



The Artist-Led, Nonprofit 4heads Announces Cancellation of 13th Edition of Its Beloved Annual Fair, *Portal: Governors Island*, in Response to COVID-19

To Continue to Support Its Artist Community, 4heads Is Expanding Its Residency Program on the Island, to be Held from July through November 2020

New York (July 23, 2020)—The artist-led, nonprofit 4heads announced today that in response to the ongoing challenges created by COVID-19 it is cancelling the 13th edition of its annual fair, *Portal: Governors Island*, which would have once again opened to the public in September. The fair, which brings approximately 100 artists from across the U.S. and abroad to Governors Island each year, has become a beloved and anticipated event on the arts calendar and draws hundreds of visitors to the historic locations on the Island. Over the course of its 12-year collaboration with Island leadership, *Portal* has been presented across Colonels Row, Fort Jay, Castle Williams, and Liggett Hall, leveraging the dynamism of contemporary art to reveal the history and beauty of historic, and sometimes forgotten, spaces. *Portal: Governors Island* is slated to return in September 2021.

“The decision to cancel *Portal* was extremely difficult for us. We were among the first organizations to recognize the potential of Governors Island as an arts destination in 2008. And we have continued to host our fair for more than a decade on the Island, despite the challenges brought by shifting economics and politics in the city as well as natural disasters like Hurricanes Irene and Sandy. So, it is particularly strange for us to not be in midst of artist selections and installation planning at this point in July,” said Jack Robinson and Nicole Laemmle, co-founders of 4heads, along with Antony Zito. “The pandemic has hit alternative spaces and artist-led groups particularly hard, but we look forward to continuing our efforts to carve out space in the city for organizations like ours and to returning the fair to the Island in 2021.”

To continue to support its artist community in 2020, 4heads has expanded its artist residency program on Governors Island. While 4heads typically hosts six to ten artists on the Island in the summer and fall months, this year the organization will host 19 artists, predominantly from across New York City and state. The participating artists were chosen from among those that have previously participated in 4heads’ fairs following an open call within the 4heads network. All of the artists will move into their spaces on Colonels Row by the end of July and will have the option to remain until November 1, 2020. The residency locations, which are being provided for free, have been appropriately spaced to minimize the risk of virus transmission. To further engage audiences with its residents, 4heads will also be launching a series of digital initiatives, including the development of behind-the-scenes video content and the creation of an online talk series to further illuminate the visions and practices of the artists, to start in September.

“Although we were forced to cancel our fair this year, we wanted to find new avenues for supporting the artists in our network. Since the start of the pandemic, we have been actively in discussion with our

cohort of artists, collaborators, and supporters, and know from these conversations that there is a distinct need among artists for workspace to restart projects and create new work,” said Robinson and Laemmle. “Through our ongoing partnership with the Trust for Governors Island, we are able to offer a larger group of artists bigger spaces on the Island, and in this way continue our mission-driven work to provide opportunities for emerging, lesser-known, and underrepresented artists in the city and beyond. We are very much looking forward to seeing what they create during residency and to inviting the public to engage with them more fully through our upcoming digital programming.”

The 2020 4heads Artists in Residence include:

[Miggy Buck](#)

[Eric Hagan](#)

[Matthias Neumann](#)

[Ethan Cornell](#)

[Kerry Lessard](#)

[Lauren Petty and Shaun Irons](#)

[Rina AC Dweck](#)

[Sizhu Li](#)

[Scott Pfaffman](#)

[Gregg Emery](#)

[Kyle Luntz](#)

[Jiwon Rhie](#)

[Tim Fite](#)

[Shiri Mordechay](#)

[Sam Sundius](#)

[Jean Foos](#)

[Motomichi Nakamura](#)

[Erin Turner](#)

“This is such an unprecedented time of uncertainty for artists in New York. If not for this residency I don’t know how I’d find the space or be able to designate proper time to keep my practice afloat,” said Rina AC Dweck, a 2020 4heads artist resident.

"This residency is one of the few redeeming features of 2020 for me—a break in the routine (which has been so especially routine these last few months), a beautiful place to be, and a creative community to make art with (from a safe distance). Having my island studio to look forward to each week inspires me and raises my spirits," said Ethan Cornell, a 2020 4heads artist resident.

“I have ideas that don’t fit in my apartment!,” added 2020 4heads artist resident Kyle Luntz

More information regarding 4heads upcoming digital initiatives will be announced in late August.

About 4heads

4heads is a 501(c)3 nonprofit arts organization run by artists for artists. It was launched in New York in 2008, when Nicole Laemmle, Jack Robinson, and Antony Zito, who are working artists themselves, saw an opportunity to create a platform that would serve emerging artists and the local community through exhibitions, education programs, and artistic collaborations. The organization’s DIY spirit helps catalyze the ongoing dialogue between artists and people from all walks of life. Its diverse slate of initiatives includes art fairs, arts-education for underserved communities, and a summer Artists in Residence program on Governors Island. 4heads is committed to shedding new light on hidden culture and bringing new life to unexpected and unique spaces across the city.

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