New York, NY | Updated April 6, 2022 — Spanish artist Cristina Iglesias invites the public to consider the forgotten terrains and geographic history of New York City in a new public art installation opening this June, her first major temporary public art project in the United States. Landscape and Memory places five bronze sculptural pools, flowing with water, into Madison Square Park’s Oval Lawn, harkening back to when the Cedar Creek coursed across the land where the park stands today. Building on Iglesias’ practice of unearthing the forgotten and excavating natural history, Landscape and Memory resurfaces in the imaginations of contemporary viewers the now-invisible force of this ancient waterway.

On view from June 1 through December 4, 2022, Landscape and Memory will be complemented by a slate of interdisciplinary public programs, free and open to the public. Presented within and responding to the work, these include a summer music series curated with Carnegie Hall as well as performance programming organized in conjunction with The Kitchen. Cristina Iglesias will also serve as the keynote speaker for the Conservancy’s annual public art symposium, held this year on Friday, June 3, which will investigate the role of public art in shedding new light on buried histories, both metaphorically and physically.

“Cristina Iglesias is renowned for sculpture and installation that engage closely with the spatial, cultural, and historical qualities of the spaces where they’re sited. With Landscape and Memory, Iglesias brings a new level of exploration to our commissioning program, creating sculptural cracks in the lawns that reveal an unseen element of the park’s natural history,” said Brooke Kamin Rapaport, Deputy Director and Martin Friedman Chief Curator of Madison Square Park Conservancy. “Visitors who encounter the work will do so almost as citizen archaeologists witnessing a living artifact from a centuries-old New York City, untouched by the present-day urban landscape.”

For Landscape and Memory, Iglesias digs deep into the park’s lawns to install five subterranean bronze sculptures carved with intricately patterned bas-reliefs. A subtle stream of water continuously trails across the sculptures’ hollowed surfaces, evoking the constancy of water slowly eroding rocky surfaces across millennia. The installation conjures the existence of unseen ancient streams that continue to run beneath modern cities, connecting the urban present with its primordial past, and connecting us to abstract ideas of what lies beneath us.
Nodding to historian Simon Schama’s major 1995 volume of the same name, which surveyed the history of landscape across time and terrain, *Landscape and Memory* is informed by Iglesias’ research into the history of the site. For the project, Iglesias located and studied historic maps that document the water flow through Madison Square Park, where the Cedar Creek once coursed. With nineteenth-century industrialization, streams like the Cedar were buried underground to create additional land for building sites, underground drains, or sewers. Through *Landscape and Memory*, Iglesias renders this history visible again, inviting viewers to contemplate centuries of transformation of urban sites that were once natural.

“Madison Square Park has a rich history, witnessing and participating in several hundred years of New York City’s growth and evolution,” said Madison Square Park Conservancy Executive Director Keats Myer. "Iglesias’ commission digs deep into this history, evoking an era that predates even our centuries-old park, to reconnect today’s visitors with the natural wonder of the original site.”

*Landscape and Memory* is organized by Brooke Kamin Rapaport, Deputy Director and Martin Friedman Chief Curator; Tom Reidy, Deputy Director of Finance and Special Projects; and Truth Murray-Cole, Curatorial Manager. Keats Myer is the Conservancy’s Executive Director.

**ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Cristina Iglesias shapes large-scale, site-specific sculpture and installations that probe the tension between past and present, ancient and contemporary. Resisting the asceticism of the Minimalist movement, Iglesias initially created grid-like structures in natural materials that were suspended to assemble pavilions and architectural spaces. Beginning in the 2000s, Iglesias began to incorporate water into her permanent outdoor projects and sculptures.

Iglesias’s work has been the subject of solo presentations at museums internationally, including Centro Botín, Santander, Spain (2018); Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid (2013); Ludwig Museum, Cologne (2006); Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2003); and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1997). She additionally has been commissioned to create major projects and installations at Bloomberg headquarters, London (2017); Fondación Botín, Santander (2017); *Tres Aguas* at Toledo, Spain (2014); Mexican Foundation of Environmental Education, Baja, California (2010); Museo del Prado, Madrid (2007); and Royal Museum of Fine Art, Antwerp (2006). The Museum of Fine Arts Houston opened Iglesias’ major permanent outdoor commission, *Inner Landscape (the lithosphere, the roots, the water)* (2020) in front of the new Kinder Building and last summer she realized *Hondalea* (2021), transforming a lighthouse into a sculpture on Santa Clara Island in the Bay of Donostia, San Sebastián, Spain.

Iglesias was born in San Sebastián, Northern Spain in November 1956. She studied Chemical Sciences in the University of the Basque Country (1976 – 1978), and ceramics and sculpture at the Chelsea College of Art in London (1980 - 1982). She was granted a Fulbright scholarship to study at Pratt Institute (1988). She was appointed Professor of Sculpture at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Munich (1995).

Her studio is in Madrid, Spain.

EXHIBITION SUPPORT

_Landscape and Memory_ is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. Leadership support for this exhibition is generously provided by Marian Goodman Gallery, New York/Paris and The Ruth Stanton Foundation. Major support for the exhibition is generously provided by Agnes Gund and Bloomberg Philanthropies. Substantial support is provided by Candy and Michael Barasch and The Malka Fund.

Major support for the art program is provided by Sasha C. Bass, Bunny and Charles Burson, Toby Devan Lewis, Ronald A. Pizzuti, Thornton Tomasetti, Tiffany & Co., Anonymous, and by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council. Substantial support is provided by Charina Endowment Fund, Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Sol LeWitt Fund for Artist Work, Madison Square Park Conservancy Art Council, Audrey and Danny Meyer, The Rudin Family, and Von Rydingsvard-Greengard Foundation. Additional support is provided by 400 Park Avenue South, Lenore G. Tawney Foundation, Jane Richards, Fern and Lenard Tessler, Ms. Barbara van Beuren and Mr. Stephen L. Glascock, and Anonymous.

Madison Square Park Conservancy is a public/private partnership with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation.

ABOUT MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY

Madison Square Park Conservancy cultivates and enlivens Madison Square Park, a dynamic seven-acre public park in New York City’s Flatiron District and one of the city’s most treasured greenspaces. Through its public art commissions, horticultural stewardship, and engaging programming, the nonprofit creates an urban oasis that welcomes a diverse community of over 60,000 visitors each day. Keats Myer is the Conservancy’s Executive Director.

Since 2004, the Conservancy has become a leader in commissioning new works of public art, curating and presenting over 40 major site-specific installations and solo exhibitions through its art programming. Led by Brooke Kamin Rapaport, Deputy Director and Martin Friedman Chief Curator, the program invites leading artists to push the boundaries of their practice and create risk-taking new works that experiment with materiality, scale, and theme in response to the park’s unique environment. The ambition of the commissioning program expands each year alongside the diverse range of innovative artists including Diana Al-Hadid, Tony Cragg, Abigail DeVille, Leonardo Drew, Maya Lin, Iván Navarro, Martin Puryear, Arlene Shechet, Ursula von Rydingsvard, and Krzysztof Wodiczko.

In 2019, the Conservancy served as the commissioning institution for the U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, marking the first time that an organization whose visual art program focuses
exclusively on public art has received this honor. With Rapaport serving as Commissioner, the Conservancy presented new work by Martin Puryear.

For more information, contact

Resnicow and Associates
Juliet Sorce, 212.671.5158 or jsorce@resnicow.com
Delaney Smith, 212.671.5160 or dsmith@resnicow.com
Jenny Levine, 212.671.5189 or jlevine@resnicow.com