



MADISON SQUARE
PARK CONSERVANCY

ELEVEN MADISON AVENUE, 29th F NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10001 212 639 1404 F 212 339 3970 WWW.MADISONOUPARK.ORG

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MADISON SQUARE PARK CONSERVANCY ANNOUNCES THAT FOUNDING PRESIDENT DEBBIE LANDAU WILL DEPART FOLLOWING 12-YEAR TENURE

Landau to Continue to Champion Contemporary Art in New Role as Public Art Advisor

Conservancy Announces Appointment of Keats Myer as Executive Director

New York—Madison Square Park Conservancy announces that its President Debbie Landau will leave the organization to work as a public art advisor following 12 successful years at the helm of the organization where she was one of three founders in 2002. Landau's vision and leadership of the organization and its unparalleled free cultural programs—the most notable of which is Mad. Sq. Art—have made it one of the most prominent public art programs in the country, with millions of visitors every year. Landau will continue in her current role through mid-December 2013.

The conservancy is pleased to announce that Keats Myer will continue in her leadership role as Executive Director. Myer has notable corporate and non-profit experience, most recently leading two New York institutions, the National Track & Field Hall of Fame, and the Children's Museum of the Arts, where she oversaw rapid periods of growth. In these positions, Myer directed strategic planning, board development, capital and programmatic fundraising, and the design of the two museums' new and larger homes. As the conservancy moves forward in its second decade, Myer will focus on keeping the Park's exceptional free public programs and lush gardens sustained at the highest levels to meet the needs of the thousands of people who use the park each day.

Mad. Sq. Art's program will continue to be curated by Brooke Kamin Rapaport, Senior Curator, who was a member of the Conservancy's Art Advisory Committee and joined the organization in May 2013. Through its public art program, Mad. Sq. Art, of which Landau was a founder, Madison Square Park has become a sought-after public, urban space for contemporary artists. Mad. Sq. Art has commissioned work by prominent international and younger artists including Orly Genger, Antony Gormley, Sol LeWitt, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Roxy Paine, Jaume Plensa, Leo Villareal, Ursula Von Rydingsvard, and William Wegman. The program has offered many artists their first outdoor exhibition in New York (for example, Giuseppe Penone) or their first public art commission ever (such as Sandra Gibson and Luis Recoder). Following critical renown for past exhibitions, Mad. Sq. Art's "museum without walls" is now recognized worldwide as a preeminent presenter of public art, and a destination for art lovers.

Landau's passion for the unlimited public opportunities for artists who work in a variety of mediums, from sculpture to film to performance to light to sound, will be the cornerstone of new special projects she will pursue. In her new role, she will represent artists to enable outdoor exhibition of their work at home and abroad. Landau will also collaborate with museums and academic institutions in creating their own public art programs modeled on the success of Mad. Sq. Art.

Says Landau, "It has been an honor and privilege to oversee Madison Square Park's transformation from its days as a derelict space into the vibrant, active park that it is today. I am proud of the great accomplishments made over the last dozen years. It is a beautiful gem of a small urban space—and one of the best in the country."

Myer adds, "Madison Square is a place where people come together—to relax, to experience art and music, to simply connect. I am thrilled to be part of the Conservancy's second decade of growth."

David Berliner, Board Chairman of Madison Square Park Conservancy comments, "Sustaining Madison Square as a worldwide destination and model for a public park is no easy task. Keats brings a depth of talent and experience that will insure that the park remains lively, programmed, and beautiful. We are grateful for Debbie Landau's role as one of the founders of the Conservancy—along with Danny Meyer and Bill Lukashok. Debbie's vision and tireless efforts have made the park a public space that is recognized worldwide. We are excited for her future in dedicating her talents to bringing groundbreaking contemporary art to outdoor venues."

Artist Antony Gormley states: "Making *Event Horizon* in New York was groundbreaking for me and my work. It would not have happened without the enthusiasm, dynamism, and commitment of Debbie Landau. Seeing the work move from the lateral landscape of the Thames to many of the classic high rises of New York was a revelation. The work became a catalyst for acute awareness of the space and structure of that great city."

Artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer reflects, "I will always be indebted to Debbie Landau for giving me my first public art commission in the United States. Thanks to her remarkable vision, integrity, and perseverance, my installation *Pulse Park* was successfully presented at Madison Square Park in the context of a world-class outdoor visual art program. I very much look forward to working with her in the future."

Artist Leo Villareal explains, "Debbie Landau is fiercely committed to art and artists. She worked tirelessly to find the right solution for *BUCKYBALL*, listening closely to both me and curator Martin Friedman. We worked tenaciously for years on various options and in the end came to the ideal conclusion. Debbie believed in my vision and trusted me to create my work. I am immensely grateful

for the passion she has brought not only to my work but to the extraordinary art program at Madison Square Park."

Madison Square Park Conservancy was founded in 2002 as a not-for-profit with a mission dedicated to keeping Madison Square Park a bright, beautiful, and active public park. The Conservancy sustains lush and brilliant horticulture, maintains the park, and offers community engagement through its diverse program of free, public exhibitions and events.

The Park re-opened in 2001 following the Campaign to Restore Madison Square Park to its 19th-century splendor as the intersection of culture, hospitality, commerce, and community recreation, which Landau also led. She always envisioned the park as a place where artists working in large scale could exhibit their work without limitations, and the public could experience a moving exhibition of outdoor art for free, without walls, ceilings, or doors.

To date, Mad. Sq. Art has presented 27 groundbreaking exhibitions, including Leo Villareal: *BUCKYBALL* (October 25, 2012–February 15, 2013), Jaume Plensa: *Echo* (May 5–August 14, 2011), Mel Kendrick: *Markers* (September 17–December 31, 2009), and many others that were equally compelling.

In the summer of 2010, Antony Gormley: *Event Horizon* represented a catalytic point for international attention for Mad. Sq. Art. It was Gormley's first-ever outdoor sculpture exhibition, featuring 31 life-size figures cast from the artist's body, which populated the park, as well as the streets and skyline of New York City's vibrant Flatiron District—from the Flatiron Building, to the Empire State Building, to the Cass Gilbert New York Life Building, to the historic Met Life Tower. The exhibition garnered the prestigious International Association of Art Critics (AICA-USA) award for second place in the category of Best Project in a Public Space. It received extensive attention in the media both nationally and internationally, raising the profile of the Park and its influential cultural offerings.

During the summer of 2013, Orly Genger: *Red, Yellow, and Blue* marked another first for the Park: the first large-scale sculptural exhibition to travel to another venue. The Mad. Sq. Art commission consists of 1.4 million feet of knotted rope—the total length equating to nearly 20 times the length of Manhattan—covered in more than 3,000 gallons of paint, and weighing more than 100,000 pounds. Genger's massive sculptural installation transformed the Park's lush lawns into colorfully lined chambers. After its run at Madison Square Park from May to September 2013, it opened at the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum in Massachusetts in November 2013 where it is currently on view.

Adding to Landau's achievements in leading the Park's distinguished art programs, she led the establishment of the \$1.4-million Sol LeWitt Fund for Artist Work, a permanent endowment to support artists' work in Mad. Sq. Art. In 2012, she championed the creation of the Martin Friedman Curator position, supported by a growing endowment, in honor of the former Director of the Walker Art Center and current member of Mad. Sq. Art's Art Advisory Committee whose contributions over six decades to the field of contemporary art have guided artists, curators, and current and former museum directors alike. In 2003-2004, Landau led fundraising, design, and construction efforts by the Madison Square Park Conservancy to open Shake Shack—the popular food kiosk inside the Park. It operates from a building designed by renowned architect James Wines of SITE Environment.

During her tenure, Landau formed a Committee of Art Advisors to contribute ideas for Mad. Sq. Art. representing hundreds of years of combined curatorial work. Original members included

Martin Friedman, Adam Weinberg, and John Hanhardt. Current members include Toby Devan Lewis, Richard Koshalek, Dan Cameron, Ronald Pizzuti, and Susan Sollins.

Join the conversation on Twitter and Instagram via the hashtag **#MadSqArt**

For more information on the Madison Square Park Conservancy and its programs, please visit <http://www.madisonsquarepark.org/>.

Image: Installation view of Orly Genger's *Red, Yellow and Blue* (2013) in Madison Square Park.
Photo by James Ewing / Courtesy of Madison Square Park Conservancy

MEDIA CONTACT:

FITZ & CO, Meg Blackburn, Tel: 212-627-1455 x225, E: meg@fitzandco.com