

OPENING PUBLIC RECEPTION:
Thursday, May 31, 6pm

WITH BATED BREATH, THE ARTIST SARI CAREL CREATES A NEW WORK OF PUBLIC ART IN CITY HALL PARK

New York, NY - City Hall Park will become an arena where New Yorkers can experience an immersive soundscape composed entirely of the sounds of breathing from Friday, June 1, to Sunday, July 8, 2018.

The occasion is a public art installation by the Brooklyn-based artist Sari Carel, commissioned and produced by More Art, a leading presenter of public art in New York City. With *Out of Thin Air*, Carel invites the visitor to City Hall Park to think about breathing in all its intimacy and enormity. As a fully immersive installation, the sound expands to and informs the environment, creating a rich sensory journey up to City Hall, while addressing important issues relating to air quality and illness. Free public programs will be offered throughout the project period.

The multi-channel soundscape is the culmination of a series of breathing and sound-recording workshops the artist has held with New Yorkers living with asthma and various breathing conditions. During these free workshops, participants are introduced to the Alexander Technique and Jessica Wolf's Art of Breathing by master teacher Jessica Wolf, who is also a Professor in the Practice of Acting at Yale University. Central to Wolf's work is the idea that the respiratory system is the balance wheel of the body. She guided attendees through principles and procedures that involve respiratory re-education to promote greater physical and emotional wellbeing.

Workshops have been hosted by recording engineer Kerry Pompeo of Concord Music, who partnered with More Art and Carel because of her interest in expanding the capabilities of sound recording. An engineer for more than a decade, Pompeo has been working with Carel to navigate the technical aspects of capturing something as elusive as breath. The final recording is a rather unusual composition drawn from such sounds as rustles, crackles, beats, huffs, and delicate inhaling and exhaling.

"In audio recordings, sound engineers always try to edit out the sound of breathing. For this audio work, I'm taking everything else out," notes Carel.

"Sari Carel is an artist known for her avid interest in documenting extinct sounds. While she is not proposing that our breathing—and thus, our lives—is on the verge of extinction, in this work she does raise harrowing questions about respiratory illness, air quality, environmental injustice, and who indeed has access to clean air and holistic wellness in New York City," says Micaela Martegani, executive director and chief curator, More Art.

+ART

By employing the sounds of actual breathing as her raw material, Carel paints a portrait of the city today using the least visible and least tangible aspect of its residents. The final installation will be a meshing together of sound and site into a multi-layered aesthetic experience that seeks to challenge stigma and reframe common perceptions of people living with chronic illness. "I think of what I do as research-based art, not conceptual art," says the artist. "Lived experience informs the materials and, I hope, gives force to the final work of art."

This is the second project in the city that More Art has commissioned from Carel. Three years ago in Sunset Park, she created a richly textured soundscape out of field recordings of local fauna; the audio portrait was, in turn, played from speakers embedded in assemblage of abstract wooden forms stationed throughout the park.

"I've long been interested in field recordings and sound biomes, how they reflect environmental health," says Carel. "This time in *Out of Thin Air*, I'm using field recordings of a different kind, which are woven together using techniques from experimental sound."

ABOUT THE ARTIST + COLLABORATORS

The hands-on workshops for *Out of Thin Air* are co-led by Carel and Jessica Wolf, an expert in the Alexander Breathing Technique and Professor in the Practice of Acting at the Yale School of Drama. The digital stethoscope incorporated into the sessions was produced by ThinkLabs.

Born in Israel, Sari Carel works across sound, video, sculpture and collage to explore relationships between sound, image and audience. As well as *Borrowed Light*, Sunset Park, Brooklyn, NY (2015), her solo exhibitions have included *Semaphore Island* at the Haifa Museum of Art (2014/15) and *Breach of Skin* at Melanie Flood Projects in Portland, Oregon (2016). The artist earned her MFA from Hunter College and BFA from Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem. She has received grants and residency fellowships from Bundanon Trust, Australia, Atlantic Center for the Arts, Florida, and Socrates Sculpture Park in New York.

Jessica Wolf has been teaching the Alexander Technique for 40 years. She is the founder of Jessica Wolf's Art of Breathing, and created the first three-dimensional animation of the respiratory system. Wolf teaches performers, teachers, and healthcare providers around the world.

Kerry Pompeo is chief engineer at Concord Music NYC, working in studio, live sound, and broadcast media production for over 14 years. She describes her approach as being "the liaison between artist and machine." Her work consists of recording, mixing, and creating production masters for label artists, as well as collaborating with independent artists who seek her out for her creative studio techniques.

PARTNERS + SUPPORTERS



This project is supported in part by Artis, Lambent Foundation, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Process Space Program, EILEEN FISHER, the Manhattan Community Award Program awarded by Manhattan Borough President's Office, and New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

Partnering agencies and organizations include NYC Parks, NYC Department of Health's Center for Health Equity, Coalition for Asthma Free Homes/WEACT, South Bronx United, Marron Institute for Air Quality at New York University and ThinkLabs, a Denver, Colorado based biotechnology company. Sound capture and consulting for sound installation by Kerry Pompeo of Concord Music.

MORE ABOUT MORE ART

More Art has presented projects in New York City parks before. In Union Square Park in 2012, the acclaimed artist Krzysztof Wodiczko employed sound and light technology to startling effect: he created the illusion that actual living veterans were telling their own stories of war from the mouth of the bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln in the center of the park.

Wodiczko's *Abraham Lincoln: War Veteran Projection*, in its collaboration with an intergenerational cohort of war veterans from the Vietnam War to the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, exemplifies More Art's approach to timely issues and collaboration between artists and communities.

Martegani says: "In our projects, we aim to foster collaborations with grassroots social justice organizations that are sustainable over time."

Since 2004, More Art has worked with some of the world's most celebrated artists, including Joan Jonas, Pablo Helguera, Dread Scott, Ernesto Pujol, and Andres Serrano, reaching tens of thousands of New Yorkers each year. www.moreart.org

MORE ABOUT NYC PARKS' ART IN THE PARKS

For over 50 years, NYC Parks' Art in the Parks program has brought contemporary public artworks to the city's parks, making New York City one of the world's largest open-air galleries. The agency has consistently fostered the creation and installation of temporary public art in parks throughout the five boroughs. Since 1967, NYC Parks has collaborated with arts organizations and artists to produce over 2,000 public artworks by 1,300 notable and emerging artists in over 200 parks. For more information about the program visit www.nyc.gov/parks/art.

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