

For Immediate Release

**SIAH ARMAJANI'S *BRIDGE OVER TREE* TO OPEN
AT BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK, FEBRUARY 20**

**FIRST PRESENTATION OF THE PIVOTAL WORK
IN NEARLY 50 YEARS**



***Siah Armajani: Bridge Over Tree*
February 20 – September 29, 2019
Brooklyn Bridge Park, Empire Fulton Ferry Lawn
Coinciding with *Siah Armajani: Follow This Line* at The Met Breuer**

**Press preview: Tuesday, February 19
9:30am The Met Breuer; 11:15am bus to Brooklyn Bridge Park
For more information: press@publicartfund.org**

February 6, 2019, NEW YORK, NY— On February 20, Public Art Fund will unveil *Bridge Over Tree* (1970), the first re-staging of the Iranian-born, Minneapolis-based artist Siah Armajani's seminal installation in nearly 50 years, on the Empire Fulton Ferry Lawn at Brooklyn Bridge Park between the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges. First shown as a temporary sculpture at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis in 1970, the influential work consists of a 91-foot-long walkway with open, trussed sides and a shingled roof, with a set of stairs at the midpoint that climb and descend over a small evergreen tree. *Bridge Over Tree* is a preeminent example of the artist's redeployment of architectural form and function in the context of politically and poetically resonant sculptural installations. Conceived amid a period of political turmoil and activism during the Vietnam War, and after Armajani fled Iran due to his pro-democratic stance, *Bridge Over Tree* is intrinsically political: it encourages connectivity and dialogue among strangers as they walk over and around the bridge. For Armajani, the bridge is never simply a passageway between two points, but represents a poetic form caught in-between—connecting people, places, communities, and ideas—and has been a recurring motif for decades. Coinciding with his career-spanning survey *Siah Armajani: Follow This Line* at The Met Breuer, New York, on view February 20 through June 2, 2019, Public Art Fund's exhibition will be the sole outdoor component featured in Armajani's museum retrospective, bringing the full scope of his practice to New York City for the first time. ***Siah Armajani: Bridge Over Tree* will be on view February 20 – September 29, 2019 on the Empire Fulton Ferry Lawn at Brooklyn Bridge Park.**

“It is an honor to bring *Bridge Over Tree* to New York City,” says artist **Siah Armajani**. “The work has been on view only once, in 1970, but I have long hoped to revisit it. By siting the work in this international city and between two highly recognizable bridges, Public Art Fund has given *Bridge Over Tree* a new civic context. It is important to me that my retrospective convey the breadth of my work, and public projects have always been at the core of my practice.”

Armajani’s more than 60-year career has focused on sculptural works that blur the lines between art and architecture, with nearly 100 projects realized internationally. Today, he is most known for his large-scale, outdoor installations that take inspiration both from American Midwestern vernacular—including bridges, gardens, gazebos, reading rooms, and structures that create shelters for social exchange or solitary meditation—and from lyrical, decorative, and architectural elements observed during his youth in Iran. When *Bridge Over Tree* was conceived in 1970, the hybrid of sculptural and architectural form was a radical proposition, revealing the expressiveness of architecture and the potential to rethink artistic boundaries, and today, the work remains as complex and pivotal.

“*Bridge Over Tree* is a very curious structure. As bridges go, it doesn’t make sense. There’s no functional efficiency in its elaborate climb over a small, lone tree; there’s no A to B that can’t otherwise be reached. In literalizing the form and stripping the customary function of a bridge, Armajani frees its potential as a poetic, expressive, and political idea. In an era obsessed with walls and fences, the bridge-building public work of this Iranian exile is perhaps even more urgent now than when first conceived in 1970. Newly sited in Brooklyn Bridge Park, *Bridge Over Tree* becomes part of the urban landscape, creating a space for reflection, engagement and interaction at the convergence of two of our city’s most iconic bridges,” says **Public Art Fund Director & Chief Curator Nicholas Baume**

Siah Armajani: Bridge Over Tree is curated by Public Art Fund Director & Chief Curator Nicholas Baume.

@PublicArtFund #BridgeOverTree

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Siah Armajani (b.1939 Tehran, Iran) was born in Iran and moved to the United States in 1960 to attend Macalester College in Minnesota, where he continues to live and work. Armajani’s most celebrated public art works are bridges, walkways, and gardens, including the Irene Hixon Whitney Bridge, Minneapolis, MN; the World Financial Center’s promenade (in collaboration with Scott Burton and Cesar Pelli), Battery Park City, NY; Gazebo for Two Anarchists at Storm King Art Center, Mountainville, NY; Floating Poetry Room, Ijburg, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Bridge for Iowa City, University of Iowa; and numerous gardens at Villa Arson Museum, Nice, France. Armajani was commissioned to design the Cauldron for the 1996 Centennial Olympic Celebration in Atlanta, GA.

VISITING THE EXHIBITION

Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation is the not-for-profit entity responsible for the planning, construction, maintenance and operation of Brooklyn Bridge Park, an 85-acre sustainable waterfront park spanning 1.3 miles along Brooklyn’s East River shoreline. As steward of the park, BBP has transformed this previously deteriorated stretch of waterfront into a world-class park where the public can gather, play, relax, and enjoy sweeping views of New York Harbor. The self-sustaining park was designed by the award-winning firm of Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc. and features expansive lawns, rolling hills, waterfront promenades, innovative

playgrounds, a greenway, sports facilities and the popular Jane's Carousel. BBP serves thousands of people on any given seasonal day, who come to picnic, walk their dog, play soccer, jog, bike, or roller skate. Brooklyn Bridge Park is a signature public investment for the 21st century and will be an enduring legacy for the communities, elected officials, and public servants who made it happen.

Dates: February 20 – September 29, 2019

Brooklyn Bridge Park, Empire Fulton Ferry Lawn (located between the historic Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges, along the Brooklyn waterfront; off of Water Street, between New Dock Street and Old Dock Street)

Subways: A, C to High Street; F to York Street; 2, 3 to Clark Street; R to Court Street; 4, 5 to Borough Hall.

Buses: B25 to Fulton Ferry Landing; B67 to Jay Street & York Street.

Ferry: East River Ferry, New York Water Taxi, or Governors Island Ferry to Brooklyn Bridge Park.

ABOUT PUBLIC ART FUND

As the leader in its field, Public Art Fund brings dynamic contemporary art to a broad audience in New York City and beyond by mounting ambitious free exhibitions of international scope and impact that offer the public powerful experiences with art and the urban environment.

SUPPORT

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Image Credits:

Siah Armajani, *Bridge Over Tree*, 1970, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, courtesy Siah Armajani