

ROSE B.
SIMPSON
SEED



Rose B. Simpson

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Seed

Madison Square Park Conservancy 2024

Rose B. Simpson
Seed

April 11–September 22, 2024

Inwood Hill Park
New York

Madison Square Park
New York

Commissioned by

Madison Square Park Conservancy, New York

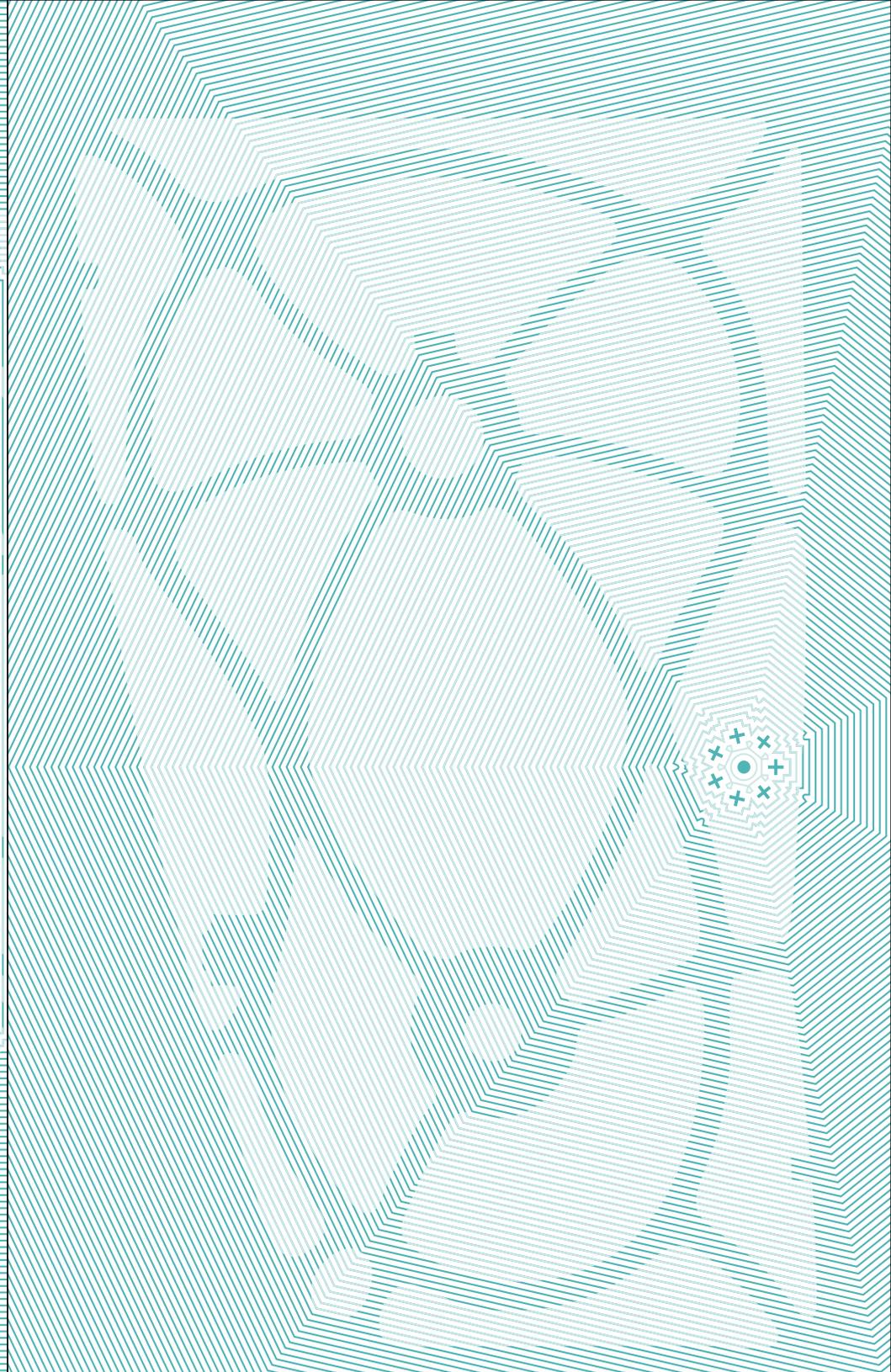


Madison Square Park Conservancy

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INWOOD HILL PARK



MADISON SQUARE PARK



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Introduction

Brooke Kamin Rapaport

Rose B. Simpson first traveled to Madison Square Park from her home and studio in Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico, in October 2021. She was immediately drawn to the east side of the park, where the Sol LeWitt Lawn—named for the Conceptual and Minimalist artist on the occasion of his 2005 exhibition—would present a nurturing space in which to install her sculpture two and a half years later. The soaring architecture of Madison Avenue is visible from this lawn—the sweeping backdrop of the white limestone façade of the Art Deco Metropolitan Life North Building and the commanding 1909 clock tower. Simpson saw the 6.2-acre park as a vessel or bowl surrounded by buildings. And the LeWitt Lawn, in her eye, was a container within that vessel, to envelop and host part of her sculptural work *Seed*: in this park, seven imposing sentinels who encircle a female figure emerging from the ground. Simpson also traveled to the 196-acre Inwood Hill Park in Upper Manhattan, where she would site two figures in a public space with a bitter history in Lenapehoking, the homelands of the Lenape people. *Seed* is on view simultaneously in Inwood Hill Park and Madison Square Park. The project coincides with the milestone twentieth anniversary of Madison Square Park Conservancy's art program and is the Conservancy's first collaboration with another New York City public park.

Simpson and other artists of her generation are resetting long-entrenched art historical and viewer interpretation around the growing capacity of figuration. *Seed* is a formidable stage for this reassessment. The artist imagined sentinels in weathered steel and bronze that lead with angularity and durability; industrial bolts fasten sections cut from ten-foot-long steel sheets, and their masks are forged in bronze. There is implicit tension in the work: Simpson's sculptures are also planar compositions that at only three-quarters of an inch deep have an exquisite fragility, like that of a giant paper doll flattened over generations and held in place by a folded steel stand. Simpson shapes symbolism in each sculpture, whereby Native histories are enduring

FIG. 2

and resonant. The sentinels seem to have an acute understanding of their role as contemporary figures.

In Madison Square Park, the seven eighteen-foot-high oxidized steel sentinels who convene in a circle protect and nurture the female figure emerging from the earth. In Inwood Hill Park, one bronze sculpture faces the ancient wood in acknowledgment of Native histories deeply connected to the land; the other bronze figure gazes outward to a marshy area of the Hudson River, part of a trade route that brought settlers who worked to obliterate Native people and practices beginning in the 1600s.

The figures in *Seed* are in the present and look to the future through bronze patinated masks. Each sculpture hosts a face on its back, summoning layers of histories, lived personal and collective human experiences that have seeded Simpson's life and work. The artist refers to visual languages, reflecting her training as a contemporary artist and as a Native artist building fortitude through a group of figures. Installed in these two public parks in Lenapehoking, *Seed* channels the vision of an artist raised far away, in Santa Clara Pueblo. Her sentinels are androgynous; there is fluidity in their bearing. Parkgoers walk around the installations, look closely and intensely at her sculpture, appreciate the powerful scale as well as the abstract forms across the surface of the works, and perhaps recognize how Simpson used every scrap gathered from the cutouts of steel sheets.

In the mid-twentieth century, Alexander Calder's thrifty use of materials was recognized for its "economy of means." Simpson has said that her sentinels are self-sufficient. She is mindful of sustainability, incorporating discards from the floor of the fabricator's shop. Even the cardboard maquettes that were delivered in fall 2023 from her studio to KC Fabrications, Inc. in Gardiner, New York, and ultimately translated into steel sheets exemplify reverence for eco-sensitive art making. This practice is embedded in Simpson's consciousness, and she follows it in her work in clay sculpture and customized lowrider cars. She attributes her innovation to seventy generations of women makers in her family. Like the sculpture in *Seed*, this stunning lineage brings the work back to family and collective histories and forward to the future, to her daughter and to new viewers who can be strengthened through Simpson's art.

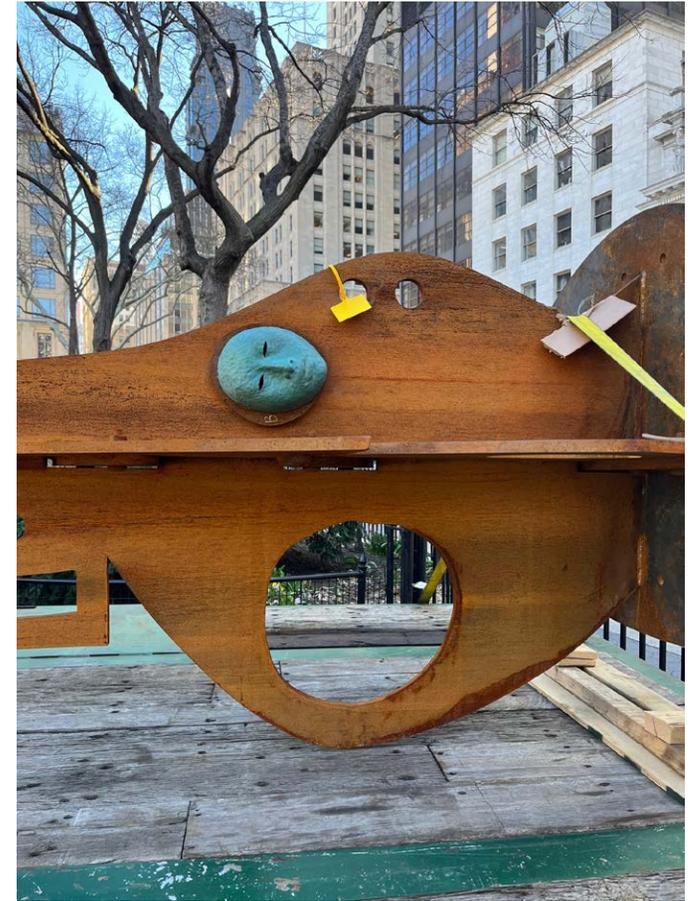


FIG. 3

In 2020, at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Madison Square Park Conservancy researched, drafted, and wrote a land acknowledgment, guided by Joe Baker and Hadrien Coumans of the Lenape Center in New York. Since that time, Baker has collaborated with Conservancy staff to sustain the presence of Lenapehoking in the park. He worked with Maya Lin in 2021 on her *Ghost Forest* soundscape and suggested that Inwood Hill Park, in Upper Manhattan, an important and contested space in Lenapehoking, was appropriate for *Seed's* additional venue. Inwood Hill is said to be the site where the Dutch "purchased" Mannahatta (Manhattan) from Indigenous people. The Lenape who lived in and cared for this part of the realm established complex systems of trading, hunting, and stewardship of the land, organized and built settlements, cultivated crops and tended waterways, and

nurtured community long before the arrival in New York in 1524 of Italian navigator Giovanni da Verrazzano and in 1609 of English explorer Henry Hudson and his English and Dutch crew on the Dutch East India Company's ship *Halve Maen* (*Half Moon*). Historians estimate that at the latter date the Lenape population may have reached 30,000 on Mannahatta.¹

Some fifteen years after Hudson arrived, Peter Minuit joined the Dutch West India Company and made the westward ocean voyage; he is often credited with "purchasing" Mannahatta in 1626 from Native peoples, an erroneous legacy that legitimized colonial occupation, planned displacement, and eventual genocide. Contemporary research indicates that Minuit sailed into New York Harbor and subsequently landed at what is now Inwood Hill Park. Indigenous people, who viewed land as a shared resource rather than a commodity for sale, were forced to leave their homelands and were often resettled multiple times, to increasingly smaller and less desirable locations.

Simpson has described her role in Manhattan as a guest. "Often, non-Native people consider that all Native people are the same, and that we all have similar ideologies," she said in a recent podcast, discussing the impact, obligation, and responsibilities of Native artists.² Her work resides here, she observed, but she is "indigenous to the pueblo in [the] Southwest. I am also a visitor to New York City. . . . And to assume that a Native person from anywhere should take on the conversation to represent and to stand for all Native people is problematic. I often see that the art world expects or assumes that they can bring in a Native person from another place to check off the Native box from anywhere on this continent. . . . The only thing I can bring to this conversation as a Native person is that I know what it's like to have people come to my ancestral homelands in a disrespectful manner. . . . I don't want to be one of those guests that is disrespectful."

On November 3, 2023, the Conservancy convened a workshop with the artist, community and Native leaders, and neighbors of both parks to discuss questions prompted by *Seed*. Dialogue that flowed from this meeting informed the installation of the work and interpretative materials associated with it, as well as public programs held during the run of the installation, and will apply to future action

within the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation. We are grateful to those who attended and offered their wisdom for planning and implementation: Joe Baker (Lenape/Delaware), cofounder, Lenape Center, New York; Danny Bonilla, artist, member of Community Board 11; Dr. Teresa Carbone, Program Director for American Art, Henry Luce Foundation; Kamala Cesar, Executive and Artistic Director, Lotus Music & Dance and Drums Along the Hudson; Brent Michael Davids (Mohican/Munsee-Lenape; composer, Wisconsin); Chris Heitmann, Deputy Administrator, Northern Manhattan, NYC Parks; Libby Hutton, Community Board 5, Manhattan; Jana La Sorte, Northern Manhattan Administrator, NYC Parks; Elizabeth Masella, Senior Public Art Coordinator, NYC Parks; Dr. Anya Montiel (Mexican, Tohono O'odham), Curator, History and Culture Department, Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C., and New York; Aaron Scott, Bruce's Garden (named for Bruce Reynolds) and the Inwood Jazz Festival, Manhattan; and Phillip Zhang, Madison Square Park neighbor and Conservancy Art Council member. Nadema Agard (Cherokee/Lakota/Powhatan) participated by exhibiting replicas of Simpson's preparatory renderings at the Gallery in the Gazebo in Bruce's Garden in Inwood.

Seed has been complemented by free public programs. On February 20, 2024, Simpson and I participated in a virtual conversation, "Sentinels in the City," as part of the New York Studio School's Evening Lecture Series. On June 18, Simpson joined artists Tau Lewis and Julia Phillips in a panel discussion titled "Why Does Figuration Remain Vital to Contemporary Sculpture?," moderated by Eva Respini, Deputy Director and Director of Curatorial Programs, Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada. On June 20, introduced by Inwood resident and artist Danny Bonilla, Simpson spoke on her work and the process of bringing *Seed* to two public parks in New York City.

Weekly lunchtime tours were led by summer interns Bela Achaibar and Skyla Monroe. On three Wednesday evenings in July, the Carnegie Hall Citywide series attracted hundreds to the Oval Lawn of Madison Square Park with free concerts by Alisa Amador, JACK Quartet, and Ekep Nkwelle. It is a highlight of the summer season to work with our wonderful colleagues at Carnegie Hall, Adriaan Fuchs, Wendy Magro, and Nolan Robertson.



FIG. 4



FIG. 5



FIG. 6

Like all of Madison Square Park Conservancy's exhibitions, *Seed* was realized with the ongoing guidance and support of the Conservancy's Board of Trustees, helmed by Sheila Davidson, Board Chair. Thanks also to David Berliner, Chair Emeritus, for his counsel. Board Member and Art Committee Chair Ron Pizzuti's long-term commitment to artists and public art is inspiring. We are grateful to those who sit on the Art Committee, listed on page 54 of this volume. We remember the beautiful light that, as an Art Committee member, Roxanne Frank shined on the art program in Madison Square Park. Board member and Art Council Chair Sarah Stein-Sapir is a dynamic advocate and offers unending enthusiasm for public art. Executive Director Holly Leicht engaged colleagues in Inwood Hill Park and the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation and warmly welcomed Rose B. Simpson to Madison Square Park.

Jessica Silverman and Kathryn Wade, at Jessica Silverman in San Francisco, and Jack Shainman and Jaci Auletto, at Jack Shainman Gallery in New York, demonstrated exceptional commitment to Simpson's art. We thank them for their generous efforts on this project. Kurt Wulfmeyer at KC Fabrications worked with tremendous skill and diligent communication with the Conservancy and Simpson to construct her lofty sculpture. At UAP, Cheyenne Cole and Christopher Cafarelli guided the production of two stunning bronze pieces in Inwood Hill Park and the bronze female figure in Madison Square Park.

Conceiving, engineering, and building *Seed* was a wondrous process. Tom Reidy, Director of Art Operations, collaborated expertly with Simpson to sustain her vision. Truth Murray-Cole, former Senior Curatorial Manager, contributed deft management to the project. Yah Jeffries, Senior Art Department Manager, has sustained planning and implementation for the twentieth anniversary of the art program. Tasha Naula, Public Programs Manager, thoughtfully planned a slate of free public events. Nicole Rivers and Rosina Roa worked energetically on many aspects of this exhibition. Thank you to the Operations team at Madison Square Park Conservancy for maintaining the beauty of this public space and to Stephanie Lucas, Aiyanna Milligan, and Austin Shupp for directing and implementing the plantings around *Seed*. Please join me in expressing thanks to



FIG. 7

the Conservancy's dedicated staff, listed on page 53 of this volume.

Seed received spectacular support, endorsing public art on view in the park and our milestone twentieth anniversary. All of us at Madison Square Park Conservancy, the artists whose work we commission, and the communities who view the work displayed are grateful to those listed on pages 48 and 49 who have been so generous to our plans for exhibitions and initiatives. Their affirmation assures that the art program commissions vital work, seen by many communities in a democratic environment.

We appreciate support from our colleagues at the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation: Jonathan Kuhn, Jennifer Lantzas, and Elizabeth Masella. Jana LaSorte and Chris Heitmann have been outstanding colleagues at Inwood Hill Park. Thanks to Elisabeth Bernstein, Hunter Canning, and Rashmi Gill for documenting the project. Our gratitude as well to Anya Montiel for her insightful essay for this publication.

With *Seed*, Rose B. Simpson's art entered publicness in New York City; it has been greeted with generosity by the communities in and around Inwood Hill Park and Madison Square Park. *Seed* opened on April 11, 2024, amid pouring rain that cleansed the site and welcomed the artist's work. We were honored that Laurie Cumbo, Commissioner of the

New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and Sue Donoghue, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, spoke about the significance of Simpson's work. Pamela and Hadrien Coumans of the Lenape Center sang and extended their welcome to this land, containing histories across millennia.

Simpson spoke about our noisy city, her quiet homeland, and how her work would be surrounded by medicinal and native plantings, tended by the Conservancy's team. Since that day, those seeds have grown, enveloping her bronze female figure. It was Simpson's long-standing hope for *Seed* to be a sign of generative dialogue, symbolized through the transformation of nature around her sculpture, and the presence of generations lodged within these objects. Those visible changes have opened the eyes and minds of parkgoers in New York City, fulfilling *Seed's* placement here.

We are grateful to Rose B. Simpson for her magnificent work.

1. For historical background, see the following sources:

Connolly, Colleen. "The True Native New Yorkers Can Never Truly Reclaim Their Homeland." *Smithsonian Magazine*, October 5, 2018. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/true-native-new-yorkers-can-never-truly-reclaim-their-homeland-180970472/>.

"Early Encounters in Native New York: Did Native People Really Sell Manhattan?" Native Knowledge 360 Education Initiative, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution. <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/resources/Native-New-York-Manhattan>.

Lenape Center. <https://lenape.center/about-us>.

"Native Americans in Brooklyn." Brooklyn Connections, Brooklyn Public Library. <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/sites/default/files/documents/brooklyn-collection/connections/Native%20Americans%20PP.pdf>.

"People of New Amsterdam, New Netherland, and Lenapehoking." Museum of the City of New York. <https://www.mcnyc.org/people-new-amsterdam-new-netherland-and-lenapehoking>.

Sanderson, Eric W. *Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City*. New York: Abrams, 2009.

2. *Conversations with Artists: Rose B. Simpson* (podcast), Madison Square Park Conservancy, www.madisonsquarepark.org/exhibitions/rose-b-simpson-seed.



FIG. 8



FIG. 9

Artist's Statement

Rose B. Simpson

Seven eighteen-foot-high steel sentinels assemble in a circular guard, higher faces watching outward, lower faces witnessing the center. Their jagged and expressive forms prickle, as they cluster like the Pleiades. These seven ancestor-protectors, representing the direction and relationship to the stars, stand tall, adult faces looking out, younger faces looking in—seven generations back and seven into the future.

One just-larger-than-life figure immerses herself in the grass. Eyes closed, half submerged in the ground, she lets go. She dissolves into the Mother. She is tender, her skin feeling the weather, the wind, the snow.

Madison Square Park, a moment of manicured nature in the dense architecture of Manhattan, is a place where residents go to be reminded of their connection with something greater than themselves. It is perhaps a respite from the intense anthropocentricity of a massive city.

While I am there with my work, I have the opportunity to guide through reminders. Maybe my work is about the displaced Indigenous residents who had thousands of years of communing with that ground—a heuristic relationship that shaped their culture. Maybe it's about the act of being in that space, gendered. Maybe it's about the feeling of communing in a public space, about safety, about the feeling of anonymity that comes from an immense crowd, the clench of protective identity and the need to exhale.

The single figure is able to dip into this place, to soak herself safely in the ground and the weather, to take a moment to listen to history through her body, to go there all the way. She is safe with the ancestors standing guard, though her act of investment can mean she is vulnerable.

The immersion is not just a cleansing; there is a reckoning. The ancestral sentinels are ominous as they stand watch; they behold, they reflect a critical eye at the mannerisms modern humans take for granted, or even choose. The circle of protection provides an example of where values can adjust, and a critical seriousness of the weight of what we have taken for granted. The ancestors demonstrate to the future the work that is yet to be done.



FIG. 10



FIG. 11

Rose B. Simpson's *Seed*: Indigenous Relationality and a Thriving Future

Dr. Anya Montiel

Our nationhood is based on the idea that the earth gives and sustains all life, that "natural resources" are not "natural resources" at all, but gifts from Aki, the land. Our nationhood is based on the foundational concept that we should give up what we can to support the integrity of our homelands for the coming generations. We should give more than we take.¹

—Leanne Betasamosake Simpson

As humans, how do we walk through the world? What relationships are we maintaining . . . and growing? Do we consider our relationships with animals, plants, and the land itself? Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, in her seminal book *As We Have Always Done*, advances Indigenous knowledge systems toward the land. She offers an understanding of connectivity to the land (and its beings) and prioritizes operating through the world with care, generosity, and respect. Such Indigenous philosophies of relationality between people and the land and of forging a thriving future also manifest through the work of visual art, as can be seen especially in Rose B. Simpson's *Seed*, a project commissioned by Madison Square Park Conservancy. In this work presented in two locales in Manhattan, Simpson has created watchful and protective figures that reflect a symbiotic relationship with the land and its beings.

In a place like Manhattan, concrete may be more visible than soil or bedrock, but there are palimpsestic histories of the past that leave traces in the present. While Manhattan never stopped being part of Lenapehoking, the Lenape ancestral homelands, the Lenape presence has been covered, obstructed, or purposefully erased, through violence, disease, settler encroachment, and forced removals. Lenape/Delaware artist and curator Joe Baker has discussed the Lenape concept of *Lankuntuwakan*, which incorporates "relationship, kinship, peace and a deeper understanding of well-being," and with Hadrien

Coumans he has explained that “we can learn from the wisdom of Lankuntuwakan by being fully aware that all our actions have consequences for our well-being, and that it is possible to restore a balance.”² Lankuntuwakan is another Indigenous philosophy that prioritizes ancestral knowledge and relationships with the land and its beings.

Rose B. Simpson is an Indigenous multidisciplinary artist from another homeland, namely Kha’po Owingeh (Santa Clara Pueblo) in northern New Mexico. She comes from a long line of artists and creatives. Her parents are artists Roxanne Swentzell and Patrick Simpson. Her grandmother Rina Swentzell was an architect, historian, and author with a doctorate from the University of New Mexico. Her great-grandmother Rose Naranjo, for whom she was named, was a famed ceramicist who taught the art to her ten children. Art and art making have been ever-present in Simpson’s life. She remembers thinking that “everyone’s mom spent her days digging, forming, sanding, and polishing clay, then filling the air with the sweet smell of burning cow dung while firing that clay.”³ Like her family and ancestors, Simpson creates in clay, but she also engages in metalworking, automotive design, performance, writing, and music.

As a Pueblo woman who lives at Kha’po Owingeh, Simpson has an intimate relationship with her homeland. Her studio is near her mother’s Flowering Tree Permaculture Institute—a nonprofit organization that creates sustainable lifeways using permaculture practices. Simpson lives surrounded by farmland, beehives, a seed bank, water catchments, and adobe buildings. Since she exhibits her artwork in many places outside her community, she practices an extension of relationality when away from home. During her keynote speech at a National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts conference in 2023, Simpson underlined that “we are part of something vast. And if we listen and we watch and we witness, and we take a minute and remember we’re guests, [we can see] that being a guest is the way to be.”⁴ Simpson listens and observes the world while also practicing being its guest.

If we walk through the world as guests, the implication is that we are on our best behavior and have the best intentions. Again, it is an attitude of not taking more than one gives. This perspective is articulated by Potawatomi

botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer as she proposes how non-Indigenous peoples should live in North America. “Being naturalized to place,” she offers, “means to live as if this is the land that feeds you, as if these are the streams from which you drink, that build your body and fill your spirit. . . . To become naturalized is to live as if your children’s future matters, to take care of the land as if our lives and the lives of all our relatives depend on it. Because they do.”⁵ Instead of believing that only Indigenous peoples have a responsibility toward this land, Kimmerer suggests a version of being a guest.

Simpson deeply considered relationships to Lenapehoking when creating *Seed*. One set of artworks is at Inwood Hill Park, at the northern tip of Manhattan, where the forest meets a natural salt marsh. Two figures, side by side, rise eight feet in height. Constructed of bronze, the golden sentinels have slender, geometric bodies framed by turquoise-colored faces with open eyes. They face opposite directions—one looks to the trees and the other to the water. They also stand near Shorakkopoch Rock, which purportedly marks the location of the 1626 “sale” of Manhattan to the Dutch by the Lenape.

While the inscription on the metal plaque affixed to Shorakkopoch Rock begins with “according to legend,” the text continues to recount the sale of Mannahatta for “trinkets and beads.” The origin of this legend is from a 1626 letter written by Peter Schaghen of the Dutch West India Company that mentions the purchase, even though Schaghen never set foot in the Americas.⁶ The letter lacks any specificity, to a location, to the parties involved, or to a particular source for his information. Scholar Jean O’Brien refers to this type of commemoration as a “replacement narrative,” whereby certain U.S. monuments and memorials recount colonial possession of Indigenous lands.⁷ Such public monuments erase prior Indigenous histories and center the colonial narrative, thereby redirecting a timeline to begin the history of a place from that moment onward. There is new signage in the park, along a path near the rock, that gives Lenape viewpoints. Simpson’s sentinels, standing in Inwood Hill Park, observe and consider. They don’t look upon Shorakkopoch Rock. They set their gazes toward the forest and the marsh for the memories those carry.



For the second location, at Madison Square Park, Simpson presents multiple figures. Seven eighteen-foot-high figures arranged in a circle surround a lone figure. These tall guardians, constructed of steel, have geometric bodies in an ochre color and bands of turquoise across their eyes. The bronze figure in the center is a woman, partially submerged in the earth, surrounded by indigenous plants, her eyes closed. The towering figures look outward and observe across the trees, while smaller turquoise faces on their bodies gaze toward the woman. In this busier and louder location enclosed by tall buildings and concrete, she is being protected *and* nurtured. Her body feels the sun and wind while she is rooted to the earth.

The grouping in Madison Square Park, like the entire project itself, is titled *Seed*. As noun, verb, and adjective, “seed” is a hopeful word. It presumes that something will come forth and grow. A seed contains the possibilities of what it may become. It does, however, need nourishment and suitable conditions to allow roots to spread. When we

view her work with this in mind, we understand that Simpson is indicating to everyone the essential nature of relationality between people and the land. Curators Arden Sherman and Pamela Solares have remarked that “Rose’s work is meant for the rest of us, those of us who need to be reminded—as Simpson says—that we are guests. Guests on this Earth, guests in these communities, and guests in our bodies.”⁸ As guests, are we providing the necessary care and support? Are we nourishing others and ourselves? When we walk near Simpson’s artworks in Inwood Hill Park and Madison Square Park, we see that her figures are watching, and they are also offering a space of protection so that we may envision our thriving future with radical possibilities.

FIG. 12

FIG. 13

1. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 8–9.
2. Joe Baker and Hadrien Coumans, “Indigenous Traditions: *Lankuntuwakan*, the Lenape Way of Life,” in *Voices from Religions on Sustainable Development* (Bonn: German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development [BMZ], 2017), 94, 90, https://www.partner-religion-development.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Voices_from_Religions_on_Sustainable_Development_April2017_3rd_edition.pdf.
3. “Finding Source,” interview with Rose Bean Simpson, *Studio Potter* 41, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2013), 30, <https://studiopotter.org/finding-source>.
4. Rose B. Simpson, “Sourced: Inspiration, Innovation, and Material,” National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) Members’ Meeting, Cultivating Community, September 25, 2023, <https://youtu.be/9i8unoddSv4?si=U6yASKco6xvhDYiF>.
5. Robin Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of the Plants* (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2013), 214–15.
6. “The Schaghen Letter,” *Native Knowledge 360°*, Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, 2024, <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/manhattan/schaghen-letter/schaghen-letter.cshtml>.
7. See Jean M. O’Brien, “Replacing: Historical Practices Argue That Non-Indians Have Supplanted Indians,” chap. 2 of *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 55–104.
8. Arden Sherman and Pamela Solares, “Rose B. Simpson in Five Acts,” in *Rose B. Simpson: Journeys of Clay* (West Palm Beach: Norton Museum of Art, and Brooklyn: Pacific, 2024), 36.



Seed and Survival

Joe Baker (Delaware Tribe of Indians)

Rose B. Simpson's figural installation *Seed* at Madison Square Park and Inwood Hill Park may at first seem to be contained within the public space of the parks where her sculptures are situated. However, the figures gazing outward as protectors have stirred a conversation that has been silent for hundreds of years. Simpson's provocation has brought the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation to rethink how it might interpret and give voice to the lands it occupies within Lenapehoking, the Lenape homelands. This is particularly relevant in Manhattan in present-day Inwood Hill Park, the site of a desecrated Lenape burial ground and the mythical site of the purchase of Manhattan. Simpson's two eight-foot-tall bronze sentinels, who look toward the Hudson River and the sacred rock caves within the trees, respectively, challenge viewers to come to terms with an unsettling history. This history of ongoing violence directed toward Native people and Native lands is unrecognized by the general population, as is the first genocide of the founding of the United States of America. These stories are largely unknown.

In consultation with Lenape elders, Simpson, a contemporary artist raised in Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico, selected Inwood Hill Park as an installation site for *Seed*, hoping to activate a narrative of Lenape survival and continuance. The city's parks department has responded with ongoing consultations with the Lenape Center around signage and walking tours reflecting a correct history. A beach plum orchard is planned for a fall 2024 planting, and discussions are underway about how to secure and protect the rock caves. Simpson's powerful works inspired by Indigenous knowledge have moved a bureaucracy to act. These sentinels animate a much larger story of human perseverance and beauty.



FIG. 15



Rose B. Simpson

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

2024 *Seed*

IN MADISON SQUARE PARK:

Seven works: steel and bronze; each 18 feet high × 4 feet, 6 inches × 4 feet inches, 6 inches

One work: bronze; 4 feet high × 1 foot, 8 inches × 1 foot, 8 inches

IN INWOOD HILL PARK:

Two works: bronze; each 8 feet high × 2 feet × 2 feet
Collection the artist, courtesy Jessica Silverman and Jack Shainman Gallery

DETAILS

1983 Born in Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico

2004 BFA, University of New Mexico, Santa Fe

2011 MFA, Ceramics, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence

2015 Certificate, Automotive Science, Northern New Mexico College, Española

2018 MFA, Creative Nonfiction, Institute of American Indian Arts, Sante Fe

BIOGRAPHY

Rose B. Simpson (b. 1983, Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico) received an MFA from Rhode Island School of Design and an MFA in creative nonfiction from the Institute of American Indian Arts. Her work is included in the collections of the Benton Museum of Art at Pomona College, Claremont, California; Denver Art Museum; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Institute of Contemporary Art and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Nevada Museum of Art, Reno; Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia; Portland Art Museum, Maine; Princeton University Art Museum, New Jersey; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, Santa Fe. Her work is also featured in the 2024 Whitney Biennial. She recently received a prestigious Ruth Award through the Ruth Foundation for the Arts. In 2023, Simpson was appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Institute of American Indian Arts by President Biden. The artist lives and works in Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico.



FIG. 17

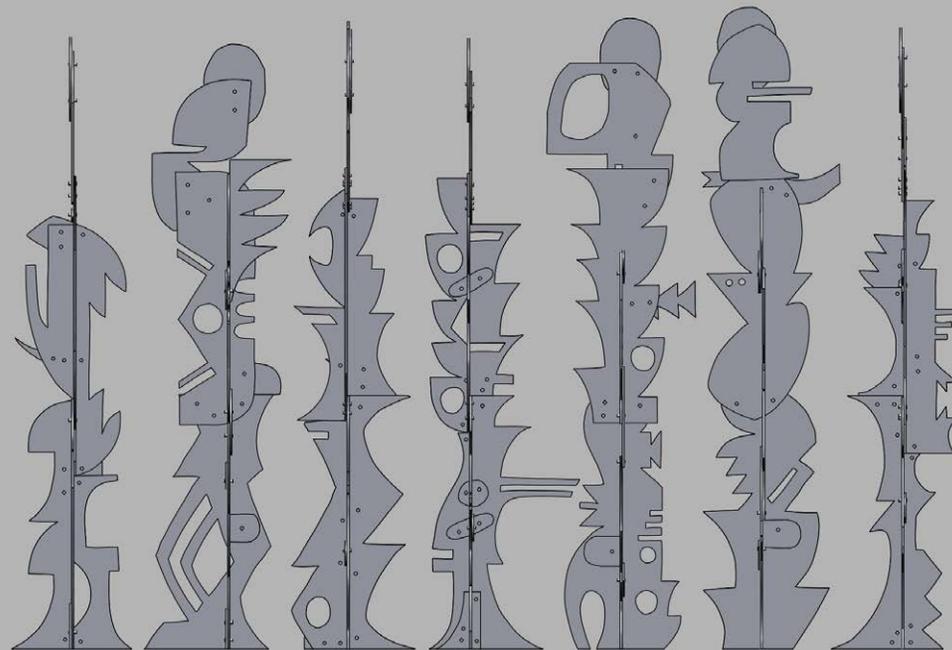


FIG. 18

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS

- 2025** *Rose B. Simpson: Lexicon*, M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco
- 2024** *Strata*, Cleveland Museum of Art
Rose B. Simpson: Journeys of Clay, Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, Florida
- 2023** *Skeena*, Jessica Silverman, San Francisco
Rose B. Simpson: Counterculture, public art installation, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, Wisconsin
Rose B. Simpson: Counterculture, outdoor installation, in conjunction with collaborative billboard *Encounter* (with Razelle Benally), Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
Road Less Traveled, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York
- 2022** *Dream House*, The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia
Legacies, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston
Witness, Art@Bainbridge, Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, New Jersey
Counterculture, public art installation, Field Farm, Williamstown, Massachusetts (presented by The Trustees of Reservations)
- 2021** *Non Linear*, Art Basel, Switzerland
 "Rose B. Simpson: Seminar," museum program, University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque
The Four, Nevada Museum of Art, Reno
Countdown, SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia
- 2019** *Duo*, Jessica Silverman, San Francisco
Brittle, Chiaroscuro Contemporary Art Gallery, Santa Fe
Course, Duhesa Gallery, Colorado State University, Fort Collins
- 2018** *LIT: The Work of Rose B. Simpson*, Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, Santa Fe
Table of Contents, Chiaroscuro Contemporary Art Gallery, Santa Fe

FIG. 19



- 2016** *Rose B. Simpson: Ground*, Benton Museum of Art, Pomona College, Claremont, California
Emotive, Chiaroscuro Contemporary Art Gallery, Santa Fe
- 2014** *Finding Center*, Chiaroscuro Contemporary Art Gallery, Santa Fe
- 2013** *A Life Worth Living*, Chiaroscuro Contemporary Art Gallery, Santa Fe
- 2011** *Thesis*, Chiaroscuro Contemporary Art Gallery, Santa Fe
- 2010** *Matterings*, IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts (MoCNA), Santa Fe

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2025** *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes: Forging Relationships Through Ceramics*, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Missouri
- 2024** *New Worlds: New Mexico Women to Watch 2024*, 516 ARTS, Albuquerque
- The Land Carries Our Ancestors: Contemporary Art by Native Americans*, New Britain Museum of American Art, Connecticut
- Mother Lode: Material and Memory*, James Cohan, New York
- Preoccupied: Indigenizing the Museum*, Baltimore Museum of Art
- Whitney Biennial, *Even Better Than the Real Thing*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
- To Take Shape and Meaning: Form and Design in Contemporary American Art*, North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh
- Hindsight / Insight 4.0: Portraits, Landscapes, and Abstraction from the UNM Art Museum*, University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque
- 2023** *Descending the Staircase*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago
- re: collections, Six Decades at the Rose Art Museum*, Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts
- A Growing Season*, Jessica Silverman, San Francisco
- Tamarind Summer Season at Los Poblanos*, La Quinta Gallery, Tamarind Institute, Albuquerque
- Hindsight / Insight 2.0: Portraits, Landscapes, and Abstraction from the UNM Art Museum*, University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque
- The Land Carries Our Ancestors: Contemporary Art by Native Americans*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
- Rising Sun*, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia
- Thick as Mud*, Henry Art Gallery, Seattle
- Corporeal*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
- 2022** *Art and Design from 1900 to Now*, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence
- 2021** *HERE*, Sanitary Tortilla Factory, Albuquerque
- Ah'-Wah-Nee*, Donna Beam Gallery, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- Ceramics in the Expanded Field*, MASS MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts
- Picturing Motherhood Now: Images for a New Era*, Cleveland Museum of Art
- New Time: Art and Feminisms in the 21st Century*, University of California, Berkeley, Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive
- Feedback*, Jack Shainman Gallery (The School), Kinderhook, New York
- Santo Lowride: Norteño Car Culture and the Santos Tradition*, Harwood Museum of Art, Taos, New Mexico
- Born in Flames: Feminist Futures*, Bronx Museum, New York
- We Are Here*, Jessica Silverman, San Francisco
- 2020** *Conversational Spirits*, Jessica Silverman, San Francisco
- Form & Relation*, Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire
- New Time: Art and Feminisms in the 21st Century*, University of California, Berkeley, Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive
- Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists*, Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa; Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.
- 2019** *Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists*, Frist Art Museum, Nashville; Minneapolis Institute of Art
- The Empathy Lab*, Jessica Silverman, San Francisco
- Radical Love*, Ford Foundation Gallery, New York
- Ancestral Connections*, Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, New York
- 2018** *Because It Is Time*, National Hispanic Cultural Center, Albuquerque
- 2017** *Catch 22: Paradox on Paper*, Ralph T. Coe Center for the Arts, Santa Fe
- Broken Boxes*, Form & Concept, Santa Fe
- Contemporary Indian Market Group Show*, Chiaroscuro Contemporary Art Gallery, Santa Fe
- 2016** *Visionaries in Clay: Pueblo Pottery Past and Present*, Couse-Sharp Historic Site, Taos, New Mexico
- Render Bender*, Center for Contemporary Arts, Santa Fe
- Con Cariño: Artists Inspired by Lowriders*, New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe

- 2015** *SouthWest/China*, traveling exhibition of drawings, University of Shanghai for Science and Technology, and Sichuan, Nanjing, and Xi'an International Studies universities, China
- Neoglyphix: The Original All-Indigenous Aerosol Art Exhibition*, Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona, Tucson
- The Games We Play*, Roxanne Swentzell Tower Gallery, Pojoaque, New Mexico
- Summer Group Show*, Chiaroscuro Contemporary Art Gallery, Santa Fe
- An Evening Redness in the West*, collaborative installation with Virgil Ortiz, IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts (MoCNA), Santa Fe
- 20/20: 20th Anniversary Series*, SITE Santa Fe, Santa Fe
- 2014** *Regarding Edward S. Curtis*, Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona, Tucson
- Courage and Compassion: Native Women Sculpting Women*, Museum of Indian Arts & Culture, Santa Fe
- Orale: Kings and Queens of Cool*, Harwood Museum of Art, Taos, New Mexico
- Cinco de Mayo Car Show*, car show and art exhibition, Española, New Mexico
- Directed*, performance/event, Denver Art Museum
- Toi Ngāpuhi Festival Exhibition, Kōkiri Pūtahi International Gathering of Indigenous Visual Artists, Kaikohe, New Zealand
- 2013** *Bound & Combined: Variable Figuration with Rose Simpson*, Arizona State University Museum International Artist Residency at Combine Studios, Phoenix
- Sovereign: Independent Voices*, Kent Monkman, Virgil Ortiz, Rose B. Simpson, Denver Art Museum
- Make It Pop*, All My Relations Gallery, Minneapolis
- 2012** *Forget Your Perfect Offering*, performance, Center for Contemporary Arts, Santa Fe
- Fine Folk of New Mexico*, New Mexico Arts Commission Invitational Exhibition, Community Gallery, Santa Fe
- Eṃnowaangosjig / Coming Out: The Shifting and Multiple Self*, Toronto Free Gallery

- 2011** *Honestly?*, Rhode Island School of Design graduate glass and ceramics program, Providence
- Indian Ink II*, Pravus Gallery, Phoenix
- 2010** *More Than Child's Play: American Indian Dolls*, Heard Museum North, Scottsdale, Arizona
- TIME*, installation, Buffalo Thunder Resort, Pojoaque Pueblo, New Mexico
- Black Sheep Art Collective*, Providence, Rhode Island
- 2009** *Cracked: RISD Ceramics*, Sol Koffler Gallery, Providence, Rhode Island
- Mothers and Daughters: Stories in Clay*, Heard Museum, Phoenix
- Intrigue and Novelty*, Beacon Street Gallery, Chicago
- Three: Marla Allison, Eliza Naranjo Morse, Rose Simpson*, Berlin Gallery, Heard Museum, Phoenix
- 2008** *Comic Art Indigène*, Museum of Indian Arts & Culture, Santa Fe; Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C.
- Trio*, Chiaroscuro Contemporary Art Gallery, Santa Fe
- Seventh International Biennial, *Lucky Number Seven*, SITE Santa Fe, Santa Fe
- Snap Crackle Pow! An Exhibition of Drawings*, 516 ARTS, Albuquerque
- 2006** *Intersections, Native American Art in a New Light*, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts
- Relations: Indigenous Dialogue*, IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts (MoCNA), Santa Fe

SELECTED AWARDS AND HONORS

- 2024** Ruth Award, Ruth Foundation for the Arts
- 2021** Fellowship, Joan Mitchell Foundation
Production and exhibition grant, VIA Art Fund
Residency, The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia
Residency, Tamarind Institute, Albuquerque
- 2020** Residency, Anderson Ranch Arts Center, Snowmass, Colorado
President's Award for Art & Activism, Women's Caucus for Art, Chicago
- 2017** U.S. National Park Service Artist-in-Residence, Aztec Ruins National Monument, Aztec, New Mexico
- 2015** Scholarship, Low Residency MFA, Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA)
- 2014** Native Arts Artist-in-Residence, Denver Art Museum
1st Place, 80s Street, *Lowrider* Magazine's Main Street Showdown Car Show, Española, New Mexico
1st Place, El Camino and Rancho Division, Cinco de Mayo Car Show, Española, New Mexico
- 2012** Fellowship, Native Arts and Cultures Foundation, Portland, Oregon
- 2011** Graduate student grant, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence
- 2010** Fellowship, American Indian Graduate Center, Albuquerque
Student scholarship, National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts, Critical Santa Fe Symposium, Santa Fe
Longhouse Grant, National Native Creative Development Program, Olympia, Washington
Presidential Scholar, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence
- 2009** Presidential Scholar, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence



FIG. 20

Support

Projects and initiatives for the twentieth anniversary of Madison Square Park Conservancy's art program in 2024 are funded by the following generous supporters.

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The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts
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FIG. 21

Acknowledgments

Madison Square Park Conservancy

Madison Square Park Conservancy is the nonprofit entrusted by the City of New York to operate Madison Square Park, a 6.2-acre public space in the heart of Manhattan. Our mission is to conserve, maintain, and program this ever-evolving historic green space, including raising 100% of the park's operating budget. Our dedicated team takes great pride in caring for and shaping an urban oasis for all to enjoy.

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Susan M. Donoghue
Commissioner
New York City
Department of Parks
& Recreation

Laurie Cumbo
Commissioner
Department of
Cultural Affairs

Land Acknowledgment

Madison Square Park is located on Lenapehoking, the ancestral homeland of the Lenape (Delaware) people. We recognize that this land was forcibly taken, resulting in the displacement and genocide of the Lenape (Delaware) Nations. Madison Square Park Conservancy respectfully acknowledges the Lenape (Delaware) people—past, present, and future—who continue to live, work, and connect to this land.

The Conservancy honors the Lenape (Delaware) people, the original stewards of this land, through our commitment to a series of sustainability and restoration initiatives. In the coming years, we aim to reduce our carbon imprint, promote sustainable land management, and reintroduce to the park species of fauna and flora indigenous to Lenapehoking.

For more information on Madison Square Park Conservancy and its programs, please visit madisonsquarepark.org

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Public Programs

FEBRUARY 20, 2024

"Sentinels in the City," a virtual conversation
Rose B. Simpson and Brooke Kamin Rapaport
New York Studio School's Evening Lecture Series

JUNE 18, 2024

"Why Does Figuration Remain Vital
to Contemporary Sculpture?"
Panelists Tau Lewis, Julia Phillips, and Rose B. Simpson;
moderator Eva Respini
NeueHouse Madison Square

JUNE 20, 2024

Art Talk with Rose B. Simpson
Inwood Hill Park

JULY 10, 2024

Carnegie Hall Citywide concert: Alisa Amador
Madison Square Park

JULY 17, 2024

Carnegie Hall Citywide concert: JACK Quartet
Madison Square Park

JULY 24, 2024

Carnegie Hall Citywide concert: Ekep Nkwelle
Madison Square Park

WEDNESDAYS THROUGHOUT THE EXHIBITION

Lunchtime tours of *Seed*
Madison Square Park



FIG. 22



FIG. 23

Madison Square Park Conservancy Exhibitions

- 2024** Ana María Hernando *To Let the Sky Know / Dejar que el cielo sepa*
- 2023** Sheila Pepe *My Neighbor's Garden*
Shahzia Sikander *Havah . . . to breathe, air, life*
- 2022** Cristina Iglesias *Landscape and Memory*
Hugh Hayden *Brier Patch*
- 2021** Maya Lin *Ghost Forest*
- 2020** Krzysztof Wodiczko *Monument*
Abigail DeVille *Light of Freedom*
- 2019** Leonardo Drew *City in the Grass*
- 2018** Arlene Shechet *Full Steam Ahead*
Diana Al-Hadid *Delirious Matter*
- 2017** Erwin Redl *Whiteout*
Josiah McElheny *Prismatic Park*
- 2016** Martin Puryear *Big Bling*
- 2015** Teresita Fernández *Fata Morgana*
Paula Hayes *Gazing Globes*
- 2014** Tony Cragg *Walks of Life*
Rachel Feinstein *Folly*
Iván Navarro *This Land Is Your Land*
- 2013** Giuseppe Penone *Ideas of Stone (Idee di pietra)*
Orly Genger *Red, Yellow and Blue*
Sandra Gibson and Luis Recoder *Topsy-Turvy: A Camera Obscura Installation*
- 2012** Leo Villareal *BUCKYBALL*
Charles Long *Pet Sounds*
- 2011** Jacco Olivier *Stumble, Hide, Rabbit Hole, Bird, Deer, Home*
Alison Saar *Feallan and Fallow*
Jaume Plensa *Echo*
Kota Ezawa *City of Nature*

- 2010** Jim Campbell *Scattered Light*
Antony Gormley *Event Horizon*
Ernie Gehr *Surveillance*
- 2009** Shannon Plumb *The Park*
Jessica Stockholder *Flooded Chambers Maid*
Mel Kendrick *Markers*
Bill Beirne *Madison Square Trapezoids, with Performances by the Vigilant Groundsman*
- 2008** Olia Lialina & Dragan Espenschied *Online Newspapers: New York Edition*
Richard Deacon *Assembly*
Tadashi Kawamata *Tree Huts*
Rafael Lozano-Hemmer *Pulse Park*
- 2007** Bill Fontana *Panoramic Echoes*
Roxy Paine *Conjoined, Defunct, Erratic*
William Wegman *Around the Park*
- 2006** Ursula von Rydingsvard *Bowl with Fins, Czara z Babelkami, Damski Czepek, Ted's Desert Reigns*
- 2005** Jene Highstein *Eleven Works*
Sol LeWitt *Circle with Towers, Curved Wall with Towers*
- 2004** Mark di Suvero *Aesop's Fable, Double Tetrahedron, Beyond*
- 2003** Wim Delvoye *Gothic*
- 2002** Dan Graham *Bisected Triangle, Interior Curve*
Mark Dion *Urban Wildlife Observation Unit*
Dalziel + Scullion *Voyager*
- 2001** Navin Rawanchaikul *I ♥ Taxi*
Teresita Fernández *Bamboo Cinema*
Tobias Rehberger *Tsutsumu N.Y.*
- 2000** Tony Oursler *The Influence Machine*
From 2000 to 2003, the Public Art Fund presented exhibitions on behalf of the Campaign for the New Madison Square Park.

Photography and Figure Credits

Unless otherwise noted, all works by

Rose B. Simpson (Santa Clara Pueblo, b. 1983)
Seed, 2024

IN MADISON SQUARE PARK:

Seven works: steel and bronze; each 18 feet high x 4 feet, 6 inches x 4 feet, 6 inches
 One work: bronze; 4 feet high x 1 foot, 8 inches x 1 foot, 8 inches

IN INWOOD HILL PARK:

Two works: bronze; each 8 feet high x 2 feet x 2 feet

Collection the artist, courtesy Jessica Silverman and Jack Shainman Gallery



FIG. 3
 Photo: Madison Square Park Conservancy



FIG. 4
 Photo: Hunter Canning



FIG. 5
 Photo: Hunter Canning



FIG. 6
 Photo: Hunter Canning



COVER
 Photo: Elisabeth Bernstein



BACK COVER
 Photo: Elisabeth Bernstein



FIG. 7
 Photo: Hunter Canning



FIG. 8
 Photo: Elisabeth Bernstein



FIG. 1
 Photo: Elisabeth Bernstein



FIG. 2
 Photo: Hunter Canning



FIG. 9
 Photo: Elisabeth Bernstein



FIG. 10
 Photo: Rashmi Gill



FIG. 11
Photo: Elisabeth Bernstein



FIGS. 12-13
Proposal for Seed, 2022.



FIG. 18
Photo: Hunter Canning

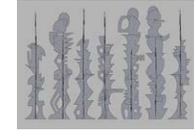


FIG. 19
Proposal for Seed, 2022.



FIG. 14
Photo: Rashmi Gill



FIG. 15
Photo: Rashmi Gill



FIG. 20
Photo: Elisabeth Bernstein



FIG. 21
Photo: Rashmi Gill



FIG. 16
Photo: Elisabeth Bernstein



FIG. 17
Photo: Rashmi Gill



FIG. 22
Art Talk with Rose B. Simpson
in Inwood Hill Park, June 20,
2024. Photo: Madison Square
Park Conservancy.



FIG. 23
Carnegie Hall Citywide
concert in Madison Square
Park, July 10, 2024. Photo:
Madison Square Park
Conservancy.



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