



## **BAM expands its commitment to visual art and audience accessibility with the opening of BAM Strong in October 2019**

**Creation of Rudin Family Gallery, the Robert W. Wilson Sculpture Terrace, and construction of elevator to the BAM Harvey Theater balcony are among exciting features that enhance and unite BAM's Fulton Street sites**

**March 15, 2019/Brooklyn, NY**—BAM announces plans to unveil BAM Strong—a unique array of expanded BAM spaces and new features—in October 2019. The project, developed with a lead gift from BAM Trustee Brigitte Vosse, unites BAM spaces along Fulton Street, allowing building improvements, greater accessibility, and institutional expansion. BAM Strong will open at the start of the 2019 Next Wave Festival—the first season curated by Artistic Director David Binder.

BAM President Katy Clark said, “As we enter an exciting new chapter in BAM’s history, signaled by the arrival of our new Artistic Director David Binder, we’re proud to announce opening plans for BAM Strong. This project provides our campus with dynamic improvements and additions while greatly increasing accessibility for all our visitors. We are grateful for the generosity of BAM Trustee Brigitte Vosse, the City of New York, and other major donors who helped bring the project to life.”

BAM Board Chair Adam E. Max said, “We are deeply grateful for the support of the many partners who made the BAM Strong project possible, including the City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York City Council, and the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President. We are thrilled that the project will provide our always adventurous institution with new opportunities—from visual art programming, to easier access to affordable seats, to new spaces for our audiences to gather. Having our Fulton Street spaces united under one canopy also reflects the evolution of BAM and the growing Brooklyn Cultural District.”

BAM Trustee Brigitte Vosse added, “I am proud to support this exciting next step for BAM—an organization to which my family and I share a deep collective commitment. BAM Strong will create a vibrant presence on Fulton Street and move the institution forward, with an accessible home for all and a deeper connection to visual art.”

BAM Strong adds the organization’s first dedicated visual art exhibition space, The Rudin Family Gallery, named for the family of donor, collector, and honorary BAM Trustee Beth Rudin DeWoody. Larry Ossei-Mensah will serve as guest curator for the gallery, collaborating with BAM Artistic Director David Binder on exhibitions and events. The 1,100-square-foot gallery occupies a new one-story construction in the formerly empty lot (623 Fulton Street) between the Harvey Theater and the 230 Ashland Place residential building.

The Rudin Family Gallery connects to the adjoining, renovated Harvey Theater outer lobby; its creation was supported by BAM Trustee Edgar Lampert and his wife, Robin Lampert. The newly named Robin & Edgar Lampert Outer Lobby includes a revitalized and user-friendly box office and is connected to the theater’s inner lobby, The Campbell Lobby. Creation of this reinvigorated and lively space for BAM audiences was supported by BAM Trustee William I. Campbell and his wife, Christine Wächter-Campbell.

Accessibility is a key part of the renovation of the Harvey Theater, and the box office (now opposite its former location) eliminates box office window partitions and provides an open space featuring service kiosks. In addition, BAM Strong's construction also adds a new generous, open staircase, making each level more accessible and providing easier movement between floors. Doors previously separating the outer and inner lobbies of the Harvey Theater have been eliminated, making the public spaces expansive.

A needed and highly anticipated feature of BAM Strong is the Harvey Theater's first elevator to its balcony level, enabling access to the most affordable seats in the 115-year-old structure. Typical of theaters built at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the former Majestic Theater's balcony was designed with entrance stairs that intentionally separated that audience from those in the orchestra. The new elevator, situated well beyond the theater's entrance, provides direct access between the balcony and the inner lobby, a more porous experience for all, and equitable access for all audience members.

On the second floor of the structure is a new patron lounge, the Jessica E. Smith & Kevin R. Brine Patron Lounge, which will face Fulton Street via a beautiful and ornate floor-to-ceiling, semi-circular window. Supported by a former BAM Trustee and her husband, this space will open out onto the Robert W. Wilson Sculpture Terrace, which sits atop The Rudin Family Gallery. Named in honor of arts philanthropist, Robert W. Wilson, the sculpture terrace will be the home for an exciting public art installation that will be announced later this year.

On the ground level and evoking a modern marquee, an undulating, lighted canopy will connect BAM's Fulton Street sites—the Harvey Theater, The Rudin Family Gallery, and 230 Ashland Place. The latter is the ground level of a residential building which wraps from 230 Ashland Place to Fulton Street and which was acquired by BAM in 2010. Possible uses and operators of that property are currently under consideration.

In anticipation of the October opening, a special fundraising campaign has been launched to support this exciting next chapter in BAM's history. Gifts to the campaign will create opportunities for donors to name a seat in the Harvey Theater or a brick in the BAM Strong complex, or to support David Binder's inaugural season.

BAM Strong was designed by Mitchell Giurgola with construction by Hunter-Roberts Construction Group.

#### About Larry Ossei-Mensah

Guest Curator Larry Ossei-Mensah is the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit's (MOCAD's) Susanne Feld Hilberry Senior Curator. Ossei-Mensah uses contemporary art as a vehicle to redefine how we see ourselves and the world around us. The Ghanaian-American curator and cultural critic, a Bronx native, has organized exhibitions and programs at commercial and nonprofit spaces around the globe from New York City to Rome in addition to documenting cultural happenings featuring the most dynamic visual artists working today such as Derrick Adams, Mickalene Thomas, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Federico Solmi, and Kehinde Wiley. Ossei-Mensah is also the co-founder of ARTNOIR, a global collective of culturalists who design multimodal experiences aimed to engage this generation's dynamic and diverse creative class. In 2017, he was the Critic-in Residence at ART OMI and in 2019 he will serve as a curatorial mentor at the VisArt in Rockville, MD. He recently co-curated the solo exhibition of Allison Janae Hamilton's work with Susan Cross at MASS MoCA entitled *PITCH*. Ossei-Mensah is also the recent recipient of the Warhol Foundation grant for

\$50K for his upcoming exhibition in spring/summer 2019 at MOAD in San Francisco entitled *Coffee, Rhum, Sugar, Gold: A Postcolonial Paradox* co-curated with Dexter Wimberly. Follow him on Instagram/Twitter at @youngglobal

### About The BAM Harvey Theater

The BAM Harvey Theater was named in 1999 for BAM's departing President and Executive Producer Harvey Lichtenstein (1929–2017). Formerly the Majestic Theater, the 1904 structure was acquired by BAM from the City in 1986 after Lichtenstein and director Peter Brook decided its abandoned structure could be renovated to stage Brook's epic *The Mahabharata* in 1987. The Majestic was once part of a thriving, early-20<sup>th</sup>-century theater district in Downtown Brooklyn, and the Majestic's productions often moved to Broadway. In 1942, it became a movie house, but changes in Brooklyn and the popularity of television led to its closure in the 1960s, after which it lay dormant until BAM's renovation. The existing shell of the building was retained essentially 'as is,' creating an architectural link to its past. Peter Brook and his associate Jean Guy Le Cat reconceived it as an amphitheater modeled on their famed Paris venue Les Bouffes du Nord. Since 1987, the Harvey has served as one of the city's most beloved theatrical houses. In 2013, its functionality expanded with the installation of the state-of-the-art Steinberg Screen (supported by The Joseph S. and Diane H. Steinberg Charitable Trust), creating a unique and beautiful film venue.

### About BAM Visual Art

BAM and the contemporary visual arts have a longstanding connection. From its inception in 1983 during the Next Wave Festival, BAM's Visual Art program has commissioned renowned artists such as Roy Lichtenstein and Willem de Kooning to produce Next Wave Festival posters. Each year, BAM Visual Art develops a diverse program, including curated exhibitions and collaborations with local artists. Supporters have the opportunity to purchase new works through the annual silent auction, which features works by both emerging and established contemporary artists. Also available are print editions of BAM's Photography Portfolio. New York's visual artists have played a significant role in initiatives at BAM since the early 80s, including Chuck Close, Jeff Koons, Lynda Benglis, and Richard Prince. Notable art works recently added to BAM's collection include José Parlá's mural *Gesture Performing Dance, Dance Performing Gesture* (BAM Fisher); Leo Villareal's LED installation, *Stars* (Peter Jay Sharp Building windows); large-scale murals by Michael Graves (Lepercq Spce); a KAWS mural (bike park on Lafayette Avenue), and David Byrne-designed bike racks (outside Peter Jay Sharp Building). Although BAM utilizes a variety of its spaces to exhibit work and host artist events, the addition of The Rudin Family Gallery provides a dedicated and unrestricted venue—underscoring BAM's increased commitment to visual art.

### About Mitchell Giurgola

BAM Strong was designed by Mitchell Giurgola, the firm responsible for the Harvey Theater renovation completed in 2012. The architects faced many challenges. Of particular note was the condition of the interior spaces that suffered through several reincarnations and 20 years of abandonment, leaving damaged plaster, exposed brick walls, and other scars from its checkered history. Paul Broches, principal at MG, notes: "These characteristics have become beloved features to BAM audiences. The challenge for us was to balance the desire to retain these characteristics with BAM's commitment to improve the audience experience through greater access, upgraded amenities, and improved seating and sight lines." A unique challenge in designing the exterior was to unify the three properties that are now BAM Strong. The 180-foot-long canopy that links all three is reminiscent of Broadway marquees of the past while its sinuous form speaks to the future.

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