

NEW YORK POST

People will literally crawl on the streets of NYC this weekend

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Participants in a prior Pope.L "crawl" take to the streets in Portland, Maine. Herb Swanson/Portland Press Herald via Getty Images

They're getting kicked to the curb.

This Saturday, 140 New Yorkers will get down and seriously dirty in the filthy streets of Manhattan as they crawl on all fours for the sake of a bizarre performance piece about "physical privilege" by veteran "crawl artist" Pope.L.

Participants will provide onlookers with an unsettling scene as they slither along a winding, 1 1/2-mile route that starts at Cpl. John A. Seravalli Playground in the West Village and ends on the south steps of Union Square Park, according to a press release.

And if crawling through the city's gutters isn't enough to make you cringe, each person must also emphasize their "personal struggles" by plodding along wearing only one shoe and holding a flashlight and blindfold in a strange attempt at symbolism.

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To make matters even weirder, groups of crawlers will be shadowed by a “perfumer” who will scent the air with teakwood and tobacco, “adding to the absurdity and theatricality of the performance,” the release says.

Pope.L, a 64-year-old artist from Newark, NJ, will then hug each crawler at the finish line, and the last participant will, oddly, drench him with faux Flint, Mich., water to draw attention to the water crisis throughout the US.



Pope.L crawls through the streets of Portland, Maine. Herb Swanson/Portland Press Herald via Getty Images

The event was organized as a way to break down social barriers by stripping away the luxury of walking upright and showing the power of people working together. “Participants will be encouraged to crawl in a way that challenges them most and speaks to their ability level, whether military-style, hands and knees, or another variation,” the release states.

The lucky road rats — who were selected to represent the diversity of New York City — will be split up into five relay groups of varying age, race, gender and physical ability that will crawl one of the 25-block sections.

“People who are forced to give up their verticality are prey to all kinds of dangers,” said Pope.L, who has conducted “crawls” throughout the city since the 1970s and will show work at both the Whitney Museum and the Museum of Modern Art in October. “But, let us imagine a person who has a job, possesses the means to remain vertical, but chooses to momentarily give up that verticality? To undergo that threat to his/her bodily/spiritual categories — would that person learn something?”

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The Public Art Fund’s director and chief curator, Nicholas Baume, will kick off the performance at 9:45 a.m. Saturday.

“Conquest” is open to the public for viewing.

