



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

Final Weeks to See *Clifford Ward: I'll Make Me a World* at Grounds For Sculpture

The Exhibition, Which Closes on January 11, 2026, Represents Over a Decade of Creative Work That Resonates with the Collective Human Experience

Hamilton, NJ — December 12, 2025 — ***Clifford Ward: I'll Make Me a World***, an exhibition guest curated by Noah Smalls, is entering its final weeks and will close on January 11, 2026. Currently on view in the sculpture park's Museum Building, this exhibition presents a rich tapestry of themes and concepts in Ward's expansive practice. It spans over a decade of creative work, much of which was created at his studio on Grounds For Sculpture (GFS) campus. Ward is inspired by a diverse array of cultural influences, including contributions from the African diaspora, Australian Aboriginal people, and Native American and Māori cultures. His work often explores geometry, Cubism, mythology, and anthropomorphism. Together, these myriad influences, themes and concepts transcend temporal and geographical confines, resonating with the collective human experience.

"We've been delighted to showcase an extensive body of work from an artist with whom we have a long-standing relationship," said **Kathleen Greene, Chief Audience Officer at Grounds For Sculpture**. "The diverse cultural narratives woven into Ward's wide-ranging artistic practice have been relatable to both existing and new audiences."

Ward's artistic journey envisions a Black future that reclaims and reinterprets the symbolism and history of the past. Conceptually, it aligns with Afrofuturism, a cultural aesthetic with roots in the mid-twentieth century. The aesthetic weaves together science fiction, history and fantasy to explore Black experiences and imagine liberatory futures. This is embodied by Ward's "Animism" series, a body of work featuring totemic figures displaying intricate geometries, mythologies, textures, and symbols. Despite their ethereal origins, these sculptures firmly root themselves in the present moment. These works also demonstrate a sculptural process that Ward has developed and refined over many years: wrapping plaster bandages around a supporting armature, which is reinforced and shaped with a variety of materials, such as steel, wood, Styrofoam, cardboard, and newspaper, and subsequently finished with shellac, brown wax, and acrylic paint.

"Having always felt the inclination to create, I made a significant piece one night using a long balloon

wrapped around a cranberry juice jar, applied paper mâché, and painted it. This simple piece was the impetus that changed my life—leading to my becoming a professional artist,” remarked **Clifford Ward**. “Since then, I’ve expanded this technique to create wall reliefs and figures ranging from six feet to nine feet.”

"It's been an honor to curate this exhibition alongside Clifford Ward, whose unwavering vision and dedication to his masterful artistic practice was a constant source of inspiration throughout this project," added the exhibition's curator, **Noah Smalls**. "Much of the work Clifford has created over the past decade has never been exhibited before, and it's been exciting to share these extraordinary pieces with the GFS community and audiences beyond."

This solo exhibition of Ward's work not only celebrates Afrofuturism as a dynamic artistic genre, but also underscores its evolution and potential future directions within visual culture. It encourages audiences to engage deeply with diverse cultural narratives, transcending temporal and spatial boundaries to address themes that are simultaneously timeless and forward-thinking. It invites viewers to embark on a journey of exploration and introspection, hopefully challenging them to reconsider their perspectives on identity, history, and the future.

Clifford Ward: I'll Make Me A World is made possible by generous exhibition support from Julie and Michael Nachamkin. Additional support is provided by the Brooke Barrie Art Fund, NRG Energy, and Marjorie Ogilvie. Support is provided in part by The New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a division of the NJ Department of State, and a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Atlantic Foundation.

About the Guest Curator for *Clifford Ward: I'll Make Me a World*:

Noah Smalls (he/him) is a museum consultant, exhibition designer, gallery director, and interpretive program developer. With a diverse portfolio of clients, including the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (PAFA), Mural Arts Philadelphia, the African American Museum in Philadelphia (AAMP), the Kentucky Center for African American Heritage, and the American Friends Service Committee, Smalls has left an indelible mark on numerous cultural institutions across the nation. He currently serves as the Director of Exhibitions and Collections Management at the esteemed Williams College Museum of Art in Massachusetts, as well as the Director of the vibrant Rush Arts Philadelphia Gallery in Pennsylvania. Smalls brings a depth of knowledge and artistic insight to his work, continually pushing boundaries and challenging the status quo. Driven by his mission to contribute to the ongoing transition of the museum field, he is dedicated to creating spaces that showcase art and serve as platforms for dialogue, education, and social change. His vision for the future of museums embraces diversity and accessibility, ensuring that art remains a powerful tool for transformation and enlightenment.

Also on view now at Grounds For Sculpture:

[*Salvador Jiménez-Flores: Raíces & Resistencias*](#), a solo exhibition that explores critical issues of migration, cultural hybridity, and resilience. On view in the park's East Gallery and outdoors, the exhibition comprises two site-specific pieces that feature slip painting and portrait forms, and two bronze cast sculptures, one of which was commissioned for the sculpture park's permanent collection. The exhibition is curated by GFS Executive Director Gary Garrido Schneider. Open now through August 1, 2027.

Salvador Jiménez-Flores: Raíces & Resistencias is made possible, in part, by the Brooke Barrie Art Fund and Hella and Scott McVay. Support is provided, in part, by The New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a division of the NJ Department of State, and a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Atlantic Foundation.

About Grounds For Sculpture

Grounds For Sculpture (GFS) is a 42-acre not-for-profit sculpture park, arboretum, and museum, founded by the late Seward Johnson. Featuring over 300 contemporary sculptures by renowned and emerging artists in a beckoning, ever-changing landscape, Grounds For Sculpture combines art and nature to surprise, inspire, and engage visitors from all backgrounds in the artist's act of invention. Grounds For Sculpture offers exhibitions in six indoor galleries alongside experiential art, horticulture, and wellness programs and its campus includes 25 artist studios and Johnson Atelier, which boasts state of the art sculpture fabrication and restoration capabilities. Located in Hamilton, New Jersey, Grounds For Sculpture is easily accessible from the New York City and Philadelphia metropolitan areas by public transit and is open year-round. For more information, visit [groundsforsculpture.org](https://www.groundsforsculpture.org).

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