

**DAILY NEWS**

## Former Bronx Borough Courthouse to host art exhibition

By: Dennis Slattery



They're revisiting the case of the long-shuttered Bronx Borough Courthouse. Scaffolding is up, windows are being replaced and a massive art exhibition is being planned to inhabit the first two floors of the former beacon of justice in April.

The hulking Melrose behemoth, dubbed the "Grey Lady" due to the unblindfolded statue of Justice above the entryway, will be transformed into a sprawling art space curated by No Longer Empty.

The project is one of seven to receive funding from the city's Economic Development Corp. and the Small Business Services' Neighborhood Challenge program.

"It's the idea of art as an enabler of economic development," Small Business Services Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer said. "(W)e are empowering neighborhood organizations to find creative and replicable solutions to their neighborhoods' specific challenges."

The century-old Bronx Borough Courthouse is in the process of being renovated and will soon feature a site-specific art installation.

The winners were culled from a pool of 80 applicants across the city. Another project will bring a light-based art installation to Staten Island, and a third will revamp a series of storefronts along Sutphin Blvd. in Queens.

But in the Bronx, the beaux-arts building, which has been empty for 37 years and once symbolized the rough-and-tumble "Bronx is burning" era of the 1970s and '80s, is finally getting a second chance.

Henry Weinstein, the owner of the landmarked 82,000 square-foot courthouse, has tried for years — to no avail — to lease the site to a nonprofit or school. He said the project, which received \$60,000 from the city, is just what the neighborhood needs.

“It’s going to be great,” Weinstein said as he showed off the work being done on two of the mezzanine levels. “A project like this will encourage others to look at the building differently.”

The project curators hope the collection of local and international artists that take up residency will agree.

“Artists are going to respond to it because it’s not the traditional walls,” said Manon Slome of No Longer Empty. “It’s almost the building as a canvas.”