

PRESS CONTACT

Thomas Brown, Olu & Company
(917) 968-3351, thomas@olucompany.com

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**MARY MATTINGLY'S *PUBLIC WATER* INVITES THE PUBLIC TO RECONSIDER
THE NYC WATERSHED**

Produced by MORE ART, the project will encourage residents to become stewards of this precious resource through installation art, public education programs, performance, and activism

New York, New York — February 26, 2020 — **MORE ART** is pleased to present ***PUBLIC WATER***, a multisite project and installation by **Mary Mattingly** taking place **April 25 - June 22, 2020** at the Grand Army Plaza entrance to **Prospect Park** in Brooklyn, presented in partnership with **Brooklyn Public Library, Prospect Park Alliance** and **NYC Parks**. The project examines issues of water quality, access, privatization and infrastructure facing the NYC watershed—which provides more than a billion gallons of clean water daily to nine million state residents.

The multi-site and multi-form project includes a large-scale public sculpture installation, a performance, and related education initiatives for all ages. The public opening on April 25 follows a national three-day youth led initiative on climate action, in celebration of the for the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, and includes an interactive on-site performance by Mattingly with collaborating artists. Programming continues April 26 at a celebration hosted by the Alliance at the Prospect Park Audubon Center. In addition, to keep this essential conversation going with park visitors into the future, the Prospect Park Alliance has commissioned Mattingly and MORE ART to produce a walking tour through the Park's watershed, designed in connection with the launch of ecoWEIR, a natural filtration pilot project for the Park's manmade watercourse.

Due to the realities of climate change, growing urban populations, and depopulated rural areas, it is necessary to build more equitable partnerships between urban water consumers and upstream water-producing communities, in order to create a more balanced system. In this moment of rising environmental urgency at home and around the world, Mattingly's project is an invitation to examine one's relationship to water. Many upstream communities who steward the watershed for downstate city-dwellers do not have access to clean drinking water themselves. *PUBLIC WATER* amplifies the socio-economic-ecological realities of Hudson Valley communities, while fostering reciprocal care through upstream and downstream solidarity.

"PUBLIC WATER is both an action and a sculpture," said **Mary Mattingly**. "The sculpture filters water, and water stewards engage in conversations about New York City's drinking watershed while serving reservoir water to visitors and neighbors. *PUBLIC WATER* brings attention to New York City's drinking water system in order to build more reciprocal exchanges between people who live in New York City's drinking watershed and its drinking-water users in the city, promoting care and commons."

Education around stewardship is an essential programmatic component of *PUBLIC WATER*, and sees Mattingly and the More Art team bringing the project into learning spaces both for the public and in local schools. Specifically, More Art is piloting an education program around water and land use with two public schools, PS 9—a lower school in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn—and the AP Environmental Science (APES) class at the Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics High School (BXCSM). Training sessions to community members on bioremediation and the invisible systems and resources that shape the biome will also be held in the Park and in partnership with Brooklyn Public Library, where Mattingly is serving as 2020 Katowitz-Radin Artist in Residence. These volunteer “stewards” will then serve as public educators, activating the work over the course of the installation.

The Alliance has also commissioned Mattingly and More Art to produce a hands-on, DIY water-filtration kit, which will be presented during Audubon programs led by the Alliance this season, and engages families around issues surrounding water systems both natural and manmade, both in timing with *PUBLIC WATER* and the launch of the ecoWEIR. Prospect Park Alliance is installing this natural filtration system to reduce toxic blue-green algae blooms in the park's waterways, which are fed by the NYC water system. This innovative pilot, the first in an urban park, is funded by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation through a \$390,000 grant, and is slated to start this spring.

PUBLIC WATER is produced by More Art in partnership with the Brooklyn Public Library, Prospect Park Alliance, and the NYC Parks Department. An earlier version of the sculpture originally appeared as "The Parts Never Lead to the Whole" in the exhibition *Stars Down to Earth: Mary Mattingly & Dario Robleto* (January 13 - March 13, 2020) at the Central Library.

The project is supported in part by the Lambent Foundation, the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, the Joseph Robert Foundation, and New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council. Additional support for educational programming has been provided by the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation.

MORE ART is a non-profit organization based in New York that commissions socially engaged public art projects, reaching over 10,000 spectators a year. More Art supports collaborations between artists and communities to create public art projects and educational programs that stimulate creative engagement with critical social and cultural issues. More Art uses public art and digital media to create powerful experiences that aggregate individual and collective perspectives on sensitive topics, such as immigration. All projects are carried out through multi-year collaborations with local organizations.

Mary Mattingly is a visual artist focused on questions of ecology and sustainability and the Katowitz Radin Artist-in-Residence at the Brooklyn Public Library for 2020. She founded Swale, an edible landscape on a barge in New York City. Docked at public piers but following waterways common laws, Swale circumnavigates New York's public land laws, allowing anyone to pick free fresh food. Swale instigated and co-created the "foodway" in Concrete Plant Park, the Bronx in

2017. The "foodway" is the first time New York City Parks is allowing people to publicly forage in over 100 year.

Prospect Park Alliance is the non-profit organization that sustains, restores and advances Prospect Park, Brooklyn's Backyard. The Alliance provides critical staff and resources that keep the park green and vibrant for the diverse communities that call Brooklyn home. The Alliance cares for the woodlands and natural areas, restores the park's buildings and landscapes, creates innovative park destinations, and provides free or low-cost volunteer, education and recreation programs. Learn more at prospectpark.org.

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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