

PRESS RELEASE

Art in Public Places Program to Unveil *Bent Pool* by Elmgreen & Dragset Culmination of Six Large-Scale Works at Miami Beach Convention Center

MIAMI BEACH, FL, 2019 – This winter the City of Miami Beach Art in Public Places Program will install Elmgreen & Dragset’s *Bent Pool* (2019), the final in a series of six permanent, site-specific works of public art at the Miami Beach Convention Center (MBCC) announced earlier this year. Located in front of the Convention Center, Elmgreen & Dragset’s 20-foot-high sculpture, an upright arching swimming pool, will welcome visitors to the recently renovated and expanded site. Installed in the brand-new park at the MBCC, directly opposite the center’s west entrance, the sculpture will be unveiled during Art Basel Miami Beach in December 2019. The six artworks selected for the Art in Public Places program for the new Miami Beach Convention Center collectively represent the largest public art project of its kind installed on a single site in United States history.

Bent Pool is shaped like an inverted “U” and stands upright on a two-tier plinth. The pool seems to have somehow been lifted out of the ground and stretched into a curved form. With a turquoise blue interior, one of Elmgreen & Dragset’s signature colors, and a matte white exterior, the work both stands out against the greenery of the park at the Miami Beach Convention Center and creates a synoptic connection to the park as a leisure area. The work draws on the Minimalist reductive tradition and use of geometric forms, as much as it does on Pop-art and Conceptualism’s use of ready-made objects and imagery. Yet, on closer inspection one will discover that this is not an altered ready-made, but a carefully crafted object. Identified by details such as its ladder, its diving board and pool lamps, the abstracted object can easily be recognized as a swimming pool even though its bowed shape prevents it from carrying water.

Due to Miami Beach’s climate and status as a beloved holiday destination, swimming pools are a natural part of the city’s fabric. The distorted shape of the *Bent Pool*, however, makes us more aware of how objects are perceived relative to different contexts. Miami Beach is an area that has seen a rise in extreme weather and flooding; its landscape is in flux. *Bent Pool* encourages us to think about how we normally interact with our surroundings: how accessible or inaccessible they appear.

With *Bent Pool*, the artist duo also challenges the conventions of outdoor sculpture and monumentality. The sculpture is an arch—a form adopted in monuments of the distant and recent past to commemorate historical battles or mark the ceremonial entrance to a city (e.g., the Arc de Triomphe de l’Étoile, Paris, France; the Gateway Arch, St. Louis, Missouri, United States). However, just wide enough for one individual to pass at a time, *Bent Pool* is not designed to accommodate the heavy traffic of Paris or masses of people marching through its narrow opening. Instead, *Bent Pool* seems to celebrate the less grandiose like ‘having a good time by the pool’, and reminds us, as we enter the convention center for an event such as Art Basel Miami Beach, that enjoyment can be found in so many experiences, beyond glamorous event culture; oftentimes in the everyday.

Elmgreen & Dragset have used the swimming pool as a motif in many significant works, including one of their earliest sculptures, *Powerless Structures, Fig. 11* (1997), a diving board installed penetrating a panoramic window overlooking the sea at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark. In 2016, the artists installed *Van Gogh’s Ear* in New York City’s Rockefeller Plaza, a sculpture of an upright, curvilinear swimming pool. In 2018, their oval

outline of a swimming pool, *Zero*, made its debut at the first Bangkok Art Biennale. The same year, the artists transformed the entire first floor exhibition space of Whitechapel Gallery, London into a derelict public pool with their installation: *The Whitechapel Pool*.

About the Artists

Michael Elmgreen (b. 1961, Copenhagen, Denmark) and Ingar Dragset (b. 1969, Trondheim, Norway)

Elmgreen & Dragset are based in Berlin and have worked together as an artist duo since 1995. They have held numerous solo exhibitions in art institutions worldwide, including their current show at The Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2019); The Whitechapel Gallery, London (2018); Museum Haus Lange, Kunstmuseen Krefeld (2017); FLAG Art Foundation, New York (2016); Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2016); Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2016); PLATEAU, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul (2015); Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen (2014); Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo (2014); Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2013); Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2011); ZKM Museum of Modern Art, Karlsruhe (2010); Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León (2009); The Power Plant, Toronto (2006); Serpentine Gallery, London (2006); Tate Modern, London (2004); and Kunsthalle Zürich (2001). Their work has been included in the Istanbul (2013, 2011, 2001), Liverpool (2012), Performa 11 (New York, 2011), Singapore (2011), Moscow (2011, 2007), Venice (2009, 2003), Gwangju (2006, 2002), São Paulo (2002), and Berlin (1998) biennials.

In 2005 the artists installed the sculpture *Prada Marfa*, a replica Prada store, in the Texan desert. In 2009 they received a special mention for their exhibition *The Collectors* in the Nordic and Danish Pavilions at the 53rd Venice Biennale. The artists were shortlisted for the Hugo Boss Prize, Guggenheim Museum, New York (2000) and won the Preis der Nationalgalerie, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2002). In 2012 they were selected for London's Fourth Plinth Commission in Trafalgar Square, and in summer 2016 Public Art Fund presented their sculpture *Van Gogh's Ear* at Rockefeller Plaza in New York City. Elmgreen & Dragset curated the 15th Istanbul Biennial in 2017. In 2018 the artists presented *To Whom It May Concern*, at Place Vendôme, Paris, and transformed the Whitechapel Gallery, London with their installation *The Whitechapel Pool*.

About the Miami Beach Art in Public Places Program

The Miami Beach Art in Public Places Program is a City of Miami Beach program for commissioning public art. The program was created in 1984, with its ordinance adopted in 1995. The program allocates funds totaling 2% of all capital costs for City projects and joint private/public projects making it one of the most progressive Public Art programs in the United States. Appointed by the City Commission, the AiPP Committee's seven members serve in an advisory capacity to the Mayor and City Commission. The program is administered and curated by Brandi Reddick, Cultural Affairs Program Manager and Joshua Carden, Cultural Affairs & Art in Public Places Coordinator.

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