



BRONX RIVER ART CENTER
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Groundbreaking Ceremony for Bronx River Art Center Building Renovation

WHEN: Thursday, June 26, at 11 AM with reception to follow

WHERE: 1087 East Tremont Ave. (one block East of Boston Rd.)

New York City public officials will join Bronx River Art Center Executive Director Gail Nathan, Board Chair William Aguado, and BRAC staff, students and patrons for a groundbreaking ceremony in celebration of the beginning of a \$10 million city-funded renovation. BRAC's 100-year-old, 18,000 square-foot building will undergo a major renovation and, when reopened, will house classrooms, studio spaces, a state of the art computer lab and ground floor art gallery. The design by Sage and Coombe Architects and Tattfoo Tan studios received an award from the NYC Public Design Commission in 2009, which cited the project for bringing BRAC's facility "firmly into the 21st Century by upgrading program and public spaces, introducing sustainable design elements and establishing an institutional identity." The project is expected to be completed in fall 2016.

Of the renovation, Executive Director Gail Nathan says, "BRAC is an essential resource for an otherwise underserved community and our goal is to secure and restore this facility as a cultural asset in the Bronx for generations to come."

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. says of the project "The Bronx River Arts Center has been a mainstay of the borough's cultural arts heritage for over 30 years. Despite the travails of this construction project it has remained steadfast in its commitment in serving our borough's young and mature artists alike in the West Farms neighborhood and beyond. It is fitting that my office and my associates in government provided the financial assistance to make this project feasible as it stands as a beacon of inspiration for our aspiring artists in the restoration of the Bronx River, and indeed, the whole of The Bronx".

"For over 25 years the Bronx River Art Center has cultivated the artistic vision of Bronx communities. The new center will provide a state-of-the-art space where the community, artists, and youth can come together to creatively re-imagine the potential of our borough. I could not be more proud to have such an important

cultural project enriching my district and I am deeply appreciative to Mayor de Blasio, Bronx Borough President Rubin Diaz Jr., and all of the stakeholders who made today's groundbreaking possible." **Said Council Member Ritchie Torres, Deputy Leader and Chair of the Committee on Public Housing.**

The new facilities will provide better resources and improve educational instruction for BRAC students, who participate in courses that range from the traditional studio arts, like painting and ceramic, to training in the digital technologies, like digital photography and the digital design arts. Students in the digital art courses will learn how to use the latest versions of Adobe software and other design tools in the new state-of-the-art computer lab. The ground floor art gallery will provide a space for the presentation of cutting-edge contemporary art that is both challenging and socially relevant. Also on the ground floor will be a new multi-purpose "Black-Box" space for performing art presentations as well as for community events and additional space for classes. Our third floor studio spaces will provide practicing artists with space to create art and to interact with community youth and residents on income generating enterprises for the design market, proceeds from which will be used to improve BRAC's programming and provide scholarships to students.

The ceremony will be attended by NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelparl, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., Department of Design and Construction Deputy Commissioner David Resnick, City Council Member Ritchie Torres, State Senator Guastavo Rivera, Assemblyman Luis Sepulveda and Javier Lopez for Congressman Jose E. Serrano.

A reception will follow the groundbreaking in BRAC's Environmental Education Garden from 12-1 PM.

More About the Bronx River Art Center (BRAC)

BRAC was established in the late 1970s as part of the first Bronx River Restoration project to help engage community residents in the revitalization of the Bronx River through arts programming. Self-incorporated in 1987, BRAC is a culturally diverse, multi-arts organization that provides a forum for the community, artists, and youth to realize their creative visions. Our education, exhibitions, and presenting programs cultivate leadership in an urban environment and stewardship of our natural resource, the Bronx River. For more information visit <http://www.bronxriverart.org>.