BAM and Onassis Cultural Center New York present Speaking Truth to Power—a series of theater productions, talks, and film screenings that examine the power of speech and the role of resistance

July 31, 2018/Brooklyn, NY—As part of the 2018 Next Wave Festival, BAM and Onassis Cultural Center New York will present Speaking Truth to Power, a fall series of theater productions, conversations, and film screenings that explores the concept of free speech as a form of resistance, and examines the challenges facing individuals, societies, and movements that seek to employ it. While freedom of speech is considered a cornerstone of our democratic freedoms, ancient Greeks wrestled with the extent to which the power to speak freely could degrade the very institutions designed to protect that right. The debate about the role of truth—who is able to speak it and the potential dangers posed to our society when it is either permitted or restricted—rages on.

Anthony S. Papadimitriou, President and Treasurer of the Board of Directors of the Onassis Foundation, said, “It is the duty of every citizen, as it is ours at the Onassis Foundation—which exists for the benefit of the public and, beyond Greek art and ideas, promotes social welfare in all its forms—to defend truth and keep it alive through dialogue and culture. It may prove the best defense we have against letting our societies sink into oblivion. We hope that our collaboration with BAM in Speaking Truth to Power highlights this responsibility and its urgency today more than ever before.”

This robust series comprises two theater productions; four humanities programs; a four-part film series; a conversation and film event; a visual art installation; and an exhibition of materials from the BAM Hamm Archives.

Theater Programming

The Bacchae
By Euripides
Translation by Aaron Poochigian
Directed by Anne Bogart
Created and performed by SITI Company

Set and lighting design by Brian H Scott
Costume design by Eleni Kyriacou
Sound design by Darron L West
Composed by Erik Sanko
BAM Harvey Theater (651 Fulton Street)
Oct 3—6 at 7:30pm, Oct 7 at 3pm
Tickets start at $30

Packed with striking scenes, frenzied emotion, and choral songs of great power and beauty, *The Bacchae* is considered to be one of Euripides’ greatest surviving works. Dionysus, the god of wine, ritual madness, fertility, and theater, returns in disguise to his birthplace in Greece. As revenge for a personal slight, Dionysus plans to spread his cult among the people of Thebes. His adversary, King Pentheus, imprisons Dionysus in order to suppress his influence and the spreading disorder of his followers. This misguided attempt to thwart the will of a god leads to catastrophe for Pentheus and his entire family. With a new translation by Aaron Poochigian, Anne Bogart and her groundbreaking SITI Company present the play as a modern reminder: if we don’t respect the inherent wildness of humanity, we may fall prey to the tyranny of excessive order or to the frenzy of collective passion.

**Greek**

Scottish Opera/Opera Ventures
Libretto by Steven Berkoff from his play *Greek*
Adapted by Mark-Anthony Turnage and Jonathan Moore
Composed by Mark-Anthony Turnage
Conducted by Stuart Stratford
Directed by Joe Hill-Gibbins
Associate Director Daisy Evans

Set design by Johannes Schütz
Costume design by Alex Lowde
Lighting design by Matthew Richardson
Video design by Dick Straker
Movement by Jenny Ogilvie
Dramaturgy by Caroline Steinbeis
Soloists from The Orchestra of Scottish Opera

In English with English titles
Co-produced by Opera Ventures and Scottish Opera

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House (30 Lafayette Ave)
Dec 5, 6 & 8 at 7:30pm; Dec 9 at 3pm
Tickets start at $35

Mark-Anthony Turnage’s groundbreaking and profane 1988 two-act opera, *Greek*, is now a cult classic in the modern chamber opera repertoire. Composed and set in Britain’s Thatcher era, and based on the in-your-face stage play by Steven Berkoff, *Greek*’s bleak humor and exploration of social and political unrest continue to resonate. Scottish Opera/Opera Ventures’ acclaimed new production is presented in its New York premiere, and the engagement also marks the New York premiere of the opera.

*Greek* is a retelling of Sophocles’ tragedy *Oedipus Rex*, set in cockney-accented north London. An aimless young man, Eddy, longs for a better life away from his family. His father tells him of a fortune teller’s prophecy years earlier that Eddy would sleep with his mother and murder his father. Eddy
storms off, disgusted, brawling his way across a turbulent city rife with strikes, gas rationing, violence, and plague. Following a row with police, Eddy escapes into a café, where he argues with the café manager and kills him. The distraught café manager’s wife falls in love with Eddy and they make a life together. She tells him of her young son who was lost in the Thames River years ago. Years later, Eddy’s parents find him and finally tell him how they rescued him from the river. Horrified, Eddy realizes the fortune teller’s prophecy has come true.

**Humanities Programming**

**On Fear and Governance**
With Anne Bogart and Monica Youn  
In conversation with Corey Robin  
Co-presented by BAM and the Onassis Cultural Center New York  
Oct 5 at 6pm, BAM Fisher Hillman Studio (321 Ashland Pl)  
Price: $15; $7.50 for BAM members

**On Confronting Silence**
With Masha Gessen and Aja Monet  
In conversation with Amanda Foreman  
Co-presented by BAM and the Onassis Cultural Center New York  
Oct 20 at 6pm, BAM Fisher Hillman Studio (321 Ashland Pl)  
Price: $15; $7.50 for BAM members

**On the Force of Truth**
With asha bandele, Tilde Björfors, and Anand Giridharadas  
In conversation with Charles W. Mills  
Co-presented by BAM and the Onassis Cultural Center New York  
Nov 1 at 6pm, BAM Fisher Hillman Studio (321 Ashland Pl)  
Price: $15; $7.50 for BAM members

**On the Economics of Fatalism**
With Sarah Jaffe and Sanjay G. Reddy  
In conversation with Simon Critchley  
Co-presented by BAM and the Onassis Cultural Center New York  
Dec 8 at 6pm, BAM Fisher Hillman Studio (321 Ashland Pl)  
Price: $15; $7.50 for BAM members

**BAMcinémathek Screenings**

**Ran** (1985) Dir. Akira Kurosawa  
Oct 1 at 7pm, BAM Rose Cinemas  
The legendary Japanese director’s final film is a blistering, visually spectacular re-imagining of one of the greatest theatrical investigations of political power dynamics, Shakespeare’s *King Lear*.

**The Arbor** (2011), Dir. Clio Barnard  
Oct 15 at 7pm, BAM Rose Cinemas  
This mesmerizing, endlessly inventive hybrid of documentary and fiction breathes life into the tragic story of Andrea Dunbar, the Bradford-born playwright who shot to fame with her raunchy, Thatcher-era satire *Rita, Sue and Bob Too*.

**Whose Streets?** (2017) Dirs. Sabaah Folayan and Damon Davis
Oct 29 at 7pm, BAM Rose Cinemas
Plunging the viewer onto the front lines of protest in Ferguson, Missouri in the aftermath of Michael Brown’s killing, this electrifying dispatch offers an urgent documentary portrait of contemporary activism in action.

_Taxi_ (2005), Dir. Jafar Panahi
Dec 3 at 7pm, BAM Rose Cinemas
Banned from making films by the Iranian government, director Jafar Panahi posed as a taxi driver to craft this resourceful, exceptionally moving, and quietly thrilling treatise on the myriad social challenges in his home country.

**Conversation and Film**

_Then and Now: The Gospel at Colonus conversation + screening of Book of Clarence_
With Lee Breuer, Sam Butler, and Bob Telson
In conversation with Joseph V. Melillo
Sept 12 at 7pm, BAM Rose Cinemas
Tickets: $15; $7.50 for BAM members

Theater director Lee Breuer; original cast member, musician and former member of the Blind Boys of Alabama, Sam Butler; and composer Bob Telson join BAM Executive Producer Joseph V. Melillo in conversation about _The Gospel at Colonus_, originally performed in the BAM Harvey Theater during the first Next Wave Festival in 1983. Slated for a revival by the Public Theater at the Delacorte this September, the production tells the story of _Oedipus at Colonus_ in the context of an African-American Pentecostal church service, with Oedipus performed by the current line-up of the Blind Boys of Alabama. The discussion will be followed by a screening of _Book of Clarence_, a feature-length documentary essay that follows the life of legendary, blind gospel singer and founding member of the Grammy award-winning Blind Boys of Alabama, Clarence Fountain. Fountain led the Blind Boys of Alabama for 60 years and together they originated the role as the musical manifestation of Oedipus in the original production of _The Gospel at Colonus_.

**Visual Art**

_**A.M.T.P. (A Mad Tea Party), 2018**_
Ioanna Pantazopoulou
Wood, stainless steel teapots, artificial palm tree, Rainbow static dusters, crystals, mixed media
Dimensions Variable
BAM Harvey Theater (651 Fulton St)
On view from September 13, 2018 – January 6, 2019

The Onassis Cultural Center New York and BAM are pleased to present a new co-commissioned artwork by Brooklyn-based Greek artist Ioanna Pantazopoulou. Titled _A.M.T.P. (A Mad Tea Party)_ , this sprawling hanging sculpture suspends from the ceiling as a topsy-turvy, upside-down tea party with cups and saucers on chairs, architectural teapot mountains, and colorful dusters and crystals under a life-size fake palm tree. Dining accouterments become undomesticated, while furniture is sliced like food. Dissected and reconfigured, very practical objects transform into the unworkable. Such deconstruction guards against the belief that the world is simple and can be known with certainty.
In deconstructing material culture—a manifestation of capitalistic power—and embracing disorder, Ioanna’s work criticizes our often-tacit acceptance of excess and invites audiences to reinterpret our relationship to materialistic consumption that has become endemic in contemporary society.

**BAM Hamm Archives Exhibition**

*Speaking Truth to Power at the Academy: In Their Own Words*

This exhibit explores the Academy as a forum for public discourse featuring remarkable thinkers and activists such as Frederick Douglass, Eleanor Roosevelt, Helen Keller, Paul Robeson, Angela Davis and many others.

BAM Harvey Theater (651 Fulton Street)
On view from September 13, 2018- January 6, 2019

**About Onassis Cultural Center New York**

The Onassis Cultural Center New York presents cultural programming for audiences of all ages to engage with art and ideas. Designed to be thought-provoking and entertaining, programs encourage audience interaction with celebrated artists and influential figures from the visual and performing arts, and the humanities.

For press information, contact Sandy Sawotka, ssawotka@BAM.org, 718.636.4190.

**Credits**

Bloomberg Philanthropies is the Season Sponsor.

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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 varied light fare and bar service prior to BAM Howard Gilman Opera House evening performances.

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

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