

THE BRONX MUSEUM

FUTURA 2000: BREAKING OUT

Opening September 8, 2024



FUTURA 2000, *Invasion From Blue City*, 1989, Collection of agnès b.

(THE BRONX, NY – MAY 29, 2024) – The Bronx Museum of the Arts announces *FUTURA 2000: BREAKING OUT*, a retrospective of this singular artist’s evolution from early graffiti art styles to his current practice of contemporary abstraction. The exhibition is the most comprehensive examination of FUTURA 2000’s five-decade career ever presented in his hometown of New York City. **On view from Sunday, September 8 through winter 2025**, *BREAKING OUT* showcases his sculptures, drawings, prints, studies, collaborations, and archival paraphernalia dating from the 1970s to the present as well as new site-specific temporary installations.

FUTURA 2000's practice today continues to bear his fascination with the aesthetics of science fiction and the space age. These interests led to his early adoption of sophisticated computer technology and video gaming. Utilizing spray paint with virtuosic precision, he creates abstract cosmic compositions on canvas. Refined lines are contrasted by mists of vibrant colors and gestural brush marks while large areas are left empty—allowing forms to float freely across the surface, suggesting the expansiveness of outer space. His recurring motifs include the atom shape, symbolizing perpetual motion; a crane or linear mark, indicating a moment of rupture; and the enigmatic Pointman, reminiscent of an alien presence.

“FUTURA 2000's unique visual language—bridging street art, abstract expressionism, and fashion—places him alongside his peers like Jean-Michel Basquiat within the canon of art history, and is especially compelling to The Bronx Museum's audiences in The Bronx and beyond,” says **Executive Director of The Bronx Museum, Claudio Rodriguez**. “We could not be more delighted to champion FUTURA 2000 with this iteration of *BREAKING OUT*.”

The Bronx Museum was founded in 1971, at a time when FUTURA 2000 began exploring his capacity as an artist through street art. As his aesthetic evolved, FUTURA 2000 continued using materials and techniques like spray paint, aerosol, and stencils to create abstract compositions—an approach that was revolutionary in the contemporary art world and remains his signature style today.

The exhibition's title, *BREAKING OUT*, refers to FUTURA 2000's boundary-breaking creative practice and his famous 1980 piece, *Break*, where the artist painted the full exterior of an N.Y.C. subway car with vibrant color and no lettering—a first for the graffiti art movement. At the time, FUTURA would “bench” in The South Bronx to watch his *Break* train pass by on elevated tracks—a short distance from The Bronx Museum.

FUTURA 2000's meteoric rise as a culture-defining artist was fully cemented in the early 1980's. His paintings were featured in historic exhibitions at Patti Astor's Fun Gallery and Tony Shafrazi Gallery. He additionally collaborated with pivotal punk band The Clash: designing their album art and painting large-scale backdrops on stage while the band played to fervent audiences on their 1981 “Combat Rock” European tour.

“The retrospective showcases the vast scope and depth of FUTURA 2000's artistic practice, within the compelling narrative of his life and career,” says **the Director of Curatorial Programs at The Bronx Museum, Eileen Jeng Lynch**. “The Bronx Museum's commitment to accessibility by providing free admission, and longstanding history of championing artists who forefront the communities we serve—like John Ahearn & Rigoberto Torres, Abigail DeVille, Henry Chalfant, and Jamel Shabazz—make it the perfect venue for FUTURA 2000's N.Y.C. homecoming.”

This exhibition takes place at an important moment for The Bronx Museum: a transformation of the southernmost part of the Museum's campus at the corner of 165th St and Grand Concourse is currently underway and expected to be completed in 2026. The northern half of The Bronx Museum remains open to the public throughout this process, with over 4,600 square feet of gallery space plus an equal amount of programmatic space. Award-winning architectural practice Marvel designed the renovation project.

FUTURA 2000: BREAKING OUT is curated by University at Buffalo Art Galleries Director Robert Scalise and Zack Boehler, Public Art Project Coordinator at the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, and this iteration is organized in collaboration with Eileen Jeng Lynch, Director of Curatorial Programs at The Bronx Museum. The exhibition is in partnership with the creative and artist management agency ICNCLST with founding support from Eric Firestone Gallery.



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About FUTURA 2000: FUTURA 2000 is the nom de plume of Leonard Hilton McGurr. FUTURA’s work is included in collections such as The New Museum, New York; MOCA, Los Angeles; Groninger Museum, the Netherlands; Yvon Lambert, Galerie De Noirmont; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, and Takashi Murakami’s Kaikai Kiki Gallery, Tokyo, Japan. His collaborations include Virgil Abloh and Rei Kawakubo of Comme des Garçons. In 2020, the Isamu Noguchi Museum presented *FUTURA Akari*, an installation of Akari light sculptures customized by FUTURA 2000. In the same year, the artist created a large site-specific installation at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris and was included in the exhibition *Writing the Future: Basquiat and the Hip Hop Generation* at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The artist lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Eric Firestone Gallery is the artist’s U.S. fine art representative. The creative and artist management agency ICNCLST represents and the artist’s fine art and commercial projects globally.

About The Bronx Museum: For over five decades, The Bronx Museum of the Arts has been a vanguard of cultural diversity and accessibility in the contemporary art world. The Museum offers 100% free admission for everyone to all its exhibitions and programs, providing a vital creative outlet to the public. Through its curatorial practices, including a permanent collection, the Museum seeks to uplift and champion POC artists and others who have been systemically and historically marginalized. The history and culture of The Bronx are a never-ending source of inspiration for the Museum, and its programs are designed to facilitate meaningful engagement with the people of the borough while also attracting visitors from all over New York City and the world. The Bronx Museum is a leader in the cultural sphere with its unwavering commitment to access, dedication to platforming underrepresented artists, and dynamic community-engaged programming.

1040 Grand Concourse / The Bronx, New York 10456
FREE ADMISSION / Wed–Sun, 11AM–6PM
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