

The Bronx Museum of the Arts Announces \$21 Million Capital Project and Renovation of its Grand Concourse Entrance by MARVEL



View of The Bronx Museum of the Arts from Grand Concourse. Courtesy of Marvel.

(Bronx, NY – December 16, 2021) – The Bronx Museum of the Arts, one of the city’s only major museums with free admission, is pleased to announce a **\$21 million capital project to mark its 50th anniversary** and support the renovation of a new multi-story entrance and lobby on the corner of Grand Concourse and 165th Street by **Marvel**, an award-winning architecture, landscape architecture, interiors and planning practice. The renovation, supported by city funds—with additional support from the state—will be overseen by the [New York City Economic Development Corporation](#) (NYCEDC) on behalf of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) and The Bronx Museum, and is slated for completion in 2025.

Since 2012, The Bronx Museum has offered free admission to the public, and over the past decade has experienced unprecedented growth, increasing its annual attendance from 25,000 to a height of over 100,000. The Bronx Museum last expanded in 2006 with a widely admired \$19 million North-Wing addition designed by the Miami-based firm Arquitectonica. The renovation by Marvel will elegantly integrate the South Wing into the existing extension by creating a **cohesive architectural whole** and a reimagined and spacious lobby that includes seating, gathering space and large street-facing walls for artwork. The re-location of the main entrance to the highly-visible corner of Grand Concourse and 165th Street will open up the Museum and serve as an expansion of the sidewalk, offering multiple opportunities for art and public programming to be visible from the street.

“As one of the few free major museums in New York, located in the city’s most diverse borough, fifty years later The Bronx Museum remains a vital public resource. The expansion will provide an enhanced gathering space for our communities and amplify our ability to educate, engage and accommodate our visitors,” said **Executive Director Claudio Rodriguez**. “Marvel has a history of working with some of the city’s most important cultural institutions, including the 2006 renovation of the Studio Museum in Harlem, and brings with them over 30 years of experience providing architectural planning, community, economic and sustainable development of public spaces. We trust that their vision will bring the Museum into the future.”

“We are excited to work with our agency and development partners to facilitate the design and construction of The Bronx Museum of the Arts’ South Wing Atrium and main entrance,” said **NYCEDC President and CEO Rachel Loeb**. “This project represents our commitment to investing in and enhancing cultural spaces across the city, and will create opportunities to further connect the Grand Concourse community with the arts.”

“The Bronx Museum is an institution as extraordinary as the borough it calls home, collaborating with amazing artists and attracting audiences from around the world,” said **NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Gonzalo Casals**. “The City is proud to invest in this exciting renovation project, which will enhance the museum’s physical connections with its neighboring communities and give it a more dynamic, open, and accessible space to engage audiences than ever before.”

The Bronx Museum was founded in 1971 by community leaders and activists at a time when the borough was in crisis, and for half a century has carved an identity as a museum dedicated to social justice. The Museum remains committed to investing in its local communities—including people of color, women, LGBTQ communities—and the belief that art and culture are essential on the path to achieving social justice and equity. For the past five decades, the Museum has organized hundreds of exhibitions featuring works by culturally diverse and under-represented artists from across the globe, including hallmark exhibitions of work by Diana Al-Hadid, Sanford Biggers, Alvin Baltrop, Henry Chalfant, Rochelle Feinstein, Eddie Martinez, Gordon Matta-Clark, Wardell Milan, José Parlá, Angel Otero, Sarah Sze, and Martin Wong, among many others.

In addition to its unparalleled exhibition program, the Museum is known for its **Teen Council**, which since 2005 has offered paid opportunities for young people to engage deeply with contemporary art and the museum space; and the **Artist in the Marketplace (AIM) Fellowship**—the Museum’s flagship artist development program, which offers career management resources to guide emerging artists through the opaque professional practices of the art world. Since its founding in 1980, the AIM Fellowship has provided pivotal career support to a diverse roster of over 1,200 of New York’s most promising artists, including Diana Al-Hadid, Firelei Báez, Njideka Akunili Crosby, Abigail DeVille, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Glenn Ligon, Sarah Oppenheimer, Jacolby Satterwhite, and Lucia Hierro.

Principal Architect, Jonathan J. Marvel, of Marvel said: “The role of museums and civic infrastructure in our communities is more critical than ever. In addition to serving as places that reflect our culture and history, these institutions have become hubs of empowerment where citizens can learn, gather and advocate for social justice. With this addition, the Museum will continue to be one of the most vibrant and welcoming spaces for all New Yorkers and visitors, now and in future. We are extremely gratified to be a part of this meaningful project, which spans the storied Grand Concourse and celebrates New York City’s rich legacy of cultural inclusion and diversity.”

Board Chair Joseph Mizzi comments: “We are thrilled that with the selection of Marvel this important project is fully moving forward. Our board and staff are deeply appreciative of the efforts by our City and all of the project’s stakeholders in this exciting next step for our museum’s visibility and continued growth, and we look forward to enhancing the museum experience for our Bronx Community and visitors from near and far.”

Vice Chair Susan Hinkson comments: “This is such an exciting and needed project for the Bronx Museum as it moves forward into its 50th year. The corner of 165th Street and the Grand Concourse is such an important and prominent intersection and the museum’s project will seek to take advantage of this prime location by opening the museum up and inviting the community in to a vital, engaging and hospitable environment filled with art to engage the mind, heart and soul.”

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. comments: “I am pleased to see that the design of the Bronx Museum’s new South Wing Atrium is moving forward. The Bronx Museum is a true jewel of our borough, and one of the most important cultural institutions in our city. This project, which will be done by Marvel, will allow for a much-anticipated expansion of this important creative space for our community to become a reality. As we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, the arts will play a critical role in this process, that is why I am proud to have allocated close to two million dollars in funding to this project. I would like to thank everyone who made this possible.”

Council Member Vanessa L. Gibson comments: “Our cultural institutions were among those hardest hit by the pandemic and it is important now more than ever that we provide the necessary support to ensure they come back stronger than ever. For over 50 years the Bronx Museum of the Arts has showcased art and culture from throughout the borough and with the \$21 million dollars in capital funds, renovations will be made to further expand and enhance the Museum. I am excited to see the work MARVEL will do and I am thankful that I was able to play a role during my time in the City Council to support this important project.”

Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner (D-Bronx, 77th AD) comments: “The Bronx Museum of the Arts is one of the finest cultural gems the Bronx has to offer to local families and to the world. The South Wing project is a daring undertaking that allows for the expansion of arts programming while enhancing the look of the Museum and connecting it even more closely with our community. I am so pleased to have been able to secure state capital funding to support this exciting investment and look forward to the continued growth of the Bronx Museum of the Arts.”

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History:

In its first decade, The Bronx Museum of the Arts was housed in the public rotunda of the Bronx County Courthouse located on Grand Concourse and 161st Street. In 1982, it moved five blocks north on the Concourse to 165th street into a former synagogue purchased and donated by the City of New York. As part of the Museum’s initiative to expand the scope of its youth and family programs, it began an ambitious capital project to enhance its facility. In February 2004, The Museum began construction on a 16,000 sq. ft. building to the north of the existing facility. Its design by the Miami-based firm Arquitectonica was awarded the "Excellence in Design" prize by The Art Commission of the City of New York in 2003. The \$19 million space opened in October 2006 and features a major gallery, flexible events / program spaces, an outdoor terrace, and an entire floor dedicated to education programs and classrooms.

About the Bronx Museum:

The Bronx Museum is one of the only major NYC museums with free admission, making it a vital resource not just for residents in The Bronx, but thousands of residents from all five boroughs and tourists visiting NYC annually. Today an internationally-recognized cultural destination, for the past five decades, The Bronx Museum has presented hundreds of exhibitions featuring works by culturally diverse and under-represented artists. The Museum's permanent collection of 2,000+ works preserves and documents artists who are not typically represented within traditional museum collections by showcasing work by artists of African, Asian, and Latin American ancestry, as well as artists for whom the Bronx has been critical to their development. Now in its 50th year, The Bronx Museum continues to promote its mission of the arts accessible to all audiences.

About Marvel:

Marvel recognizes that pressing issues facing contemporary cities, communities, and the natural environment can only be solved with bold, collective action. Marvel embraces global challenges. For more than 20 years, the firm has worked at the intersection of public and private space, creating intentionally timeless design solutions that integrate nature and context.

With offices in New York City and San Juan, Puerto Rico, Marvel brings together architecture, landscape architecture, planning, urban design, and interiors professionals. Together, Marvel accelerates the discussion between all stakeholders—including policy makers, community and business leaders, clients, activists, and citizens—and co-authors long-term visions for buildings, places, and people.

www.marveldesigns.com

About NYCEDC:

New York City Economic Development Corporation is a mission-driven, nonprofit organization that creates shared prosperity across New York City by strengthening neighborhoods and creating good jobs. We work with and for communities to bring emerging industries to New York City; develop spaces and facilities for businesses; empower New Yorkers through training and skill-building; and invest in sustainable and innovative projects that make the city a great place to live and work. To learn more about what we do, visit us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

About New York City Department of Cultural Affairs:

The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) is dedicated to supporting and strengthening New York City's vibrant cultural life. DCLA works to promote and advocate for quality arts programming and to articulate the contribution made by the cultural community to the City's vitality. The Department represents and serves non-profit cultural organizations involved in the visual, literary, and performing arts; public-oriented science and humanities institutions including zoos, botanical gardens, and historic and preservation societies; and creative artists at all skill levels who live and work within the City's five boroughs. DCLA also provides donated materials for arts programs offered by the public schools and cultural and social service groups, and commissions permanent works of public art at City-funded construction projects throughout the five boroughs. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/culture.



Visit the Museum:

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