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For Immediate Release

## HIGH LINE ART ANNOUNCES 2020 – 2021 SEASON OF COMMISSIONS

Group exhibition *The Musical Brain* and works by Hannah Levy, Ibrahim Mahama, and Jordan Casteel

Opening April 2020

**New York, NY (February 18, 2020)** — High Line Art announces its 2020 – 2021 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 2020 and on view through March 2021, this season will include the group show *The Musical Brain* and sculptural solo commissions by Ibrahim Mahama and Hannah Levy. Jordan Casteel’s mural *The Baayfalls* is also on view now through December 2020, and is visible from the High Line at 22nd Street.

This year’s 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 Macotella. Some of these artists are well-known for their musically-inclined artworks and others have only recently begun working with sound. They all approach music from different lenses—historical, political, performative, and playful—to create original installations and soundscapes placed throughout the park. The exhibition, named after a short story by the Argentine writer César Aira, reflects on the power that music has to bring people together. Opening April 23, *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’s associate curator.

For the High Line, **Hannah Levy** (b. 1991, New York, New York) creates *Retainer*, an oversized orthodontic retainer made from carved marble and stainless steel that will be installed on the park at 23rd Street. The sculpture is the latest in her series of stone retainers—the artist hand-sculpted earlier iterations in alabaster; the version for the High Line is realized with the Fondazione Henraux at Monte Altissimo, a prestigious marble quarry in Italy that Michelangelo Buonarroti first used in 1517, and that was later used by Auguste Rodin and Henry Moore. The scale of Levy’s giant retainer is almost as tall as the park benches nearby, and the retainer wire is rendered the size of the exterior railings. This size sets the piece in conversation with the architecture and design of the park and the neighborhood. Levy’s largely anthropomorphic sculptures (often made with contrasting materials like silicone and aluminum) evoke the physicality of interacting with the built environment, serving as reminders of our own materiality. Hannah Levy, *Retainer* is organized by Cecilia Alemani, Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director & Chief Curator of High Line Art.



**Ibrahim Mahama's** (b. 1987, Tamale, Ghana) commission *57 Forms of Liberty* is an inverted industrial tank from a former manufacturing facility. The work is inspired by a rusted smokestack the artist saw at a locomotive workshop in Sekondi, Ghana that now has a tree growing from its mouth. The tree sprouting from the top of Mahama's sculpture mirrors the torch of the Statue of Liberty to the south, and the non-human agents that continue to reinvent the conditions for living on this planet, even among the structures built and abandoned by humans. *57 Forms of Liberty* will be installed in the Northern Spur Preserve on the park near 16th Street, a location with visible reminders of High Line's own industrial past. For many of his sculptural installations, Mahama uses found materials to reflect on the movement of goods and people around the world. Ibrahim Mahama, *57 Forms of Liberty* is organized by Cecilia Alemani, Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director & Chief Curator of High Line Art.

Installed in December 2019, **Jordan Casteel's** (b. 1989, Denver, Colorado) mural *The Baayfalls* recreates a painting on canvas of the same name originally made in 2017. *The Baayfalls* is a double portrait of Fallou—a woman Casteel befriended during her artist residency at The Studio Museum in Harlem—and Fallou's brother, Baaye Demba Sow. The pair are pictured outside the museum at Fallou's table, where she sold hats she designed. The title references Baye Fall, a sect of the Sufi brotherhood Mouride, of which Fallou's brother is a member. Casteel's work for the High Line extends the Harlem sidewalk to the park, connecting public spaces of different neighborhoods across the city. Through her portraiture, Casteel adds deeply nuanced expressions of human experience to the expanding collection of images we see every day. Jordan Casteel, *The Baayfalls*, is organized by Cecilia Alemani, Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director & Chief Curator of High Line Art.

"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 further information on High Line Art, please visit [thehighline.org/art](https://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**

Lead support for High Line Art comes from Amanda and Don Mullen. Major support for High Line Art is provided by Shelley Fox Aarons and Philip E. Aarons, The Brown Foundation, Inc. of Houston, and Charina Endowment Fund. 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.

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

Hannah Levy, *Retainer* is made possible, in part, by an in-kind donation from Fondazione Henraux.

Jordan Casteel, *The Baayfalls* is made possible, in part, by an in-kind donation from Morgenstern Capital and Canvas Property Group. Additional in-kind support is provided by Colossal Media.

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