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Artsy Editors. "The Best Public Art of 2019." *Artsy*. December 3, 2019.



From [Times Square in New York](#) to the [Parisian gardens of Petit Palais](#), artists summoned international attention in 2019 through fresh public artworks. The most incisive sculptures, penetrating light installations, and eye-opening murals spurred meaningful discussions around identity, politics, climate change, and community, while, at times, inspiring awe as well.

To honor such innovative, impactful artworks, the art-and-design fabrication company UAP recruits a panel of international curators each year to select the best new public works. Here, we share the 2019 list, with insights from the nominating curators on what makes these works so compelling. (To learn more, you can [tune into an interactive webinar](#) with UAP's curators on Wednesday, December 4th at 7 p.m. EST.)

Kehinde Wiley, *Rumors of War*, New York City and Richmond, Virginia



Kehinde Wiley, *Rumors of War*, 2019. Photo by Ian Douglas. © Kehinde Wiley. Courtesy of Times Square Arts in partnership with the Virginia Museum of Fine Art and Sean Kelly, New York.

"*Rumors of War* is a bronze sculpture created by [Kehinde Wiley](#) for Times Square in New York and a future, permanent site at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond. The work explores the public art tradition of monuments to male military prowess. A young black man, hair styled in dreadlocks and wearing contemporary garb

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including a hoodie, sits atop a horse that appears to be mid-motion, its front leg raised and tail flowing in the wind. The figure, turned to the side and pulling on the reins, is completely in control of his steed. Wiley's sculpture brilliantly gives power and majesty to those rarely featured in the monument genre while also questioning the masculine, state-sanctioned violence celebrated in such memorials. In Richmond, the statue will sit on Arthur Ashe Boulevard, near displays of Confederate statues. As Wiley [notes](#), *Rumors of War* exposes 'the beautiful and terrible potentiality of art to sculpt the language of domination.'"—Julia Friedman, Senior Curatorial Manager at Madison Square Park Conservancy

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