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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, and activism

Opening reception: Thursday, June 3, 6-8pm.
Artist-led Walk and Celebration: Tuesday, June 29, 6-9pm

New York, New York — April 27, 2021 — **MORE ART** is pleased to present ***PUBLIC WATER***, a multiform project and installation by **Mary Mattingly** taking place **June 3 - September 7, 2021** at the Grand Army Plaza entrance to **Prospect Park** in Brooklyn, presented in partnership with **Prospect Park Alliance**, **New York City Department of Parks and Recreation**, and **Brooklyn Public Library**. The project examines issues of water quality, access, privatization and infrastructure facing the New York City watershed—which provides more than a billion gallons of clean water daily to nine million state residents.

The project includes a large-scale, public sculpture installation, digital campaign, and education initiatives. 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 understand and address the social, political, and economic mechanisms affecting access to clean water for everybody if we want to create a more balanced and equitable 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.

The sculpture, titled *Watershed Core*, is a 10ft tall geodesic dome designed as a structural ecosystem covered in native plants that filter water in a gravity-fed system that mimics the geologic features of the watershed. "*Watershed Core* is an active sculpture that follows *A Year of Public Water*, a timeline recounting the building of New York City's drinking watershed," said **Mary Mattingly**. "The sculpture draws from the minerals and geologic features of the watershed to filter water. The *PUBLIC WATER* project 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, to promote care and commons."

In the last year, More Art has developed *A Year of Public Water*—a yearlong digital exploration including a dedicated project website and social media campaign to share information with a

wider audience, to open an extended dialogue about water access, and to contextualize the project in anticipation of the sculpture's opening. The website and digital campaign explore the long and complex history of New York City's drinking watershed starting in geologic time and continuing through where we are today. It confronts social, political, economic issues relating to equitable access to clean water in the US, for example agricultural runoffs, regulation and control—i.e., eminent domain and rollbacks of EPA regulations—and aging infrastructure like lead pipes that contaminate drinking water, all disproportionately affecting minority and low-income communities. In doing so, it highlights how infrastructure repairs, environmental clean-ups, and water privatization have all led to inequitable access to clean and affordable drinking water. The work also brings attention to the rarely-seen labor that humans and non-humans do to care for New York City's drinking water. Addressing environmental, health, and economic conditions in and around New York City's watershed is a vital precondition for the creation of a more just present and future for urban and rural New Yorkers.

In conjunction with the sculpture, More Art and Mattingly have produced *Invisible Ecosystems*, a self-guided walking tour and wayfinding installation that conceptually and geographically connects the water-filtering sculpture with the ecoWEIR. Ten signs placed at strategic locations within the park will direct readers to an audio guide accessible via QR codes and a mobile device app. The tour will address filtration, natural systems of water remediation, New York City water systems, reservoirs, and the New York City watershed, and explore how human-made water management systems clean water in a way that mimics the earth's natural ecosystems. In addition, the audio tour will provide a sensory accompaniment to the walk, providing meditative direction through the space, pointing the listener's attention to sounds, how the body moves throughout the space, and other sensory cues or landmarks.

Education around stewardship is an essential programmatic component of *PUBLIC WATER*, and Mattingly and the More Art team will bring the project into learning spaces both for the public and in local schools. In early 2020, More Art piloted an education program around water and land use with the AP Environmental Science (APES) class at the Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics High School (BXCSM). As an extension of this program, More Art is creating a series of curriculum guides that serve as an accompaniment to the Public Water website and *A Year of Public Water* campaign. The lesson plans will explore different topics from the Year of Public Water that have more expansive themes or resonance and will be distributed to partnering schools and parks in NYC and the upstate watershed areas.

PUBLIC WATER is produced by More Art in partnership with the Prospect Park Alliance, the NYC Parks Department, and Brooklyn Public Library. 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. The *Invisible Ecosystems* audio walk and wayfaring installation is a project of the Environmental Protection Fund Grant Program for Park Services, administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.

About 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 New York City 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.

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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