

TimeOut

See what's coming to Astoria's Socrates Sculpture Park this summer

It may be a sign of better times ahead for art in NYC.

By Howard Halle Posted: Wednesday July 29 2020, 6:13pm

Since NYC went into lockdown, it's been strange days for New York's art world, with gallery exhibits limited to online viewing rooms and museums confined to offering virtual tours. But now, with the prospect of the city slowly beginning to lift the quarantine, all of that may change. Indeed, you might say an upcoming exhibition slated for Queens's Socrates Sculpture Park is a harbinger of things to come.

Remarkably, the outdoor art showcase in Long Island City has been opened all of this time, because, well, it's a park. However, Socrates was only showing works installed before the crisis.

Now, it's making up for lost time with a new exhibition series, under the rubric, "Monuments Now," that will take place over the summer and fall. It kicks off with a trio of artists—Jeffrey Gibson, Paul Ramírez Jonas and Xaviera Simmons—presenting large-scale objects that take the premise literally.

Gibson's piece, for example, consists of 40ft x 40ft plywood ziggurat inspired by the pre-Columbian earthen mounds created by indigenous people in the Mississippi Valley during the 13th century. It will be covered in a skein of brightly-colored geometric patterns.

Ramírez Jonas, meanwhile, is creating a functional community grill in the form of a towering obelisk.

Finally, Simmons's boxlike cenotaph frames texts culled from historical documents related to racial disenfranchisement.



Photograph: Courtesy the artist and Socrates Sculpture Park

The projects will be unveiled on a staggered schedule between July and August to facilitate social distancing—a reminder that while the art world may be finally emerging from stasis, there's still a long way to go before it gets back to anything like normal.