

**Media Contact**

Liza Stoner // Olu & Company  
434-996-3062 // [liza@olucompany.com](mailto:liza@olucompany.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Large Ironwork Sculpture by Fred Wilson to be Installed in Columbus Park, Brooklyn**

*Presented by More Art, Fred Wilson's first ever large-scale public installation acts in conversation with surrounding historical monuments and buildings*

Brooklyn, NY—**More Art** is pleased to present ***Mind Forged Manacle/Manacle Forged Minds***, Fred Wilson's first ever large-scale public sculpture, opening at the plaza in Columbus Park, Brooklyn on Tuesday June 28, 2022 and closing a year later, in June 2023. The installation features a 10-foot-tall sculpture, composed of layers of decorative ironwork, fencing and statues of African figures. This project is funded through the Downtown Brooklyn + Dumbo Art Fund, under New York State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI), and is exhibited through NYC Parks' Art in the Parks program

The use of ornamental gates and fences serves as a metaphor for security and gated communities, insecurity, the incarceration of Black men, the detainment of immigrants, policing, and William Blake's concept of "Mind Forg'd Manacles" — self-created barriers to personal and societal growth and freedom, built by fear, division and perceptions of difference. These gates, whether they are to keep others out or keep someone in, act as reflections on the separation of people, both physically and mentally.

*Mind Forged Manacle/Manacle Forged Minds*, while not strictly site-specific, creates, connects and amplifies a conversation about the sculpture and the monuments and buildings around it that currently reside in Columbus Park. The viewer is encouraged to be "site conscious" when looking at the work and its location, as it is positioned between a sculpture of Henry Ward Beecher — a 19th century Congregationalist clergyman known for his support of the abolition of slavery — and the statue of Columbus, as well as the Kings County Supreme Court building — exploring issues of justice, freedom, slavery and mass incarceration.

Viewers passing through Columbus Park while encountering the elaborate structure, will perhaps consider questions of perspective: Who is looking in? Who is looking out? Who is free? Who is trapped? Who has the power to decide who has the freedom to be inside and outside? The sculpture will be activated through public programs and is intended to ignite productive dialogue about each individual's experiences and feelings evoked by the piece.

Wilson has a longstanding interest in metalworks, blacksmithing and ironworks, particularly in relation to the time he spent in the Caribbean and Africa observing the use of gates as protection. The decorative elements in the different types of gates act in dissonance with the

function of gates—creating barriers between people. Wilson is known for his politically charged work of reframing objects and cultural symbols, encouraging viewers to reconsider social and historical narratives and raising critical questions about the politics of erasure and exclusion.

More Art has worked with Wilson over the course of several years to develop this project, involving the community and choosing an intentional location for the work. More Art partnered with the [Center for Court Innovation](#), a non-profit working to create a humane justice system, to involve youth (ages 18-24) in creative writing workshops where they were encouraged to think about the issues raised by Wilson's project. These individuals will be invited to the physical sculpture for additional workshops and programming that will activate the work. Additional public programs will be scheduled throughout the year at the sculpture site and will include, performance, dance, music and spoken word poetry.

*Mind Forged Manacle/Manacle Forged Minds* is made possible by a grant from the Downtown Brooklyn + Dumbo Art Fund, led by Downtown Brooklyn Partnership and Dumbo Improvement District as part of New York State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative, and by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. This project is supported in part by the Lambent Foundation, the Joseph Robert Foundation, the Abakanowicz Arts and Culture Charitable Foundation, Pace, The David Rockefeller Fund, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and commissioning sponsor VIA Art Fund. Additional support for educational programming has been provided by the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation.

### **About More Art**

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.

### **About Fred Wilson**

Fred Wilson is a conceptual artist whose work investigates museological, cultural and historical issues, which are largely overlooked or neglected by museums and cultural institutions. Since his groundbreaking exhibition *Mining the Museum* (1992) at the Maryland Historical Society, Wilson has been the subject of more than 40 solo exhibitions around the globe. His work has been exhibited extensively in museums including the Museum of Modern Art, NY; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Allen Memorial Museum at Oberlin College, Ohio; the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Institute of Jamaica, W.I.; the Museum of World Cultures, Sweden; the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College; the British Museum, and the Ian Potter Museum of Art at the University of Melbourne, Australia. His work can be found in several public collections, including

the Museum of Modern Art, NY, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Long Museum, Shanghai, the Tate Modern in London and National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia. Wilson presented his exhibition *Afro Kismet* at the 2017 Istanbul Biennial, Turkey, which traveled to London, New York and Los Angeles. Since 2008 Wilson has been a member of the Board of Trustees at the Whitney Museum of American Art. He represented the U.S. at the Cairo Biennale (1992) and Venice Biennale (2003). His many accolades include the prestigious MacArthur Foundation's "Genius" Grant (1999); the Skowhegan Medal for Sculpture (2006) the Ford Foundation's Art of Change fellowship (2018) and Brandeis University's Creative Arts Award (2019). Most recently, Wilson was commissioned, among five other artists, to create two large-scale sculptures for the Delta wing of New York's LaGuardia airport. Port Authority partnered with Governor Kathy Hochul, Delta Air Lines, and the Queens Museum to commission the six artworks, which will be revealed this spring.

### **About the Downtown Brooklyn + Dumbo Art Fund**

[The Downtown Brooklyn + Dumbo Art Fund](#), a partnership of Downtown Brooklyn Partnership and Dumbo Improvement District, provides grants for eligible public art, performance, and accessibility projects that serve to enhance public space, increase access to cultural programming, and connect the neighborhoods of the Downtown Brooklyn area. Funding for these transformative grants has been provided by New York State through its Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Part of New York State's approach to create vibrant neighborhoods and boost local economies, DRI investments are a crucial part of the State's strategy to revitalize communities.