

## **The Bronx Museum of the Arts and Cuba's El Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de La Habana Announce Historic Collaboration**

### **Groundbreaking Initiative Will Include Major Exhibitions in the U.S. and Cuba, Artist Exchanges, Educational and Public Programs, and a Dual-Language Publication**

**Bronx, NY, January 21, 2015**—The Bronx Museum of the Arts and El Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de La Habana (MNBA) have announced an unprecedented joint arts initiative that is the culmination of years of planning and collaboration. *Wild Noise: Artwork from The Bronx Museum of the Arts and El Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes* represents the most extensive visual arts exchange between the two countries in more than 50 years, and will include major exhibitions at MNBA and the Bronx Museum; an artist exchange with U.S. artist Mary Mattingly and Cuban artist Humberto Diaz; a teen exchange program; a series of educational and public programs; and the publication of a dual-language publication that will extend the impact of *Wild Noise* beyond the audiences that participate directly in the initiative.

The launch of *Wild Noise* will be concurrent with the 12<sup>th</sup> Bienal de La Habana, with the exhibition of more than 100 works from the Bronx Museum's permanent collection on view at MNBA from May 21 through August 16, 2015. *Wild Noise* will feature works created from the 1960s to the present that reveal how contemporary artists are addressing questions of identity, urban life, and community. The initiative will also send—for the first time—over 100 works from MNBA's permanent collection to the U.S. to be presented at the Bronx Museum in spring 2016. The title of the initiative—*Wild Noise*—is taken from a Victor Hugo poem, “Ma vie est déjà dans l'ombre de la mort,” and refers to the sublimity and chaos of urban spaces, “the wild noise where infinity begins.” The theme resonates with this year's Bienal de La Habana, which will be held at locations across the city, integrating into the urban fabric of Havana and its communities.

At the Bronx Museum, *Wild Noise* is organized by Executive Director Holly Block, and Director of Programs Sergio Bessa. At the MNBA, the project is spearheaded by Director Ana Cristina Perez and curated by Corina Matamoros, Curator of Contemporary Cuban Art, and Aylet Ojeda Jequin, Curator of Contemporary Cuban Art and Naïve Art.

“We are at the threshold of a new kind of relationship between Cuba and the U.S.—both politically and artistically,” said Executive Director of the Bronx Museum Holly Block. “The Bronx Museum has been working with the arts community from Cuba since the launch of the first Bienal de La Habana in 1984 and we are committed to continuing to build the cultural dialogue between our two countries.”

### **EXHIBITIONS**

#### ***Wild Noise* at El Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, May 21 – August 16, 2015**

The exhibition will focus on urban life and communities, and introduce artists, practices, and themes previously little-known in Cuba. More than 100 works from the Bronx Museum's permanent collection will be on view, including work by Bronx-born artists Vito Acconci, Lawrence Weiner, and Glenn Ligon,

sculptor and visual artist Willie Cole, photographer Lisa Kahane, sculptors Chakaia Booker and Huma Bhabha, and others.

In addition, *Wild Noise* will feature approximately 100 works from MNBA's permanent collection at **The Bronx Museum of the Arts spring 2016**. The exhibition will offer U.S. students, scholars, artists, travelers, members of the New York community, and Bronxites the opportunity to view the breadth of contemporary art from Cuba, providing a rare look at the range of artists who have responded to Cuba's unique political, economic, social, and cultural conditions since the 1960s.

### **ARTIST EXCHANGE**

Each museum has chosen one artist to take part in an international artist exchange to be conducted over a four- to six-week period leading up to opening of each exhibition. The artist exchange will begin in 2015 when Mary Mattingly—a New York-based artist and former participant in the Bronx Museum artist-ambassador program *smARTpower*—will travel to Cuba to create a new work for *Wild Noise* and interact with audiences through public programs. Cuban artist Humberto Diaz has been selected to participate in the 2016 exhibition at the Bronx Museum, creating new art work for the show.

### **TEEN EXCHANGE**

Using as a model the Bronx Museum's successful Venice Teen Exchange (implemented for the 2013 U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Biennial), the exchange program will connect members of the Bronx Museum Teen Council and teens in Havana through a series of platforms, including mail exchanges, jointly produced "zines," and other collaborations investigating social issues that affect youth in both cities.

### **PUBLICATION**

A dual-language print and digital publication will highlight works from each exhibition, providing in-depth examinations of the exhibitions' themes, contributing scholarship and offering fresh interpretations of the Bronx Museum and MNBA's collections. The publication will be accessible online through the Bronx Museum's and MNBA's websites.

In addition, the Bronx Museum and MNBA are currently planning additional programmatic initiatives, including educational programs, concerts, performances, film screenings, artist talks, and workshops that explore the themes of *Wild Noise*.

*Wild Noise* has received generous funding from the Ford Foundation, Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, and individual donors. For more information on *Wild Noise* and other Bronx Museum initiatives, visit the Bronx Museum website at <http://www.bronxmuseum.org/>

### **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.

The Museum has sustained a long-term commitment to promoting the work of Cuban/Cuban-American artists through numerous acquisitions, exhibitions, and curatorial projects, including an early research tour by staff to the first Bienal de La Habana in 1984. Past exhibitions highlighting Cuban art have included *Revolution Not Televised* (2012), featuring works by contemporary Cuban artists in the permanent collection; *Carlos Garaicoa: The Ruin, the Utopia* (2001), the Cuban artist's first solo museum exhibition; and *The Nearest Edge of the World: Art and Cuba Now* (1991), featuring nine contemporary Cuban artists. The Museum's permanent collection also contains substantial holdings of works by Cuban artists, including Ana Mendieta, Wilfredo Prieto, Carlos Garaicoa, Sandra Ramos, Jose Angel Toirac, Luis Salvador Cruz Azeta, Tania Bruguera, Kcho, Aimée Garcia Marrero, and Reynier Leyv Novo.

#### **About El Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes**

Founded in 1913, El Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (MNBA) is Cuba's leading fine arts institution. MNBA houses the largest and most significant collection of Cuban art in the world, as well as artwork from diverse cultures and historical periods. The museum's extensive permanent collection reflects the cultural heritage of the nation and includes a range of work—from Colonial and contemporary Cuban art, to historic Greek pottery and Fayum mummy portraits, to English portraits from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Spanish paintings from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and a major collection of prints.

The MNBA is housed in two public buildings: Palacio de Bellas Artes, dedicated to exhibiting Cuban art—and Centro Asturiano, which features international collections.

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