

**Presenting a New Public Sculpture by José Carlos Casado, under the theme:
*Women of Color***



I Don't Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Ah Me... | Marcus Garvey Park, Harlem, NYC
On view until September 2019

Harlem, New York: The Marcus Garvey Park Alliance (MGPA) is pleased to announce the unveiling of two new sculptures in Marcus Garvey Park. The installations are part of the MGPA's Public Art Initiative. The artists have been working with the Public Art Initiative for the past year to bring their ideas to life and to the community.

I Don't Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Ah me...
by [José Carlos Casado](#)

José Carlos Casado thinks back to some of his earliest recognized work: a photograph that won a competition in Spain 26 years ago. "The picture was titled 'Woman, Lesbian, and Black.' The race, you couldn't see -- it's just a shadow, its very abstract in a way," he says describing the photograph. "My work always has some sort of political and social background." Abstractions in Casado's work, set the framework for a conversation, Casado, is neither woman, nor lesbian, nor black, but he utilizes his art as a way to connect with, question interrelation and demonstrate alliance.

The latest iteration of this intercultural query presents itself in a public work, "I Don't Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Ah Me..." a title which evokes a conversation between Maya Angelou's iconic autobiography and Casado's observations and curiosities about the black female experience in today's day and age. In the work, installed in central Harlem's Marcus Garvey Park, Casado merges sculpture from an ongoing series with augmented reality cages. Viewers will be able to see the fully designed concept through their smartphones. The colorful aluminum sculpture is caged, representing a caging of potential for women, but especially women of color. But the AR adds another dimension -- one of hope -- allowing viewers to enter and leave the cage, and share community in the process. "You realize that you are not the only one in the cage," Casado says, meditating on the individual and also shared aspects of this plight. "You realize not only are women in the cage, but we are all in the cage, because if one person is not free, nobody is free." The piece reflects Casado's renewed inspiration, having read Angelou's brave and still applicable story. The piece urges allegiance in a difficult social and political climate: "There's a light. We can all go through the door, we can all find a way to figure out this labyrinth."

José Carlos Casado (b. 1971) is a multimedia artist from Spain. A MFA graduate of the School of Visual Arts, he has been based in New York for 20 years. He uses technologies to create art involving video, 3D animation, photography and sculpture. His work has been shown in multiple solo and group shows internationally and has won numerous prizes and recognitions, including a grant from Picasso Foundation, a scholarship from LaCaixa Foundation, MIT's Leonardo Excellence Award, two New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowships, a grant from Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone (UMEZ)/Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC), and two grants from Queens Council on the Arts (QCA), NY.

He has participated in more than 20 international New Media Festivals, including Sundance and ArsElectronica. He has been an art resident at the Vermont Studio Center, School of Visual Arts, Anderson Ranch Residency, and Swatch Art Peace Hotel Residency in Shanghai. He performed *Aliens With Extraordinary Abilities*, a 16-minute performance with video and dancers at the 1st Spanish Art Fest in NYC's Times Square. He has created several Public Art projects, including sculptures at Socrates Sculpture Park in NY; Castle Williams in Governors Island, NY; Women Center Plaza in Madrid, Spain; Marcus Garvey Park, in Harlem, NYC; and Rufus King Park in Jamaica, Queens, NY.

Casado was recently invited to create a Swatch Art Limited Edition watch, presented at the 55th Venice Biennale, and created a surrounding video installation for the singer M.I.A.'s new album release concert.

Casado founded NY/Anantapur in 2010, a foundation to raise funds to build schools in India. Two schools have been built so far and are used by more than 500 children and adults, as primary schools and civic centers.

The Public Art Initiative is an ongoing program developed by Marcus Garvey Park Alliance President, Connie Lee in 2016 that creates opportunities for artists who live and work uptown to produce and install art in public parks and open spaces in Northern Manhattan.

I Don't Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Ah Me... is made possible in part with funding from the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation and administered by Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.

Funding has also been provided by the Marcus Garvey Park Alliance Public Art Initiative, MarcusGarveyParkAlliance.org. Additional funding provided by the Harlem Community Development Corporation, Socrates Sculpture Park, and Council Member Bill Perkins. Additional support provided by Materials for the Arts. Marketing support has been provided by NYC & Company Foundation, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer Cultural Tourism Grant.

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