

Dia:

For Immediate Release

April 30, 2013

**Dia Art Foundation presents Thomas Hirschhorn's *Gramsci Monument* from
July 1–September 15, 2013**

**Thomas Hirschhorn's first *Monument* in the United States and Dia's first public
commission since Joseph Beuys's *7000 Oaks* in 1996**

(New York, NY) – Dia Art Foundation will present *Gramsci Monument*, a new artwork by Thomas Hirschhorn, on the grounds of Forest Houses, a New York City Housing Authority development in the Morrisania neighborhood of the Bronx, New York. *Gramsci Monument* will be open to the public from July 1–September 15, 2013.

MONUMENT

“My decision to do *Gramsci Monument* does not come from an understanding of the philosopher Antonio Gramsci, rather it comes from my understanding of art and my belief that art can transform.” -- Thomas Hirschhorn

Gramsci Monument is the fourth and last in Thomas Hirschhorn's series of “monuments” dedicated to major writers and thinkers, which he initiated in 1999 with *Spinoza Monument* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), followed by *Deleuze Monument* (Avignon, France, 2000) and *Bataille Monument* (Kassel, Germany, 2002). This fourth monument pays tribute to the Italian political theorist and Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), famous for his *Letters* and *Prison Notebooks* (1926–1937). *Gramsci Monument* is based on Hirschhorn's will “to establish a definition of monument,’ to provoke encounters, to create an event, and to think Gramsci today. My love for Antonio Gramsci is the love of philosophy, the love of the infinitude of thought. It is a question of sharing this, affirming it, defending it, and giving it form.”

Dia Art Foundation

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NON-EXCLUSIVE AUDIENCE

Over the years, Hirschhorn has maintained a commitment to presenting his work in exhibition spaces such as museums and galleries, but also in “public space”: urban settings, sidewalks, vacant lots, and communal grounds of public housing projects. Every work of Hirschhorn’s aims to include the Other, and address what he calls a “non-exclusive audience.” “The *Gramsci Monument* will remain an affirmation of an autonomous art work that is made as a gesture of love. This gesture doesn’t necessarily call for an answer; it’s both utopian and concrete. I want to create a new form, based on my love for a “non-exclusive audience.”

“*Gramsci Monument* is a defining project for Dia, and working with Thomas is both a privilege and a learning experience. Every day we learn from his uncompromising commitment to art and audiences,” says Philippe Vergne, Director, Dia Art Foundation. “*Gramsci Monument* reinforces Dia’s commitment to off-site commissions, which is at the center of our mission. I am confident that through this project Dia will become a different, stronger institution — one that is even more engaged with the reality of art today.”.

PRESENCE AND PRODUCTION

With *Gramsci Monument*, Hirschhorn will apply his guidelines for “Presence and Production” by being present and producing on location during the full course of the project. “To be ‘present’ and to ‘produce’ means to make a physical statement, here and now. I believe that only through presence—my presence —and only through production —my production— can my work have an impact in Public Space or at a public location.”

Hirschhorn’s ambition is to create through his work, a form of “co-existence,” where questions of autonomy, authorship, and energy are addressed, challenged, and ultimately reinvented.

FORM/PROJECT

Gramsci Monument will take the form of an outdoor pavilion constructed with easily available, “unintimidating,” everyday materials. The structure will be built—and later dismantled—by local residents of Forest Houses, coordinated by Hirschhorn and Erik Farmer, Forest Houses Resident Association President and long-time resident. As was the case in his previous monuments, it is the artist’s intention that *Gramsci Monument* be built and run with the help of local residents, employed temporarily and involved at every stage of the project.

The structure will include an exhibition space with a selection of archives and a library with books by (and about) Antonio Gramsci, borrowed from the Fondazione Istituto Gramsci in Rome, Casa Museo di Antonio Gramsci in Ghilarza, Italy, and the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute in New York, a theater platform, a workshop area, a lounge, an internet corner, and the *Gramsci Bar*, which will be run by local residents. The *Gramsci Monument* will be open daily, offering a daily program of lectures by philosopher Marcus Steinweg, a children's workshop run by Lex Brown, a play titled the *Gramsci Theater*, a radio station, and a daily newspaper. Weekly programs will include Gramsci Seminars led by eleven scholars, Poetry Lectures and Workshops led by eleven writers, Art Workshops led by Hirschhorn, open microphone events coordinated by the community, and field trips organized by the project's "ambassador," Dia curator, Yasmil Raymond.

In order to be continuously present on location throughout the production of his artwork, Hirschhorn will temporarily reside in the South Bronx (from July 1 - September 15) with Lex Brown, Marcus Steinweg, and Dia's curator, Yasmil Raymond.

"It has been a privilege to work alongside Thomas as he puts forth a new idea of the monument and creates an active space of exchange between people, ideas and communities. The depth of his engagement is exceptional. Thomas has the absolute will to include others, and wants to put the whole world in his work," said Raymond,. "We are deeply grateful to NYCHA Chairman John Rhea and the hardworking team at NYCHA for embracing this project. Above all, our most profound gratitude goes out to the residents of Forest Houses—in particular Erik Farmer, Clyde Thompson, and Diane Herbert—for joining us in this beautiful effort and offering a firm handshake from day one."

Hirschhorn has also created a website as part of the *Gramsci Monument*. It is an informative platform offering texts, notes, pictures and videos documenting the process of the artwork, from its earliest sketches. The website will be updated daily with the productions, philosophy lectures, newspaper and radio streaming that have taken place. It will also offer a "press-kit" with pictures and texts available for publication (free of rights). The website, following the monument's guideline, is meant to be temporary, and will end on December 31, 2013. For additional information, visit www.gramsci-monument.com.

LOCATION

To realize this project, Dia and the artist are collaborating with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). Hirschhorn began “field work” two years ago, visiting forty-six Public Housing sites all around New York City, and meeting with residents in three boroughs, before focusing on seven locations in the Bronx: Castle Hill, Soundview, Monroe Houses, Patterson, Bronx River, Claremont and Butler Houses and Forest Houses. The “encounters” at Forest Houses with Diane Herbert, Clyde Thompson and Erik Farmer were decisive for Hirschhorn: “I was challenged and taken seriously. These were the real encounters between me and the Other—and one can easily understand that without these encounters, no decision regarding a possible location can be taken. This is why the *Gramsci Monument* will take place at Forest Houses.”

“The New York City Housing Authority is very much looking forward to our residents engaging in this very special endeavor,” said NYCHA Chairman John Rhea. “We especially thank artist Thomas Hirschhorn for bringing his unique vision to public housing, and totally involving Forest Houses residents. And we thank Dia Art Foundation for its generosity in making this artistic effort possible.”

Gramsci Monument will be Dia’s first public commission in New York City since 1996, when Dia extended Joseph Beuys’s *7000 Oaks* on West 22nd Street from 10th to 11th Avenues. The opportunity to work with Hirschhorn represents a new manifestation of Dia’s commitment to enabling artists to achieve ambitious projects that cannot be realized within the museum context. In anticipation of the *Gramsci Monument*, from September 15–November 3, 2012, in New York City, Dia presented *Timeline: Work in Public Space*, which comprised a 30-foot linear layout of images, written statements, and text excerpts chronicling Hirschhorn’s interventions in “public spaces” in urban and rural sites from 1989 to 2011.

Dia Art Foundation offers special thanks to the New York City Housing Authority. Major support for *Gramsci Monument* has been provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and Maja Oeri and Hans Bodenmann. Generous support has also been provided by Dia’s Commissioning Committee: Jill and Peter Kraus, Leslie and Mac McQuown, Genny and Selmo Nissenbaum, and Liz Gerring Radke and Kirk August Radke. Public funding has been provided

by Pro Helvetia, the Swiss Arts Council, the Jan Michalski Foundation and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. Additional support has been provided by the Martin and Rebecca Eisenberg Foundation, Stéphane Samuel and Robert Melvin Rubin and Lenore and Adam Sender.

RELATED PROGRAM

Conversations and Lectures

Thomas Hirschhorn in conversation with Yasmil Raymond

Saturday, May 11, 2013, 6 pm
545 West 22nd Street, NYC

Thomas Hirschhorn

Thomas Hirschhorn was born in Bern, Switzerland, in 1957. He studied at the Kunstgewerbeschule Zürich from 1978 to 1983. Over the past thirty years, Hirschhorn has become internationally renowned for his critically engaged and humanistic aesthetic. He has created over sixty works in public space that pair everyday materials with a universalizing approach that proposes that both the work of art and the process of artistic creation are collaborative and accessible to a broad ranging audience. Since his first solo show in 1986 (Bar Floréal, Paris), Hirschhorn has garnered much critical attention and has had solo exhibitions at international venues, including the Art Institute of Chicago (1998); Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2001); Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2005); Museo Tamayo, Mexico City (2008); and Secession, Vienna (2008). In 2009, he completed a new homage to Spinoza entitled "The Bijlmer Spinoza-Festival," in Amsterdam, and he has most recently held solo exhibitions at the Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium (2010); Les Ateliers de Rennes, France (2010); the Sprengel Museum, Hannover (2011) and Gladstone Gallery, New York (2012). Among many group exhibitions, he has participated in Skulptur Projekte in Münster (1997); the Venice Biennial (1999 and 2011); Documenta 11 in Kassel (2002); São Paulo Bienal (2006); the Carnegie International, Pittsburgh (2008); Brighton Photo Biennial (2008); Tirana International Art Biannual (2009); the 8th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2010); Moma PS1 (2011) and, most recently, at the 9th Shanghai Biennale; La Triennale, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2012) and Kunsthalle Mannheim (2013). Hirschhorn has received numerous awards and prizes, including the Preis für Junge Schweizer Kunst (1999), Marcel Duchamp Prize (2000), Rolandpreis für Kunst im öffentlichen Raum (2003), Joseph Beuys Prize (2004), and Kurt Schwitters Prize (2011). He has been living and working in Paris since 1984.

Forest Houses

Forest Houses

Bronx, NY

Gramsci Monument is located on the grounds of Forest Houses, off Tinton Avenue between 163rd and 165th Streets.

Directions

Subway: 2, 5 at Prospect Avenue

Head north on Prospect Avenue

Turn left onto 163rd Street

Pass Union Avenue

Turn right onto Tinton Avenue

Take first left onto pedestrian pathway leading into Forest Houses

New York Housing Authority

NYCHA is committed to increasing opportunities for low- and moderate-income New Yorkers by providing safe, affordable housing and facilitating access to social and community services.

More than 400,000 New Yorkers reside in NYCHA's 334 public housing developments around the five boroughs, and another 235,000 receive subsidized rental assistance in private homes through the NYCHA-administered Section 8 Leased Housing Program.

Dia Art Foundation

Dia Art Foundation, founded in 1974, is committed to initiating, supporting, presenting, and preserving extraordinary art projects. Dia:Beacon opened in May 2003 in Beacon, New York.

Dia also maintains several long-term, site-specific projects including Walter De Maria's *The New York Earth Room* (1977) and *The Broken Kilometer* (1979), Max Neuhaus's *Times Square* (1977), Joseph Beuys's *7000 Oaks* (1988), and Dan Flavin's *untitled* (1996), all in Manhattan; the Dan Flavin Art Institute in Bridgehampton, New York; De Maria's *The Vertical Earth Kilometer* (1977) in Kassel, Germany, and *The Lightning Field* (1977) in Quemado, New Mexico; and Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970) in the Great Salt Lake, Utah. Dia also commissions original artists' projects produced for the web and produces scholarly publications.

Dia currently presents temporary installations, artist lectures, and readings on West 22nd Street in the Chelsea section of New York City, the neighborhood it helped pioneer. Plans for a new project space are underway.

For more information please visit www.diaart.org.

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For additional information contact: press@diaart.org / 212 293 5518