

# THE BRONX MUSEUM

**The Bronx Museum of the Arts to break ground on its new Grand Concourse entrance in November 2023**



Render of new Grand Concourse Entrance of The Bronx Museum. Courtesy of Marvel.

**(November 3, 2023 – The Bronx, New York) – The Bronx Museum of the Arts**, one of the few free contemporary art museums in the city, is pleased to announce its 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 urban planning practice—**will break ground in November 2023 to be completed in 2025**. The now **\$32.2 million** project is supported by public funds from the city and state—nearly \$32 million of which was provided by the City of New York—and is 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.

**Klaudio Rodriguez, Executive Director of The Bronx Museum, comments:** “This capital project marks the biggest moment in the history of The Bronx Museum, which was founded not only to champion artists who are not typically represented within museums, but also to educate, engage, and provide a critical gathering space for our communities. Creating greater cohesion through our varied spaces, Marvel’s redesign of the South Wing Atrium and our galleries does not only create greater accessibility, welcoming new audiences in off the street and providing additional space for exhibitions, but remains rooted in a careful consideration of the Museum’s mission, how it operates and who it serves.”

Marvel’s design of the South Atrium will elegantly integrate the South Wing with the North Wing by utilizing a unifying architectural language and a reimagined, spacious lobby with a seating area, a gathering space, and large street-facing displays for rotating installations. The relocation of the main entrance towards the

highly-visible intersection of Grand Concourse and 165th Street will open up the Museum's reach and expand the experience to the sidewalk, offering multiple visibility opportunities for art and public programming from the street.

**Jonathan Marvel, Founding Principal, Marvel, comments:** "Overlooking Grand Concourse and 165th Street, The Bronx Museum's organically folded roofs, angled windows and walls will entice patrons and passersby with energy, activity, and presence. Taking inspiration from residents and the surrounding community, the dynamic new entrance aims to grab visitors' attention, serving as a place to explore, meet, greet, eat and linger, all at the same time, set right in the heart of the Bronx."

*Michael Richards: Are you Down?* remains on view through January 7, 2024 in the North Wing of the Museum. The North Wing will continue to host programs during the construction period, including a two-part exhibition of the sixth edition of the AIM Biennial, featuring over 50 emerging artists who have participated in the museum's Artist in the Marketplace (AIM) Fellowship, a professional development program launched in 1980 which has since provided pivotal career support to a diverse roster of over 1,200 of New York's most promising artists. Inaugurating the newly renovated South Wing in 2025 will be a rotating series of commissioned artworks in the lobby, alongside a permanent collection display in the anterior of the atrium, enlivening The Bronx Museum's trail-blazing history of uniting art and social justice—which has been integral to its mission since its inception in 1971. Over half a century later, the Museum remains committed to investing in its local communities and the belief that art and culture are essential on the path to achieving social justice and equity.

**Continues Claudio Rodriguez:** "The project's flexible construction timeline enables us to remain partially open so that we can continue to engage members of our community. We look forward to celebrating the AIM artists that will be featured in the upcoming Biennial, which serves as a vital resource for artists at pivotal points in their careers."

**Adds Laurie Cumbo, Commissioner of New York City Department of Cultural Affairs:** "The Bronx Museum is an incredible institution whose exhibitions and programming reflect the dynamism of the borough it calls home," said Cumbo. "We're so proud of the City's major investment of over \$28 million—including \$2.6 million Mayor Adams contributed this year—in this exciting project, marking the start of a new chapter for the museum and delivering for the Bronx the world-class arts facility it deserves."

**Adds Bronx Borough President Vanessa L Gibson:** "Located along the historic Grand Concourse, The Bronx Museum serves as a hub for culture, education, and entertainment for the thousands of residents, families, and tourists who come to marvel at their breathtaking exhibits or partake in their interactive programming," said Gibson. "This \$32 million capital renovation is years in the making and demonstrates our joint commitment to supporting our premier cultural institutions that are highlighting the beauty and rich history of the Bronx. As our borough is on the verge of experiencing a renaissance, this project will help to ensure The Bronx Museum has the resources to expand and come back even stronger than before."

**New York City Council Member Althea Stevens, 16th District in the Bronx, comments:** "Community museums are not just mere luxuries but essential components of a thriving and vibrant community. Our investment in enhancing The Bronx Museum is not just about revitalizing a cultural institution; it's about investing in the future of our youth and the well-being of our entire community," said Stevens. "In times of uncertainty and change, the arts have the power to unite us, inspire us, and provide solace. They offer a sense of belonging and purpose. By supporting The Bronx Museum, we are cultivating beautiful community space and ensuring accessibility for all. I'm excited for the project to start, and can't wait to see the final product!"

**Assembly Member Latoya Joyner, concludes:** “The Bronx Museum is such a great asset for this community, and I am excited work is beginning on their new atrium and entrance. With these additions, The Bronx Museum will be even more of a destination for local families and visitors. Few other museums celebrate the diversity of our City as well as The Bronx Museum does, and I look forward to visiting the new atrium when it is finished.”



Render of new Grand Concourse Entrance of The Bronx Museum. Courtesy of Marvel.

### **About the Design:**

The design principles are rooted in the Grand Concourse's history and the building's evolution throughout the past four decades. Marvel's primary design goal was to unify the Museum's multiple buildings into a single experience and make it a recognizable public destination within the Bronx. Not only focused on the cohesion of the exterior but also internally, the project offers new connections between both buildings and allows for a fully accessible route through all the galleries. Stemming from the articulation of the 2006 North Wing addition, Marvel utilizes folded copper bronze panel roofs that reflect the warm tones of the surrounding brick and tie to the art deco influence of the Concourse district. Furthermore, the design pays respect to the existing synagogue building from 1962 by stripping down the dark metal panels that conceal brick walls of the original design.

Marvel proposes an architecture that is accessible and open to all with no visual interference to the multiple layers of art and activities happening inside the Museum. The building is glazed on all sides, interlaced with glass fiber reinforced concrete (GFRC) textured walls that serve as interior exhibition surfaces and frame the views into the deeper gallery spaces. The project aims to bring the street into the gallery and bring the gallery back to the street, blending the boundary between the two, keeping in line with the active street life of the neighborhood. The expansive triple-height project space at the corner offers a clear opportunity that allows art to be visible to pedestrians and invites newcomers inside. As soon as one enters the Museum at



the intersection of the roof planes, the visitor is immersed in the museum experience, stepping into a welcoming space that aspires to become the Bronx's new living room.



Renders of the interior of The Bronx Museum's new lobby. Courtesy of Marvel.

### **Architectural History:**

Founded in 1971, The Bronx Museum of the Arts was housed in the public rotunda of the Bronx County Courthouse in its first decade, 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.

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### **About The Bronx Museum:**

The Bronx Museum is one of the few major contemporary art museums in NYC 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 annually. Now 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. After over 50 years, The Bronx Museum continues to promote its mission of the arts accessible to all audiences. <http://bronxmuseum.org>

### **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, Richmond, VA, and San Juan, PR, 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](http://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](http://www.nyc.gov/culture).

**Visit the Museum:**

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