



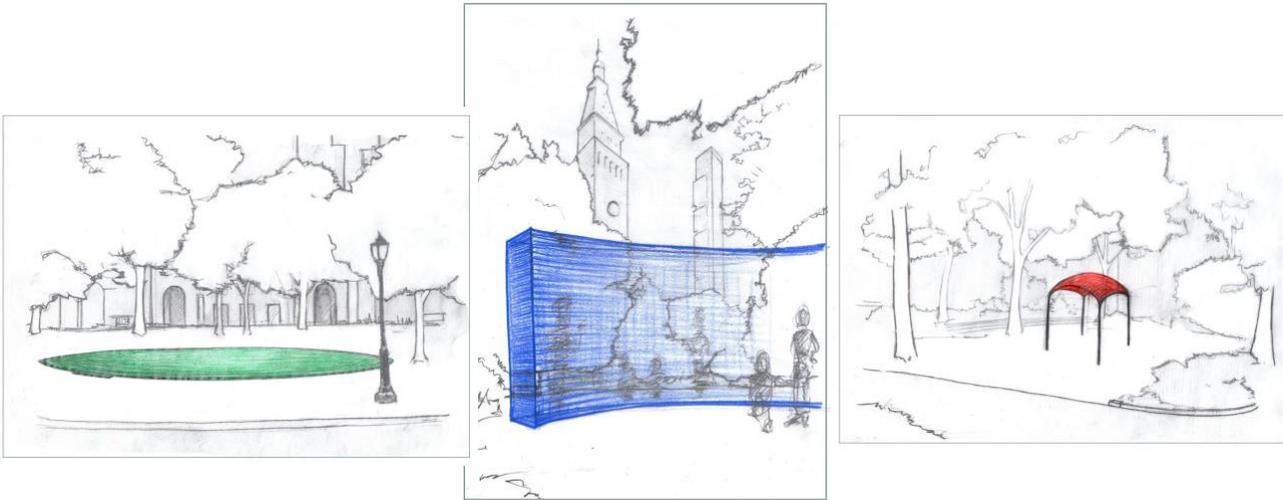
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**MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY'S MAD. SQ. ART ANNOUNCES MAJOR
COMMISSIONED OUTDOOR EXHIBITION BY AMERICAN ARTIST JOSIAH MCELHENY**

Prismatic Park is Mad. Sq. Art's thirty-fourth public art exhibition

New York, NY | November 15, 2016 – Madison Square Park Conservancy is proud to announce its thirty-fourth exhibition, *Prismatic Park* by artist and MacArthur Foundation Fellow recipient Josiah McElheny. The project features three large sculptures of painted wood and prismatic glass on view in Madison Square Park from June 13, 2017 through October 8, 2017.

The outdoor exhibition will comprise three exquisite sculptures in painted wood and prismatic glass: minimal, almost architectural forms that will create new spaces within the Park for the creation of music, dance, and poetry: a curvilinear, translucent blue sound wall for experimental music; a circular, reflective green floor for vanguard dance; and a vaulted-roofed luminous red and yellow pavilion for poetry. Each will refract the surrounding natural light, beckoning the passerby and regular Park visitor. The three structures will form open, stage-like platforms—in both the physical and metaphorical sense—for the collaborating choreographers, dancers, musicians, and poets who will be working next to them, on them, and under them in the summer of 2017.

Throughout the exhibition, three nonprofit art organizations based in New York—Blank Forms, Danspace Project, and Poets House—will “inhabit” the Park to realize new commissions. The resident artists will create ambitious new work that summons the potential for imagination, creativity, and performance inspired by spontaneous audiences and chance encounters that only a public place, like an urban park, can offer. McElheny's sculptures are there to galvanize new movement, sound, and language. He has also offered the participating artists a prompt to consider the Park not only for performances, but also for rehearsals or even impromptu workshops. When not occupied by the resident artists, the public will have access to the sculptures to view or to adopt as a framework for

their own innovative use. Interpretive materials, including dedicated *Prismatic Park* signage, a weekly free poster with images inspired by the commissions, a scholarly catalogue, and the Conservancy website will allow visitors to reflect on how public spaces can become sites to articulate diverse civic values including creative expression and chance meetings.

In recent years, various parks have been especially important as sites for political assertion, such as Gezi Park in Istanbul, Tahrir Square in Cairo, and Zuccotti Park in New York. McElheny takes impetus from the activism of recent years, but *Prismatic Park* reconceives this ferment as an idealistic, almost utopian concept for the shared responsibility towards a public site that still allots space for the highly individual, unique voice.

Josiah McElheny (American, b. 1966) holds a distinct role in the contemporary art field. He works in a range of mediums, including sculpture, installation, film, writing, and performance. In *Prismatic Park*, McElheny continues his examination of the way the transparency of glass is strongly linked to ideas within Modernist art, architecture, and philosophy. In this project he proposes that public sculpture might become a catalyst for the creation of new works by augmenting physical presence with the construction of shared spaces.

Madison Square Park's 6.2-acre site welcomes more than 60,000 daily visitors—a richly diverse audience including local residents, families, public school groups and day camps, office workers, students, artists, and international tourists.

Josiah McElheny emphasizes that this project is one of shared effort, between himself, the Park, the collaborating artists and, not least, inhabitants of and visitors to New York. "One of the most urgent societal issues today is how can we best share what little public space is left to us. *Prismatic Park* attempts to provide a partial answer to this question by suggesting that the arts can expand existing public spaces through the visionary efforts of individuals and small groups, creating works of art, dance, music and poetry in the middle of our city."

"Our program of public art continues to push the boundaries of this field. Josiah McElheny's *Prismatic Park* is a hopeful use of a Park site where sculpture and performance will seamlessly unite for the tremendous benefit of Parkgoers," said Keats Myer, Executive Director, Madison Square Park Conservancy. "We are delighted to have this project on view in the summer of 2017 and to collaborate with our colleagues at Blank Forms, Danspace Project, and Poets House."

Brooke Kamin Rapaport, Director and Martin Friedman Senior Curator, Mad. Sq. Art, said: "Josiah McElheny's *Prismatic Park* scrutinizes and poses alternatives for the use of public space for a democracy, for solidarity, for optimism. This project takes the impetus from recent activism in public parks and squares, but its core comes from an idealistic, almost utopian, concept of the optimism for the shared responsibility of a public site by people and the artist's role in solidifying that contract. By making three stunning prismatic glass works and by partnering with three nonprofits, McElheny is positing his works as platforms for questions of how sculpture can revamp other disciplines."

A celebrated series of sculpture exhibitions by living artists, Mad. Sq. Art was launched by Madison Square Park Conservancy in 2004 to bring free public art programs to New York. The program has received extensive critical and public attention since its inception and has developed into a world-class cultural institution. Its ambition and scale expands each year alongside an increasingly diverse range of innovative, world-class artists.

Join the conversation on Twitter and Instagram via the hashtags **#MadSqArt**, **#JosiahMcElheny** and **#PrismaticPark**. For more information on Madison Square Park Conservancy and its programs, please visit <http://madisonsquarepark.org>.

Images: Josiah McElheny, Proposal for *Prismatic Park*, 2016. Wood, steel, and prismatic glass, 9.5 x 31 x .33 feet (wall); 32 feet diameter (floor); 14 x 11 x 9 feet (pavilion). Collection of the artist.

©Josiah McElheny

About Josiah McElheny:

Josiah McElheny (born 1966, lives and works in New York) received a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1989. His work is acclaimed for the way he explores the history of ideas as an integral part of his experiments combining glass with other materials. He has had solo exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, and the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, and internationally at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid, and the Whitechapel Gallery in London. McElheny was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 2006. He is represented by Corbett vs. Dempsey in Chicago and White Cube Gallery in London.

About Mad. Sq. Art and Madison Square Park Conservancy:

Mad. Sq. Art is the free, contemporary art program of Madison Square Park Conservancy. Since 2004, Mad. Sq. Art has commissioned and presented thirty-three premier installations in Madison Square Park by acclaimed artists ranging in practice and media. Mad. Sq. Art has exhibited works by artists including Bill Beirne, Jim Campbell, Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Mark di Suvero, Kota Ezawa, Rachel Feinstein, Teresita Fernández, Bill Fontana, Ernie Gehr, Orly Genger, Sandra Gibson & Luis Recoder, Antony Gormley, Paula Hayes, Jene Highstein, Tadashi Kawamata, Mel Kendrick, Sol LeWitt, Olia Lialina & Dragan Espenschied, Charles Long, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Iván Navarro, Jacco Olivier, Roxy Paine, Giuseppe Penone, Jaume Plensa, Shannon Plumb, Martin Puryear, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Alison Saar, Jessica Stockholder, Leo Villareal, and William Wegman.

Madison Square Park Conservancy is the not-for-profit organization whose mission is to protect, nurture, and enhance Madison Square Park, a dynamic seven-acre public green space, creating an environment that fosters moments of inspiration. The Conservancy is committed to engaging the community through its beautiful gardens, inviting amenities, and world-class programming. Madison Square Park Conservancy is licensed by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation to manage Madison Square Park and is responsible for raising 100% of the funds necessary to operate the Park, including the brilliant horticulture, park maintenance, sanitation, security, and free cultural programs for Park visitors of all ages.

Support:

Major exhibition support for *Prismatic Park* is provided by Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Foundation, Showman Fabricators, Andrea Rosen Gallery, and VIA Art Fund. Substantial exhibition support is provided by Art Alliance for Contemporary Glass, Gillinder Glass, Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, and Lenore G. Tawney Foundation. Limpe Fuchs is presented in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut. Shelley Hirsch is presented with support from Genelec. Ánde Somby is presented with support from Royal Norwegian Consulate General.

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