

HARLEM SCULPTURE GARDENS



Call to Artists

Harlem Sculpture GardensSM announces its first call for outdoor sculpture, dance and sound art in West Harlem, New York City. The historic parks Morningside, St. Nicholas, and Jackie Robinson have been selected to be the featured sites for these works. **Harlem Sculpture Gardens**SM will be led by the West Harlem Art Fund and New York Artist Equity Association. They will work collaboratively with the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, local community boards, neighborhood groups and various committees.

Among the Organizing Committee, helping with recruitment and assuring diversity are AHL Foundation and the BX Arts Factory.

In 2024, the inaugural exhibition will take place from spring through late fall. Selection committees will be formed to allow the public to rank submitted proposals. The City will receive final recommendations this fall from an established Advisory Committee comprising key art professionals.

Sculptures must be suitable for general viewing and pose no threat to public safety; no sexual, political, or violent content will be accepted. Materials must be resilient enough to withstand the harsh NYC weather. Artists will be required to maintain their sculptures throughout the duration of the exhibiting time frame including but not limited to damage from weather or vandals. Neither the City of New York nor the show presenters are liable for damage nor able to maintain the sculptures. Artist assumes responsibility for transportation and delivery to and from the display site.

An applicant can be an individual artist or a team of artists. Artists and galleries or groups of artists can form teams as well. Individual artists or key team members must demonstrate NYC residency. Site-specific works are strongly recommended but not required. Tours will be made available to artists along with additional reference information. West Harlem's cultural, demographic, and natural history can be the inspiration for submissions.

The exhibition is open to all artists. Artists of color and emerging artists from underserved communities are strongly encouraged to apply. Presenters will cover comprehensive general liability insurance and a bond to the City of New York to cover site restoration.

Sculpture Submission Requirements

- A written description of proposed artwork, including: title, medium, dimensions (height x width x depth), weight, installation method and anchoring procedure. **Disclaimer: All work should NOT exceed 10 Feet in ANY dimension.**
- If proposing existing work: photographs or slides of artwork; include reference to human scale.
- If proposing a new work: working drawings or photograph of maquette to scale.
- Artist's statement and resume
- Proposed location for the installation
- Up to ten images of the artist's previous work. All images must be clearly labeled with the name of the artist, title of the work, media and dimensions.

Sound Art & Dance Requirements

- Written proposal for exploring dance or sound in a public space.
- Sound art/sound compositions must be fixed media works to be streamed over a smart phone at specific chosen location, triggered by GPS coordinates using the STORY platform.
- Additional sound art works that do not require AC power requirements will be considered.

- Propose duration of a sound or dance work
- Propose location of a sound or dance work - Morningside, St. Nicholas, Jackie Robinson Park
- Individual artist or team statements and resumes
- Up to three examples of previous works (audio/movement photograph/video - no more than 10 min)
- Willingness to lead public workshops

Please note: The approval process for Dance and Sound Art will be made by the Advisory Committee and the permitting is handled as a special event through the NYC Department of Parks and recreation.

Please send an email stating your interest in order to receive additional information and tour dates. Deadline for all submissions is **September 15, 2023** at 5 pm. No exceptions. Submit proposals electronically to: westharlemartfund12@gmail.com or info@nyartistequity.org.

Organizing Committee

West Harlem Art Fund — Lead Organization
NY Artist Equity Association — Lead Organization
AHL Foundation
Bx Arts Factory

Advisory Committee

Nadema Agard - Artist
Cecilia Alemani - Curator
Chakaia Booker - Artist/Sculptor
Projjal Dutta - Architect/Gallerist
Eva Mayhabal Davis - Curator
Carl Fudge - Artist/Printmaker
Matthew William Goodheart - Musician/Composer/Sound Artist
Kendal Henry - Curator/Arts Administrator
Paul Kozel - Sonic Artist/Program Director
Luis Pagan - Artist
Debra Priestly - Artist/Sculptor
Tiffany Rea-Fisher - Dancer/Choreographer
Alec Rovensky - Architect
Ki Smith - Gallerist
Mame Diarra Speis - Dancer/Choreographer

Local Partners

Office of the Manhattan Borough President
Office of State Assemblyman Daniel O'Donnell
Office of State Assemblyman Al Taylor
Office of Councilman Shaun Abreu
Dorrence Brooks Historic District
West 135th Street Apartments Tenant Association, Inc.
Columbia University, Office of Governmental and Community Affairs

Youth Partners

Artistic Noise
Exalt
Street Corner Resources

PARK VENUES

Morningside Park

13 blocks

110th - 123rd Streets

30 acres



Morningside Park is named for the sunny eastern side of the cliff that separates Morningside Heights from Harlem in Northern Manhattan. It is one of four designated Historic Harlem Parks. The others are Marcus Garvey, St. Nicholas and Jackie Robinson Parks.

In 1867, Andrew Haswell Green, Commissioner and Comptroller of Central Park, recommended that a park be located in Morningside Heights. He argued that it would be impractical to extend the Manhattan street grid over the steep topography. The City received jurisdiction over the 30-acres property in 1870 but did not begin constructing the park until 1883.

Designing the Park

The Board of Commissioners rejected an 1871 design by Parks Engineer-in Chief M.A. Kellogg and an 1873 plan by landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, the co-designers of Central and Prospect Parks. In 1880, the Board hired Architect Jacob Wrey Mould to rework Olmsted and Vaux's plans. Mould designed the promenade and buttressed masonry wall that encloses the park along Morningside drive. Although a construction contract was awarded in 1883, Mould died in 1886 before the work was completed. Fourteen years after rejecting their original proposal, the Board hired Olmsted and Vaux to continue improvements to Morningside Park. The architects planted vegetation tolerant of the dry, rocky soil and created two paths, one broad, one meandering, to cross the lower portion of the park. Retained as a consultant, Vaux saw the work to completion in 1895, the year he drowned. Parks Superintendent Samuel Parsons, Jr. wrote of Vaux's work, «...perhaps Morningside Park was the most consummate piece of art that he had ever created».

New Monuments

The park's design continued to evolve in the 20th century. Monuments raised in and around the park included Lafayette and Washington (1900) by Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi, the Carl Schurz Memorial (1913) by Karl Bitter and Henry Bacon, and

the Seligman (bear and Faun) Fountain (1914) by Edgar Walter, one of the fountain sculptors for the great San Francisco world exposition in 1915. Between the 1930's and the 1950s, playgrounds, basketball court and softball diamonds were constructed in east and south parts of the park.

In 1968, student and community protesters halted construction of a gymnasium in the park intended for use by Columbia University and the public. The excavated foundation was converted into a pond and waterfall in 1989-90. The project also included installing new play equipment, creating a picnic area, planting new trees, and rebuilding the ballfields.

St. Nicholas Park

13 blocks

128th - 141st Street

23 acres



This spacious park is named for St. Nicholas of Myra. It is located at the intersection of St. Nicholas Avenue, 127th Street, St. Nicholas Terrace and 141st Street, bordering the Manhattan neighborhoods of Hamilton Heights, Manhattanville, and West Harlem.

Settled by Dutch farmers in the late 1600s, the neighborhood's agricultural yield began to wane after the American Revolution. Many residents moved to southern Manhattan's newly industrialized areas. In the 1880s, the area

developed quickly as the elevated trains and tenement houses were constructed.

The City acquired some of the land for St. Nicholas Park by condemnation for the construction of the Old Croton Aqueduct in 1885-86. New York State laws of 1894 and 1895 authorized the creation of a public park instead, and it was called St. Nicholas Park. The name for the park was taken from the adjacent Harlem streets, St. Nicholas Terrace (to the west) and St. Nicholas Avenue (to the east). These streets honor New Amsterdam's patron saint, whose image adorned the masthead of the New Netherland that brought the first Dutch colonists to these shores.

St. Nicholas of Myra is also known as the patron saint of children, sailors, bankers, pawnbrokers, travelers, and captives—as well as the inspiration for Father

Christmas or Santa Claus. Legend claims that he gave his considerable inheritance to charity and often made secret and anonymous gifts to the desperately needy. He served as bishop of Myra in Asia Minor in the 4th century where he was venerated even before his death as a man of exceptional holiness. St. Nicholas' relics are enshrined in the Italian town of Bari.

Additional property for the nascent park was assembled in 1900-1906, and construction began in 1906. Like Harlem's other "ribbon parks," St. Nicholas was built on a rugged mass of rock, following the steep and irregular topography of northern Manhattan. Landscape architect and Parks Commissioner Samuel Parsons Jr. (1844-1920) was responsible for the design of the rustic park, of which he said a "dominant note must be followed with a harmonious treatment, a high hill made higher, a rugged slope more rugged, a deep valley made deeper, thus invariably following nature's lead." The development of the park and the completion of the elevated rapid transit line made this area of Harlem a fashionable residential district at the turn of the century.

In 1909, Parks acquired an adjacent parcel that extended the southern boundary of the park from W. 130th Street to W. 128th Street. This property contained the area known as "The Point of Rocks," where General George Washington had positioned himself during the Battle of Harlem Heights in 1776. NYC Parks opened a playground near the West 129th Street entrance in 1931; and the new facility included swings, a basketball court, and a garden where farm products were grown for educational purposes. Thirty years later, NYC Parks and the Board of Education made arrangements for a new jointly operated playground on this site. The 129th Street Playground opened in 1965, and P.S. 129, also known as John H. Finley Campus School, opened in 1970 on nearby property held by the City College of New York.

This area of Manhattan was inhabited by the Lenape before it was colonized by the Dutch and named New Haarlem in 1660 and in 1664 renamed New York by the English. During the Revolutionary War, this was the site of the Battle of Harlem Heights where George Washington won the battle and eventually the war.

After the war, the already sparse population declined further as people moved to a more developed downtown. For this reason, the grid plan was abandoned above 155th Street where many of the farms and homesteads were. The 1811 Commissioner's Plan deemed it "improbable that (for centuries to come) the grounds north of the Harlem Flat will be covered with houses."

Jackie Robinson Park (formerly Colonial Park)

10 blocks

145th - 155th Street

12.77 acres



This park was acquired by the City of New York between 1894 and 1899 and opened in 1911 as Colonial Park, connecting to the site's history. In the 1930s, NYC Parks utilized the resources of the Works Progress Administration to further improve the park. NYC Parks architect Aymar Embury II designed an additional playground, basketball and volleyball courts, roller skating areas, wading pool and a bandshell which hosts concerts throughout the warm season.

The park was renamed for Jackie Robinson in 1978 by local law and a bronze bust of Robinson by Inge Hardison was installed inside the Jackie Robinson Pool and Recreation Center entryway at West 147th Street and Bradhurst Avenue in 1981. These facilities were designated a New York City historical landmark structure in 2007.

In 2020, a large-scale redesign and renovation along Edgecombe Avenue and on 145th Street was completed through the Parks Without Borders capital construction initiative to make parks more accessible and welcoming to everyone while improving neighborhoods by extending the beauty of parks out into communities and creating vibrant public spaces by transforming underused areas. The park redesign reduced fence heights and restored a pathway that connects a reopened entrance to an updated plaza.

Who is this park named for?

Jackie Robinson (1919-1972) is legendary for his pioneering role as the first Black professional baseball player in the major leagues. Born in Cairo, Georgia and raised in Pasadena, California, Robinson's success was foretold at the University of California at Los Angeles, where he became the first student to earn letters in four sports: baseball, basketball, football and track. He played football for the Los Angeles Bulldogs, before serving in the army during World War II. After the war, Robinson played baseball in the Negro Leagues for the Kansas City Monarchs. Brooklyn Dodgers general manager, Brandon Rickey signed him to the Dodger's top farm team, the Montreal Royals, in 1945.

On April 15, 1947, Robinson made history as the first African American to play in a major league baseball game and paved the way for generations of black athletes to compete in America's national pastime. Robinson led the Dodgers, as a second baseman, to six World Series appearances. He retired in January 1957 with a lifetime batting average of .311. He was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962.

Robinson became involved with the Chock Full O' Nuts restaurant chain as well as a number of black-owned community enterprises such as Freedom National Bank (which he co-founded) and a land development firm. He was also active in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and civil rights. Robinson died at his home in Stamford, Connecticut in 1972.