

THE TRUST FOR GOVERNORS ISLAND

The Trust for Governors Island Announces opening of Mark Dion’s ‘The Field Station of the Melancholy Marine Biologist’

Adapted for Governors Island, The Field Station of the Melancholy Marine Biologist takes visitors on a voyeuristic journey confronting a future impacted by climate change.

September 22, 2021—The Trust for Governors Island announced today a new exhibition by artist Mark Dion will open as part of its ongoing public art program. Beginning October 8, *The Field Station of the Melancholy Marine Biologist* will be on long-term view in Building 105, a historic arsenal building located within the Governors Island Historic District.

Previously presented at Storm King Art Center as part of the exhibition *Climate Indicators: Artists on Climate Change* in 2018, and Prospect 4, New Orleans in 2017, *The Field Station of the Melancholy Marine Biologist* takes on a new form on Governors Island, with objects and material culture informed by the Island’s unique history and the ecology of New York Harbor and the Buttermilk Channel.

The new installation of the work transforms historic Building 105 into an abandoned research outpost, filled with scientific objects, instruments, artifacts and samples. As visitors peer through the building’s windows, they witness a scene preserved in time—a moment, Dion explains, “where somebody studying the natural world realizes that the future’s not looking so good...that we are going to lose a great amount of the natural wonders that have been here in previous centuries.” The work invites reflection on the tools and methodologies through which audiences seek to understand the world around them, while inviting visitors to imagine the life of a solitary researcher faced with the realities of a dark future declining ocean health impacted by climate change.

“We are thrilled to welcome Mark Dion’s especially prescient piece to Governors Island, a natural home for public art that is in conversation with the most pressing issues of the climate crisis,” said **Clare Newman, President and CEO of the Trust for Governors Island**. “Through the powerful combination of artistic engagement and dialogue about our changing environment, we can work together to inspire climate action and awareness.”

“Governors Island is a place deeply connected to history and the natural world,” said **Meredith Johnson, Vice President for Arts and Culture and Head Curator at the Trust for Governors Island**. “Mark Dion’s *The Field Station of the Melancholy Marine Biologist* is a work that feels intimately tangled into the fabric of the Island, its personal narratives, and its rich and ever-changing landscapes. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to work with Mark and exhibit this project on long-term view.”

Since opening to the public in 2005, Governors Island has been home to hundreds of artists and arts and cultural organizations from across New York City, bringing a robust calendar of commissions, exhibitions and events to the Island’s diverse audience. The Trust’s commissioning

program gives artists the opportunity to engage with audiences through site-specific projects responding to the Island's unique conditions.

Current commissions on view include Duke Riley's *Not for Nutten*, Shantell Martin's *Church/The May Room*, Rachel Whiteread's *Cabin*, Mark Handforth's *Yankee Hanger*, and the upcoming performative work *Herstory of the Universe@Governors Island* by Richard Move and MoveOpolis!

Recent commissions include Jacob Hashimoto's *Never Comes Tomorrow*, David Brooks's *Rock, Mosquito and Hummingbird*, and Susan Philipsz's *Day is Done*. Learn more about public art commissions on Governors Island at govisland.org/things-to-do/public-art.

The Field Station of the Melancholy Marine Biologist is made possible through the generous support of Charina Endowment Fund, Stavros Niarchos Foundation, and the Donald A. Pels Charitable Trust.

About Mark Dion

Artist, collector and naturalist, Mark Dion uses the detritus of human culture to examine the ways in which dominant ideologies and institutions shape our understanding of history, knowledge and the natural world. Dion's work takes the form of installation, drawing and curiosity cabinets. Based in Copake, New York, Dion has received numerous awards, including the Joan Mitchell Foundation, Guggenheim Fellowship and the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Lucida Art Award. He has had major exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Tate Gallery, London; the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut and the British Museum of Natural History, London. Dion received his BFA and honorary doctorate from the University of Hartford in Connecticut and has an honorary doctorate from The Wagner Free Institute of Science in Philadelphia. Dion is co-founder of Mildred's Lane an innovative visual art education and residency program in Beach Lake, Pennsylvania. He is represented by Tanya Bonakdar Gallery in NYC.

About The Trust for Governors Island

The Trust for Governors Island is the nonprofit corporation created by the City of New York that is responsible for the redevelopment and operation of 150 acres of Governors Island. The Trust's mission is to realize the full potential of Governors Island for the inspiration and enjoyment of all New Yorkers, demonstrating a bold vision for public space.

For more information, visit www.govisland.org.

Press Contacts

John DeSio – 917-656-5972, john@risaheller.com

Photo

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Mark Dion *The Field Station of the Melancholy Marine Biologist*, 2017

mixed media

194 3/4 x 289 1/2 x 108 inches; 494.7 x 735.3 x 274.3 cm

Installation view, Prospect 4. The Lotus in Spite of the Swamp, Prospect New Orleans, New Orleans, 2018.

Photo by Zach Smith, courtesy the artist and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York / Los Angeles