



**Public Art Fund Brings Sculpture to the Sands:
Between Tides Presents Six Artists' Ping-Pong Tables at Rockaway Beach**



Between Tides

June 27 – September 13, 2026

Beach 67, Rockaway Beach, Queens

**Free ping-pong paddles and balls available to borrow on Fridays 10:00 am - 4:00 pm,
Saturdays and Sundays 12:00 pm - 6:00 pm**

May 27, 2026 (New York, NY)—Public Art Fund is pleased to announce *Between Tides*, a dynamic outdoor exhibition bringing together local and international contemporary artists—**Moko Fukuyama, Ilana Harris-Babou, Las Hermanas Iglesias, Carlos H. Matos, Amalia Pica, and SUPERFLEX**—to present newly commissioned sculptural ping-pong tables on Rockaway Beach. From June 27 through September 13, 2026, beachgoers are invited to grab a paddle and engage with these works installed directly on the sand.



Responding to the richness of Rockaway Beach, one of New York City’s most beloved recreational areas, the artists in the exhibition reimagine the ping-pong table in inventive ways: as a sea legend, an interspecies habitat, a composite musical instrument, maritime flags, a beach scene cast in ceramic, and an ancient Mesoamerican ballgame. Visitors are encouraged to experience these works in both traditional and unexpected ways, expanding the boundaries of play, participation, and fun—and reinforcing the power of public art to inspire discovery and catalyze social connections. *Between Tides* reflects the cultural landscape of Queens, one of the nation’s most demographically diverse regions, and Rockaway Peninsula, which is home to numerous delicate ecosystems and a rich array of wildlife species.

Between Tides centers on community participation and builds on the layered history of table tennis. Originally a parlor game for the elite in Victorian England, it later became a global pastime, a tool for diplomacy between the United States and China, and eventually an Olympic sport. Due to its accessibility, the game cuts across class, race, age, and gender divisions. *Between Tides* continues a tradition of artists who, since the 1970s, have explored ping-pong as a platform for creative exchange, rule-breaking, and challenging expectations.

“*Between Tides* embodies the transformative role of public art, rethinking a familiar game in ways that foster shared encounters and celebrate the joyful energy of summer. Each work in this exhibition reveals a fresh perspective on play—whether by emphasizing its collective nature, or promoting it as a means of social interaction,” notes **Public Art Fund Associate Curator of Public Practice, Gabriela López Dena**. “Set against the backdrop of Rockaway Beach, these sculptures reinforce connection and the vibrancy of communal spaces, while acknowledging the ecological and cultural forces that shape them.”

Throughout the summer, as millions of visitors make their way to Rockaway Beach to surf, swim, and sunbathe, Public Art Fund will offer opportunities to enjoy *Between Tides*, including free ping-pong equipment available to borrow on the weekends, organized ping-pong events, and special programming. In partnership with local community organization RISE (Rockaway Initiative for Sustainability and Equity), groups of students will also connect with the exhibition through workshops and guided visits. Everyone is invited to “BYOP” (Bring Your Own Paddle – and balls) and visit the sculptures for an unconventional game of ping-pong any day of the week.

“People create their own forms of leisure on the beach. Some come to simply relax under an umbrella, while others play volleyball, dance, or body surf. The beach doesn’t dictate how you should spend your time; you and the people you’re with create your own rituals and



experiences. I wanted to make something that could be used in multiple ways, inviting people to imagine new forms of play,” said artist **Ilana Harris-Babou**.

“New York City has a profound relationship with water in our day-to-day lives, and Rockaway Beach exemplifies that bond, serving as a comforting reminder that, in less than an hour, you can escape the chaos of the city and reconnect with the ocean,” says artist **Moko Fukuyama**.

Public Art Fund’s first exhibition at the site, *Between Tides* follows ongoing community engagement at Rockaway Beach begun in summer 2024 with Queens-based collective Mobile Print Power and with RISE.

ARTWORKS INCLUDE:

Moko Fukuyama, *Old School*, 2026

A salvaged boat from Marina 59 in the Rockaways and a ping-pong table top are gripped by a giant sea monster. The mysterious, octopus-like being evokes mythical figures like the Scandinavian Kraken—a creature that has fueled sailors’ superstitions since the 1700s—or the Japanese Akkorokamui—a sea deity said to appear on calm waters before quickly turning them tumultuous. Fukuyama crafted the sea monster’s tentacles from a reclaimed walnut tree and finished them with bright automotive paint, giving them an alluring, otherworldly presence. The aluminum boat, prized in the 1950s for its innovative design, lies capsized on the shore, suggesting the impermanence of human-made objects and the forces of nature that eventually consume them. Through a mix of nautical imagery and playfulness, *Old School* revisits legends of the sea, reflecting on the enduring power of myths and how they shape our understanding of the vast, uncontrollable forces of nature.

Las Hermanas Iglesias, *DiMeLo*, 2026

Each game played on this musical sculpture creates a live composition. Inspired by the artists’ childhood experiences of collaborative play, the table becomes a space for musical improvisation. Percussion instruments associated with the many cultures that shape Queens are embedded in the surface of the table, inviting players to treat it as a music-making object. One side of the sculpture is custom-made and includes a glockenspiel—a series of tuned metal bars whose bright tones echo metallophone traditions found across Europe and Asia. The other side features a set of ready-made instruments, including handpan, tom drums, and cymbals, all of which have ancient origins and continue to be used in diverse settings, from Indian temples to jazz bands and modern orchestras. As participants play a match, they celebrate the borough’s unique cultural mix, varied migration stories, and ever-evolving sonic landscape.



Ilana Harris-Babou, *for those of us who live at the shoreline*, 2026

Four sculptures in terrazzo and concrete invite visitors to engage in unstructured discovery. Assorted ceramic beach items, including a book, bottle, and sunglasses, lie scattered across a ping-pong table, disrupting the typical flow of the game. Nearby, a seating area with a beach umbrella holder and ceramic tiles hinting at board games offers space for rest, recreation, and interaction. Harris-Babou's process was inspired by hundreds of drawings created by beachgoers during workshops led by the Queens-based collective Mobile Print Power along the Rockaway Beach boardwalk in the summer of 2024. Borrowing its title from the first line of Audre Lorde's *A Litany for Survival*, the artist imagines the shoreline as a space of possibility, inviting individuals to find their own voice. Drawing on the principles of "free play," Harris-Babou encourages open-ended participation and improvisation, shifting the focus from mastery to exploration.

Carlos H. Matos, *Tlachco*, 2026

Matos merges the physical structure of ping-pong with a scaled-down version of an Ulama court. Ulama, a Mesoamerican ballgame considered one of the oldest sports in the world, holds both recreational and ritual significance and is still played today. The game symbolizes cosmic battles, and its courts, or *tlachco*, were often regarded by the Aztecs and Maya as portals to the underworld. In Ulama, two teams use their hips, forearms, and thighs to strike a rubber ball, scoring points by pushing it across the opposing team's end line or by the challenging feat of passing it through hoops anchored to the court's tilted side walls. Echoing the way Ulama is played and referencing the court's architectural elements, Matos creates a game that blends ancestral tradition with contemporary leisure. The result is a transcultural experience that connects past and present, inviting players to engage with layers of history.

Amalia Pica, *Fair Play*, 2026

Pica's sculpture consists of eight tabletops displaying the International Code of Signals, a colorful system sailors use to communicate between ships and share information visually. Each module features a symbol from the language's alphabet, together spelling out "FAIR PLAY." Their staggered configuration invites friends and strangers to join several simultaneous matches, turning what is typically a two-person game into a multiplayer experience. This setup encourages up to ten people to participate and emphasizes the collective nature of play. Fabric flags suspended between two vertical posts read "COME PLAY," extending an invitation to socialize and have fun. These flags were made in collaboration with RISE, a Rockaway organization that inspires local residents to care for their environment and community.



SUPERFLEX, *Fish Ping-Pong*, 2026

This pink stone structure serves a dual purpose: hosting ping-pong games and supporting marine life. Inspired by housing blocks in the Rockaways, its brutalist form evokes the façades of 20th-century modernist buildings. If submerged, the sculpture would provide an ideal habitat for ocean creatures. Its design—with two large holes in the tabletop and multiple openings throughout the structure—creates spaces where microorganisms like plankton and algae can thrive, attracting fish and other sea creatures. The color pink has been shown by scientists to promote coral growth, further nurturing biodiversity. By reimagining modernist architecture to accommodate other species, *Fish Ping-Pong* builds on SUPERFLEX's research into interspecies living, fostering relationships between diverse life forms. Positioned so that one player faces the sea and the other the city, the sculpture points toward harmonious coexistence between humans, urban life, and the ocean.

Between Tides is curated by **Public Art Fund Associate Curator of Public Practice, Gabriela López Dena.**

@PublicArtFund #BetweenTides

When & Where

Starting on June 27, *Between Tides* will be located at Beach 67 at Rockaway Beach, Queens. The exhibition can also be explored anytime, anywhere, on the free Bloomberg Connects app.

About the Artists

Moko Fukuyama (b. 1981) is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice spans large-scale sculptural installations, experimental film, and collaborative projects. Originally from Japan and now based in Brooklyn, Fukuyama has lived in various cities across the United States, where she closely observed how urban societies interact with nature. Her work addresses the environmental and cultural challenges shaping both American society and her personal experiences. Drawing from her interest in recreational sports fishing, Fukuyama incorporates the concept of “lures” into her sculptures, using them as metaphors for human manipulation of the natural world. Her work, often made from salvaged wood and painted with vibrant automotive finishes, explores the dynamics of attraction among diverse forms of life. Fukuyama's sculptures reflect themes of overconsumption, consumerism, sustainability, and urbanization, as well as the tension between human desires and environmental impact.

Ilana Harris-Babou (b. 1991) was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. Through sculpture, installation, and video, she uses humor to question the aspirational language of consumer



culture. By taking on roles such as celebrity chef, interior designer, or beauty vlogger in her artworks, she critiques the American Dream and challenges the notion that hard work leads to upward mobility and economic freedom. Harris-Babou investigates the messy moments when individuals cannot fully conform to social structures and explores how to subvert the status quo in generative ways. Recently, she has focused on community-based projects and public commissions examining love, transcendence, imperfection, and self-determination within the aesthetics of order. Her work highlights human persistence and connection in systems she finds oppressive.

Las Hermanas Iglesias (collective founded 2005. Lisa Iglesias b. 1979, Queens, NY; Janelle Iglesias b. 1980, Queens, NY) is an artist duo of sisters Lisa and Janelle Iglesias, who currently split their time between Massachusetts, California, and New York. Their moniker draws from feminist histories and speaks to their identity as children of Norwegian and Dominican immigrants born and raised in Queens, New York. Their collaborative practice disrupts geographical borders, engages absurdity, and promotes the benefits of working collectively. Incorporating materials as diverse as music, piñatas, and bubblegum, they produce playful work that results in installations, textiles, and participatory performances. Their practice has fluidly evolved to include ongoing collaborations on colorful textile projects with their mother, Bodhild, adding an intergenerational dimension to their work. Through their culturally hybrid practice, Las Hermanas Iglesias explore the connections between family bonds and broader societal structures, linking personal experiences to larger social systems.

Carlos H. Matos (b. 1983) blends architecture and sculpture to probe the boundaries of function, scale, and materiality within the built environment. Based in Mexico City, his practice examines the intersection of abstract forms and architectural elements, stripping them of their traditional contexts to challenge their purpose and meaning. Drawing inspiration from Mesoamerican cultures, Mexico's pre-Hispanic heritage, and mid-20th-century modernist architecture, Matos creates works that evoke quasi-fictional worlds where ruins, rituals, and routines unfold. He utilizes materials such as volcanic stone, concrete, and aluminum, collaborating with artisans skilled in traditional construction methods like hand-chiseling and sand casting. Far from offering a nostalgic look at the past, these techniques allow him to investigate new dimensions of form and spatiality.

Amalia Pica (b. 1978) is an Argentinian artist exploring the social dynamics of communication, especially the desire to be understood and what brings people together. Using simple materials and found objects like chalk, plexiglass, and flags, she inquires into human modes of interaction. Pica considers shared visual codes associated with verbal and nonverbal language



systems, often incorporating playful signifiers of collective expression, such as bunting and confetti. By doing so, she delves into themes of cultural intimacy and the political potential of joy, proposing celebration and happiness as forms of resistance and political actions. Her work possesses a lightness of touch and a feel-good quality that invites viewers to share experiences.

SUPERFLEX (collective founded 1993. Bjørnstjerne Reuter Christiansen b. 1969, Copenhagen, Denmark; Jakob Fenger b. 1968, Roskilde, Denmark; Rasmus Rosengren Nielsen, b. 1969, Hjørring, Denmark) is a Copenhagen-based collective by Bjørnstjerne Christiansen, Jakob Fenger, and Rasmus Rosengren Nielsen. With a focus on alternative models of social and economic organization, their projects have taken diverse forms: energy systems, beverages, sculptures, replicas, hypnosis sessions, infrastructure, paintings, plant nurseries, contracts, and public spaces. SUPERFLEX was conceived as an expanded artistic practice, consistently involving a wide range of collaborators – from gardeners and engineers to audience members – and exploring new ways of engaging local communities, specialists, and children. Recently, SUPERFLEX has taken the idea of collaboration even further by incorporating the participation of plants and animals to develop a new kind of urbanism centering interspecies living. For SUPERFLEX, the best idea might come from a fish.

Related Free Programming

Opening Celebration: *Between Tides* Beach Party at Rockaway Beach 67

June 27, 2026, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Join pro ping-pong players and a live band for a free public celebration of *Between Tides*, with matches happening across all six installations.

Sand and Paddle Classic

***Between Tides* Ping-Pong Tournament**

August 22, 2026

Rain Date: August 23, 2026

Rockaway Beach 67

Details TBC

Visiting the Exhibition

Operated and maintained by NYC Parks, Rockaway Beach in Queens is a vibrant, year-round destination for residents across the Rockaway peninsula, drawing millions of visitors each



summer between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Known for its expansive shoreline, lively boardwalk, and diverse community, it remains one of New York City's most dynamic coastal resources and its only legal surfing beach.

Between Tides, presented by Public Art Fund, will be sited on the sand, with accessible play on the boardwalk, and the beach kiosk will be open on Fridays from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm and Saturdays and Sundays, from 12:00pm - 6:00 pm, for visitors to pick up exhibition information, and borrow ping-pong paddles and balls. Bring paddles and balls outside of these hours to play anytime the beach is open!

Beach 67 has an accessible modular public restroom; there are local restaurants aplenty, and the nearest boardwalk concession is located at Beach 86. For transportation to Beach 67, access the NYC MTA subway (A line to Beach 67 Station) or bus (Q22, Q35, Q35 SBS, Q52 SBS), the NYC Ferry (from Wall Street or Sunset Park to Rockaway Beach), or take the Long Island Railroad's Far Rockaway Line to Far Rockaway Station and connect with the Q114 bus toward Far Rockaway-Seagirt Blvd.

The boardwalk is wheelchair accessible. NYC Parks also has [beach wheelchairs](#) for visitors to borrow. Please get in touch at programs@publicartfund.org to book one so we can have it ready for you at the location of the exhibition upon your arrival.

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.

Supports

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Public Art Fund at Rockaway Beach, 2024

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