



For Immediate Release



Rendering by Raúl de Nieves

THE MUSICAL BRAIN

Featuring works by Rebecca Belmore, Vivian Caccuri, Raúl de Nieves, Guillermo Galindo, David Horvitz, Mai-Thu Perret, Naama Tsabar, and Antonio Vega Macotela

A group exhibition on the power that music has to bring people together

April 2021 – March 2022

Various locations along the High Line

New York, NY (December 18, 2020) —High Line Art announces ***The Musical Brain***, part of the 2021 – 2022 season of commissioned artworks. Each year, High Line Art works with an international array of artists—both established and emerging—to produce artworks inspired by the unique setting of the park. Opening in April 2021 and on view through March 2022, the group exhibition *The Musical Brain* explores how music can be used as a tool to inhabit and understand the world. *The Musical Brain* features works by Rebecca Belmore, Vivian Caccuri, Raúl de Nieves, Guillermo Galindo, David Horvitz, Mai-Thu Perret, Naama Tsabar, and Antonio Vega Macotela. The exhibition, named after a short story by the Argentine writer César Aira,

HIGH LINE ART



reflects on the power that music has to bring people together. The exhibition was originally planned for 2020, but was delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic. *The Musical Brain* is organized by Cecilia Alemani, Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director & Chief Curator of High Line Art and Melanie Kress, High Line Art associate curator.

The featured artists approach music through different lenses—historical, political, performative, and playful—to create new installations and soundscapes installed throughout the park. The artists listen closely to the sonic world, and explore the different temporal, sculptural, social, and historical dimensions of the ways people make music, and the ways of listening. They wonder what stories discarded objects tell when played, what happens when a railway spike becomes a bell, and how the youth of our generation sing out warnings to save our planet. They remind us that music is a powerful tool for communication, especially in times when spoken language fails us. The sonic brings us together to celebrate, protest, mark the passage of time, and simply be together.

Rebecca Belmore (b. Upsala, Ontario, Canada, a member of Lac Seul First Nation (Anishinaabe)) and **Oswaldo Yero** (b. Camaguey, Cuba) collaborate on projects rooted in the material nature of art and its relationship to the body, land, and language. Belmore and Yero’s cast concrete and found object sculpture *I Heard a Singing Siren* references two carved marble statues of sirens from the National Archeological Museum, Athens, Greece. The siren is a mythological female figure rumored to lure sailors to their death with song. Belmore and Yero’s siren represents youth, who sing to warn of the accelerating devastation of the planet.

Vivian Caccuri (b. 1986, São Paulo, Brazil) is interested in the physicality of music—the bass that shakes a room and the wall of speakers it comes from—and the importance of music in people’s daily lives. Caccuri has collaborated with musicians from around the world, including Brazil, where she lives and works. On the High Line, Caccuri installs a baile funk sound system (also called a *paredão* or *equipe de som* in Portuguese), a stack of speakers covered with reflective glass that mimics the new buildings in the neighborhood and hosts a variety of music and dance performances throughout the year.

Raúl de Nieves (b. 1983, Michoacán, Mexico) makes colorful beaded sculptures and elaborately costumed performances. Having learned to sew and crochet as a child, de Nieves collages found beaded fabrics onto mannequins and canvas coveralls to create fantastical figures that he displays as sculptures and wears in musical performances. De Nieves installs three of these figures sitting on benches on the High Line. The sculptures reference the costumes musicians wear to become their larger-than-life personas and interrupt the crowds with their magical splendor.

Guillermo Galindo (b. 1960, Mexico City, Mexico) and photographer Richard Misrach collaborate on the project *Border Cantos*, for which Misrach photographs materials along the Mexico-US border that Galindo in turn transforms into sculptures and sonic devices. From this series, Galindo shows *Fuente de Lagrimas (Fountain of Tears)*, a fountain made from the water stations that volunteers leave near the US-Mexico border to serve those attempting the crossing. The stations are often shot through with bullets; Galindo’s fountain drips through these holes to a tin floor and amplifies the resulting sounds.

David Horvitz’s (b. Los Angeles, California) artworks meander playfully among material forms



such as performance, artist books, mail art, plants, and photography, as well as immaterial forms such as memes, walks, and rumors. For *The Musical Brain*, Horvitz forges steel spikes from the original High Line train tracks into a string of small bells. The piece references how bells of churches and civic buildings ring, and thus standardize, time. By installing a series of bells over the 14th Street staircase, Horvitz turns the park itself into a musical instrument.

Mai-Thu Perret (b. 1976, Geneva, Switzerland) creates paintings, sculptures, installations, and films that reference historical feminist and utopian movements, as well as her own fictional all-female commune The Crystal Frontier, begun in the late 1990s. Perret presents *Eventail des caresses (Coeur, Poumons, Utérus)*, or *Fan of Caresses (Heart, Lungs, Uterus)*, a hanging chime of cast bronze bells in the shape of human organs. The sculpture was originally made for an installation titled *Garden of Nothingness*, and references Zen Buddhist principles of emptiness and fullness.

Naama Tsabar (b. 1982, Tel Aviv, Israel) works at the intersection of architecture and music, showing us how sound moves both through and beyond walls and buildings. Tsabar makes large-scale collaborative performances, sculptures, and installations that can be played by musicians and visitors. For the High Line, Tsabar makes a metronome installed on a stone pedestal. The work was inspired by contemporary conversations around the removal of confederate monuments, but goes further to explore the shifting relationship between history and time. In her work, Tsabar ignites the push-and-pull between static sculptures and the time-based performances and experiences that bring them alive.

Antonio Vega Macotela (b. 1980, Mexico City, Mexico) makes sculptures and installations, in collaboration with others, where relationships and labor become the artwork. For *One Second*, Vega Macotela worked with hackers to embed the data from an mp3 file of one second of recorded silence into a large acrylic lens, thus distorting the image seen through it. The silence is taken from a video recorded on top of “La Bestia” (The Beast), one of the freight trains that many migrants from Central America use to traverse Mexico on their journey north.

“This year’s commissions demonstrate how today’s talented artists reflect on the world around them, in turns playful, thoughtful, and hopeful,” says Cecilia Alemani. “From engaging with music’s transformative and connecting powers, to imagining the potential for reconsideration and regeneration in design and the built environment, to more deeply considering the people and spaces around us, these artists will activate the public space of the High Line in exciting ways.”

ABOUT HIGH LINE ART

Founded in 2009, High Line Art commissions and produces a wide array of artwork, including site-specific commissions, exhibitions, performances, video programs, and a series of billboard interventions. Led by Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director & Chief Curator of High Line Art Cecilia Alemani, and presented by the High Line, the art program invites artists to think of creative ways to engage with the unique architecture, history, and design of the park, and to foster a productive dialogue with the surrounding neighborhood and urban landscape.

For more information about High Line Art, please visit thehighline.org/art.



ABOUT THE HIGH LINE

The High Line is both a nonprofit organization and a public park on the West Side of Manhattan. Through our work with communities on and off the High Line, we're devoted to reimagining public spaces to create connected, healthy neighborhoods and cities.

Built on a historic, elevated rail line, the High Line was always intended to be more than a park. You can walk through gardens, view art, experience a performance, enjoy food and beverage, or connect with friends and neighbors—all while enjoying a unique perspective of New York City.

Nearly 100% of our annual budget comes through donations. The High Line is owned by the City of New York and we operate under a license agreement with NYC Parks.

SUPPORT

The Musical Brain is supported, in part, by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Lead support for High Line Art comes from Amanda and Don Mullen. Major support is provided by Shelley Fox Aarons and Philip E. Aarons, The Brown Foundation, Inc. of Houston, and Charina Endowment Fund. Additional support is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and The Scintilla Foundation. High Line Art is supported, in part, with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the New York City Council, under the leadership of Speaker Corey Johnson.

SOCIAL MEDIA

@HighLineArtNYC #TheMusicalBrain

MEDIA CONTACT

Janelle Grace | High Line Art Communications Manager | The High Line
646.774.2536 | janelle.grace@thehighline.org

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