

Sculpture Milwaukee Announces 2021 Exhibition- there is this We

invites the community downtown to explore contemporary global issues through the lens of extraordinary public art

[MILWAUKEE, May 4, 2021 —] Sculpture Milwaukee will return to the streets of downtown Milwaukee this summer for its fifth annual exhibition. This year features a dynamic roster of international artworks guest curated by Chicago-based artist **Theaster Gates** — described by the Tate Modern as “one of the world’s most influential living artists” — and Milwaukee-based artist **Michelle Grabner**, Crown Family Professor of Art at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and recent recipient of a 2021 Guggenheim Fellowship.

For the first time, Sculpture Milwaukee will present a titled exhibition, introduce a guest artist program featuring emerging artist **Lauren Yeager**, and boast increased community collaboration and partnered activities. The exhibition title, *there is this We*, is drawn from the opening line of the poem *An Aspect of Love, Alive in the Ice and Fire* by **Gwendolyn Brooks**, the first Black poet to be awarded a Pulitzer prize.

“The poetics of perseverance and determination vibrate in the art that Theaster and I have selected,” remarks Grabner. “The exhibition’s title reflects the collective power of the works included in the 2021 exhibition, and honors a belief in social change through the provocations of the artistic imagination.”

Sculpture Milwaukee Board Chair **Wayne Morgan** reiterated that message, “This extraordinary exhibition could not be more timely. On the heels of the hardships wrought by the pandemic, as well as issues of racial inequities brought to the forefront via the Black Lives Matter social justice movement, Theaster and Michelle are inviting us to consider some incredibly challenging questions and give thought to how we intend to move forward as a community and as a country.”

A host of local collaborations are highlighted throughout the exhibition. A work by **Betty Gold**, to be permanently installed on the Milwaukee Art Museum campus, will be unveiled in tandem with Sculpture Milwaukee’s 2021 exhibition. Works by **Salvador Jiménez-Flores** were produced through the Arts/Industry program at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center. Artist **Matthias Neumann** will be traveling to Milwaukee to construct his work on site with the help of architecture students from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. In addition, an array of community engagement programs are slated for the Summer and Fall in conjunction with new and returning partners, including the Urban Ecology Center, TRUE Skool, Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, 3rd Street Market Hall, and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra.

“We demonstrated last year we can safely create and implement a full, in-person cultural experience in the midst of the pandemic, while utilizing our unique exhibition to

reflect and contribute to the most important community conversations. This has created a pathway for an even more robust experience in 2021,” remarks Executive Director **Brian Schupper**. “As Milwaukee continues its post-pandemic recovery, Sculpture Milwaukee is a destination in and of itself, and an invitation to re-discover and re-consider our shared urban center.”

The new sculptures will be installed beginning later this month, joining fifteen sculptures that remain on view from the 2020 exhibition. With social distancing built into its fabric, Sculpture Milwaukee will welcome guests throughout the year, and will include the return of limited in-person tours and programming, as well as offer free self-guided audio tours accessible on their website.

The 2021 exhibition will debut new works by **Thaddeus Mosley**, **Jason Pickleman**, and **Brad Kahlhamer**. The full roster of artists to be featured in the exhibition also include: **Kevin Beasley**, Betty Gold, **Allison Janae Hamilton**, **Kara Hamilton**, Salvador Jiménez-Flores, **Deborah Kass**, Matthias Neumann, **Virginia Overton**, **Dan Peterman**, **Sara Greenberger Rafferty**, **John Riepenhoff**, **Christine Tarkowski**, and Lauren Yeager.

there is this We will run through autumn of 2022.

Guest Curators

Theaster Gates is a Chicago-based artist and curator whose practice encompasses sculpture, performance, and land development-based projects. His work has been widely exhibited in museums, galleries, and biennials nationally and internationally, including recent solo exhibitions at Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago and Gagosian Gallery, New York.

Michelle Grabner is a Wisconsin-based artist, writer, and curator. She co-curated the 2014 Whitney Biennial and was named a 2021 Guggenheim Fellow. Her work has been the subject of several national museum surveys. She is presently represented by James Cohan, New York and Green Gallery, Milwaukee.

Sculpture Milwaukee

Sculpture Milwaukee is an annual exhibition of public sculpture in downtown Milwaukee that serves as a catalyst for community engagement, economic development, and creative placemaking. For more information visit sculpturemilwaukee.com