

THE ART NEWSPAPER

‘Do your worst, Boston’: Nicole Eisenman’s fountain - vandalised in Germany – gets permanent US home

New version of sculpture that was first shown at Skulptur Projekt Münster in 2017 is the artist’s first permanent public work

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BY AIMEE DAWSON

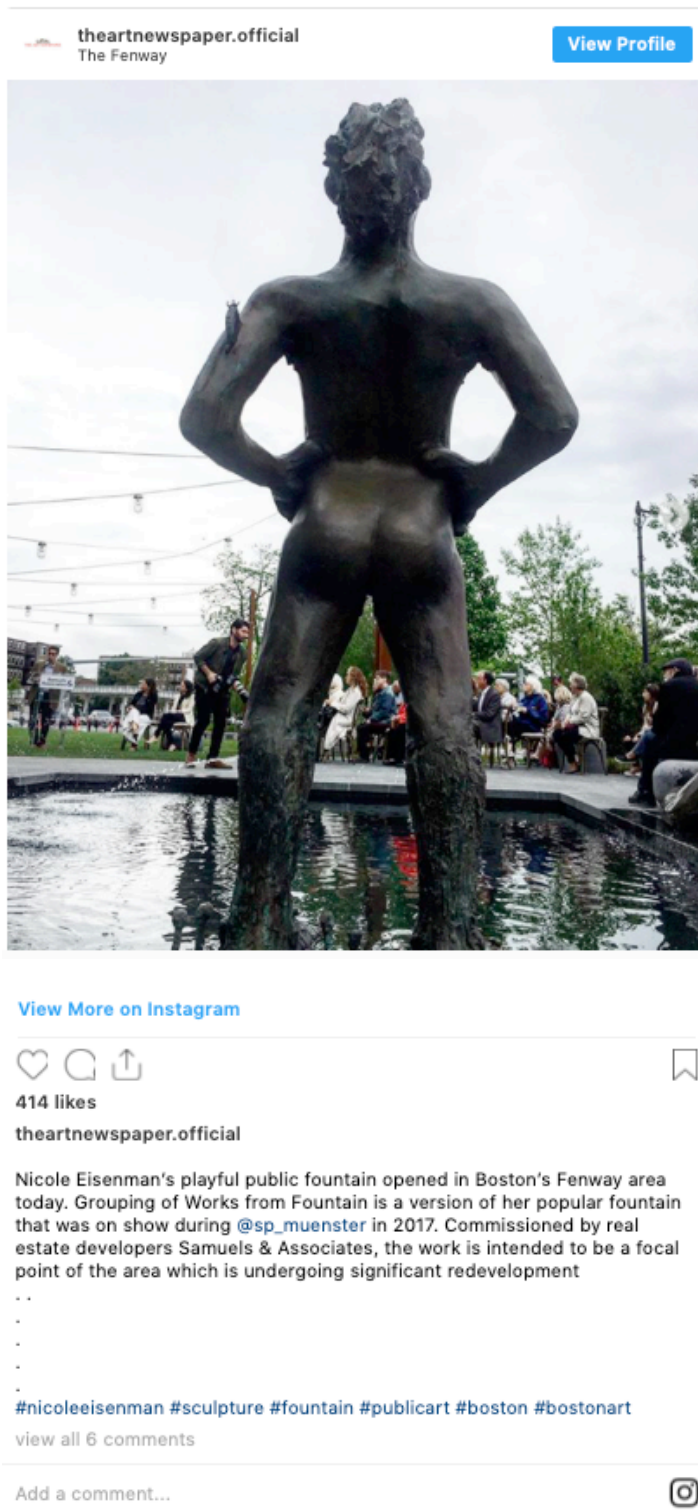


Children playing on Nicole Eisenman's Grouping of Works from Fountain (2017-19), which is now part of the 401 Park Collection owned by Samuels & Associates, Boston. Courtesy of Goodman Taft and the artist / Anton Kern Gallery, New York © Nicole Eisenman. Photo: Aram Boghosian

Nicole Eisenman's first permanent public work of art has been unveiled in Boston. The installation Grouping of Works from Fountain (2017-19) was unveiled last weekend in the city's new one-acre 401 Park as part of a redevelopment project in the Fenway area. The work is based on Eisenman's piece for Germany's [Skulptur Projekte Münster](#), [Sketch for a Fountain](#), which was [vandalised](#) and part-decapitated in 2017 in what organisers called "a fascist form of violence".

While the original work comprised five figures, including two that were made of plaster, Eisenman has rendered the three selected figures for the Boston sculpture in bronze to ensure their durability. "It didn't upset me that they were vandalised. I was expecting that this could happen," Eisenman says. She adds, "People do shit—if it had been in New York it would have been ten times worse. Now they are in bronze—do your worst, Boston".

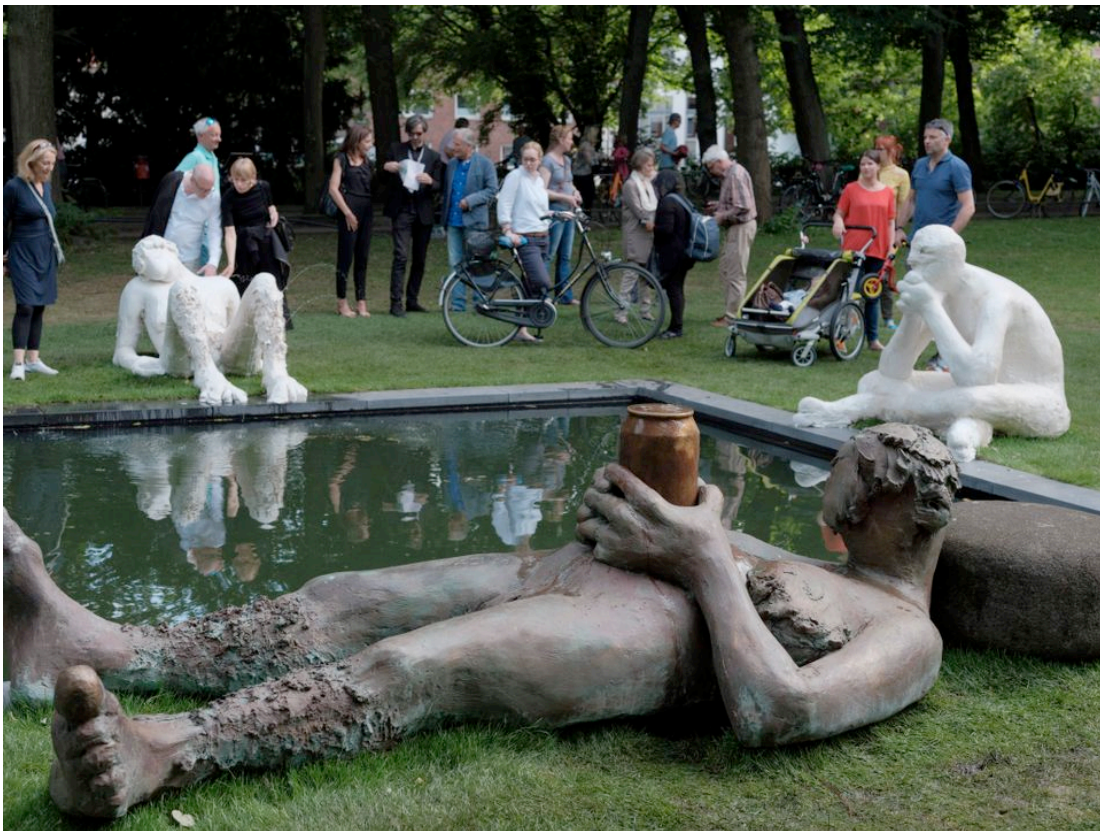
The sculpture has been commissioned by the real estate company Samuels & Associates, which is redeveloping around 4m sq ft of real estate in the Fenway neighbourhood. It was chosen unanimously by the company's board from around 30 works proposed by the curatorial and advisory firm Goodman Taft, says Steve Samuels, the founder and chairman of Samuels & Associates. While the cost of the work is undisclosed, it is likely a seven-figure sum. When locals in Münster tried to purchase Eisenman's original sculpture, it was priced at €1.2m before she and her gallery [reduced the price](#).



The Boston fountain features three of the original figures, each of indeterminate gender, lounging around a rectangular pool. All the sculptures include water elements: one

spurts water from its legs (like long hairs, Eisenman says); one has water coming out of the drinks can on its belly; and one has a light spray of water coming out of its forearm. “They’re very familiar gestures”, Eisenman says. “I think they’re very peaceful, which I think comes from the symmetry in the poses of the figures. The pool is a perfectly proportioned rectangle based on the [architect] Philip Johnson’s Glass House design.”

Some more changes have been made to the original work, including an improved filtration system, added seating and some modifications to the figures. The work also now stands on stone rather than grass. “They are stronger sculptures now”, Eisenman says.



Nicole Eisenman's *Sketch for a Fountain* (2017) in Münster included two sculptures in plaster © Skulptur Projekte 2017. Photo: Henning Rogge

Eisenman is conscious of the different contexts in Münster and Boston. “Over a million people saw the piece in Münster over five months”, the artist says. She adds, “It was a

very social place but it was also an art show—that’s a lot of people standing around the piece looking at it as opposed to sitting with it and engaging with it. In Boston, it’s a much more controlled environment. My hope is that it looks the same way in 20 years as it does now—as a functioning fountain that people will use.”

Boston is not the only city that has an iteration of this work. In April, the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas announced the part-purchase, part-promised gift of *Sketch for a Fountain* that includes all five of the original statues in bronze, which is now on view in the museum’s garden.

Eisenman is currently included in some of this year's major international biennials. She has both painting and sculpture on show in the two-pronged main exhibition at the [Venice Biennale](#) as well as a major commission in the [Whitney Biennial](#).