



For Immediate Release

PUBLIC ART FUND ANNOUNCES 2020 EXHIBITIONS

FARAH AL QASIMI

Opening January 29
JCDecaux Bus Shelters Citywide

DAVINA SEMO

Opening May 5
Brooklyn Bridge Park

MELVIN EDWARDS

Opening June 11
City Hall Park, Lower Manhattan

AWOL ERIZKU

Opening July 22
JCDecaux Bus Shelters Citywide

SAM MOYER

Opening September 16
Doris C. Freedman Plaza, Central Park

November 14, 2019, NEW YORK, NY—Public Art Fund announces five solo exhibitions by internationally acclaimed artists working across photography, installation, and sculpture for its upcoming 2020 season. The season begins on January 29, with a series of newly-commissioned photographs by **Farah Al Qasimi** that capture both private and public spaces familiar to the artist, and reveal intimate and seemingly inconspicuous moments across New York City. This is the second exhibition in an ongoing partnership with JCDecaux that brings photography to 100 bus shelters across all five boroughs. On May 5, an installation of new large-scale bronze bells by **Davina Semo** will be unveiled along the waterfront on Brooklyn Bridge Park's Pier 1. Her largest and most ambitious exhibition to date invites the public to activate the work by ringing these bells, creating a participatory moment for audiences along the East River. A month later on June 11, a thematic survey of sculptor **Melvin Edwards'** work will open at City Hall Park, bringing his sculpture from the 1970s to today to the public for the first time. Highlighting two key motifs—the chain and the rocking chair—and featuring a new large-scale commission, the exhibition will explore Edwards' signature use of welded metal. Starting on July 22, a new series of photographic works by **Awol Erizku** will appear on bus shelters citywide as the third installment in the JCDecaux partnership. In these powerful photographs, the artist will explore the multilayered experiences of individuals who have undergone a spiritual awakening in the Islamic faith while in the U.S. prison system. The season culminates on September 16 with a new commission by **Sam Moyer** who will bring stone archways composed of found marble and stone native to the area to the entrance of Central Park at Doris C. Freedman Plaza for her first solo public art installation in New York City.

“Working variously in bronze, stone, steel or photography, each of these five remarkable artists has developed a highly distinctive and compelling artistic language through which to articulate a striking personal vision,” says **Public Art Fund Director & Chief Curator Nicholas Baume**. “Some works will ignite conversations around timely issues like mass incarceration or collective action, while others poetically reimagine urban infrastructure. All represent major career milestones, whether as an artist’s first public art commission or the culmination of a long and celebrated career.”

FARAH AL QASIMI

Opening January 29

JCDecaux Bus Shelters Citywide



Farah Al Qasimi, a photographer who works between Brooklyn and Dubai, will present a new body of work on 100 bus shelters across all five boroughs for her first institutional solo show in New York. Known for her richly textured photographs that camouflage figures through color and pattern, Al Qasimi’s work challenges ideas associated with traditional portraiture and figuration. For this exhibition, Al Qasimi is creating a new series of photographs that isolate and highlight the beauty of ephemeral moments amidst New York City’s visual and audible noise. With a distinct photographic approach, Al Qasimi’s meticulous compositions capture vibrant instances of personalization and adornment that break through the anonymity of the city. This will mark the second exhibition in the Public Art

Fund-JCDecaux partnership for which a series of newly-commissioned photographs will appear across New York City, connecting them back to the locations in which they were taken.

This exhibition is curated by Public Art Fund Assistant Curator Katerina Stathopoulou.

DAVINA SEMO

Opening May 5

Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 1



Debuting this spring, San Francisco-based sculptor Davina Semo’s large-scale installation of interactive bells will be sited along the New York City waterfront in Brooklyn Bridge Park. The exhibition builds on a series of bells that she began developing in 2016. Multiple towering structures that each house a bronze bell can be rung by park-goers, evoking public modes of communication and harkening back to New York City’s maritime history. Located adjacent to the Brooklyn Bridge, Semo’s work explores our relationship to industrial materials and the built environment that we encounter every day. Alluding to the bell’s function of calling a community to attention—whether that be bells hung within a tower at the town square to tell the time or ferries traveling along the New York Harbor—Semo’s work

will activate the pier, highlighting the civic nature of art in public space. In considering how we occupy and navigate these spaces, she creates powerful work that invites connection and communication in an effort to inspire a greater awareness of our surroundings and ourselves.

This exhibition is curated by Public Art Fund Curator Daniel S. Palmer.

MELVIN EDWARDS

Opening June 11

City Hall Park



For more than 60 years, New York-based artist Melvin Edwards has created seminal sculpture that addresses identity and cultural history grounded by his belief in the civic, social, and aesthetic value of public art. Public Art Fund first showed Edwards' work in 1991, and this summer will present the first major survey of the artist's public works at City Hall Park. A series of large-scale sculptures created from 1970 to today will offer an in-depth look at the legacy and impact of Edwards' practice. The exhibition will explore two key recurring motifs—the chain and rocking chair—which carry deep personal symbolism and speak to African-American culture. Edwards uses chain links in different formal iterations: to suggest oppression, but also connection and linkage between generations and communities, and broken chains to evoke liberation or rupture. The sculptures will resonate with the history of City Hall Park as both an African burial ground and as the site of the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence. Edwards' practice combines geometric and abstract forms that draw from a breadth of experiences that have shaped him, reflecting his engagement with the history of race, labor, violence, and themes of the African Diaspora, while expanding the formal and conceptual boundaries of contemporary sculpture.

This exhibition is curated by Public Art Fund Curator Daniel S. Palmer.

AWOL ERIZKU

Opening July 22

JCDecaux Bus Shelters Citywide



Awol Erizku is a multidisciplinary artist working in photography, film, sculpture and installation creating a new vernacular that bridges the gap between African and African American visual culture. His work references art history, hip hop and spirituality. For his first major public art exhibition Erizku will collaborate with individuals who have had a spiritual awakening in the Islamic faith during their time in the U.S. prison system. The artist, who grew up in a Muslim household in the Bronx, aims to photograph those who have experienced the strength of this faith while navigating the country's prison-industrial complex, creating photographs that reflect their multilayered identities. This potent new body of work will be displayed on 100 bus shelters in all five boroughs through November 2020. Erizku will use the highly public advertising platform to spark dialogue about this crucial subject, asking audiences to scrutinize the important social issue through the power and proliferation of these personal images.

This exhibition is curated by Public Art Fund Curator Daniel S. Palmer.

SAM MOYER

Opening September 16

Doris C. Freedman Plaza, Central Park



New York-based artist Sam Moyer has developed a distinctive language of abstraction that draws inspiration from architectural space and natural materials. Recognized for a diverse practice in which she unites found textures and objects in innovative ways, Moyer creates compelling hybrids, often combining hand-painted fabrics with repurposed marble, slate, and stone that carry textural imperfections reflecting industrial design processes. Next September, Moyer's commission for Doris C. Freedman Plaza will investigate the economy of stone and how these natural materials manifest in the urban landscape. Moyer will construct archways using stone indigenous to the New York area and remnants of locally sourced marble that originates from around the world. Adorned with rich, mosaic patterns, the portals will allow the public to pass through and around the sculpture into Central Park. This powerful new work will stand as a gateway between bustling Midtown—seen through the same types of polished stone often used as construction elements in the architecture of New York—and the more restive oasis of nature that is Central Park. Moyer's upcoming commission emphasizes the character of the city as a diverse mosaic of people from countless cultures.

This exhibition is curated by Public Art Fund Curator Daniel S. Palmer.

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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:

Farah Al Qasimi, *Coco*, 2019. Courtesy the artist; Helena Anrather, New York; and The Third Line, Dubai.

Davina Semo, *Dreamer*, 2019. Cast bronze bell, UV protected 2-stage catalyzed urethane, stainless steel, chain, wooden clapper, hardware, 2019.

Image courtesy of Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco and Marlborough, New York and London

Melvin Edwards, *Homage to Coco*, 1970, painted steel and chain. Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London. © Melvin Edwards/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Awol Erizku, 2019. Photo by Jeff Vespa

Sam Moyer. Photo by Jason Schmidt