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***THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS COMMEMORATES CENTENNIAL
OF GRAND CONCOURSE WITH YEAR-LONG EXHIBITION SERIES***

STORY TOLD THROUGH LENS OF HISTORY, ART, AND ARCHITECTURE

Daniel Libeskind is Keynote Speaker for Two-Day Symposium, March 6

Acconci Studio Unveils Year-Long Lobby Installation on June 21

Bronx, NY – A visionary feat of 19th-century city planning, largely taken for granted by 21st-century New Yorkers, the Grand Concourse flows through the Bronx from Van Cortlandt Park at the top to East 138th Street at the south. Inspired by the Champs-Élysées in Paris and designed by Alsatian-born engineer Louis Risse, the famous thoroughfare was originally conceived in 1890 as a means of connecting residents of Manhattan to the green parks of the north Bronx. After nearly two decades of planning, engineering, and construction, the Grand Concourse officially opened in November 1909.

Now, in 2009, The Bronx Museum of the Arts examines the past, present, and future of the Grand Concourse in *Intersections*, a year-long, three-part centennial celebration. The three exhibitions comprising *Intersections* are: *Intersections: The Grand Concourse at 100* (March 5 – July 20, 2009); *Intersections: The Grand Concourse Commissions* (August 2, 2009 – January 4, 2010); and *Intersections: The Grand Concourse Beyond 100* (November 1 – January 4, 2010).

“We invite New Yorkers to accompany us on a journey that begins with Risse’s 1892 watercolor sketch for a ‘transverse road’ slicing through farmlands, continues in the summer with specially commissioned works by artists, and ends in the fall with the presentation of visionary new designs for the Bronx,” says Holly Block, Executive Director, Bronx Museum of the Arts.

As the culmination of the centennial celebration, seven new designs for the built environment will be selected from an international architectural competition co-organized by The Bronx Museum and the Design Trust for Public Space, a New York-based non-profit organization dedicated to improving New York City's parks, plazas, streets, and public buildings. "Our call for submissions is going out around the world, asking for fresh new thinking about the Bronx of the future," says Deborah Marton, Director of the Design Trust.

The Past

In *The Grand Concourse at 100*, works of art, architectural drawings, prints, photographs, and ephemera examine the impact of the Grand Concourse, whose completion gave rise to prosperous shopping and housing districts and the settlement of upwardly mobile immigrant families. Archival materials, such as *American Builder Magazine* (November, 1935), will illustrate the housing boom that lined the new urban corridor with grand Art Deco and Art Moderne apartments (still standing today) and led New Yorkers to dub the Grand Concourse the "Park Avenue of the Middle Class."

Historical materials will be paired with such works of art as a 1949 painting by Bronx-born painter Burgoyne Diller, which evokes both the grid structure of urban planning and stylistic elements associated with Art Deco; a short documentary film by Jay Leyda, entitled *A Bronx Morning* (1931); a sculpture from the series *Bronx Floors* by Gordon Matta-Clark; a 1976 series of photographs of South Bronx residents by the Brazilian artist Helio Oiticica; a video installation by Pia Lindman about the Lorelei fountain in Joyce Kilmer Park (2000); a fictional documentary by Pablo Helguera on the Loew's Paradise Theater, the Andrew Freedman Home, and Poe Cottage (2005 – 2009); and Aaron Birk's 2008 drawings for a graphic novel about the adventures of three youths who "attempt to connect the coast of Pelham Bay Park with the cliffs of Inwood Hill via a 'genetic corridor' of native plants." Also on view will be works by such other artists as Diane Arbus, Adolph Gottlieb, Daniel Hauben, André Kertész, Ira Moskowitz, and Henry E. Rile. Bronx-based sculptor Linda Cunningham will display an installation in the Museum's terrace.

The Present

Specially commissioned works of art by two artists—Katie Holten (Ireland) and Jeff Liao (Taiwan)—will be unveiled in *The Grand Concourse Commissions*, which considers present-day conditions along the Grand Concourse.

Liao will exhibit a suite of large-format photographs of specific points along the Concourse, and Holten will present the *Tree Museum*, a temporary outdoor exhibit exploring the ecology of trees along the Grand Concourse through the collection, conservation, and presentation of artifacts. The project will have simultaneous presence at The Bronx Museum, Wave Hill, and in Joyce Kilmer Park. Developed by The Bronx Museum in collaboration with Wave Hill and the City Parks Department.

The Future

In *The Grand Concourse Beyond 100*, the concluding centennial exhibition, models, drawings, architectural renderings, plans, photographs, texts, and artworks will be on view, illustrating seven projects selected by the judges of the *Intersections* competition co-sponsored by the Museum and the Design Trust for Public Space. These new initiatives are conceived to help the Bronx evolve in the next few decades and cope with the pressing needs for housing, green spaces, and transportation. Of the seven finalists, one will be named winner.

Applications are available online at www.grandconcourse100.org beginning February 2, 2009.

Public Events

On Friday, March 6, 2009, from 6pm – 10pm, The Bronx Museum will hold an open house and symposium to celebrate the launch of *Intersections*. The symposium will continue Saturday, March 7, 2009, from 9:30am – 7pm with keynote speaker Daniel Libeskind and programs on the history of the Grand Concourse with a special focus on how to introduce the subject into a school curriculum. The symposium will feature presentations by noted scholars, artists, architects and urban planners, and will culminate with a workshop led by instructors from the Center for Urban Pedagogy.

The Bronx Museum will also hold a day-long street fair centered on themes related to this history on Sunday, June 21, 2009, from 12pm – 5pm. On the same day, Katie Holten will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the *Tree Museum* at the Lorelei fountain in Joyce Kilmer Park located at 161st Street and Grand Concourse.

For more information on public programs, please visit www.bronxmuseum.org.

Catalogue

The exhibition is accompanied by a comprehensive 150-page catalogue published in collaboration with Fordham University Press. *Intersections: The Grand Concourse at 100* will include essays by Ray Bromley, Deborah Marton, Francis Morrone, Jennifer McGregor, and Clare Weiss.

Sponsorship

Intersections: The Grand Concourse at 100 is made possible by the J. Ira and Nicki Harris Family Foundation; Council for Cultural Affairs, R.O.C., in collaboration with Taipei Cultural Center of TECO in New York; Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts; National Endowment for the Humanities; Paul and Klara Porzelt Foundation; U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services; New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency; and Kodak. The first Lobby Project Series by Vito Acconci is generously supported by the Starry Night Fund of Tides Foundation. The *Tree Museum* is made possible by a generous grant from the Greenwall Foundation.

The Bronx Museum of the Arts receives ongoing general operating support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs with the cooperation of the Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion, Jr. and the Bronx Delegation of the New York City Council; Ford Foundation; Starry Night Fund of Tides Foundation; New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency; Bronx Delegation of the New York State Assembly; New York Times Company Foundation; and private sources.



The Bronx Museum of the Arts

The flagship cultural institution of the Bronx, founded in 1971, The Bronx Museum of the Arts focuses on 20th-century and contemporary art, while serving the culturally diverse populations of the Bronx and the greater New York metropolitan area. The museum's home on the Grand Concourse is a distinctive contemporary landmark designed by the internationally-renowned firm Arquitectonica.

The Bronx Museum of the Arts maintains a permanent collection of 20th and 21st-century works by artists of African, Asian, and Latin American ancestry. Additionally, the Museum collects works by artists for whom the Bronx has been critical to their artistic practice and development. The Museum's educational offerings spring from these central programs with outreach to children and families as well as adult audiences. For more information please visit www.bronxmuseum.org

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