

Andy Goldsworthy: *Red Flags*, 2020 Frieze Sculpture at Rockefeller Center, September 1 – October 2, 2020



Andy Goldsworthy,
Red Flags (California), 2020



Andy Goldsworthy,
Red Flags (New York), 2020

Galerie Lelong & Co. is pleased to announce Andy Goldsworthy's participation in the second edition of Frieze Sculpture at Rockefeller Center with *Red Flags*, 2020. Presenting 109 flags encircling the iconic Rink at Rockefeller Center Plaza, this major new installation continues Goldsworthy's longstanding investigation of the relationship between humans and our natural surroundings. By examining the contexts of flags and their connections to land and geography—their inherent and potential meanings are evoked in the varying qualities of red earths.

During his invited visit to Rockefeller Center in November 2019, Goldsworthy observed the U.S. state flags flying in place of the usual flags that represent UN countries. In response, he proposed to replace these flags with flags he creates using earth from each state. Having worked for many years with red earth found near his home in Scotland, he was aware of the remarkable staining qualities of the material that can result in vibrant permanent colors. While being a familiar material, Goldsworthy also remarked on the significance of earth in the context of a flag as most often flags denote land fought over. He said while proposing the work, "Collectively I hope they will transcend borders. The closeness of one flagpole to another means that in certain winds the flags might overlap in a continuous flowing line. My hope is that these flags will be raised to mark a different kind of defense of the land. A work that talks of connection and not division."

Goldsworthy had almost completed this new work when the COVID-19 pandemic struck throughout the world. "*Red Flags* may not have been conceived as a response to recent events, but it is now bound up with the pandemic, lockdown, division and unrest." said Goldsworthy. "However, I hope that the flags will be received in the same spirit with which all the red earths were collected—as a gesture of solidarity and support. At best, *Red Flags* will rise above individual states and become a single flowing work of canvas, earth, light, color, stillness, movement and people." (The artist's complete statement may be found on the next page.)

This project would not be possible without the extraordinary support of the institutions, organizations, and individuals who identified and collected red earth. A complete list of volunteers will be published.

About Frieze Sculpture at Rockefeller Center

Usually held in the spring as part of the wider programming of Frieze New York, Frieze Sculpture at Rockefeller Center was postponed and readapted this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Presented in partnership with Tishman Speyer, the major public art initiative places significant sculptural works by leading artists in open, public locations throughout Rockefeller Plaza, allowing for ample social distancing space in compliance with all City and State guidelines. Offering free admission to all, Frieze Sculpture at Rockefeller Center will be on display from September 1 – October 2, 2020. Curated by Brett Littman, Director of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum in Long Island City, New York,

the second edition is inspired by the site and city's earth, stone, and plants, as well as in recognition of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, the original date when Frieze Sculpture at Rockefeller Center was scheduled to debut.

Artist Statement by Andy Goldsworthy

I began developing *Red Flags* in November 2019—short notice for a large, complex and ambitious project, due to be installed this spring.

We had almost completed dyeing the flags when the pandemic took hold in the US and UK. In both countries, lockdown measures were put in place and Frieze Sculpture at Rockefeller Center was postponed.

In lieu of the flags flying in New York, I flew a flag from each state in Scotland—making three film works in the process. It has been a difficult time for everyone but the way in which a flag flew on any particular day seemed at times to reflect something of the emotions felt during lockdown—from the slow movement of a calm day to the furious flapping during strong winds.

A Texas red earth flag was flown in a gentle breeze on June 9th and a film made, which lasts 8mins 46 secs.

Though it was personally meaningful to experience the flags flying here in Scotland, *Red Flags* will only be complete when they fly in New York.

Red Flags has been a journey I have taken without leaving home. It spans an entire country and has connected me to so many people across the US.

The flags are returning to a very different United States from the one that they left in their undyed state at the beginning of this year. The charged atmosphere in which the flags will now be flown could be as impactful upon them as the weather.

Red Flags may not have been conceived as a response to recent events, but it is now bound up with the pandemic, lockdown, division and unrest. However, I hope that the flags will be received in the same spirit with which all the red earths were collected—as a gesture of solidarity and support.

At best *Red Flags* will rise above individual states and become a single flowing work of canvas, earth, light, color, stillness, movement, and people.

That the flags will fly at all is in itself an expression of hope. Even though many of those who might have gone to see them, including myself, will not experience them flying in New York, it is important that the flags are flown there. I am very grateful for the commitment that Frieze, Rockefeller Center and Galerie Lelong have shown in seeing this project through to completion in such challenging circumstances.

- Andy Goldsworthy, July 2020