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High Line Art Relaunches Its 18th Street Billboard Commission with a Glenn Ligon Work

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Glenn Ligon, 'Untitled' (America/Me), 2022-2024.
COURTESY THE HIGH LINE AND THE ARTIST.

New York's **High Line** (<https://www.artnews.com/t/high-line/>) Art, the art commissioning platform of the beloved railroad turned pedestrian walkway, is once again getting a dedicated billboard.

After nearly a decade hiatus, the organization will once again present artworks on 18th Street, near 10th Avenue, in Chelsea. A newly reconstructed billboard there will reinvigorate its Billboard Art series, which places artworks visible from both street level and the elevated park. The 18th Street billboard will rotate every two months.

For the inaugural iteration, High Line Art director and chief curator **Cecilia Alemani** (<https://www.artnews.com/t/cecilia-alemani/>) has tapped conceptual artist **Glenn Ligon** (<https://www.artnews.com/t/glenn-ligon/>), who is known for an incisive, text-based practice that ponders America's past and its possibilities. Ligon's *Untitled (America/Me)*, a reworked photograph of one of his iconic neon works, will be on view from September 3 through November 2024 at 18th Street near 10th Avenue.

"We're very excited to have the platform of the billboard at 18th Street again after nearly a decade," Alemani said in a statement. "The billboard format allows the High Line Art program to present large, highly visible two-dimensional artworks in a more responsive time frame than other installations."

She continued, "It's a giant canvas for artists to present large scale works visible both from the High Line and from the street level. The cutting message of [*Untitled (America/Me)*] finds renewed resonance in the current political moment."

The previous iteration of High Line Art's billboard commission ran from 2010 through 2015, and exhibited works by John Baldessari, Faith Ringgold, and Louise Lawler, among other artists. Since September 2023, the organization has also staged billboard commission on one such structure on Dyer Avenue between 30th and 31st Streets, not far from the High Line.

Ligon's *Untitled (America/Me)*, too, is a new iteration of an old idea. He reworked his iconic 2008 neon *Untitled*, which originally stretched some 14 feet across, and featured the word "AMERICA" in flickering neon letters—a nod to the cautious optimism of the first Obama administration. The High Line piece is even more critical of the relationship between an individual and nation: thick black X's have been drawn over almost every letter of "America"—leaving only the 'M' and 'E' visible.

In a statement, Ligon reflected on his work: "Paint is a material. Language is a material. Neon is a material. I'm interested in playing with that word ["America"] as material. So to cross it out, to invert it, to put it upside down or to make it blink off and on obnoxiously is all a way of playing with this word that we think we all know what it means."



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