

News Release



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Event Date: Sunday, November 6, 2022

Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of Patricia Cronin's Memorial to a Marriage

Recognized for having the “largest and finest collection of funerary art in the country,” The Woodlawn Cemetery (est. 1863) encourages lot owners to create personalized memorials. One of the most significant works of art in the cemetery’s collection is *Memorial to A Marriage*, a full-sized depiction of artist Patricia Cronin and her wife in a lovers’ embrace. Over the course of its twenty-year history, laws have changed, and culture has changed, making the sculpture the world’s first Marriage Equality monument. On Sunday, November 6th, the Woodlawn Conservancy will host a series of walks and talks to celebrate the contribution the work has made to memorial art.

Award winning visual artist Patricia Cronin created *Memorial to A Marriage* in 2002, when gay marriage was illegal throughout the United States. Crafted in the 19th century American Neoclassical style as a mortuary sculpture of Cronin and her (now) wife, artist Deborah Kass, it is a monument to what should be, equal rights for all. Before same sex marriage became legal in 2015, to simulate just a few of the 1200 rights heterosexual marriage affords, same-sex couples had to pay for elaborate legal documents predominantly about the end of their lives.

“What I couldn’t have in life, I would have forever in death. I decided to imagine a world where misogyny and homophobia didn’t exist. In *Memorial To A Marriage*, I imagine Deborah and myself, after a long fulfilling life together, carved in 3 tons of Carrara marble resting with the powerful and notable at Woodlawn. With the national conversations about monuments and who is memorialized in the public square, why are there still so few women and LGBTQ+ people represented? I have the radical imagination to reject my absence and insist on my presence with dignity,” says Cronin.

Thousands of visitors have made the pilgrimage to the Bronx to see the monument. The original work was executed in Carrara marble. To ensure its longevity, Cronin made a bronze version of the memorial—enabling the original to be shown by museums. *Memorial To A Marriage* has been included in over 50 exhibitions in the U.S. and Europe, including the American Academy in Rome, Italy; Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow, Scotland; Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; The FLAG Art Foundation, New York, NY; Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, New York, NY; Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa, FL; Newcomb Art Museum, New Orleans, LA; Wrightwood 659 Museum, Chicago, IL; and Station Museum of Contemporary Art, Houston, TX; among others.

Bronze versions are in the permanent collection of Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC; Fuhrman Family Foundation, New York, NY; Perez Art Museum, Miami, FL; Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Scotland; and Woodlawn Cemetery, Bronx; as well as many private collections. In 2022, *Memorial To A Marriage*, became the centerpiece of the world’s first VR LGBTQ+ Museum.

About the Artist:

Patricia Cronin is an interdisciplinary conceptual artist whose paintings, sculptures and public art examine issues of gender, sexuality, and social justice. Cronin's work has been exhibited widely in the U.S. and internationally, including *Shrine For Girls* at the 56th Venice Biennale that traveled to The FLAG Art Foundation, New York, the LAB Gallery, Dublin, Ireland and Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, The Netherlands. Other solo exhibitions were presented at Capitoline Museum's Centrale Montemartini Museum, and the American Academy in Rome, Rome, Italy, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY, and the Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa, FL. Cronin is the recipient of numerous awards including: the Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome, Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award, and Civitella Ranieri Fellowship. Her work is in the permanent collections of the National Gallery of Art and Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa, FL, among others. She is Professor of Art at Brooklyn College, CUNY.

About the Event:

On November 6, 2022, from 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM, there will be self-guided tours of monuments designed and created by women and LGBT artists. These monuments depict both real and allegorical women. Patricia Cronin will present an artist talk at Memorial to a Marriage at 1:00 PM and 2:00PM. An invitation-only private reception with remarks by Maura Reilly, Ph.D., Director of the Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University and Harriet Senie, Ph.D., Professor Emerita City College and Graduate Center, CUNY will follow at 3:00 PM in the Woolworth Chapel at The Woodlawn Cemetery. All guests should enter at the Jerome Avenue entrance to the Cemetery at 3800 Jerome Avenue, Bronx, NY.

About the Venue: Woodlawn Cemetery is a 400-acre active burial ground located in Bronx, New York. As a non-sectarian institution Woodlawn accommodates the needs of all faiths, races, and ethnic groups. Over 320,000 rest at Woodlawn including: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington, Herman Melville, and Celia Cruz. Over 1300 private mausolea grace the grounds designed by architects John Russell Pope, McKim Mead & White, Carrere & Hastings, and James Gamble Rogers. Sculptors represented in the collection include Daniel Chester French, Anna Hyatt Huntington, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, and Alexander Archipenko to name a few.

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