



G R O U N D S F O R S C U L P T U R E

Roberto Lugo Debuts New Works in Solo Exhibition at Grounds For Sculpture

On-Site Residency Leads to Lugo's First Monumental Sculpture

Hamilton, NJ – April 18, 2022 – A solo exhibition highlighting **Roberto Lugo** will debut all new works by the artist, social activist, spoken word poet, and educator at **Grounds For Sculpture** this spring. Reimagining traditional European and Asian porcelain forms and techniques with a 21st-century street sensibility, these multicultural mash-ups were created on site during a residency at Grounds For Sculpture this winter. Opening May 22, 2022 and on view through January 8, 2023, **Roberto Lugo: The Village Potter** includes a 20-ft high vessel with an interactive viewing platform – representing the first time the artist has worked at this scale.

“Grounds For Sculpture amplifies the diverse voices and visions of those working in the field today,” said Gary Schneider, Executive Director of Grounds For Sculpture and co-curator of the exhibition, along with Faith McClellan, Director of Exhibitions and Collections. “As an artist, Roberto addresses equity and justice through visually compelling and exquisitely made ceramics; as a person, he shares our commitment to making art accessible to all.”

Born in Kensington, Philadelphia to Puerto Rican parents, Roberto Lugo began his explorations in art as a graffiti artist before discovering ceramics. In his current practice, he uses a variety of clay bodies, including porcelain, and illuminates its historically aristocratic surface with imagery that creates conversation around key themes in his work: equity, access, and social and racial justice. His surface treatment is a mixture of traditional design, graffiti, and portraiture focusing on representation of iconic people of color from contemporary culture and history, from Sojourner Truth, Dr. Cornel West, and The Notorious BIG, to Lugo's family members and, very often, himself.

For Grounds For Sculpture's exhibition, Lugo created his first monumental sculpture in milled foam. Titled *Put Yourself in the Picture*, the work was completed by the artist on site during his residency, fabricated at The Digital Atelier, and then painted by Lugo at The Seward Johnson Atelier. Visitors will be invited to walk in and through the vessel via the viewing platform, which will also be activated as a performative stage and DJ booth at set times during the run of the exhibition. A drop-in maker space in the gallery further extends the interactivity of the exhibition, providing the opportunity to experience the materiality of clay.

Additional new ceramic works in the exhibition include at least eight large-scale vessels and more intimately sized tea sets, with new subject matter addressing recent events such as Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson's Supreme Court confirmation and the locality of Grounds For Sculpture, including its iconic peacocks. The mezzanine of the gallery includes a selection of work by other artists, curated by Lugo, and explores the theme of mentorship in the development of his practice.

“For my exhibition at Grounds For Sculpture, I reflected on what it means to be the ‘village potter’— both in terms of celebrating the people who have paved the way forward for me and striving to build that sense of community support for others,” said Roberto Lugo. “Art builds empathy as well as an

understanding of other people that will lead us to see ourselves in one another and grow a family rather than a society.”

As part of Grounds For Sculpture’s in-depth exploration of ceramics this spring, a concurrent exhibition in partnership with The Color Network and Guest Curated by Angelik Vizcarrondo-Laboy features sixteen artists of color working in clay and using the medium to meditate on social, environmental, and individual perceptions of fragility. A series of artist-led programs will activate these themes and provide new avenues for audience participation and community engagement.

Sponsor Information

Roberto Lugo: The Village Potter and *Fragile: Earth* are supported by lead sponsor Bank of America, with major support from the Edna W. Andrade Fund of the Philadelphia Foundation, The Gordon and Llura Gund Foundation, the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel & Tourism, and Marjorie Ogilvie and Miller Parker. Additional generous exhibition support by the Brooke Barrie Art Fund, Judith Burgis, Drs. Umesh and Sunanda Gaur, Holman, NRG, PSEG, and Barbara Eberlein and Jerry Wind. Support is provided in part by the Atlantic Foundation, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts; and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.

Member Preview Day

Grounds For Sculpture will hold a special preview day for its Members on Saturday, May 21, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The exhibitions *Roberto Lugo: The Village Potter* and *Fragile: Earth*, which will not open to the general public until the following day, will both be on view and programs include opportunities to meet the artists and curators. Member reservations are required.

Hours and Ticketing

Both *Roberto Lugo: The Village Potter* and *Fragile: Earth* will be on view to the public with general admission. Visitors should check the Grounds For Sculpture website for extended hours.

Advance timed ticket reservations are highly recommended to ensure entry. Reservations can be made online at [groundsforsculpture.org](https://www.groundsfor Sculpture.org). Capacity is limited and tickets often sell out on weekends and holidays. Member reservations are required on weekends (Saturdays and Sundays) and holidays. Tickets are available up to two weeks in advance and are released on a weekly basis.

About Roberto Lugo

Roberto Lugo holds a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute and an MFA from Penn State. His work has been featured in exhibitions at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, and the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, among others. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including a 2019 Pew Fellowship, a Cynthia Hazen Polsky and Leon Polsky Rome Prize, and a US Artist Award. His work is found in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, The High Museum of

Art, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Brooklyn Museum, Walters Art Museum, and more. He is currently an Assistant Professor at Tyler School of Art and Architecture in Philadelphia, PA.

About Grounds For Sculpture

Grounds For Sculpture is a 42-acre not-for-profit sculpture park, arboretum, and museum, founded by the late artist and philanthropist Seward Johnson. Featuring more than 300 contemporary sculptures by renowned and emerging artists in a beckoning landscape, Grounds For Sculpture combines art and nature to surprise, inspire, and engage all visitors in the artist's act of invention. In addition to its permanent collection, Grounds For Sculpture offers rotating special exhibitions in its six indoor galleries, rich educational programs, and dynamic family events. Located in Hamilton, New Jersey, Grounds For Sculpture is easily accessible from both the New York City and Philadelphia metropolitan areas and is now open year-round. For more information, visit groundsforsculpture.org.

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