



For Immediate Release

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LAUMEIER SCULPTURE PARK ANNOUNCES NEWLY COMMISSIONED WORK FROM ODILI DONALD ODITA

At a Glance

WHAT: Artist Odili Donald Odita will present newly commissioned artwork in the form of colorful flags. The exhibition, *From Periphery to Center*, is intended to forge connections between North and South St. Louis County, and therefore, will be displayed at two locations – Laumeier Sculpture Park in Sunset Hills, MO and Jeske Sculpture Park in Ferguson, MO.

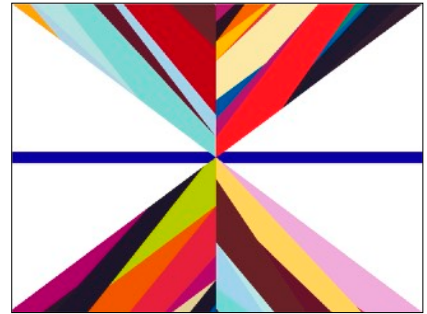


Image: Odili Donald Odita, *X (Laumeier)*, 2020. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

WHO: Nigerian-born, Philadelphia-based artist Odili Donald Odita, who is widely acclaimed for his use of color in hard-edged, abstract paintings and public art projects.

WHEN: The outdoor exhibition will open August 8 at Jeske Sculpture Park and August 9 at Laumeier Sculpture Park, running through December 20, 2020 at both locations. Jeske is free and open daily from sunrise to sunset. Laumeier is free and open daily from 8 a.m. until 30 minutes past sunset.

WHERE: Five flags will be presented at Laumeier Sculpture Park, 12580 Rott Road, St. Louis, MO 63127. Ten flags will be presented at Jeske Sculpture Park, 211 Thoroughman Ave, Ferguson, MO 63135.

WHY: *From Periphery to Center* is a meditation on similarities and difference, bonds and divisions. It strives to “use the space of art to create platforms of compassion and consideration, where people may not agree on certain things but they can try to come to understand what is on the other side,” says Odita.

Odili Donald Odita is a nationally and internationally-known artist whose work has been featured in exhibitions around the world, including: Jack Shainman Gallery, New York; M77 Gallery, Milan, Italy; Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina; Michael Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa; among many other locations.

Detailed release follows



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**LAUMEIER SCULPTURE PARK PRESENTS ODILI DONALD ODITA:
FROM PERIPHERY TO CENTER, AUGUST 9 - DECEMBER 20, 2020**

St. Louis, MO – Laumeier Sculpture Park is proud to present newly commissioned work from Odili Donald Odita. Nigerian-born, Philadelphia-based artist Odita is best known for his use of color in hard-edged, abstract paintings and public art projects. *From Periphery to Center* will run August 9 - December 20, 2020. This new outdoor exhibition will take the form of colorful flags displayed at two locations – Laumeier Sculpture Park in Sunset Hills, MO and Jeske Sculpture Park in Ferguson, MO.

Odita's flag designs are extractions of his research around the concepts of "periphery" and "center," most specifically looking at the geographic and social relationships between North and South St. Louis County. He is especially interested in the conversations on inequity and social justice that ensued after the killing of Michael Brown by police, which brought local conditions and events to national and international attention. Odita wants to address the idea that concepts of periphery and center are subjective and changing, and that events do not cease to make significant impact when they occur outside of a broader horizon of attention.

"You have this notion of periphery as being a space to the side, not in focus, in a blur. But you also have to ask: Is a place actually periphery if I can still see it? Why don't I take the time to look left, right, up, down and be able to see what exists around me, rather than only the immediate?" Odita says. Once you ask those questions, he adds that you can look to "institutions of art as sanctuaries, or safe places, where people can gather to have real discussions, to speak their minds and to share their thoughts together in a safe and conscientious manner."

From Periphery to Center features five abstract designs used to make a total of 15 flags. On view at Laumeier will be one 30-foot flag pole displaying a 6'x10' flag as well as two 25-foot flag poles displaying two 4'x6' flags each. At Jeske Sculpture Park, four of the designs will be used to create ten 3'x5' flags, attached to existing light poles throughout the park.

The flag designs present bold colors arranged into geometric shapes and patterns. Some of the flags utilize shapes suggesting chain-link fencing and divisions within urban landscapes. Odita expounds the flag entitled *X (Laumeier)* by stating, "The X design is a representation of a crossroads, but I like the term 'x' because it means we have the ability to make the decision of where we go, rather than where we are determined to be." He continues, "We can decide as we look at things, as we think about things, as we discuss with each other, where we can go as a group."

Using his signature color formations, the project is a meditation on similarities and differences, bonds and divisions. Laumeier Curator Dana Turkovic states, "Odita's works have great potential to reverberate with our visitors from near and far by creating a metaphorical and physical dialogue through sculpture. Shared between sites, his flags have the ability to engage with a range of visitors through his attempt to connect two seemingly disparate locales."

Odita's interwoven blocks of color are derived from a variety of influences; from the vibrant wallpapers he



grew up with in his Columbus, Ohio household, to the old-school methods of Jazz and Nigerian Highlife music composition, alongside traditional African artifacts. Laumeier visitors may remember one of Odira's paintings featured in the group exhibition *How We See: Color and Materiality* from March to June 2019, curated by Dana Turkovic.

Odili Donald Odita: From Periphery to Center was conceived as part of a new Visiting Artists in Residence program launched with the support of [Vilcek Foundation](#). The foundation's mission is to celebrate immigrants' contributions to the arts, culture and society in the United States. "Through this program, we are able to share our vision with the Missouri community through Laumeier Sculpture Park and Jeske Sculpture Park," said Rick Kinsel, president of the Vilcek Foundation. "The unique perspective that foreign-born artists provide is indispensable to the development of American Art."

About the Artist

Odili Donald Odita (b. 1966, Enugu, Nigeria) is an abstract painter whose work has been exhibited internationally for over 25 years. His recent solo exhibitions include Cape Town, New York, and Milan. He has been included in significant group exhibitions including Prospect 4 in New Orleans and the Front Triennial in Cleveland. His work is held in museum collections including Baltimore Museum of Art, Hirshhorn Museum, Newark Museum, New Orleans Museum of Art, Perez Art Museum and Studio Museum in Harlem, among many more. His commissions and public installations have ranged from the Venice Biennale to the United Nations. He holds a BFA from Ohio State University and a MFA from Bennington College. He lives in Philadelphia, where he serves as a professor of art at Tyler School of Art and Architecture at Temple University.

Public Programs

First viewing events for *Odili Donald Odita: From Periphery to Center* will take place on August 8 and 9.

Saturday, August 8, 10 a.m. to noon

Jeske Sculpture Park / Free

The debut of Odita's exhibition at Jeske Sculpture Park will feature two free activities: a walking tour with Director of Jeske Sculpture Park Bryce Robinson and Laumeier Sculpture Park Curator Dana Turkovic as well as a family flag-making workshop inspired by Odita's artwork.

Sunday, August 9, noon to 4 p.m.

Laumeier Sculpture Park / Free

The debut of Odita's exhibition at Laumeier will include a family flag-making workshop inspired by Odita's artwork and a discussion with Curator Dana Turkovic underneath Odita's flags.

Additional public programming will be presented throughout the run of the exhibition, please visit www.laumeier.org for the most up to date information.

About Jeske Sculpture Park

Jeske Sculpture Park is a seven-acre public green space in the heart of Ferguson, Missouri. Its mission is to host rotating exhibitions of contemporary sculpture in North St. Louis County. Jeske presented its inaugural exhibition in 2014 and continues to feature artists from across the country.

About Laumeier Sculpture Park

Founded in 1976, Laumeier Sculpture Park is one of the first and largest sculpture parks in the country. Laumeier presents more than 70 works of large-scale outdoor sculpture throughout its 105-acre campus and serves 300,000 visitors of all ages each year, with a world-class art collection, indoor and outdoor

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temporary exhibitions, education programs and public events. Laumeier is an internationally recognized museum, accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The 501(c)3 nonprofit organization operates in partnership with St. Louis County Parks.

Laumeier Sculpture Park's ongoing operations and programs are generously supported by St. Louis County Parks; Regional Arts Commission; Missouri Arts Council; Arts and Education Council; UMSL; and Emerson, among other corporations, foundations, individual donors and members. Additional funding related to COVID-19 relief has been provided by the U.S. Small Business Administration, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Windgate Foundation.

2020 Exhibitions are supported by Ellen and Durb Curlee, Alison and John Ferring, Jan and Ronnie Greenberg, Nancy and Ken Kranzberg, Joan and Mitchell Markow and Two Sister's Foundation, Emily Rauh Pulitzer, Mary Ann and Andy Srenco.

Odili Donald Odita: From Periphery to Center is supported by the Windgate Foundation, the Whitaker Foundation and the Vilcek Foundation.

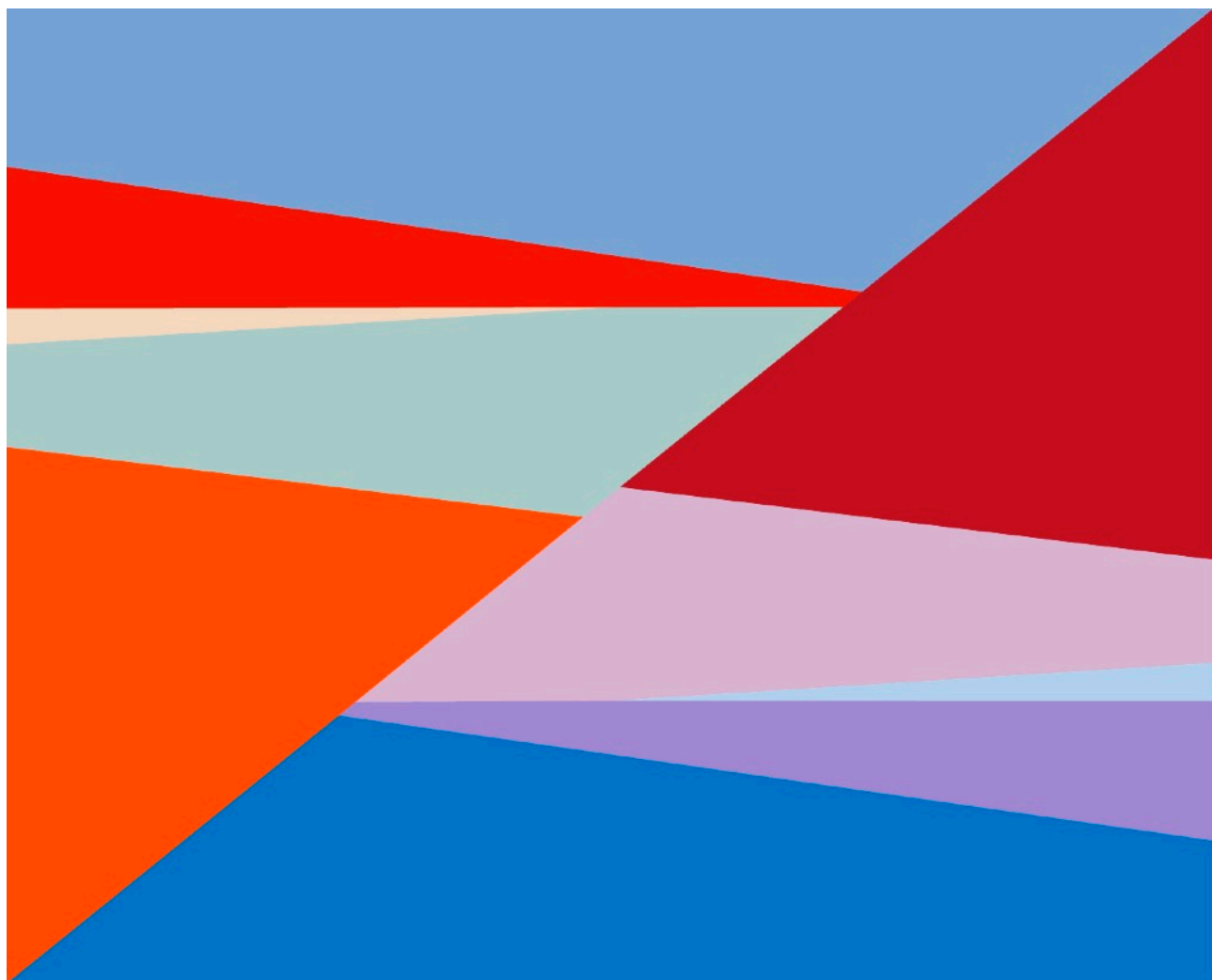
Exhibition Images

Digital designs for *From Periphery to Center*, 2020. Commissioned by Laumeier Sculpture Park. Copyright Odili Donald Odita. Images courtesy of artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.



Odili Donald Odita. *X (Laumeier)*, 2020. Nylon. 72 x 120 inches.

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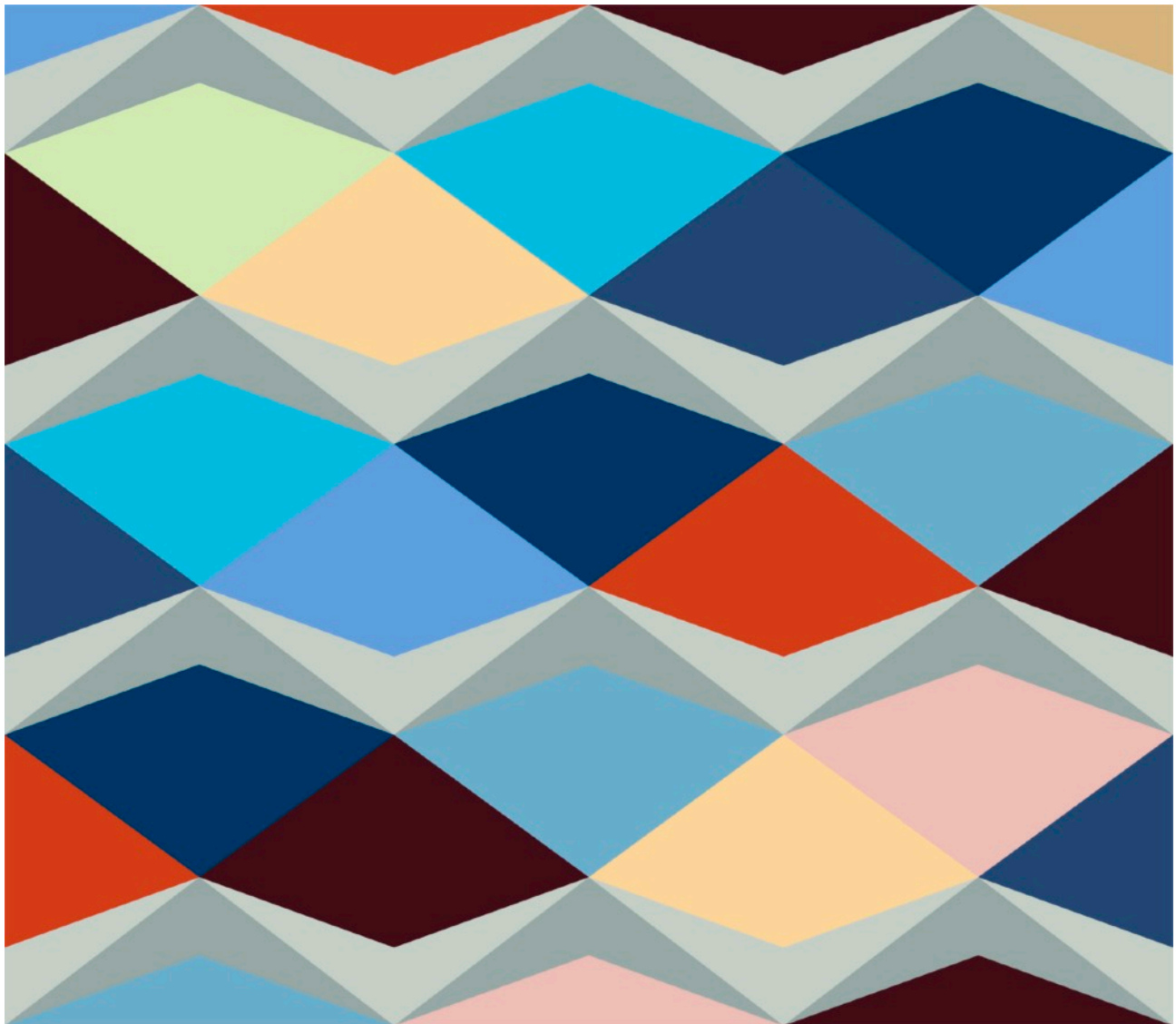
Odili Donald Odita
Divide, 2020
Nylon
Ed. 1, 48 x 72 inches
Ed. 2, 36 x 60 inches

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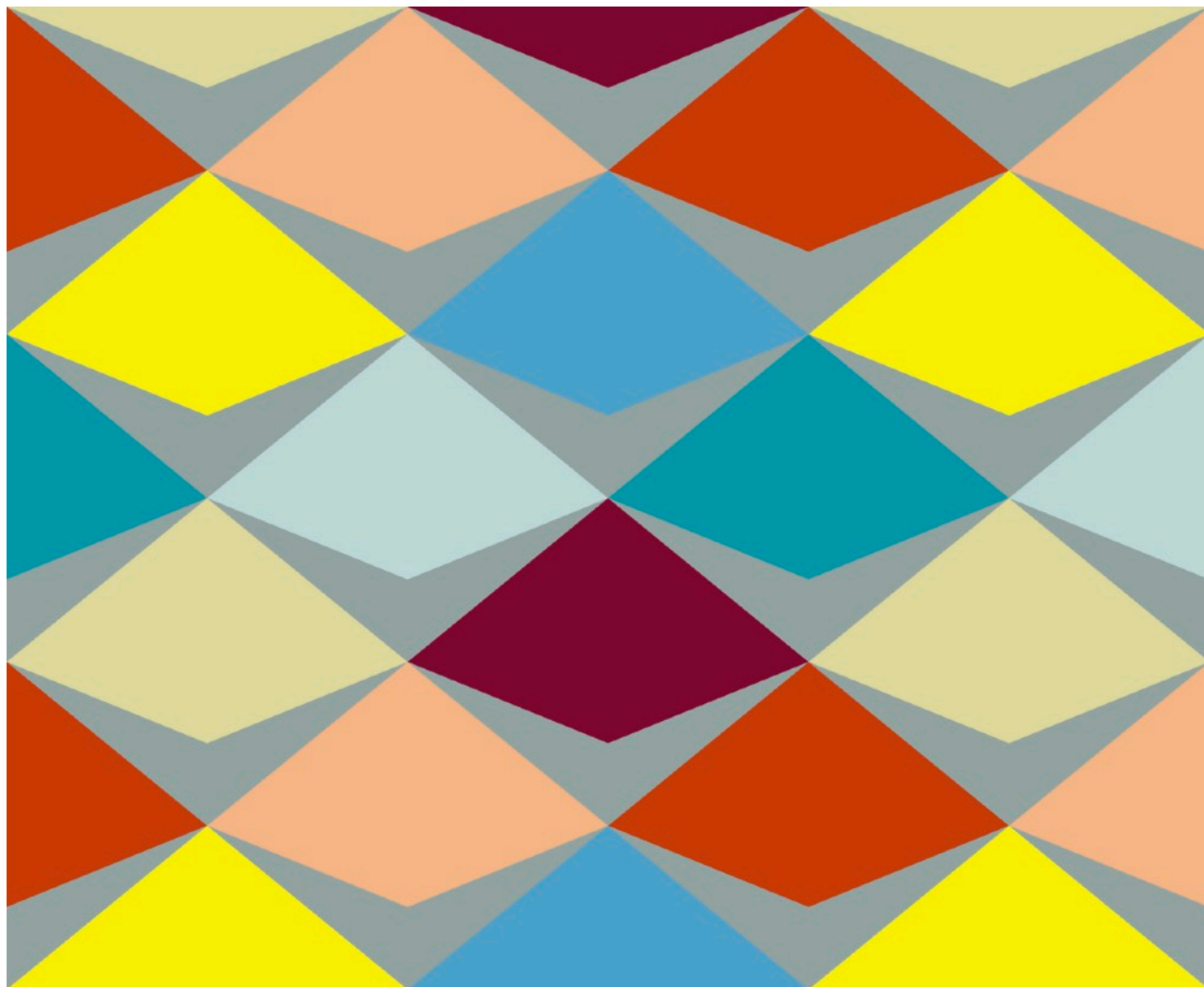
Odili Donald Odita
Fence #1, 2020
Nylon
Ed. 1, 48 x 72 inches
Ed. 2, 36 x 60 inches

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Odili Donald Odita
Fence #2, 2020
Nylon
Ed. 1, 48 x 72 inches
Ed. 2, 36 x 60 inches

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Odili Donald Odita
Fence #3, 2020
Nylon
Ed. 1, 48 x 72 inches
Ed. 2, 36 x 60 inches

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