



 → OUTDOOR SCULPTURE

## A breath of fresh air: The Clark opens its first outdoor exhibition

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Known for its esteemed collection of European and American paintings and art historical research library, the institution's 140-acre meadow now features contemporary sculptures set against the bucolic landscape of the Berkshire Highlands in Massachusetts

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After several years of development and a months-long postponement due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts, has opened its first-ever outdoor exhibition.

The show *Ground/Work* comprises several poetic site-responsive commissions imbued by the picturesque backdrop of the Berkshires by six contemporary women artists, including Kelly Akashi, Nairy Baghramian, Jennie C. Jones, Eva LeWitt, Analia Saban and Haegue Yang.

The show is scheduled to be on view until October 2021 or later, and is perhaps serendipitously timely as lockdown restrictions begin to tighten with Covid-19 cases spiking in Massachusetts and other parts of the East Coast again, making outdoor art activities more valuable than ever even as winter rolls in.

The Clark, formally known as the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, opened in 1955 as a museum of European and American artworks from the collection of the American philanthropists Sterling and Francine Clark, who amassed a significant collection in their lifetime, including extensive holdings of [works by Pierre-Auguste Renoir](#) , JMW Turner and Winslow Homer, among others.

The institute expanded to become a research and academic centre, and gradually blossomed to its current state to include a 140-acre outdoor campus as part of a \$145m renovation. Led by the architects Tadao Ando, Annabelle Selldorf and Reed Hilderbrand, the project was completed in 2016.

While museum attendance remains [capped at 25% capacity](#) due to state-wide mandates amid the global health crisis, the outdoor campus will be open year-round at all hours, and offers ample room for social distancing.

The inaugural plein air exhibition has been organised by the guest curators Molly Epstein and Abigail Ross Goodman, in collaboration with Robert Wiesenberger, the associate curator of contemporary projects, who joined the museum in 2018 and is a graduate professor at Williams College, which The Clark co-sponsors.

Below, Wiesenberger tells *The Art Newspaper* about the dynamic works that now dot the surrounding landscape:



Courtesy of the artist and Patron Gallery, Chicago. and Alexander Gray Associates, New York. Photo: Thomas Clark

The Brooklyn-based artist Jennie C. Jones has produced a sonic wind-activated sculptural work of monumental scale that evokes an Aeolian harp. The work is in direct dialogue with two turbulent seascapes of the Atlantic Ocean by Winslow Homer in the institution's permanent collection—titled Eastern Point and West Point, Prout's Neck (both 1900)—which the artist, who is “deeply steeped in the history of African American culture”, related to the “the transatlantic slave trade and the Middle Passage”, Wiesenberger says. “The sound is very subtle—it's a call and response with these pieces inside and explores the vernacular language of minimalism as it relates to sound art”.