Institute of Contemporary Art
University of Pennsylvania

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www.icaphila.org

NEWS RELEASE

Solo Exhibition of Large-Scale Sculptures by Karyn Olivier Explores the Emotional Weight of Monuments this Winter at Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania

Everything That's Alive Moves examines the role of monuments in revealing what it means to be a citizen, their relationship to civic space, and how they might be remade to be humble and audacious in equal measure

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Philadelphia, PA

Karyn Olivier, *It's Not Over 'Til It's Over*, 2004, steel, wood, fabric, rope lighting, rotating floor and chair, 168 x 264 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Karyn Olivier, *Fortified*, 2017–20, bricks, used clothing, and steel, 180 x 360 x 360 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), University of Pennsylvania presents *Karyn Olivier: Everything That's Alive Moves,* a solo exhibition of six large-scale sculptures by Philadelphia-based artist Karyn Olivier. *Everything That's Alive Moves* offers the rare opportunity to examine the recent trajectories of Olivier's investigation into memorials and monuments, and their relation to issues of citizenship and individual responsibility. The exhibition, on view January 24 through May 10, 2020, builds on several public projects and commissions created by the artist in recent years and continues to revise, rework, and expand on key works from her past.

"We are thrilled to present the work of local artist Karyn Olivier. Olivier's ability to connect with the community and people through her work is profound," said John McInerney, Interim Director at ICA. "She adeptly shifts our experience of the familiar to reveal the malleable and unfixed nature of objects and spaces, enabling us to ponder meaning, honor the past, while creating new possibilities."

Karyn Olivier, *Moving the Obelisk*, 2019—20, work in progress, 180 x 42 x 42 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Everything That's Alive Moves brings together two tactics the artist has focused on in recent years: architectural scale and the minute, modest gesture. A fully-functioning carousel for one rider, a car made entirely of repurposed shoes—gathered for export to poor countries—and a brick wall built using clothing wedged between the bricks as mortar, are among the older works reimagined and constructed on-site at ICA. In looking at these past works, Olivier is thinking more about how large-scale need not be a refutation of, or counter to, a desire to be "human-sized."

Karyn Olivier's recent thinking has been centered on civic space—specifically monuments and memorials, driven in part by her planning, building, and writing for several public commissions and memorials. The most recent being awarded in fall 2019 the commission for the Dinah Memorial to be built at Stenton, also known as the James Logan Home, in Philadelphia.

Three new sculptures reflect Olivier's 2018–19 year of study in Rome, investigating the city's ruins, histories, and public works. These sculptures also offer a chance to attune ourselves to her care for the accumulation of often-overlooked patterns, and how monuments have embedded in them the perpetual irresolution of overlapping histories. Recently named a 2019 Pew Fellow, Olivier has expanded her interest in local histories, the significance of monuments, as the artist notes, "Maybe monuments can be instruments that offer us a mirror to give witness to ourselves, our community, our city, or to the world. Or maybe they implore us to be aware of the present moment and allow us to reflect on our shared complicated histories.

"Karyn's searching curiosity is brilliantly indefatigable. Her sculpture incisive, her formal care and emotional responses to space simply searing," said Anthony Elms. "What's more is that still her art contains enormous amounts of joy for and delight in our world and the people who, through gestures big and small, recognized or unnoticed, endure and thrive for all our betterment."

Concurrent with the exhibition, ICA will present a series of programs that draw upon the themes of the exhibition. These will be listed online at www.icaphila.org as confirmed.

Karyn Olivier: Everything That's Alive Moves is organized by Anthony Elms, ICA Daniel and Brett Sundheim Chief Curator. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated monograph to be released in 2020.

Support for *Karyn Olivier: Everything That's Alive Moves* has been provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Edna Wright Andrade Fund of the Philadelphia Foundation, and by The Henry Moore Foundation. Additional support has been provided by Nancy & Leonard Amoroso, Danielle Mandelbaum Anderman, Cecile & Christopher D'Amelio, Cheri & Steven Friedman, Christina Weiss Lurie, Josephine Magliocco, Lori & John Reinsberg, Patricia & Howard Silverstein, and by Stephanie & David Simon.

ABOUT KARYN OLIVIER
Karyn Olivier (born 1968, Trinidad and Tobago; lives Philadelphia) received her MFA at Cranbrook Academy of Art and her BA at Dartmouth

Karyn Olivier, *Car Cover and Export Shoes*, 2018, car cover, expired shoes and support materials, 54 x 168 x 72 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Karyn Olivier, *Car Cover and Export Shoes* (detail), 2018, car cover, expired shoes and support materials, 54 x 168 x 72 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

College. In 2018 a permanent addendum was created by Olivier to a controversial Anne Rice O'Hanlon fresco in Lexington, Kentucky, calling attention to the African American and Native American figures within the piece. In 2015 she created a lenticular billboard in Central Park for Creative Time and New York's Percent for Art Program. In 2019 Olivier was commissioned for the twenty-first-century Dinah Memorial at Stenton in Philadelphia. Olivier has exhibited at the Gwangju and Busan biennials, the World Festival of Black Arts and Culture (Dakar, Senegal), The Studio Museum in Harlem, The Whitney Museum of Art, MoMA P.S.1, The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Contemporary Art Museum Houston, The Mattress Factory (Pittsburgh), SculptureCenter (New York), Drexel University, the University of the Arts, and the University of Delaware Museum, among others. She has received numerous awards, including the 2018–19 Nancy B. Negley Rome Prize, a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award, the New York Foundation for the Arts Award, a Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant, the William H. Johnson Prize, the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Biennial Award, a 2019 PEW Fellowship, a Creative Capital Foundation grant, and a Harpo Foundation grant. Olivier is associate professor of sculpture at Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Philadelphia.

ABOUT ANTHONY ELMS

Since joining ICA's staff in 2011, Anthony Elms has organized the exhibitions *Cauleen Smith: Give It or Leave It* (2018), *Endless Shout* (2016–17), *Rodney McMillian: The Black Show* (2016), *Christopher Knowles: In a Word* with writer Hilton Als (2015), *White Petals Surround Your Yellow Heart* (2013), and coordinated several other exhibitions and projects. Elms's writings have appeared in various periodicals, including *Afterall*, *Art Asia Pacific*, *ART PAPERS*, *Cakewalk*, *May Revue*, *Modern Painters*, and *New Art Examiner*. Elms has written essays for catalogues and edited collections such as *Cosey Complex* (Koenig Books), *Geof Oppenheimer: Big Boss and the Ecstasy of Pleasures* (Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art), *Terry Adkins: Recital* (Prestel) and *Among Others: Blackness at MoMA* (Museum of Modern Art). He has independently curated many exhibitions, including: *Interstellar Low Ways* (with Huey Copeland); *A Unicorn Basking in the Light of Three Glowing Suns* (with Philip von Zweck); and *Sun Ra, El Saturn & Chicago's Afro-Futurist Underground, 1954–68* (with John Corbett and Terri Kapsalis). He was one of three curators of the 2014 Whitney Biennial.

ABOUT INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART | UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

The Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania is a non-collecting institution presenting exhibitions at the forefront of contemporary practice and culture that challenge audiences to think in new ways. The ICA is free for all to engage and connect with the art of our time. Since its founding in 1963, ICA has served as a laboratory for the new, introducing and supporting the production of urgent and important contemporary art, beginning with ICA's inaugural show of paintings by Abstract Expressionist Clyfford Still, followed by the first museum show of works by Andy Warhol in 1965. Throughout its history, ICA has been instrumental in identifying and developing many promising artists before they attained prominence within the international art world, some of whom include—in addition to Warhol—Richard Artschwager, Vija Celmins, Alex Da Corte, Karen Kilimnik, Barry Le Va, Glenn Ligon, Robert Mapplethorpe, Agnes Martin, Rodney McMillian, Pepón Osorio, Cauleen Smith, and Charline von Heyl.