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PUBLIC ART FUND ANNOUNCES
SUI JIANGUO: BLIND PORTRAITS
OCTOBER 28, 2014 – FEBRUARY 20, 2015

Doris C. Freedman Plaza, Central Park
60th Street and 5th Avenue



Artist's rendering

September 26, 2014, NEW YORK, NY—Public Art Fund announces a new exhibition for **Doris C. Freedman Plaza** by Chinese artist **Sui Jianguo**, his most ambitious public work in the United States to date. *Blind Portraits* is a series of four monumental sculptures by the Beijing-based artist **Sui**. Initially modeled in miniature while the artist was blindfolded, then scaled up to seventeen feet tall and cast in bronze, the works play with notions of chance, intuition, and subjective expression—important themes in both traditional Chinese and modern Western art.

“Informed by a deep fascination with both Eastern and Western cultural and artistic themes, Sui Jianguo’s *Blind Portraits* are the result of a creative process that is at once playful yet rigorous, open-ended yet highly controlled” said Public Art Fund Director & Chief Curator, Nicholas Baume.

Named for the founder of Public Art Fund and New York City’s first Director of Cultural Affairs, **Doris C. Freedman Plaza** has been the site of more than 60 installations since Public Art Fund’s founding in 1977.

The four large-scale, cast bronze sculptures that make up *Blind Portraits* are part of a series of works that the artist first began work on in 2008. He begins by working blindfolded with mounds of clay, creating 10-15 small abstracted portraits each day. Selected small-scale forms

are then chosen for digital enlargement and eventually cast in bronze. The resulting monolithic forms take on subtle characteristics of human faces and expressions depending on one's perspective, while the enlarged marks of the artist's fingers are visible on the original clay surface. This is the first time these works have been shown in the United States.

To date, Sui is perhaps best known for his *Mao Jacket* and *Dinosaur* series, which reflect both his personal history and the sensitivities of a generation that was born under the Mao regime and came of age during the Cultural Revolution, experiencing the subsequent whirlwind of political shifts and reforms leading to present day China. A departure from the charged iconography of these past works, his *Blind Portraits* series continues to utilize scale and material to impact viewers, but it also raises questions about artistic practice in modern China. His nod to the presence of the artist's hand in the production of contemporary art—particularly large-scale, outdoor sculptures—further reinforces this connection to his irreverent and sometimes critical past works.

Sui Jianguo (b. 1956, Qingdao, China) lives and works in Beijing. He received a BA in the Fine Arts Department from the Shandong University of Arts in 1984 and an MA in the Sculpture Department from the prestigious China Central Academy of Fine Arts in 1989, where he is currently the Head of the Sculpture Department. He has participated in numerous international group and solo exhibitions at institutions including The British Museum, London (2012); Museum Beeldenaan Zee, The Hague, The Netherlands (2011); Today Art Museum, Beijing, China (2009); Asia Society, New York (2008); Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei, Taiwan (2007); Metropolitan Museum of Manila, Manila, The Philippines (2006); Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (2005); as well as at the Expo 2010 Shanghai China and the Jardin Des Tuileries, Paris, France (2004). He is represented by Pace Gallery.

SUPPORT

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ABOUT PUBLIC ART FUND

Public Art Fund brings dynamic contemporary art to a broad audience in New York City by mounting ambitious free exhibitions of international scope and impact that offer the public powerful experiences with art and the urban environment.

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