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Word Up!

By Kadia Goba - October 1, 2018



Deborah Kass' sculpture "YO/OY" and Brooklyn Hi-Art! Machine's "DO NOT DISAPPEAR INTO SILENCE" in front of The Brooklyn Museum as part of the museum's "Something to Say" art series. (Photo: Kadia Goba/Bklyner)

CROWN HEIGHTS — The **Deborah Kass** installation “OY/YO” just hit the nabe as part Brooklyn Museum’s text-based art series.

The 17-foot-tall, bright yellow installation, “OY/YO” was mounted on the lawn outside of Brooklyn Museum on Friday. The painted aluminum is part of Kass’ ongoing engagement with work from male artists of the twentieth century. Ed Ruscha’s “OOF” and Milton Glaser’s “I LOVE NY” logo are Kass’ inspiration for what has become a Brooklyn badge of art.

Since 2015, the sculpture has traveled from Brooklyn Bridge Park — where it made its debut — to Williamsburg and has now made its way to the Brooklyn Museum.

According to the placard mounted on the foot of the installation, the “YO” angle refers to both the Spanish translation of “I” and the slang greeting. But that only applies to those walking away from Downtown Brooklyn heading towards Crown Heights on Eastern Parkway. Brooklynites walking the opposite way are met with the Yiddish word, “OY,” representing dismay or annoyance, according to the 62-year-old Brooklyn-based artist.



Deborah Kass’ art sculpture “YO/OY” in front of The Brooklyn Museum as part of the museum’s “Something to Say” art series. (Photo: Kadia Goba/Bklyner)

For Crown Heights, the sculpture represents the unique makeup of the neighborhood, almost beckoning a conversation about the long-standing Black and Jewish communities.

“When I created OY/YO the American promise of equality and fairness was writ in the most diverse administration ever, working to make the country a better place for all,” Kass told Bklyner. “With hate and division now on the rise, it is urgent to see our commonalities, what we share, and what brings us together.”

The installation is part of a year-long art series, “**Something to Say**” highlighting four artists in the Museum’s public space. The Crown Heights art collective **Brooklyn Hi!-Art Machine**’s neon women installation already sits on the facade of the Museum’s Martha A. and Robert S. Rubin Pavilion.

Kameelah Janan Rasheed’s two-part work has installations both inside and outside of the museum. The interior art piece is installed on the interior brick arcade. For her exterior piece, Rasheed will feature thought-provoking prepositions along the iconic steps of the museum, next to the fountain. Passersby can expect to see the dangling expressions from the artist as soon as early Monday evening.

A second neon installation from artist **Hank Willis Thomas** will go next to the admissions desk. Thomas’ art installation, “Love Rules,” will continuously flash words such as, “love rules” and “love overrules.” The words have a sentimental meaning signaling unity during difficult times.

The museum is **inviting the public** to come out and experience the collaborative exhibit on Oct. 6.

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