



"Chloë Bass: Wayfinding" brings a provocative outdoor addition to the Pulitzer Arts Foundation

More than 30 pieces, inspired by public wayfinding signage, are arranged in four "strands" across the museum's campus.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY ALISE O'BRIEN, © PULITZER ARTS FOUNDATION AND ALISE O'BRIEN
Chloë Bass Installation view of Chloë Bass: Wayfinding. Pulitzer Arts Foundation, Apr 17 – Oct 31, 2021.
Photograph by Alise O'Brien, © Pulitzer Arts Foundation and Alise O'Brien

No two visitors will have the same experience in the Pulitzer Arts Foundation's evocative outdoor installation Chloë Bass: Wayfinding—nor will a single observer if they visit more than once.

Depending on the weather, a visitor's mood, the angles from which they view the artworks, what's blooming nearby, and when or if they choose to start the audio portion of the work, the 30-plus signs arranged in four "strands" across the museum's campus will provoke different emotional responses.

Artist Chloë Bass grew up in New York City and is an only child. That meant she navigated opposing emotional states of being both isolated and highly activated at the same time, a sensation she's offering viewers with her work. Bass doesn't want to impose any specific response on viewers, preferring to encourage them to access their own when they enter the isolation/activation mindset.

"It is intriguing to me what feelings come up for you in that state," says Bass. "I'm not interested in emotional manipulation. I am capable of it, but I don't find it artistically interesting."



PHOTOGRAPH BY ALISE O'BRIEN, © PULITZER ARTS FOUNDATION AND ALISE O'BRIEN
Chloë Bass How much of belief is encounter?, 2021. Mirrored stainless steel with frosted vinyl lettering, 48 x 120 inches (121.9 x 304.8 cm) Courtesy of the artist Photograph by Alise O'Brien, © Pulitzer Arts Foundation and Alise O'Brien

The exhibition is made up of signs at different scales: reflective billboards and midsize placards, small plaque-size pieces, and cropped photographic images from the New York Public Library's collection. They fill Park-Like, the green space across from the museum, as well as areas around the museum, with no specific path or progression indicated.

"Half the show is really, really small," Bass says. Indeed, finding the garden plaques feels a bit like an Easter egg hunt. "If you're not paying attention, you'll miss them—and that's OK."

"They have this real ability to disappear and integrate," Bass says of the sculptures. "Take the time to move around it, because it will appear totally differently. It doesn't impose itself onto the landscape. Places are already places; they don't become places because we put a piece of public art there."

The audio artwork, accessible from a smart phone, features Bass, poet and podcaster Cheeraz Gorman, artist Damon Davis, and theater artist Ron Himes reading quotes from the city's Mow to Own program, Google and Yelp reviews of the Pulitzer, National Institutes of Health reports on aging and disorientation, landscape architecture teaching guides, phrases from the sculptures, and Bass' personal narrative. It's poignant, funny, disorienting, and evocative by turns.

The show debuted in St. Nicholas Park in Harlem and was originally commissioned by The Studio Museum. That installation provided a different feel, Bass explains, because it wasn't in a place where viewers were necessarily expecting to encounter art.