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Media Contact
info@socratessculpturepark.org

Socrates Sculpture Park Executive Director To Step Down In The Coming Year.



Executive Director John Hatfield.

Long Island City, NY | October 14, 2020 – John Hatfield, Executive Director of Socrates Sculpture Park since 2012, has announced his plans to step down after nine years leading the outdoor sculpture park. His departure will occur when a successor is chosen. A transition committee has been appointed by the Board to conduct this important search and expects a new Executive Director to begin by mid-2021.

Hatfield's tenure at Socrates has been marked by the celebration the Park's 30th Anniversary; the initiation of important commissions in the Park by acclaimed artists such as Agnes Denes and Nari Ward; a significantly expanded digital presence and publication program; dramatic improvements to the facilities; and greatly enhanced social and education programming – all of which has made Socrates a cultural anchor to the Queens community and a nationally renowned public art venue. Of his departure, Hatfield stated:

"I will be stepping down as Executive Director of Socrates Sculpture Park sometime in early-to mid-2021 after a new Executive Director has joined the organization. It has been my great privilege to lead such an extraordinary organization over the last nine years. Socrates remains fiscally sound, and after a successful presentation of MONUMENTS NOW, our current exhibition, it is a good time to facilitate a transition with the Board for a new Executive Director before another programming season begins in early spring of 2021.

"I am so proud of Socrates' mission and work, especially this year – remaining open and active throughout the pandemic to serve New Yorkers. I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the Board, staff, artists, supporters, and all of our partners at Socrates for making the Park such a unique and special place in our cultural landscape. There have been many accomplishments during my tenure, and I am confident that even greater accomplishments will follow with a new Executive Director."

Stuart Suna, Socrates Board President, stated on behalf of the entire Board of Directors:

"We are thankful for John's contribution over the years and grateful to have the opportunity for a seamless transition with a new Executive Director. During John's tenure, the Park's operating budget, attendance, and staff has each doubled in size, and the organization has elevated its artistic ambition, expanded social and

educational programming, and diversified its board and staff. We will miss John's leadership and friendship, and support any future endeavors he may pursue. We are all also excited about the possibilities for the future of Socrates and what a new Executive Director will bring to the organization."

For decades, Socrates has been in partnership with NYC Parks as a non-for-profit that manages a New York City public park. Of John Hatfield's departure, NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP said:

"It has been a pleasure working in partnership with John Hatfield and seeing Socrates Sculpture Park thrive under his leadership. Over the past nine years, John's promotion and activation of the space has boldly advanced the creative and equitable vision of this unique art park. We commend Socrates Sculpture Park's expansion during his tenure, and we look forward to the selection of a new Executive Director who will further innovate and expand the Park's mission."

In the coming months, Socrates will begin the search process for a new Executive Director while continuing its work with artists and community partners. The Park's transition committee will work alongside community stakeholders and the Park's staff to realize a search that holds inclusivity as a core tenet and promise of the Park.

MONUMENTS NOW

Currently on view is *MONUMENTS NOW* with major new commissions by acclaimed artists Jeffrey Gibson, Paul Ramírez Jonas, and Xaviera Simmons. On Saturday, October 10, the second part of the exhibition, *Call and Response* – with projects by the Park's 2020 Artist Fellows, went on view alongside the first phase, adding 10 newly-commissioned monuments. The third and final part of the exhibition, *The Next Generation*, was also unveiled with a monument sculpture realized by local high-school students participating in the Park's Socrateens art education program.

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