



Socrates thinks outside the box

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by Elizabeth Daley, qboro editor

The sun is shining, the breeze is blowing and it is undoubtedly the best time of year to visit Socrates Sculpture Park in Long Island City.

Though this year's exhibit, "Vista" is more subtle than shows in years past and there isn't much for kids to climb on, after reading about the show it is easier to appreciate.

Curated by the park's departing director Alyson Baker with Lars Fisk and Elissa Goldstone, the show attempts to "explore the interplay between methods of viewing and the interpretation of the physical world."

Of the 11 artists who have created sculptures for the park, some are more successful than others at challenging points of view.

Blane De St. Croix, whose monumental stone sculpture "Mountain Views" conceals the city skyline, offers one of the most successful works. Simple, yet ingenious, St. Croix's work plays with dimensions, as his mountain range is both enormous and miniature. The East River, glimmering beneath the handmade mountain range, only adds to the pleasure of seeing some of the best nature the city has to offer.

Slinko's "Anti-Flare," a towering green sculpture mimicking lens flare — those streaks of light that appear in photos whether you want them to or not — is also effective at challenging perspectives. Many visitors stopped to take pictures with the photographic effect made physical.

Robert Swainson's "All That Is Solid Melts into Air" doesn't look like much from one side, but from the other it is a perfect mimicry of the blue construction fencing often present on many city streets. Seeing it on display in the park's expansive green space is amusing. What's more interesting still is that the piece, created using a blue woodblock print on a white poly knit fabric, fills up like a sail when wind hits it, making it appear as if it is swollen.



PHOTO BY ELIZABETH DALEY

Blane De St. Croix's "Mountain Views," on view at Socrates Sculpture Park.



Priscilla De Carvahlo's "Between Lines," a set of black poles with cord connecting them, didn't look like much until a black bird alighted upon it, suddenly turning the poles with rope connecting them into a set of zig-zagging telephone lines.

If visiting Socrates for the art isn't enough, the park has partnered with a variety of organizations to offer a farmer's market every Saturday beginning on June 25 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., a bike parade on June 11 with a helmet giveaway starting at 11 a.m., fishing class on June 12 at 2 p.m. Yoga and capoeira lessons are offered in the park on Saturdays starting at 9:30 and 11 a.m. and sculpture workshops at noon on Saturdays. Visit the park's website at socratessculpturepark.org for more information.

"Vista" at Socrates Sculpture Park

When: 10 a.m. until sunset through August 7

Where: 32-01 Vernon Blvd. at Broadway, LIC