

From May 10 through July 6, 2014, a monumental, immersive new work by legendary artist Kara Walker will dramatically transform the former Domino Sugar factory, in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Walker's highly anticipated project, which represents a major departure from her practice to date, responds to the history of the industrial site with a radical work that is both inspired by and embedded with the history of sugar and the sugar trade, including its many implications past and present. It promises simultaneously to provoke, engage, charm, and challenge visitors. Commissioned and presented by Creative Time, this is Walker's first major public project. Project curator is Nato Thompson, chief curator at Creative Time.

As is her tradition, Walker has given the work a title that is at once poetic and descriptive. It is: At the behest of Creative Time Kara E. Walker Has Confectioned: *A Subtlety* Or the *Marvelous Sugar Baby* an Homage to the unpaid and overworked Artisans who have refined our Sweet tastes from the cane fields to the Kitchens of the New World on the Occasion of the demolition of the Domino Sugar Refining Plant

Creative Time President and Artistic Director Anne Pasternak states, "Watching Kara Walker's work come to life in the unadorned, expansive space of the Domino factory, with its molasses-covered walls and natural light, has been one of the most amazing aesthetic experiences I have had. We have long wanted to work with Kara, and are thrilled to have been able to provide the support she needed to create this groundbreaking new work. Creative Time commissions art that engages the critical issues of our day, and with *A Subtlety* we are proud to be presenting one that is certain to spark important conversations on topics including race, labor, power, and much more."

Thompson adds, "Kara Walker is one of the most intellectually and aesthetically brilliant artists working today. For this project, she has immersed herself in the history of sugar, creating a work that is at once beautiful and troubling. While formally the work is a significant departure from her previous artworks, the underlying tensions of power, sexuality, and empire continue to resonate and provoke."

The focus of *A Subtlety* is a colossal, sugar-coated sphinx-like figure that presides over the cavernous, 30,000-square foot space. Measuring some 75.5-feet long, 35.5 feet high, and 26 feet wide, the majestic figure towers over her surroundings and evokes a multiplicity of meanings and references, from raw sexual power, to oppression, to empire, to the historically inextricable role of slavery in the sugar economy, and much more. And while her ancestry clearly includes the sphinxes that figure prominently in ancient Greek and Egyptian mythology, with their associations with lost

empires, hubris, and cunning, Walker's title also hints at another source at play in the work: the *subtleties*, or intricate sugar sculptures, that were served at aristocratic tables in Europe during the Middle Ages, representing themes that would be recognizable to the dinner guests— the king, a hunt, warfare, etc.

The sphinx is attended by fifteen five-foot-high sculptures of young boys, arrayed in a procession leading to her. Scaled up from collectible *tchotchkes* that Walker found online, the figures—five of which are made of sugar—carry baskets and bananas as they approach the massive figure that dominates this cathedral of industrialism.

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