

MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA To Expand Outdoor Art Offerings with Taryn Simon's *The Pipes*

Simon's Large-Scale Sculpture is a Reimagined and Redesigned Version of the Pipes Featured in her Acclaimed Performance *An Occupation of Loss*

North Adams, Massachusetts – March 24, 2021 – The Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) has announced that a large-scale outdoor sculpture by Taryn Simon, titled *The Pipes*, will be on long-term view on the museum's campus starting May 29, 2021. What began as an oversized concrete instrument for a cacophony of global mourning in Simon's work *An Occupation of Loss* will be populated by the sounds, collective call and response, and movements of a living public. The 11 structures that make up the installation – which Simon originally designed in collaboration with Shohei Shigematsu of architecture firm OMA – are modular, and have been adapted by Simon and Shigematsu for the MASS MoCA campus.

The Pipes joins MASS MoCA's growing constellation of long-term outdoor artworks sited throughout the museum's campus and downtown North Adams, including works by Jenny Holzer, Martin Puryear, James Turrell, and Franz West. This will be Simon's second project at MASS MoCA, following her acclaimed 2018 solo exhibition *A Cold Hole + Assembled Audience*.

The Pipes are an immersive experience, offered to the public as a sacred space for reflection, impromptu performance, and stargazing. The form and function of *The Pipes* simultaneously conjures the futuristic and the ancient. As Simon noted in a public conversation with Homi K. Bhabha: "The concrete, modular, installation has a monumental appearance but was inspired by the subterranean form of the well. I was initially drawn to their sonic properties, and by inverting their structure – literally flipping it upright – I was able to reference their invisible scale."

The sculpture was commissioned by the Park Avenue Armory and Artangel for the 2016 exhibition *An Occupation of Loss*, where the pipes were activated by both professional mourners and the larger public. The mourners' sonic rituals included northern Albanian laments, which seek to excavate "uncried words"; Wayyu laments, which safeguard the soul's passage to the Milky Way; Greek Epirotic laments, which bind the story of a life with its afterlife; and Yazidi laments, which trace a topography of displacement and exile. By day, Simon's sculpture was occupied by the living, who projected different soundscapes and cacophonies by interacting with each other and the pipes themselves. Simon's installation considered the anatomy of grief and the intricate systems we use to manage contingencies of fate and the certainty of death.

Reconceptualized at MASS MoCA, *The Pipes* will be installed outdoors, where it will generate a sonic community over time. Resonating with MASS MoCA's commitment to contemporary visual and performing art, this reimagining of *The Pipes* will offer a space for visitors to quietly

contemplate or to fill with the sounds of their own instruments, vocals, and accidental and intentional performances. The sculpture will be sited adjacent to Joe's Field, the museum's largest performing arts venue. Visitors including local school and community groups and

musicians-in-residence will be welcomed to use the space during festivals and throughout the year. The installation of *The Pipes* at MASS MoCA will overlay the sculptures' sonic memory of loss with the spontaneity of life.

The installation of Taryn Simon's *The Pipes* at MASS MoCA was made possible in part by the Michael G. and C. Jane Wilson 2007 Trust, Gagosian Gallery, Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte, and David Zicarelli and Virginia Troyer.

ABOUT TARYN SIMON

Taryn Simon directs our attention to familiar systems of organization—bloodlines, circulating picture collections, mourning rituals, ceremonial flower arrangements—making visible the contours of power and authority hidden within them. Incorporating mediums ranging from photography and sculpture to text, sound, and performance, her works are informed by research on and with institutions including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Central Zionist Archives, the International Commission on Missing Persons, Smith & Wesson, The Walt Disney Company, and the Fine Arts Commission of the CIA. Her books and projects include *The Picture Collection* (2013–2020), *A Cold Hole* (2018–2019), *Assembled Audience* (2018–2019), *An Occupation of Loss* (2016, 2018), *Paperwork and the Will of Capital* (2016), *Image Atlas* (2012), *A Living Man Declared Dead and Other Chapters, I–XVIII* (2008–2011), *Contraband* (2010), *An American Index of the Hidden and Unfamiliar* (2007), *Black Square* (2006–), and *The Innocents* (2002).

Simon produced *The Innocents* (2002) with the support of a fellowship in photography from the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. Her work is in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Kunstmuseum Luzern; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and was included in the 56th Venice Biennale (2015). Her work has been exhibited at the New York Public Library (2020–2021); the Wexner Center for the Arts (2020); Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, Massachusetts (2018–2019); Artangel, London (2018); Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark (2016–2017); Park Avenue Armory, New York (2016); Albertinum, Dresden (2016); Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague (2016); Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2016); Jeu de Paume, Paris (2015); UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2013); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2012); Tate Modern, London (2011); Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2011); and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2007).

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