THE TRUST FOR
GOVERNORS ISLAND

GOVERNORS
ISLAND ARTS

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READY, SET, CARVE! GOVERNORS ISLAND ARTS DEBUTS FINALISTS FOR FIFTH ANNUAL ICE SCULPTURE SHOW

Finalists will wield chainsaws and chisels to expertly carve their designs into blocks of ice with expert guidance from Okamoto Studio

Winning designs range from ice carved by a robotic arm to a busking stage that will feature a live ice skater

NEW YORK, NY (January 8, 2026) – Governors Island Arts announced today the finalists that will compete in the fifth annual Governors Island Ice Sculpture Show, set to take place on February 7, 2026, from 12:00-3:00 p.m. This popular annual event provides New Yorkers with a unique opportunity to experience live ice carving set amongst the open space, cultural, educational, and historic resources and attractions that Governors Island offers year-round. The ten finalists were chosen following an open call seeking designs inspired by the theme of "movement." The selected finalists will be paired with professional ice carvers from Okamoto Studio to bring their visions to life.

"What began as a winter experiment five years ago has grown into one of our signature seasonal events, and we're thrilled to present such a dynamic group of artists for this year's show," **said Lauren Haynes, Head Curator of Governors Island Arts and Vice President at the Trust for Governors Island.** "From bold public art to immersive programming year-round, Governors Island offers eclectic and engaging experiences for every type of visitor, and the Ice Sculpture Show is no exception. Whether you're a longtime Island fan or visiting for the first time, there's no better way to experience winter on the Island than watching massive blocks of ice transform into stunning works of art live in Colonels Row."

2026 Ice Sculpture Show Finalists & Designs:

- **Takashi Harada and Kae Sato (@studiotakashiharada):** "Transboundary" – This design emulates the wild beta fish that live in the great Mekong River, evoking the movement and energy of the natural world.
- **Rhea Marmentini (@rheamarmentini):** "The Freethinker" – This design addresses reality through creative thinking with a collection of stacked spheres that ebb and flow together, representing the idea as an ephemeral and changing concept.
- **Cathleen Luo (@catluo27.art):** "Convergence Deity" – This design explores movement as both physical motion and collective change, with the form of human hands symbolizing the human ability to take action that can make and remake the world.
- **Kris Thomas (@kristhomas.art):** "Flight of the Yellow-crowned Night Heron" – Depicting a bird in flight, this work aims to highlight the diverse ecosystem of Governors Island and New York Harbor, and the importance of the work done on the Island to protect and restore ecosystems.

- **Lizzy Chemel (@lil_south):** "Sacral Column" – This ice design depicts the vertebra from the spine of a humpback whale, which serves as both the locus of movement and a remnant from a mammalian ancestor.
- **Zyia Zhang, Kiril Bejoulev, Elias Griffin, Michael Luck Schneider (@volvoxlabs):** "Hybrid Biota" – This design explores movement through the choreography of a robotic arm carving ice, which will shape the block in gestures unique to the machine. The resulting work is both process and performance, becoming a kinetic sculpture in its own right.
- **Salvador Gomes da Silva Filho (@salvadorgomesart):** "Not Moving Backward" – This design explores the unsettling beauty of the human body through a sculptural torso with its head turned backward, questioning the notion that moving backward is inherently comfortable or unproductive.
- **Karina Manta (@karinamanta):** "Busking Stage" – This design creates a physical venue where a figure skater will debut a performance. Busking plays an integral role in the culture of New York City; after the skater performs, the sculpture will become a physical representation of their movements before melting away.
- **Wei Xiong, Shanshan Zhang (@xiongweiii_studio):** "The Birth of Us" – This design, based on the classic image of Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus,* replaces the goddess with a human baby and replaces the scallop shells with oyster shells to indicate the characteristics of Governors Island and New York Harbor.
- **David Green (@dgreenco):** "Untitled" – The same way a sculpture of a galloping horse reflects movement frozen in time, this design of a breaking wave reflects water frozen into ice. As it melts, it will give the impression of the wave completing its cycle—thereby unfreezing time.

In addition to real-time ice carving, the Ice Sculpture Show will also feature ice carving workshops from Okamoto Studio, a DJ set from Miss Alicia with sound by Karlala Soundsystem, and more activities for visitors. Makina Café will be open in Colonels Row alongside additional food trucks with winter-themed treats. The Ice Sculpture Show is free with RSVP at www.govisland.org/ice-show.

Governors Island is open to the public daily from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. during the winter months. Cold-season activities include Winter Dog Days, outdoor exploration in the Island's award-winning park, recreation activities and amenities including bike rentals and QC NY Spa, and more. Governors Island Arts public artworks—including pieces by Lenka Clayton & Phillip Andrew Lewis, Chakaia Booker, Duke Riley, Sam Van Aken, Rachel Whiteread, Mark Dion, Sheila Berger, Shantell Martin, and Mark Handforth—are on view daily throughout the Island.

Trust for Governors Island-operated ferries run daily between the Battery Maritime Building at 10 South Street in Lower Manhattan and Soissons Landing on the Island. Round-trip ferry tickets cost $5 for adults. Governors Island ferries are always free for children 12 and under, older adults ages 65 and up, residents of NYCHA, IDNYC holders, current and former military service members, and Governors Island members. Ferries before 11a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays are free for all. There is no surcharge for bicycles or strollers at any time. For schedules and tickets, visit www.govisland.org/ferry. NYC Ferry, the city's public ferry service, also serves Governors Island daily on the South Brooklyn Route during the winter months, with stops in Lower Manhattan and along the Brooklyn waterfront. Schedules and more information available on their website at www.ferry.nyc.

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About Governors Island Arts

Governors Island Arts, the public arts and cultural program presented by the Trust for Governors Island, creates transformative encounters with art for all New Yorkers, inviting artists and researchers to engage with the issues of our time in the context of the Island's layered histories, environments, and architecture. Governors Island Arts achieves this mission through temporary and long-term public art installations and exhibitions, an annual Organizations in Residence program in the Island's historic houses, and the curated multidisciplinary *INTERVENTIONS* performance series. For more information, visit www.govisland.org/arts

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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.