

BAM presents

Do What I Want: The Experimental World of Arthur Russell

Mar 1—May 14

First-ever public exhibition features more than 150 pieces of original ephemera and reproductions, an evening of film screenings, and a celebratory performance by Mustafa Ahmed, Ernie Brooks, Peter Gordon, Bill Ruyle, Peter Zummo, and special guests.

Co-organized by Nicole Will, Independent Curator, and Jonathan Hiam, Curator, American Music Collection and the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Do What I Want: The Experimental World of Arthur Russell

Peter Jay Sharp Building (30 Lafayette Ave)

Diker Gallery Café and Natman Room

Mar 1—May 14

Free and open to the public

Opening reception: Mar 8 from 6—8 pm

Brooklyn, NY/February 23, 2017—Twenty five years after Arthur Russell's death, BAM Visual Art, Russell's estate, and Tom Lee (Russell's partner) present a stunning selection of materials belonging to the late composer, cellist, and electronic music pioneer, on view from Mar 1—May 14. This first-ever public exhibition features more than 150 pieces of original ephemera and reproductions including a selection of Russell's own notes, scores, photos, test pressings, show fliers, and album covers alongside never-before-heard recordings from the artist's personal working tapes. Programming during the exhibition will also include screenings of Phill Niblock's *Terrace of Unintelligibility* (1988) and Matt Wolf's *Wild Combination* (2008), and a BAMcafé Live tribute featuring musicians who were close to Russell: Mustafa Ahmed, Ernie Brooks, Peter Gordon, Bill Ruyle, Peter Zummo, and other special guests. White Columns' Director and Chief Curator Matthew Higgs will DJ the opening night reception on March 8.

Counting Philip Glass and Allen Ginsberg among his many collaborators, Arthur Russell brilliantly blurred boundaries with bold experimentations in new music, classical, electronic, dance, folk, pop/rock, and disco genres, influencing multiple generations of composers and musicians. Prior to his death at the age of 40 from AIDS-related complications, Russell amassed a rich body of work—much of which has been released posthumously in the form of albums, singles, and remixes.

Accompanied by in-depth textual material, the exhibition will include four listening stations featuring playlists spanning a wide range of Russell's work, compiled by Steve Knutson of Audika Records, the label responsible for releasing much of his music.

The title of the exhibition *Do What I Want* is a lyric from the song "Me for Real" from the album *Another Thought*, the record Russell had been working on just before he died. Originally



released in 1994, by Phillip Glass's Point Music label, a re-release was pressed on vinyl in 2013 by Arc Light Editions.

Do What I Want: Arthur Russell on Film

Terrace of Unintelligibility (1988)

Directed by Phill Niblock

20min

Wild Combination (2008)

Directed by Matt Wolf

71min

BAM Rose Cinemas (30 Lafayette Ave)

Apr 20 at 7pm

Tickets: \$15; (\$10 for BAM members)

Post-screening panel discussion with Jonathan Hiam, Steve Knutson, Tom Lee, and Matt Wolf, moderated by Nicole Will

BAM presents multimedia artist Phill Niblock's 1985 document of an intimate Arthur Russell performance alongside Matt Wolf's engrossingly visual documentary, featuring interviews with Russell's family and collaborators as well as rare archival materials.

BAMcafé Live: Tribute to Arthur Russell

BAMcafé (30 Lafayette Ave)

Apr 22 at 9pm

Free and open to the public

This intimate evening of music in honor of the artist will bring together some of Russell's closest collaborators and friends including Mustafa Ahmed, Ernie Brooks, Peter Gordon, Bill Ruyle, Peter Zummo, and other special guests.

About Arthur Russell

Born in Oskaloosa, Iowa in 1951, Arthur Russell was a cellist, composer, vocalist, and producer whose work spanned the genres of classical, disco, experimental, folk, and pop/rock music. Russell studied composition at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and northern Indian music at the Ali Akbar College. While in northern California, Russell became a dedicated student of Buddhism, studying under various practitioners including Yuko Nonomura who would be influential in what is considered one of his most important compositions, *Instrumentals*. He moved to New York in 1973 and collaborated with notable artists including Allen Ginsberg, Philip Glass, David Byrne, Jennifer Warnes, Bootsy Collins, Robert Wilson, and Nicky Siano. Russell found commercial success in New York's underground dance and disco scene throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s. Following his death in 1992, several albums of his unreleased recordings were compiled and released including *Another Thought* (1994), *Calling Out of Context* (2004), and *Love is Overtaking Me* (2008). Since 2004, a series of reissued albums, compilations, a biography, and a biographical documentary have significantly raised attention to his incredible work. *Master Mix: Red Hot + Arthur Russell*, released in 2014 by Yep Roc Records, features 26 of Russell's songs performed by more than 20 artists including Sufjan Stevens, José González, Robyn, Devonté Hynes, and Richard Reed Parry. The album was celebrated at BAM with multi-artist performances in May, 2015.

For press information, contact Sarah Garvey at sgarvey@bam.org or 718.724.8025.

Credits

Leadership support for BAM Visual Art provided by Agnes Gund and Toby Devan Lewis.

The Wall Street Journal is the title sponsor of BAM Rose Cinemas and BAMcinémathèque.

Viacom is the Major Sponsor of BAMcafé Live. Con Edison is the BAMcafé Live Sponsor. Programming in BAM's Lepercq Space is supported by The Lepercq Charitable Foundation. BAMcafé Live receives endowment support from the BAM Fund to Support Emerging and Local Musicians, created in part with a major gift from The Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust.

Special thanks to Master & Dynamic.

Delta is the Official Airline of BAM. Pepsi is the official beverage of BAM.

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General Information

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM Rose Cinemas, and BAMcafé are located in the Peter Jay Sharp building at 30 Lafayette Avenue (between St Felix Street and Ashland Place) in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn. BAM Harvey Theater is located two blocks from the main building at 651 Fulton Street (between Ashland and Rockwell Places). Both locations house Greenlight Bookstore at BAM kiosks. BAM Fisher, located at 321 Ashland Place, is the newest addition to the BAM campus and houses the Judith and Alan Fishman Space and Rita K. Hillman Studio. BAM Rose Cinemas is Brooklyn's only movie house dedicated to first-run independent and foreign film and repertory programming. BAMcafé, operated by Great Performances, offers a dinner menu prior to BAM Howard Gilman Opera House evening performances. BAMcafé also features an eclectic mix of live music for BAMcafé Live on Friday and Saturday nights with a bar menu available starting at 6pm.

Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue – Barclays Center (2, 3, 4, 5 to Nevins St for Harvey Theater); D, N, R to Pacific Street; G to Fulton Street; C to Lafayette Avenue
Train: Long Island Railroad to Atlantic Terminal – Barclays Center
Bus: B25, B26, B41, B45, B52, B63, B67 all stop within three blocks of BAM
Car: Limited commercial parking lots are located near BAM. Visit BAM.org for information.

For ticket information, call BAM Ticket Services at 718.636.4100, or visit BAM.org.

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