

The Pierce Boston Blog

PIERCE BOSTON WELCOMES WORLD-CLASS PUBLIC ART INSTALLATION TO THE FENWAY



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The Fenway has cause for celebration.

Only weeks remain until Pierce Plaza becomes the permanent home of a public art installation that promises to solidify Boston's growing role as a world-class city for art.

The late September unveiling of renowned artist [Alexandre da Cunha](#)'s *Plaza (Arcade)* marks another exciting chapter for the dynamic

Fenway neighborhood, and will add a museum-worthy piece of contemporary art to the public plaza in front of the [shimmering 30-story Pierce Boston](#).

Da Cunha, who has been described as a poet of found materials, has created a site-specific sculpture in the shape of three massive concrete discs accented by stainless steel that will greet Pierce Boston residents and engage the city and the Fenway community at large.

“This was an exciting opportunity to engage an artist working at the highest level to activate and elevate this public space,” says Molly Epstein, one of three principals at curatorial and advisory firm [Goodman Taft](#) who worked closely with Pierce Boston developer Samuels & Associates to identify da Cunha for the project.

“The commission was less about the Pierce specifically, and more about contributing something to the community that will become a part of the identity of the neighborhood—a continuous and meaningful source of enjoyment and pride,” adds Abigail Ross Goodman, co-founder of Goodman Taft.

Thoughtful Collaborator

The Brazilian-born da Cunha, who now lives and works in London, first visited the site at the [triangular intersection](#) of Brookline Avenue and Boylston Street nearly two years ago, when Samuels began the process of commissioning a contemporary artist to respond to the space and propose a permanent sculpture for the site. His artistic practice — which da Cunha describes as “pointing” to already existing objects in order to reveal something new or unexpected — closely aligned with Samuels’ holistic approach to place-making, and impressed city and community members as well.

Da Cunha returned for another visit last fall when construction had reached the 14th floor. Dressed in a hard hat, the artist took in the monumental nature of the site from a new vantage point up above, which allowed him to envision the permanence of his sculpture amid the evolving city landscape.

“It was an exciting moment,” Epstein recalls. “Da Cunha’s practice is driven by his observation of objects and the narratives behind them. He is very thoughtful of context, collaboration, and transformation— both in making the work as well as when it comes to the environment and the surroundings that inform the parameters for each project.”

Lasting Impact

Da Cunha’s sculpture nods to Boston’s storied history of brutalist architecture, embodied in landmarks like City Hall, designed by Paul Rudolph and completed in 1963. In a statement to the *Boston Globe*, the [artist explains](#):

“In all my work I take something that’s familiar, and I transform it into bigger things. In this piece there is a sense of appropriation. I was trying to come up with a project that visually looked good and made me feel like I was contributing to the landscape in terms of aesthetics. I was trying to make a functioning work that’s relevant to the city, but also establishes a good relationship with the public. I feel like I’m using someone else’s space, and I need to be respectful.”

Da Cunha has had recent solo exhibitions at many significant venues, including the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, as well as prominent institutions across Europe and South America. A work by the artist is on permanent view at the Laumeier Sculpture Park in St. Louis, Missouri. Sited in the plaza in front of Pierce Boston, da Cunha’s work will make a lasting impact and provide an outdoor expansion and extension of The Fenway’s [vibrant art scene](#), just steps away from the Museum of Fine Arts and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

“Plaza (Arcade) is one of the first new permanent contemporary sculptures coming to a Boston neighborhood, and da Cunha’s imprint will be a meaningful and transformative contribution to the city,” Goodman says.

Undeniably refined. Unquestionably Pierce Boston.

*Courtesy of the artist.

