park wonderfully."

Extending east along West 30th Street and terminating above 10th Avenue, the Spur is the last section of the original rail structure to be converted into public space. The High Line Plinth is the first site on the High Line dedicated solely to a rotating series of new, monumental, contemporary art commissions. Simone Leigh's *Brick House* is the inaugural Plinth commission.

As part of the opening of the Spur, the High Line also commissioned *We Are Here*, a series of text-based sound installations on park. Claudia Rankine wrote the text with Helga Davis and LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs, with sound by Jeremy Toussaint-Baptiste. Sound installations can be heard in two balconies in the Coach Passage along 30th Street, at the 23rd Street Seating Steps, and in the Sunken Overlook at 17th Street, from June 5 – July 5, 2019 during park hours.

Claudia Rankine shares, "*We Are Here* was made for the Spur as an offering. Mimicking how the Spur extends public space to the urban public, this soundscape locates a collective idea of what "here" can mean."

For the inaugural High Line Plinth, Simone Leigh presents *Brick House*, a sixteen-foot-tall bronze bust of a Black woman whose torso conflates the forms of a skirt and a clay house.

"There's been a dearth of sculpture, especially that represent Black women, and so I'm very honored to get this opportunity. I think it is something that we need," says Simone Leigh, artist of the inaugural High Line Plinth sculpture, *Brick House*, in an interview with *CBS This Morning*.

The Spur is designed by James Corner Field Operations (Project Lead), Diller Scofidio + Renfro, and Planting Designer Piet Oudolf—the same design team behind the other sections of the High Line.

James Corner, FASLA, Founding Partner, and CEO, James Corner Field Operations, comments, “The design of the Spur has gone through many iterations over the years: from theater, to garden, to woodland, to event platform, to an immersive ‘bowl,’ among others. But we ended up with the best solution, typical High Line: tough, simple, and authentic. Leaving the large lofted space of the Coach Passage, you enter the Spur through a lush woodland, which opens into a large clearing with large-scale artwork on the Plinth. This dramatic space is flanked by generous seating and overlooks and immerses you in the massive scale of the surrounding city.”

Ricardo Scofidio, Partner, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, says, “It’s another moment to celebrate. This abandoned, elevated freight system continues to surprise with its latest incarnation as a unique new plaza for art and music. The Spur opens new vistas to and from the city and visually reconnects the High Line back to the 10th Avenue Overlook on 17th Street.”

Piet Oudolf, adds, “The Spur natural plantings take your imagination away from daily life in the city.”

## **ABOUT THE HIGH LINE**

Built on a historic, elevated freight line, we reimagine public space with our communities, neighborhoods, and city, in partnership with NYC Parks. The High Line is a park where visitors can view art, walk through gardens, experience a performance, or connect with friends and neighbors—all while enjoying a unique perspective of New York City. We raise nearly 100% of the annual budget for our programming, maintenance, and operations.

For more information, visit [thehighline.org](https://thehighline.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#).

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