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For Immediate Release

## **HIGH LINE ANNOUNCES FUTURE OF MONUMENTALITY PANEL CONVERSATIONS JANUARY 27 & 28**

**High Line partners with Next City to present this speaker series at a unique intersection of art, design, and urbanism**

**New York, NY (January 6, 2021)** — The High Line, partnering with Next City, announces today the Future of Monumentality Speaker Series. This series, two virtual panels moderated by *New York Times* critic Salamishah Tillet, will be held at 1pm EST on January 27 & 28, 2021. Given the High Line's unique intersection of art, design, and urbanism, the Future of Monumentality Speaker Series bridges practical and philosophical perspectives from across disciplines to advance the discussion around monuments and inspire collaborative action.

Over the past year, communities around the world have protested the institutional racism of police violence toward Black, Latinx, and Indigenous people—the same people who have experienced disproportionately devastating health effects and economic hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the most powerful symbols engaged by these protests has been the removal and defacing of monuments, as well as their use as focal points and backdrops for rallies, speeches, performances, and collections of protest signs.

As communities face renewed high-profile debates on the role of monuments in public spaces, we must once again examine the civic, aesthetic, and historical contexts these influential objects inhabit. Against this backdrop, The Future of Monumentality Speaker Series will engage artists, historians, government leaders, and placemakers around issues of power, engagement, and representation. Inspired by these ongoing debates, the speaker series asks: Who determines monumentality in the urban public realm? And what does honest, equitable commemoration look like?

The Future of Monumentality Speaker Series is organized by nonprofit news organization Next City and the High Line. In the first panel, speakers will address monumentality itself; in the second, speakers will offer examples of alternatives to monuments as currently understood in the mainstream. Participating architects, urban designers, and arts professionals include Rebecca Belmore, Zena Howard, Bryan Lee Jr., Justin Garrett Moore, Paul Ramirez Jonas, and



Zsuzsa Szegedy-Maszák, with more names to be announced. Series moderator Salamishah Tillet is a contributing critic at large for *The New York Times* and the Henry Rutgers Professor of African American Studies and Creative Writing at Rutgers University, Newark. Tillet is also a curator and contributor for the public art and research studio Monument Lab.

“Our notions of the past inevitably shape how we are seen and see each other in the future,” said Salamishah Tillet. “I look forward to being in conversation with the leading voices in art, architecture, urbanism, and government to better build more dynamic ideas of monumentality.”

“Monuments should enrich public spaces by recognizing the contributions of many of our communities,” said Mauricio Garcia, chief program and engagement officer of the High Line. “It’s incumbent on stewards of public spaces — residents, artists, government leaders, activists, historians, and designers — to inspire civic dialogue and deepen connections among our many communities to rethink what monuments can and should be.”

“Monuments have hurt our communities, but they can also be used to heal,” said Lucas Grindley, executive director of Next City. “Now is the time to learn from the many practitioners already doing the work of reimagining monuments.”

To register for this event, visit <https://nextcity.org/events>. Attendees can register now for a single ticket to both events for an early bird price of \$15, ending on January 13 when the event opens for pay-what-you-wish registration as the full lineup of speakers is released. Donations made to support this event are split between Next City and the High Line.

This series builds off of the 2019 *New Monuments for New Cities* exhibition, subsequent 2020 publication, and launch of the High Line Plinth. *New Monuments for New Cities* was a collaboration between infrastructure reuse projects in North America inviting five of their local artists to create proposals for new monuments.

## **SUPPORT**

High Line programming is made possible by a generous community of supporters. The High Line Network is made possible by the founding support of The JPB Foundation. Other major support is provided by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Major support for High Line Art is provided by The Brown Foundation, Inc. of Houston.

Next City's coverage is generously underwritten by the Kresge Foundation.

## **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 the gardens, view art, experience a performance, enjoy food or 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.

For more information, visit [thehighline.org](http://thehighline.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#).

### **ABOUT NEXT CITY**

Next City is a nonprofit news organization that believes journalists have the power to amplify solutions and help spread workable ideas from one city to the next city. Our mission is to inspire greater economic, environmental, and social justice in cities. Next City is a trusted voice on urban policy, reaching 2 million influential doers and changemakers annually via [nextcity.org](http://nextcity.org). Another 150,000 follow coverage on social media, and 40,000 subscribe to [newsletters](#). All are in search of ways that cities can be reimagined as truly equitable and inclusive.

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### **MEDIA CONTACT**

Janelle Grace | High Line | 646.774.2536 | [janelle.grace@thehighline.org](mailto:janelle.grace@thehighline.org)

