

# NOW + THERE

## PRESS RELEASE

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***Liz Glynn: Open House*** reimagines a Gilded Age ballroom and invites you in  
*Location: Commonwealth Avenue Mall West between Kenmore Street and Charlesgate West*

**On view July 26 – November 4, 2018**

(Boston, MA --- June 25, 2018) --- Public art curator Now + There will unveil its 2018 season **on July 26** with *Open House*, an exhibition by nationally acclaimed Boston-born artist Liz Glynn. *Open House* takes the form of one of the grandest interior spaces of the Gilded Age, a private ballroom historically accessible only to the most elite members of society. In this work, the artist highlights class distinctions and the dynamics between public and private space, beckoning you to take a seat and linger. Organized for Boston by Now + There, *Open House* was commissioned and originally presented in 2017 by Public Art Fund at the southeast entrance to Central Park, New York, in cooperation with the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery.

*Open House* will transform a busy area of Commonwealth Avenue Mall near Kenmore Square into the opulent ruins of an open-air ballroom. The artist's 26-piece installation includes lavish Louis XIV chairs, sofas, footstools, and arches that evoke an extravagant late nineteenth century interior, but with a twist — these objects are cast in concrete, a utilitarian material more commonly seen in public housing. With this revision of a Gilded Age ballroom, Glynn addresses the evolving face of a city asking: who has access to space in a society that is increasingly divided along socio-economic lines?

The work was inspired by William C. Whitney's private ballroom on Fifth Avenue in New York City, a magnificent, now demolished, interior designed by Stanford White, architect of Kenmore Square's Boston Hotel Buckminster and numerous Commonwealth Avenue mansions within close proximity of the exhibition.

"We are thrilled to partner with Now + There to bring Liz Glynn's *Open House* to Boston," says **Public Art Fund Director & Chief Curator Nicholas Baume**. "As a former Bostonian and ICA Chief Curator, I'm particularly excited that Liz Glynn's brilliant *Open House* will create a dialogue with this beloved Boston icon, Commonwealth Avenue Mall. Glynn's skillful and timely reinterpretation of an exclusive Gilded Age interior could not be more appropriate amidst the Back Bay's grand nineteenth century architecture."

"During the late 19th century, ballrooms became important signifiers of power and prestige accessible only to the elite, unlike the grand promenade of Commonwealth Avenue Mall," says **Now + There Executive Director Kate Gilbert**. Bringing this work to Boston during a time of rapid development, Now + There is sparking a dialogue about economic inequality and supporting Glynn's desire to incite

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future action. You can't sit within *Open House* and not think about who is designing tomorrow's Boston, and who will have access to it."

**Daniel S. Palmer, Associate Curator Public Art Fund, the curator of *Liz Glynn: Open House***, says "By reinterpreting an artifact of a period marked by incredible financial growth—and disparity—Glynn connects our present moment to the historical era of the Gilded Age and makes it accessible to the public."

**Liz Glynn** stated, "*Open House* will offer Boston a site to consider the values which shape our urban spaces. Who has access to public and private spaces, and how does this relate to rising income inequality? The installation is designed as a living room for all, and I'm particularly excited about the potential for local artists and community members to activate the site as a gathering place for conversation and performances."

When first installed in New York City in 2017, *Open House* was Glynn's first large-scale public commission and engagement with subjects from the Gilded Age. The exhibition continues her ongoing interest in social ritual and economy as expressed through transformations of material. Glynn's work is often activated through performance, engaging history and modern materials to recreate objects and architectures that she has researched extensively. Her practice seeks to de-stabilize dominant historical narratives and invite audiences to question the values attached to cultural artifacts. This approach re-animates history, connecting it to the present moment and opening it up to a critical rethinking.

Glynn's current exhibition at MASS MoCA, *The Archaeology of Another Possible Future*, is a sprawling sculptural experience of sight, sensation, sound, and scent spread across 25,000 square feet in Building 5 gallery. Stretching nearly a football field in length, this exhibit considers what happens to material goods, and the people who used to make them, in the face of technological acceleration and an increasingly abstract economy.

**Now + There** is a non-profit public art curator changing the landscape with temporary and site-specific public artworks. Through its curatorial and fundraising efforts, N+T is transforming Boston into a public art city by creating a portfolio of projects that support artistic risk-taking, community dialogue and cultural change.

#### **Public Art Fund**

As the leader in its field, Public Art Fund brings dynamic contemporary art to a broad audience in New York City and beyond by mounting ambitious free exhibitions of international scope and impact that offer the public powerful experiences with art and the urban environment.

**Paula Cooper Gallery**, the first art gallery in SoHo, opened in 1968 with an exhibition to benefit the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. For fifty years, the gallery's artistic agenda has remained focused on, though not limited to, conceptual and minimal art. In 1996, the gallery moved to Chelsea. Three years later, Paula Cooper opened a second exhibition space in Chelsea on 21st Street.