

Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board

Arlington County, Virginia



HALRB Meeting September 17, 2025, CoA 25-07

3550 Wilson Blvd.: Request for the permanent installation of *Reclining Liberty* in the front lawn.

Vicinity Map
Arlington Arts Center
3550 Wilson Boulevard
RPC# 19-016-004





Zaq Landsberg: *Reclining Liberty*

Proposal for a Certificate of Appropriateness to permanently install the work's presence on the front lawn of the Museum of Contemporary Art Arlington

Original Dates: August 5, 2023 – July 28, 2024

First Extension: through September 30, 2025

Proposal: Permanent Installation

Dimensions: 25 feet long, 7 feet at the tallest point, 5 feet at the widest point

Weight: Approximately 2000 lbs.

Location: 3550 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22201 (RPC#: 19-016-004)

Structural Materials: Framed in plywood and lumber, covered by carved foam, hardcoated with plaster-resin (Forton MG an aqua resin equivalent), and fiberglass netting

Covering: Copper paint, sprayed with oxidizing acid creating the blue-green patina

Reclining Liberty is a twenty-five-foot-long mashup of the Statue of Liberty and the giant reclining Buddha statues of Asia. The piece is sturdy enough to allow viewers to interact with the monument on a human level by touching, climbing, sitting atop, and leaning against the figure. Finished with a coat of copper powder and an oxidizing acid, the patina mimics the actual Statue of Liberty.

Reclining Liberty takes inspiration in part from the reclined statues and depictions of Buddha which are a major iconographic theme throughout Buddhist art. The pose of the Buddha lying down is an illustration of one stage on the path to enlightenment. By merging the traditional Buddhist reclining pose and the quintessential American figurative symbol, *Reclining Liberty* asks the viewer to contemplate the status of the ideals the Statue of Liberty represents.

Monuments are where the historic, the political, and the aesthetic meet. Zaq Landsberg's art explores this intersection through humor, interactivity, and accessibility. Landsberg tweaks recognizable monuments to engage audiences in a consideration of their (often multiple and contested) meanings. In *Reclining Liberty*, he brings the ideals represented by the original Statue of Liberty down to a more human scale and to the literal grassroots level. The piece is at eye level with viewers and can be touched and interacted with. It is open to all and sits at the viewers' level, rather than being placed on a pedestal.

It suggests that, perhaps, the ideals of Liberty and Freedom represented by the Statue of Liberty are active, tangible, and living values that should be discussed, debated, embraced, and enlivened through active engagement and public discourse.

***Reclining Liberty* in Arlington**

Reclining Liberty's presence in Arlington emphasizes the work's focus on accessibility and interactivity. Museum of Contemporary Art Arlington is located at the boundary between the residential neighborhood of Ashton Heights and the busy commercial corridor along Wilson Blvd. Although Arlingtonians live near many of the nation's *other* important monuments, they may rarely encounter or think about them during their daily lives. If they do, they may see them so frequently that they no longer really consider their meanings. Installing *Reclining Liberty* in Arlington, far from the actual Statue of Liberty, invites viewers to think about the values the Statue represents and how those values exist in their lives and communities. It brings the statue off its pedestal, away from its island, and into a residential neighborhood.

History of Reclining Liberty

Reclining Liberty was originally installed in Morningside Park in Manhattan in April of 2021 with support from Friends of Morningside Park, Marcus Garvey Park Alliance, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Council on the Arts, and the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation. From May of 2022 until April of 2023, *Reclining Liberty* was installed in Liberty State Park in Jersey City, New Jersey, adjacent to the landing for the ferries to Liberty Island. In both locations, the work attracted substantial visitorship and media attention, including coverage from CBS New York, WNYC, *the New York Times*, *NYMag*, and *Time Out New York*.

Reclining Liberty was subsequently refurbished and installed on MoCA Arlington's front lawn in August of 2023. The work has been immensely popular with the public, attracting a constant stream of visitors. It has received press coverage from the *Washington Post*, *Washingtonian*, *ArlNow*, *Axios*, *WTOP*, and *Fox 5 DC*, among other outlets. In 2024, considering the work's popularity with the local community, MoCA Arlington sought an extension of the sculpture's installation which will end on September 30, 2025. With the *Reclining Liberty* having another successful year, MoCA Arlington and artist Zaq Landsberg are eager to make Arlington the sculpture's permanent home.

About the artist

Zaq Landsberg is a New York City-based artist who specializes in large scale, site-specific sculptures, and public art. He has had solo exhibitions with the New York City Parks Department, chashama (New York, NY), CUAC (Salt Lake City, Utah), La Ene, (Buenos Aires, Argentina), and Pehr Space (Los Angeles, CA). His work has shown in group exhibitions at Socrates Sculpture Park (Queens, NY), Franconia Sculpture Park, (Shafer, MN), CCK, (Buenos Aires, Argentina), MALBA, (Buenos Aires, Argentina), Bronx Community College (Bronx, NY), and Figment Festival (Governors Island, NY), among other venues.

Landsberg has been awarded numerous grants and fellowships, including a New York City Parks Clare Weiss Emerging Artist Award, a Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Creative Engagement Grant (2020), NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellowship in Sculpture (2017), the Art in the Parks: UNIQLO Park Expressions Grant and a More Art Engaging Artist Fellowship (2018). He was an artist-in-residence with the LMCC Workspace Program 2019-2020 and with Sculpture Space (Utica, NY) in 2012.

Landsberg's work has been covered in more than 40 countries and 27 languages, including by *artnet news*, *Time Out NY*, *Vice*, *NY Daily News*, *The Believer*, *PEOPLE Magazine*, *Clarín (Argentina)*, *ARTE (France)*, *Blouin Art Info*, *Gothamist*, KSL Salt Lake City, WGN Radio, *NY Magazine*, and *The Daily Mail*, among others. Landsberg is of Chinese and Jewish descent and was born in Los Angeles. He holds a BFA from New York University.

Reclining Liberty Press Coverage

Video and Radio coverage

[Public art project "Reclining Liberty" reimagines Statue of Liberty](#), Dick Brennan, CBS New York News, 6/29/2022

[Arts in the City October 2021](#), Donna Hanover, CUNY TV, 10/2021

[The Get Out](#), Jennifer Vanasco, All of It, WNYC 5/13/2021

[RTVi](#) (Russian Language), Anastasiia Chumakova, 6/17/2021

[Fuji TV](#) (Japanese Language), Hunter Hoysradt,



Selected Print and Digital Media:

[5 Things to Do on Memorial Day Weekend](#), Melissa Smith, The New York Times, 5/27/2021

[Lady Liberty is Currently Relaxing at a Park across the Hudson](#), Anna Rahmanan, Time Out New York, 5/26/2022

[Photos: You May Now Recline Alongside Lady Liberty In Manhattan](#), Ben Yakas, Gothamist, 6/9/2021

[Reclining Liberty Gets a Touch-Up](#), Aaron Morrill, Jersey City Times, 7/11/2022

[25-foot 'Reclining Liberty' finds a home in Liberty State Park](#), Jake Maher, NJ.com, 5/29/2022

[There is a Reclining Liberty Statue in a Harlem Park, And You Can Touch It](#), Angie Kordic, Artiholics, 6/28/2021

[Post-pandemic, Jersey City's public spaces are back and better than ever](#), Elizabeth Cain, NJ.com, 1/5/2023

See below for additional images of *Reclining Liberty*:





Zaq Landsberg
***Reclining Liberty*, 2021**
Plaster resin, paint, foam, wood, and steel

Learn more about *Reclining Liberty* at mocaarlington.org



Zaq Landsberg's *Reclining Liberty* takes inspiration from the giant reclining Buddha statues of Asia, which represent the Buddha in one stage on the path to enlightenment and are a theme throughout Buddhist art. By merging the traditional Buddhist reclining pose and the quintessential American figurative symbol, *Reclining Liberty* asks the viewer to contemplate the status of the ideals the Statue of Liberty represents. The work's playfulness and accessibility suggest that these ideals of liberty and freedom are active, tangible, and evolving and need to be directly engaged with, debated, and defended.

The creation of *Reclining Liberty* was supported in part by Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation (UMEZ), Friends of Morningside Park, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Council on the Arts, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Zaqistan Arts Council, and Andrew Logan Projects.

The presentation of *Reclining Liberty* is organized by Museum of Contemporary Art Arlington and co-sponsored by Arlington Public Art in celebration of 40 years of public art in Arlington.

Visitors are welcome to climb, sit, and stand on *Reclining Liberty*.

Please use caution when interacting with the artwork.

Selfies and other photos are encouraged!

#recliningliberty #reclininglibertyselfie #arlingtonarts
@mocaarlington @art_scene @zaqlandsberg



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Existing signage for art installation