

The Broadway Mall Association Presents
Nicolas Holiber: Birds on Broadway, the Audubon Sculpture Project



(Brant, 2018, Reclaimed wood, hardware, paint, 9 x 12 x 5.5 feet)

Ten Sculptures in Reclaimed Wood
To Call Attention to New York City's Climate-Threatened Birds

NEW YORK CITY (April 17, 2019) – On May 17, 2019, ten special birds will return home to roost on Broadway. However, this isn't a normal migration. This journey is the result of a multi-year project created by Nicolas Holiber, a Brooklyn-based artist who is known for his large-scale public works and mixed-media paintings. The installation, *Nicolas Holiber: Birds on Broadway, the Audubon Sculpture Project*, features ten oversized sculptures of New York City birds that are in danger of extinction due to climate change. The sculptures will be displayed along the Broadway malls, a tree-lined greenway between 64th and 157th Streets in Manhattan, and will be on view through January 2020. Holiber is the youngest artist to have a solo exhibition presented by the Broadway Mall Association; this installation will be his second time showing with NYC Parks. Partnering entities Gitler & _____ Gallery and the New York City Audubon Society supported Holiber to create the work in an effort to raise awareness about a group of more than 300 imperiled birds in North America.

Holiber's sculptures often consist of reclaimed wood sourced from the ubiquitous shipping pallets that dot the city streets, and the Broadway Mall Association installation is no different. Through sponsorships and the artist's own amassing, each sculpture is made entirely out of reclaimed lumber. This artistic conservation is both practical and conceptual. Although painted, the wood used for the sculptures will not be weatherproofed. Instead, each work will be left untreated to allow for the city's natural forces to affect it, highlighting the environmental challenges faced by each species. Holiber's intent, to lend meaning and subject matter to objects that previously had neither, is amplified when paired with the exhibition's alarming message about climate change.

Over the past several years Holiber has carefully studied sites along Broadway, choosing locations in the many and diverse neighborhoods along the boulevard to display his work. Placing the large, colorful sculptures in settings that will take New Yorkers by surprise and remind them that the urban environment is a *natural environment*, Holiber's work is sure to catch the eye of any hurried passerby. The nine-foot-tall mother *Red-Necked Grebe* sits across from Lincoln Center, seemingly at home with her chicks in a small triangular park, while at 72nd Street *Peregrine Falcon*, with a wingspan of almost ten feet, has just won his next meal. There is also the eight-foot-tall *Double-Crested Cormorant*, a species that frequently visits Central Park, drying its wings at 105th Street, and the eleven-foot-long *Wood Duck*, one of the most colorful birds in North America, resting at 157th Street next to Audubon Terrace. A closer inspection of the work and signage will reveal not only the artist's unique process, inspired by the conceivably never-ending act of reconstruction and deconstruction, but also information about each species that includes climate-related threats and future habitat projections, offered in both English and Spanish.

The ten birds in this exhibition were chosen from the *Birds and Climate Change Report*, released in 2014 by the National Audubon Society. This study warned that half of all North American bird species will be imperiled over the coming decades due to shifting and contracting habitat zones resulting from climate change. From among the 145 threatened species that reside in or migrate through New York, Holiber decided to showcase the American bittern, brant, common goldeneye, double-crested cormorant, hooded merganser, peregrine falcon, red-necked grebe, scarlet tanager, snowy owl, and wood duck. In addition to raising awareness for this serious cause, *Nicolas Holiber: Birds on Broadway, the Audubon Sculpture Project* reflects the role of urban green space, such as the Broadway malls, in countering climate change by producing oxygen, moderating temperatures, and providing bird habitat.

Nicolas Holiber: Birds on Broadway, the Audubon Sculpture Project would not have been possible without contributing sponsors BIG Reuse, Con Edison, Cool Hand Movers, Farrow & Ball, Hampshire Properties, Marjam Supply Company, Stanley Black & Decker, The Durst Organization, and Warburg Realty. This will mark the twelfth sculpture exhibition presented by the Broadway Mall Association.

About Nicolas Holiber

Born in 1985 in New York and now living and working in Brooklyn, Nicolas Holiber has a formal background in painting, graduating from the New York Academy of Art in 2012. Upon completing his MFA, Holiber was one of three students to receive a postgraduate fellowship. In 2015 his first large-scale public work with NYC Parks, *Head of Goliath*, was exhibited in Tribeca Park from May through October. Holiber's art is characterized by its unique use of materials and vivid use of color, creating multidimensional works that combine painting, drawing, and sculpture. Holiber has exhibited across the United States and internationally. Past awards and honors include a residency at Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Process Space on Governors Island, ArtInPlace Public Sculpture Award in Virginia, Visiting Artist-in-Residence at West

Nottingham Academy in Maryland, and residency at the Leipzig International Art Programme in Germany.

About the Broadway Mall Association

The Broadway Mall Association (BMA) is a nonprofit that stewards, advocates, and cares for the 5-mile environmental resource in the heart of upper Manhattan. The 83 verdant malls from 70th to 168th Street stretch from the Upper West Side through Harlem to Washington Heights. In addition to upgrading the 10.6 acres of malls along Broadway, BMA installs winter lighting and stages world class public art exhibitions that reflect the distinct, diverse communities of the area and engage both residents and visitors alike.

About *Art on the Malls*

Art on the Malls, the Broadway Mall Association's program to enliven the Broadway malls with contemporary art, was launched in 2005 with the major exhibition *Tom Otterness on Broadway*. Since then, BMA has exhibited the work of more than 20 internationally recognized artists on the malls, including Joy Brown, Saint Clair Cemin, Dan Colen, Carole Eisner, Don Gummer, Kathy Ruttenberg, Manolo Valdés, Peter Woytuk, and now Nicolas Holiber.

About NYC Parks Art in the Parks

For more than 50 years, NYC Parks' Art in the Parks program has brought contemporary public artworks to the city's parks, making New York City one of the world's largest open-air galleries. The agency has consistently fostered the creation and installation of temporary public art in parks throughout the five boroughs. Since 1967, NYC Parks has collaborated with arts organizations and artists to produce more than 2,000 public artworks by 1,300 notable and emerging artists in more than 200 parks.

About New York City Audubon

New York City Audubon champions nature in the city's five boroughs through a combination of engaging programs and innovative conservation campaigns. NYC Audubon is an independent nonprofit organization affiliated with the National Audubon Society. Through its efforts, NYC Audubon protects more than 350 species of birds living in or passing through the 30,000 acres of wetlands, forests, and grasslands of New York City. NYC Audubon connects New Yorkers with birds and nature through more than 200 bird walks and outreach programs each year and in recent years has collaborated with avian-inspired artists at its seasonal nature center on Governors Island and its Kingsland Wildflowers at Broadway Stages Green Roof & Community Engagement Center in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. NYC Audubon is the fiscal sponsor of *Nicolas Holiber: Birds on Broadway, the Audubon Sculpture Project*.

About Gitler & _____ Gallery

Gitler & _____ is an art gallery dedicated to showcasing rising artists from around the world. The gallery moves regularly between genres to expose and celebrate the original work of craftspeople and artistic visionaries whose conceptual and technical narratives help bring a fresh perspective to the canon. The artwork is brought to light through pop-up shows, performances, public interventions, and traditional exhibitions held in the gallery's uptown

space in Hamilton Heights. *Nicolas Holiber: Birds on Broadway, the Audubon Sculpture Project* is a companion to the Audubon Mural Project, the ongoing public art initiative spearheaded by Avi Gitler of Gitler & _____ Gallery.

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