

Nina Katchadourian

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Garden of Beaten! Exhibit Sports Yard Signs for Presidential Losers — And It's About to Get a New Addition!

By Claire McCartney on November 8, 2016

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Image credit: Nina Katchadourian

They're signs of defeat!

A Boerum Hill artist has erected fake yard signs inside Prospect Park commemorating the losers of every U.S. presidential race from Thomas Jefferson in 1796 to Mitt Romney in 2012 — which she hopes will encourage voters to ponder how different election outcomes can dramatically alter the country's path as well as how the 2016 race will go down in the annals of history.

"Thinking about these candidates who ran for president, but who weren't chosen and came in second, is an opportunity to think about this country's 'path not taken' and the political choices we have made as a country over time," said artist Nina Katchadourian. "Thinking about our past history is a way of also encouraging us to think about the history we are about to make as we elect our next president."

The piece — dubbed “Monument to the Unelected,” and currently gracing the front lawn of the park’s Lefferts Historic — went up on Nov. 5, and Katchadourian will update it on Wednesday with a sign for either Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump, which will stay for the rest of the exhibit until Nov. 13.

The piece is *about* politics, but is politically neutral Katchadourian said — the signs just presents historical facts, and viewers will interpret them depending their own beliefs.

“You might feel happy or sad about the results on any one of the signs, depending on your own politics,” she said.

The placards are not particularly historically accurate, however — Katchadourian and her fellow designer Evan Gaffney gave each one a modern look as if the candidate were running in 2016, she said.

Katchadourian says she first started paying attention to campaign signs in the history-making 2008 race, and debuted “Monument to the Unelected” that year at the Scottsdale Museum of Art in Arizona.

“I started paying attention to these signs for the first time, and the way that some names get written into history, and other names we never think about again,” she said.

Katchadourian exhibited the piece again in 2012, and says she plans to revive it in every presidential election year moving forward.

“Monument to the Unelected” at the Lefferts Historic House [452 Flatbush Ave. between Eastern Parkway and Ocean Avenue in Prospect Park, (718) 789–2822, www.prospectpark.org]. Through Nov. 13. Free.