

STORM KING ART CENTER

MARTIN PURYEAR'S PERMANENT, SITE-SPECIFIC COMMISSION *LOOKOUT* AND ACCOMPANYING INDOOR EXHIBITION OPENS AT STORM KING ART CENTER

The eminent American sculptor's
first work in brick opens on September 23, 2023

An accompanying exhibition illustrating over four decades of the artist's practice
entitled *Martin Puryear: Process and Scale* is
on view from September 23 – December 17, 2023



Martin Puryear, *Lookout*, 2023. Storm King Art Center, Mountainville, NY
© Martin Puryear, courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery. Photo by Jeffrey Jenkins

Mountainville, NY, September 23, 2023 — Storm King Art Center announces *Lookout*, a permanent, site-specific commission by celebrated American sculptor Martin Puryear and an accompanying indoor exhibition entitled *Martin Puryear: Process and Scale* opening concurrently on September 23, 2023.

Lookout marks Puryear's first use of brick—a material whose production was once a primary industry in the Hudson Valley—as a medium. Located on a high overlook in the Art Center's North Woods, the sculpture's form and setting encourage a heightened sense of presence—at its front, a masonry arch frames a sweeping view of the landscape. Measuring 20 feet high and 16 feet in diameter, *Lookout* is shaped by a series of nine segments: at the open end of the structure, the first of these segments emerges visually and structurally as an arch, set perpendicular to the ground plane. Each successive segment is set against its neighbor at an acute angle until the bricks of the final segment are laid level to the ground and form a dome at the summit of the artwork.

Storm King Art Center's Artistic Director and Chief Curator Nora Lawrence shared, "What distinguishes Martin Puryear as an artist is the way he finds forms and materials that feel familiar but create a world of their own. With *Lookout*, Puryear has created a tapestry in brick, using small individual elements to create something majestic on a grand scale. It's been an honor to watch him think about masonry as something elevated, technical, and specific and to create something that many said

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would not be possible. He took the time to envision the perfect work for Storm King. *Lookout* joins a tradition of our site-specific commissions that wouldn't be right anywhere else: it is for this landscape; it is for this hill. Not only is *Lookout* a gorgeous work of art, but it is a feat of engineering and craftsmanship that reflects so much of Puryear's thinking throughout his career."

Departing from the straight lines and vertical walls of traditional brick structures, *Lookout* curves inward and upward, opening to allow entry from one side and culminating in a voluminous, curved form on the opposite end. At the arched entry, visitors may gaze southward with the contours of Schunne-munk Mountain in the far distance. Inside the domed space, ninety circular openings act as oculi from which to observe moments in nature surrounding the work. Expanding their experience with and presence within the work, visitors may follow the sculpture's ground-paving to a central spot which reveals sightlines out of all apertures at once, creating a constellation of one's surroundings.

Lookout emerges from Puryear's exploration of traditional masonry forms, including the daring techniques of Nubian vault-building without formwork that the artist witnessed in Mali; classical Roman arches and domes; the curved and tapered forms of bottle kilns at the ceramics factories of Stoke-on-Trent, in England; and the curved entablatures of the Squadron A Armory on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, which seem to defy gravity. To realize this monumental vision, Puryear identified trusted collaborators including structural engineers, architects specializing in Guastavino vaults, kiln-builders, and expert brick-and-stonemasons.

President of Storm King Art Center John P. Stern said, "The revelation of Martin Puryear's *Lookout* is unquestionably a transformative moment for Storm King. The Art Center has commissioned site-specific artworks for more than 50 years, and each artist has helped shape the collection and landscape, as well as the way visitors experience this place. Puryear is one of the most important sculptors working today, and the amazing team he brought together is indicative of his care and expertise as a maker. *Lookout* is a wonderful balance of simplicity and complexity, and I am honored that Storm King is among the collaborators who helped realize such a significant artistic achievement."

Artist Martin Puryear said, "Creating a new work for Storm King has been an adventure and a challenge. *Lookout*, my first sculpture in brick, is an effort to celebrate a special spot in Storm King's extraordinary landscape. From the beginning the project was a series of puzzles to be solved, a collective effort between engineers, brick and cement technologists, and the highly skilled team of masons who constructed the work onsite over a period of two summers, (after more than ten years of planning). Throughout the entire process Storm King was a tenacious source of encouragement and support. My gratitude is vast for such a faithful realization of my vision."

The inauguration of *Lookout* is accompanied by a special exhibition on view in Storm King's Museum Building. Drawn from the artist's archives, *Martin Puryear: Process and Scale* reveals the years of planning that precede Puryear's finished public and site-specific works, affording a rare view into the artist's practice over the past 50 years.

Regardless of size, all of Puryear's sculptures originate with the artist's hand, whether through drawings or with models that the artist carves or fashions from pieces of wood. Sculptures in their own right, Puryear's models allow the artist to work through questions of form, scale, and medium. The artist uses his process models and drawings as a means of communicating his ideas with the makers and fabricators that help him realize his work at a large scale. These process models are often accompanied by a hand-whittled wooden figure that serves as a stand-in for the viewer. The presence of these figures suggests that from the moment of inception, Puryear seeks to understand the relationship between his monumental sculptures and the viewer as much as the environment in which they are situated.

Assembled together for the first time, 33 maquettes and drawings and an outdoor sculpture offer a throughline to Puryear's large-scale sculptures spanning decades and continents, providing valuable insight into the development of the artist's distinctive visual language and the themes that have been central to his formal exploration over the course of his prolific career.

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Martin Puryear: Process and Scale is on view from September 23 – December 17, 2023. It will dedicate an individual gallery for three models and two drawings of *Lookout*. In conjunction with the commission and exhibition opening, Storm King will present an onsite public program on Sunday, October 1 featuring Martin Puryear in conversation with Nora Lawrence. A full-color scholarly catalogue illustrating the installation of *Lookout* and contextualizing the new commission within the history of Puryear's public and site-specific works will be published in Spring 2024.

Lookout was organized by Nora Lawrence, Artistic Director and Chief Curator; Amy S. Weisser, Deputy Director of Strategic Planning and Projects; with Adela Goldsmith, Curatorial Assistant; and Mike Seaman, Director of Facilities and Conservation. *Martin Puryear: Process and Scale* was curated by Nora Lawrence with Adela Goldsmith.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Project Collaborators

Lookout was installed by a masonry team led by Lara Davis, Principal, Limaçon Design, and Rob Horton, Studio Manager, Martin Puryear Studio; with Scott Cafarella, Owner and Mason, Hudson Valley Mason Works; Mario Magana, Mason Foreman, Hudson Valley Mason Works; and Aaron Getman-Pickering, Studio Assistant, Martin Puryear Studio. Additional expertise was provided by Silman (Structural Engineering); John Ochsendorf (Structural Engineering Advisor); Reed Hilderbrand Landscape Architecture (Landscape Architecture); KC Fabrications (Formwork); and Taylor Clay Brick Products (Bricks).

About Storm King Art Center

Storm King Art Center is a 500-acre outdoor museum located in New York's Hudson Valley, where visitors experience large-scale sculpture and site-specific commissions under open sky. Since 1960, Storm King has been dedicated to stewarding the hills, meadows, and forests of its site and surrounding landscape. Building on the visionary thinking of its founders, Storm King supports artists and some of their most ambitious works. Changing exhibitions, programming, and seasons offer discoveries with every visit.

About Martin Puryear

Over five decades, Martin Puryear has created a body of work that defies categorization, creating sculpture that examines identity, culture, and history. Departing from the impersonal and machined aesthetic of Minimalism, (the dominant sculptural movement of the artist's formative years), Puryear's work combines modernist abstraction with methods of making inspired by traditional trades and crafts. With shapes informed by the natural world and by ordinary objects and made by direct engagement with materials such as wood, wire, tar, granite, bronze, cast iron, steel and granite, his work is quiet but deliberately associative, informed by his extensive travels and his endless curiosity about the world, and drawing on a huge and varied reserve of images and ideas.

Martin Puryear (b. 1941) was born in Washington, DC. His first one-person exhibition was in 1968, and since then he has exhibited throughout the world, including public commissions in Europe, Asia, and the United States. His work was featured in Documenta 9 (1992), and in 1989 he represented the United States at the São Paulo Bienal, where he was awarded the festival's Grand Prize. In 2007 the Museum of Modern Art in New York organized a survey of his work, which traveled to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. In 2015 the Art Institute of Chicago organized an exhibition of fifty years of his works on paper, which traveled to the Morgan Library and Museum in New York and the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington. Puryear received a MacArthur Foundation award in 1989 and a National Medal of Arts from President Obama in 2011. In 2019 he represented the United States at the 58th Venice Biennale.

About Site-Specific Commissions for Storm King's Permanent Collection

Storm King's site-specific commission program for its permanent collection has been active since 1972, with the commission of David von Schlegell's *Untitled*, followed by Robert Grosvenor's *Untitled* in 1974, and Patricia Johanson's *Nostoc II* in 1975. In 1977, Storm King's Founding Chair, H. Peter Stern, invited

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Isamu Noguchi to create a sculpture for the collection. The result was Noguchi's *Momo Taro*, completed in 1978. Other highlights of site-specific commissions for the permanent collection include Richard Serra's *Schunnemunk Fork* (1991), Andy Goldsworthy's *Storm King Wall* (1997-98), Maya Lin's *Storm King Wavefield* (2007-08), and Sarah Sze's *Fallen Sky* (2021).

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Visitor Information

Hours

Through November 26: Wednesday–Monday, 10AM–5:30PM (closed Tuesdays)

Member Mornings: Sundays at 9AM

Beginning December 2: Saturdays and Sundays only, 10AM–4:30PM

Tickets

Advance tickets are strongly recommended. Onsite tickets are limited and available on a first come, first served basis. Members enjoy free, ticketless admission any time during open hours. For the most up-to-date information on ticket availability, amenities, and hours, please see stormking.org/visit.

Discounted Admission

Storm King is pleased to offer discounted admission for the 2023 season to the following visitors. Tickets using these discounts are requested via the Free Admission Request Form at stormking.org/tickets.

- SNAP participants/EBT cardholders via Museums for All
- Active military and their family via the Blue Star Program (May 20–September 4 only)
- Storm King Partner School students, families, and educators
- Modern and Contemporary Reciprocal Membership Program (Mod/Co)
- American Association of Museum (AAM) Members
- International Committee of Museums (ICOM)
- Staff of other museums

Bloomberg Connects Digital Guide

The Storm King digital guide is available for free on the Bloomberg Connects cultural app. Make the most of your visit with interactive activities, audio and video commentary by artists and Storm King staff, suggested routes, and more—anywhere, anytime from on your mobile device. [Download the Bloomberg Connects app >](#)

Press Images

Press-approved images of *Martin Puryear: Lookout* and *Process and Scale* are available via [Dropbox](#).

Press Inquiries

Laura Schwarz / FITZ & CO / lschwarz@fitzandco.com / 212.637.1455

Elizabeth McNamara / FITZ & CO / emcnamara@fitzandco.com / 646.589.0926

Press Visits

Advance reservations are requested for all accredited members of the media. Please contact FITZ & CO to request a reservation.

Program Credits

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