

## Announcing The Block Gallery The Bronx Museum of the Arts' Exhibition and Artist Workspace and Inaugural Class of Resident AIM Artists

(New York, NY — October 26, 2018) — The **Bronx Museum of the Arts** is pleased to announce its new exhibition and artist workspace at 80 White Street in Lower Manhattan, which will be known as **The Block Gallery**. The name was chosen in honor of the late Bronx Museum Executive Director Holly Block. It will welcome the first artist residents in January, 2019.



The space will be home to a new expansion of **AIM** (Artist in the Marketplace), the museum's storied career development program for emerging artists in all five boroughs of New York City. The space will serve as a community resource hub, featuring private workspaces, exhibition facilities, meeting rooms, and career management resources for alumni of the AIM program. The museum's AIM program will now serve **46 New York-based artists every year**, with 36 first-time emerging artist fellows at the Bronx Museum and ten AIM alumni at "The Block" in lower Manhattan. The residency will host five artists every six months. The inaugural resident artists are **Blanka Amezkua** (AIM alumnus, 2008), **Michael Paul Britto** (2006), **Cecile Chong** (2011), **Sophia Dawson** (2016), and **Pacifico**

**Silano** (2013). In July, the second cohort will begin its residency: **Onyedika Chuke** (2012), **Alicia Grullon** (2012), **Jessica Lagunas** (2006), **Jasmine Murrell** (2016), and **Shani Peters** (2010).

"We are thrilled to be able to offer even more support to emerging artists by welcoming the first class of resident artists to The Block," said **Deborah Cullen, Executive Director of the Bronx Museum of the Arts**. "The space was designed to further our mission of providing underrepresented New York-based artists the career development tools needed to succeed, and I am excited to see what our residents accomplish in this next level of our storied AIM program."

To inaugurate the space, AIM artist alumni **Grimanesa Amorós** has created a luminous site-specific sculpture, **ARGENTUM**, commissioned by Martin Weinstein and Teresa Liszka. The artwork is comprised of two main sections which connect the location of the Bronx Museum with its new hub at 80 White Street— the left side is based on the island Manhattan, while the right is the Bronx. The sculpture is made of LEDs, diffusion and reflective material, custom lighting sequence, electrical hardware, and steel.

"The relationship between 80 White Street's steel reinforced foundation and AIM's second home in Lower Manhattan inspired me to combine two vital parts of the building; its foundation and residents. As the piece occupies most of the entrance, the viewer is constantly interacting with it. When entering and exiting the building, the observer sees themselves, but much like light's speed, it can never be fully captured and only appreciated in movement," said **Grimanesa Amorós**, AIM alumni artist.

**The Block Gallery** is a gift from Gerald Weinstein, General Hardware Mfg. Co., Inc., and Martin Weinstein and Tereza Liszka, who are longtime supporters of The Bronx Museum of the Arts.

AIM alumni will have access to a robust portfolio of career development resources including training in areas such as exhibition design, curatorial methods, archiving, cataloguing, and estate planning; artists will also have opportunities to take part in clinics on legal, business, and communication strategies of relevance to an artist's practice. Resident artists will have full use of the incubator's 4,500 sq-ft facilities, including a gallery to exhibit new work and works-in-process, a multipurpose space to host programming, and a conference room for meetings.

The Bronx Museum of the Arts' Block Gallery and programming is made possible through the generosity of Tereza Liszka and Martin Weinstein, Gerald Weinstein, General Hardware Mfg. Co., Inc., The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and The New York Community Trust. Additionally, the Bronx Museum's AIM program is made possible with the generous support of Jerome Foundation, William Talbott Hillman Foundation, and the museum's Friends of AIM patron circle.

"The New York Community Trust and Bronx Museum of the Arts are both committed to helping traditionally underrepresented artists develop their careers," says **Kerry McCarthy, Program Director of Thriving Communities, Art and Historic Preservation at The Trust**. "Because finding the space to create art is a challenge in the City, we are proud to help expand the AIM program to include studio residencies for its alumni at this new downtown space."



**Inaugural AIM Residents (l-r):** Jasmine Murrell, Jessica Lagunas, Pacifico Silano, Cecile Chong, Michael Paul Britto, Deborah Cullen (Bronx Museum Executive Director), Sophia Dawson, and Onyedika Chuke. **Not pictured:** Blanka Amezkua, Alicia Grullon, and Shani Peters.

On **October 25, 2018**, the Bronx Museum formally introduced the artists with a launch party, providing guests with an opportunity to be among the first to see the future home of the AIM alumni residency program and new exhibition space.

## RESIDENT ARTISTS

### JANUARY - JUNE 2019

#### **Blanka Amezkua, AIM Class of 2008**

b. 1971, Mexico City, Mexico

Bronx-based artist Blanka Amezkua creates images addressing complex cultural and gender issues using techniques and materials often regarded as artisanal. Her elaborate aesthetic formalism, often created from paper, embroidery, or crochet, melds together domestic practices with popular culture. Continuing her exploration of paper arts from her native Mexico, Amezkua will create *papel picado* representing her own immigrant journey to the U.S. while in

residence. She will also delve into *jianzhi*, a Chinese paper cutting tradition dating from the 6th century.

#### **Michael Paul Britto, AIM Class of 2006**

b. 1968, Brooklyn, New York

Bronx resident Michael Paul Britto creates work that addresses political and cultural awareness using familiar tropes as metaphor. During his time in residence, Britto will develop, *Be Black InstaBaby!*, a multimedia project using video, collage, sculpture, and audio soundscapes to document and explore the experiences and struggles that people of color face on a daily basis. Britto seeks to foster a better understanding of the mental, physical, and institutional challenges faced by people of color.

**Cecile Chong** AIM Class of 2011

b. 1964, Guayaquil, Ecuador

In her mixed media works, Chong creates cross-cultural narratives by appropriating subjects and materials from myriad global sources. As part of her residency, Chong proposes to investigate the historical and contemporary visual culture of Manhattan's Chinatown. She intends to excavate signs of history and culture, and contemplate how technology, contemporary living, and globalization interact, overlap, and entangle at this dynamic crossroads of East and West, which she calls the "Contemporary Silk Road."

**Sophia Dawson** AIM Class of 2016

b. 1988, Brooklyn, New York

Sophia Dawson is a Brooklyn-based visual artist whose work affirms the experiences of individuals striving to overcome injustice. While in residence, Dawson will continue working on her To Be Free project which through large-scale portraiture explores the stories of the 20+ remaining US held political prisoners jailed for their activism in the black liberation movements of the 1960's and 1970's. The project utilizes art to call attention to their continued imprisonment and to advocate for their freedom.

**Pacifico Silano** AIM Class of 2013

b. 1986, Brooklyn, New York

Pacifico Silano is a lens-based artist whose work is an exploration of print culture and LGBTQ identity. As a resident artist, Silano will continue his *After Silence* project, a photo series which evokes the emotional and physical voids felt as a result of the AIDS epidemic. Through fragmenting, obscuring, layering, reassembling, and re-photographing, Silano re-contextualizes images and sources of gay erotica from the 1970's pre-AIDS era to reveal the innocence, naiveté; and euphoria of the moment.

## JULY - DECEMBER 2019

**Onyedika Chuke** AIM Class of 2012

b. Onitsha, Nigeria

Onyedika Chuke is concerned with the history and historiography of cultural objects. He creates architectural models, sculpture, and installations that reveal the disjunctions between historical architecture, politics, and the human body. While in residence, Chuke will research and workshop a portraiture project in collaboration with the New York City Department of Corrections with the intention of developing a public monument/anti monument dedicated to the history of incarceration in New York City.

**Alicia Grullon** AIM Class of 2012

b. 1973, New York, New York

Alicia Grullon is a New York based artist working across photography, video, socially engaged arts, installation, and performance. Her work focuses on topics dealing with power relations, activism, urbanism, memory, identity, and language. Grullon's residency will be used to develop video treatments and an installation for two media projects on climate change and resiliency. These projects are a continuation of Grullon's "Surge", which considers the impact of climate change on the lives of urban youth.

**Jessica Lagunas** AIM Class of 2006

b. 1971, Managua, Nicaragua

Through various media, such as installation, video-performance, and objects, Jessica Lagunas makes work using minimal elements to express her concerns about women in contemporary society. During her residency, the Bronx-based artist will work on an ongoing series called "Hair Weaves," a participatory project that uses hair donated from the public, along with the artist's own hair, to create communal portraits that weave together identity, culture, and place.

## **Jasmine Murrell** AIM Class of 2016

b. 1975, Detroit, Michigan

Jasmine Murrell's work reveals the contemporary myth-making of commodities and social rituals, exposing the contrivances, inventions, and erasures that promote dangerous cultural fantasies. While in residence, Murrell will collaborate with elders to explore ideas of power, beauty and the collective memory of the feminine black body. The series of works to be developed seeks to recoup the essential beauty and visibility of aging bodies and contributes to a larger narrative that transcends fear of death, impermanence, and change.

## **Shani Peters** AIM Class of 2010

b. 1981, Lansing, Michigan

Shani Peters is a multi-disciplinary artist whose work encompasses community building, activism histories, the subversion of popular media, and the creation of accessible imaginative experiences. While in residence Peters will continue her project PSA for Collective Care, a public art campaign offering people of color accessible advice for surviving the perils of living in an unjust society.

## **ABOUT AIM**

For nearly 40 years, The Bronx Museum of the Arts has supported New York's artist community through AIM, the museum's signature artist training program offering career enhancement resources to emerging artists living in New York City. Mentored by a distinguished faculty of industry experts, AIM artists engage in an intensive series of seminars and activities that aid artists in building sustainable studio practices while expanding peer and professional networks. Since its founding, AIM has provided pivotal support to a diverse roster of over **1,200 artists including Njideka Akunyili-Crosby, Diana Al-Hadid, Tomie Arai, Firelei Báez, Abigail DeVille, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Debbie Grossman, Byron Kim, Simone Leigh, Glenn Ligon, Whitfield Lovell, Sarah Oppenheimer, Erik Parker, and Jacolby Satterwhite.** Full list of AIM artist alumni [here](#).

## **ABOUT THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS**

The Bronx Museum of the Arts is an internationally recognized cultural destination that presents innovative contemporary art exhibitions and education programs and is committed to promoting cross-cultural dialogues for diverse audiences. Since its founding in 1971, the Museum has played a vital role in the Bronx by helping to make art accessible to the entire community and connecting with local schools, artists, teens, and families through its robust education initiatives. In celebration of its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Museum implemented a universal free admission policy, supporting its mission to make arts experiences available to all audiences. The Museum's collection comprises over 1,000 modern and contemporary artworks in all media and highlights works by artists of African, Asian, and Latin American ancestry, as well as artists for whom the Bronx has been critical to their development. Located on the Grand Concourse, the Museum's home is a distinctive contemporary landmark designed by the internationally recognized firm Arquitectonica.

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