



For Immediate Release



Photo by Timothy Schenck

***WINDY*—MERIEM BENNANI'S KINETIC SCULPTURE—OPENS TODAY ON THE HIGH LINE, NEW YORK, AS PART OF HIGH LINE ART'S 2022-2023 COMMISSIONS**

**Co-commissioned by High Line Art and Audemars Piguet Contemporary, *Windy* is now on view to the public from June 23, 2022 through May 2023**

**New York, NY (June 23, 2022)** – Artist Meriem Bennani's first public sculpture, *Windy* (2022), opens today on the High Line, kicking off the summer season of High Line Art's program. Co-commissioned by High Line Art and Audemars Piguet Contemporary, *Windy* is installed on the High Line at 24th Street and will remain on view through May 2023. Bennani's project marks the first time High Line Art and Audemars Piguet Contemporary are co-curating and commissioning a public sculpture. The curators from High Line Art and Audemars Piguet Contemporary worked closely together with Bennani and the High Line Art's expert team of fabricators to bring this ambitious artwork to life.

*Windy* presents a new direction for Bennani's practice. The artwork translates her command of film and animation into a kinetic 3-D sculpture that alludes to movement represented in her video work.

Breaking norms of traditional static sculpture, *Windy* is a motorized spinning tornado that will rotate at varying speeds for a full year. Standing at just over nine feet tall, the sculpture is made from

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approximately 200 stacked foam disks. Electrical bike motors comprise the spine of the sculpture and connect to each section of foam layers. Each engine is uniquely programmed by the artist so all sections spin at varying speeds and sequences, creating unique loops that never repeat. In this way, *Windy* reflects Bennani's video practice: the time sequences of a multi-channel video installation where each screen is on its own, unsynchronized loop.

*Windy* is built to withstand all four seasons in New York. The disks are made of lightweight UV-proof and waterproof foam that will enable the sculpture to spin in rain or shine. The foam was also meticulously managed and cut to avoid excess waste during the fabrication process.

Born in Morocco and based in New York City, Bennani is best known for her video work that tell stories about human behavior and our experiences both on and offline. Her works blend references from reality TV, cartoons, documentary film, and social media, often with a humorous and absurdist touch. *2 Lizards* (2020), the artist's recent video series created at the start of COVID-19 in collaboration with filmmaker Orian Barki, became an overnight viral sensation as the work poignantly captured the experience of quarantine and isolation at the height of the pandemic.

*Windy* is more abstract than Bennani's previous works. The commission enabled Bennani to explore a new direction in her practice while drawing on several areas of inspiration. The frenetic movement of the sculpture captures the experience of walking through New York City's crowded streets and the frequency of movement on the High Line, one of the city's most visited public parks. As the metropolis continues to return to life following the pandemic lockdowns, *Windy* is a poignant visual of New York City's frenzied and intoxicating energy.

The collaboration between High Line Art and Audemars Piguet Contemporary highlights the parallel mission of both programs: to invite an artist to commission a new artwork which allows them to experiment and further develop their practice. Both High Line Art and Audemars Piguet Contemporary support artists in a meaningful, sustained, and collaborative way, offering the opportunity to create a new artwork that might otherwise not be realized. All works commissioned by High Line Art and Audemars Piguet Contemporary respectively belong to the artist.

**Meriem Bennani**, artist, says: "Developing *Windy* has expanded my understanding of sculpture and allowed me to take on new conceptual and technical challenges in my work. The project is at once inspired by moving images and in many ways reminds me of the process of animation, while at the same time presents something quite different and even opposite to my video practice. *Windy* is much more abstract than my other works and open to many different interpretations. I hope that visitors will have a visceral, emotional reaction when they experience the piece and be swept away by its chaotic energy, echoing the energy of New York City and the High Line. I am thankful to High Line Art and Audemars Piguet Contemporary for their support in fabricating the work and providing me the opportunity to create my first public sculpture."

**Cecilia Alemani**, Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director & Chief Curator, High Line Art, says: "Our team has so enjoyed supporting Meriem in creating *Windy* and we are thrilled to unveil it to the public today. It's an exciting moment to see Meriem expand her practice to new forms and master quite an engineering feat with this kinetic work. Our collaboration with Audemars Piguet Contemporary broadens the unique platform that the High Line provides artists to present new creative projects for a wide, public audience."

**Audrey Teichmann**, curator at Audemars Piguet Contemporary, says: "It has been a pleasure to accompany Meriem on this journey of exploring her relationship to sculpture and pushing the boundaries of what a sculpture can be. We are so pleased to collaborate with Cecilia and High Line Art, a program that is completely in line with Audemars Piguet Contemporary's commitment to supporting artists and nurturing their creative development. We are excited that *Windy* is now on view for visitors to the High Line to enjoy for a full year."

## ABOUT MERIEM BENNANI

Meriem Bennani (b. 1988, Rabat, Morocco) is an artist based in New York. In 2022, in addition to *Windy*, she will present solo exhibitions at the Renaissance Society, Chicago, Illinois (2022); and Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, England (2022). She has previously presented solo exhibitions at the Julia Stoschek Collection, Berlin, Germany (2020); Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, France (2019); The Kitchen, New York, New York (2017); and MoMA PS1, New York, New York (2016). Her work has been featured in group exhibitions at institutions including LAX, Los Angeles, California (2020); Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, Denmark (2020); and MAXXI National Museum of XXI Arts, Rome, Italy (2018). She has participated in major international exhibitions including the Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York (2019), Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement, Turin, Italy (2019); Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland (2018); Biennale de Rennes, France (2018); and 11<sup>th</sup> Shanghai Biennale, China (2016).

## 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 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 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 its work with communities on and off the High Line, it is 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. Visitors 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 the High Line's annual budget comes through donations. The High Line is owned by the City of New York and is operated under a license agreement with NYC Parks.

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

## SUPPORT FOR HIGH LINE ART

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. Project support is provided by Charlotte Feng Ford and Vivian and James Zelter. Additional support is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. 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 Adrienne Adams.

Meriem Bennani, *Windy*, is co-commissioned by High Line Art and Audemars Piguet Contemporary.

## ABOUT AUDEMARS PIGUET CONTEMPORARY

Audemars Piguet Contemporary commissions international artists to create contemporary artworks, fostering a global community of creators. The brand believes in the power of contemporary art to connect and be connected. Its patronage resonates with the talented artisan community that the Manufacture has supported and grown in the Vallée de Joux.

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Audemars Piguet Contemporary engages with and commissions artists to create new work across a variety of scales and media, which may enable them to explore new territories in their practice. The team accompanies each commission process from inception to development to exhibition and builds experiences for audiences to engage with the work around the world. The resulting artworks belong to the artists and contribute to their body of work.

Since 2012, Audemars Piguet Contemporary participating artists include Meriem Bennani, Aleksandra Domanović, Cao Fei, Phoebe Hui, Ryoji Ikeda, Arin Rungjang, Robin Meier, Tomás Saraceno, Semiconductor, Jana Winderen and Sun Xun. Commissioned artworks have been presented worldwide at major venues spanning the Americas (Art Basel, Miami Beach; the High Line, New York; Lenfest Center for the Arts, Columbia University, New York; Times Square Arts, New York), Asia (Art Basel, Hong Kong; UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing), and Europe and the United Kingdom (180 The Strand, London; Ars Electronica, Linz; Art Basel, Basel; House of Electronic Arts, Basel; the International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia; Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg; MAXXI, Rome; Palais de Tokyo, Paris).

For more information, visit [audemarspiguet.com/en/about/audemars-piguet-contemporary.html](https://audemarspiguet.com/en/about/audemars-piguet-contemporary.html).

## **ABOUT AUDEMARS PIGUET**

Audemars Piguet is the oldest fine watchmaking manufacturer still in the hands of its founding families (Audemars and Piguet). Based in Le Brassus since 1875, the company has nurtured generations of talented craftspeople who have continuously developed new skills and techniques, broadening their savoir-faire to set rule-breaking trends. In the Vallée de Joux, at the heart of the Swiss Jura, Audemars Piguet has created numerous masterpieces, testament to the Manufacture's ancestral craftsmanship and forward-thinking spirit. Sharing its passion and savoir-faire with watch enthusiasts worldwide through the language of emotions, Audemars Piguet has established enriching exchanges among fields of creative practices and fostered an inspired community. Born in Le Brassus, raised around the world.

For more information, visit [audemarspiguet.com](https://audemarspiguet.com) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#).

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Installation images and artist portrait available [here](#).

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