



Xavier Simmons; Rendering of 'The structure the labor the foundation the escape the pause;' 2020; Courtesy the Artist, Socrates Sculpture Park, and David Castillo, Miami.

New Yorkers will experience new monuments this summer at Socrates

NEW YORK, NY.- As the country grapples with both a deadly pandemic and the tragic consequences of systemic racism, [Socrates Sculpture Park](#) will open an exhibition of new outdoor monuments this summer. MONUMENTS NOW seeks to address the role of monuments in American society – some of which have been removed in recent days – and presents artist-envisioned monuments highlighting underrepresented histories including queer, Indigenous, and diasporic narratives.

Socrates Sculpture Park, as with all NYC Parks, has been open and operating during the pandemic. With Phase I reopening of the city, Socrates will begin installing and presenting MONUMENTS NOW with the initial installation and presentation of Jeffrey Gibson's project, Because Once You Enter My House, It Becomes Our House on July 10th.

MONUMENTS NOW will evolve over three phases as a cumulative exhibition. Part I opens this summer with major new commissions for monuments by acclaimed artists Jeffrey Gibson, Paul Ramírez Jonas, and Xavier Simmons. Then Parts II & III open together on October 10, 2020. Part II, Call and Response, features ten monuments by artists selected through an open call application process. Part III, The Next Generation, presents a multi-faceted monument project collectively

realized by local Queens high school students. Additionally, the Park's Broadway Billboard above the main entrance will feature a monuments- related artwork by photographer Nona Faustine.

Monuments are created by artists, but ultimately are valued and empowered by society. Throughout the exhibition, Socrates will engage the community through a "visible conversation" which will allow socially distant visitors to respond to the work through an on-site exchange and display process. Artist-curated online activations will also allow viewers to engage with the projects virtually.

JEFFREY GIBSON

For Part I, artist Jeffrey Gibson – a recipient of a 2019 MacArthur Foundation "Genius Grant" – will present a monument to inclusion and diversity: *Because Once You Enter My House, It Becomes Our House*. Drawing from Indigenous Mississippian culture, architecture, activist graphic traditions, and queer performative strategies, the large-scale public sculpture projects a future vision of the world that embraces complexities within collective identity. Gibson has also curated a series of performances from Indigenous artists. These performances will be filmed onsite and made available to the public online.

PAUL RAMÍREZ JONAS

Part I continues with Paul Ramírez Jonas' *Eternal Flame* – a monument in the form of a grill which honors the role of cuisine and cooking in cultural cohesion and expression among immigrant communities and identities. *Eternal Flame* is designed to recognize the importance of dialogue and exchange. During this new time of social distancing the grill will not be available for public use, but instead bring people together philosophically and culturally through the common experience of cooking and eating. With this in mind, a series of videos will be released with local and distant chefs invited by the artist to address the meaning of cooking in culture while preparing recipes and relating stories on each dish's significance. Ramírez Jonas imagines cooking culture as a symbolic eternal flame, enduring in communities for generations, over vast distances.

XAVIERA SIMMONS

Xaviera Simmons' contribution, *The structure the labor the foundation the escape the pause*, completes Part I and is a series of sculptural forms – each bearing landscapes of text culled from historical documents foundational to racial disenfranchisement in the United States. The works are a monument to promises denied, offering insight into governmental policies that continue to shape the racial caste system we live within presently. Simmons will offer a virtual tour and discussion of her works which will be made available to the public online.

EXHIBITION PARTS II & III

For Part II, *MONUMENTS NOW: Call and Response*, the Park released an open-call for monuments. Fellowship applicants were asked to adhere to the topic of monuments. Over 200 proposals were submitted and the following artists were selected: Daniel Bejar, Fontaine Capel (2020 New York Community Trust Van Lier Fellow), Patrick Costello, Dionisio Cortes Ortega, Bel Falleiros, Jenny Polak, Aya Rodriguez-Izumi, Andrea Solstad, Kiyan Williams (2020 New York Community Trust Van Lier Fellow), and Sandy Williams IV (2020 New York Community Trust Van Lier Fellow). Part II will be on view from October 10, 2020.

For the third part, *MONUMENTS NOW: The Next Generation*, high school students participating in the Park's arts education program, *Socrateens*, will collectively research and realize a monument sculpture (on view beginning October 10, 2020) and accompanying zine. All three parts of *MONUMENTS NOW* – I. Jeffrey Gibson, Paul Ramírez Jonas, Xaviera Simmons; II. *Call and Response*; and III. *The Next Generation* – will remain at the Park through March 2021.