



For Immediate Release



Photo by Timothy Schenck

HIGH LINE ART PRESENTS *YOU KNOW WHO I AM*, A COMMISSION BY PAOLA PIVI

An iconic symbol of freedom wears a new face

New York, NY (April 15, 2022) — High Line Art announces *You know who I am*, a commission by artist **Paola Pivi**. The work is a large scale bronze replica of the Statue of Liberty wearing various cartoonish masks. The masks are stylized portraits of individuals whose personal experiences of freedom are directly connected to the United States. The masks will change every two months, representing six different people over the course of the exhibition. The work is on view on the High Line at 16th Street from April 2022 – March 2023. *You know who I am* is organized by Cecilia Alemani, Donald R. Mullen Director & Chief Curator of High Line Art and Melanie Kress, High Line Art Associate Curator.

You know who I am is a scale model replica of the Statue of Liberty, cast in bronze and patinated, standing twenty-three feet above the High Line on the Northern Spur Preserve. From this vantage, visitors can also see the original Lady Liberty to the south in New York Harbor. Pivi's sculpture was manufactured at Fonderia Artistica Battaglia, a bronze casting foundry established in Milan in 1913. This artwork follows a direct line to the original sculpture by Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi. To create a scale replica, Pivi worked from a historic plaster cast

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of the original bronze model created by Bartholdi himself, which is now on view at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris.

The six emoji-inspired masks are playful and colorful, contrasting the streamlined, lighthearted portraiture of personalized digital cartoons with the staid monumentality of the statue. Each mask represents an individual whose experience of freedom is connected to the United States, offering the sentiment that anyone could be represented within the symbol of the statue. For this commission, Pivi, an Italian artist who has lived in Alaska since 2006, was inspired by her family's experience. Pivi's son had been living stateless in India when he adopted Pivi and her husband. The three of them endured a four-year legal battle in India to bring the boy home, a journey that concluded with her son gaining a pathway to citizenship in the US. During this struggle, the Statue of Liberty became an invaluable beacon for Pivi's son, a symbol of the human rights and freedom that could be possible for him in the US.

For *You know who I am*, Pivi expands on her family's experience, depicting in the masks five additional individuals whose freedom has been connected to the US, and inviting them to share their own stories. For some, their story may be about having gained or hoping to gain greater freedoms upon entering the US; for others, the US may represent a denied dream of freedom. Stories from the six people pictured, beginning with Pivi's son, will be available for visitors on the High Line's website. *You know who I am* engages conversations about legal and symbolic freedoms available in the US, and how these freedoms are sought by people living around the world. In Pivi's engagement with this subject matter, the artist also considers the US's limitations on freedom.

"Paola Pivi is an artist who challenges us all to think about boundaries and categories in new ways," says Cecilia Alemani, the Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director & Chief Curator of High Line Art. "We are thrilled to share *You know who I am* on the High Line in a city and a neighborhood that has welcomed so many people from around the world, and has a direct connection to the Statue of Liberty and entry point of New York Harbor."

The title *You know who I am* was conceived by Karma Culture Brothers.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Paola Pivi's interdisciplinary artistic practice combines the familiar with the bizarre. She is known for transposing live animals and common objects—ranging from helicopters to cappuccinos—to unexpected settings. Some of her best-known striking tableaux include *Untitled (zebras)*, two zebras standing on a snowy mountain—shown on the High Line Billboard in 2012—as well as 84 goldfish flying coach, and a gallery filled with frolicking feathered polar bears in highlighter-bright hues. In all her work, Pivi uses strategies of displacement and overabundance to disorient and shift viewers' expectations of rules, categories, and boundaries. Her parallel universes offer opportunities to shift points of view on divisions we take for granted.

Paola Pivi (b. 1971, Milan, Italy) lives and works in Anchorage, Alaska. Recent solo exhibitions have been featured at institutions including Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, Colorado (2021); Arken Museum of Modern Art, Ishøj, Denmark (2020); The Bass Museum, Miami Beach, Miami, Florida (2018); Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, Georgia (2018); La Rinascente, Milan, Italy (2017); Dallas Contemporary, Dallas, Texas (2016); FRAC Bourgogne, Dijon, France (2014); National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia (2014); Witte de With, Rotterdam, Netherlands



(2013); and Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, China (2012). Public solo commissions include High Line Art, New York, New York (2012) and Public Art Fund, New York, New York (2012). Notable group exhibitions include *Io dico Io – I say I*, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome, Italy (2021); *Trittico*, Fondazione Prada, Milan, Italy (2016); and *Senso Unico*, MoMA PS1, New York, New York (2007). Major international exhibitions include the Yokohama Triennial, Japan (2018) and the 48th Venice Biennale, Italy (1999).

ABOUT HIGH LINE ART

Founded in 2009, High Line Art commissions and produces a wide array of artworks on the High Line, including site-specific commissions, exhibitions, performances, video programs, and a series of billboard interventions. Led by Cecilia Alemani, the Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director & Chief Curator of High Line Art, 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 on 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 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 and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#).

ABOUT FONDERIA ARTISTICA BATTAGLIA

Fonderia Artistica Battaglia aims to share their historical expertise in artistic bronze, initiating contemporary artists into the practice. *You know who I am* is Pivi's first artwork cast in bronze; the team at Battaglia guided her throughout the fabrication process.

SUPPORT

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