

FALL 2019

# OFF THE SHELF

A LOOK INSIDE BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY





## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

At Brooklyn Public Library, we often say our libraries are about people—the librarians and public service staff who help patrons discover their interests and reach their potential every day. In this issue of *Off the Shelf* you will meet two extraordinary, award-winning staff members who represent the very best of BPL. You will read about Bard at BPL, a groundbreaking program that offers a liberal arts degree, here in the Library, to those who have been previously excluded from higher education. And we hope you will marvel at the dynamism and breadth of our cultural programming this season. In every neighborhood BPL offers Brooklynites a place to do their best thinking and creating.

**Linda E. Johnson**  
President & CEO

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Cover: one of seven new murals installed at Central Library's Youth Wing, created by leading children's book illustrators. Pictured: Stephen Savage.

All photos, unless indicated, by Gregg Richards

**Brooklyn Public Library would like to offer its sincere thanks to all the library lovers who spoke up for our branches throughout this year's annual budget process.** This year's campaign showed us the high level of commitment and solidarity that exists for our libraries from the community and from our representatives. So many of you took action online, made phone calls and attended rallies. You showed up to hearings and helped BPL set a record high of over 13,000 emails, 500 letters, 400 postcards and hundreds of calls and tweets on behalf of the Library. Your voices were heard—and library funding across the city was increased! The process began with the Library facing significant budget cuts—but they were reversed and in the end, thanks to all your advocacy, BPL's operating funds were increased by \$9.2 million, ensuring the continuation of essential services to everyone who walks through our doors, six-day-a-week service, increased collections, and expanded programming to meet the growing needs of the neighborhoods we serve. To address our capital infrastructure needs, \$42 million was allocated for BPL,

including \$25 million toward the renovation of our flagship Central Library. We are especially grateful to our elected officials including Mayor Bill de Blasio, Speaker Corey Johnson, Finance Chair Daniel Dromm, Library Chair Jimmy Van Bramer, the Brooklyn Delegation and the entire NY City Council for their continuing support. Together, New York City's elected leaders are ensuring that when New Yorkers visit their libraries, they will continue to find a home for self-improvement, an engine for civic engagement and a pillar of inclusion for all.



# WE DID IT!

Photo by Jonathan Blanc



# A BLAST FROM BOOKMATCH'S PAST

A SELECTED LIST  
OF BOOKS IN THE  
BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

1956

Images from Brooklyn Collection

**BKLYN BOOKMATCH**, the Library's popular readers' advisory service, celebrated its fifth anniversary this year. However, this isn't the Library's first foray into the world of creating booklists. In the Brooklyn Collection, BPL's premier local history archive, visitors can discover booklists created and published by the Library dating back to 1886! These lists cover a range of topics including novels to read for pleasure for both adults and children, books to help discover new hobbies, as well as lists to help educate the public on various social and political issues. Examples include: *America Is Many People* – a book list to celebrate the diversity of the people of New York City; *Live and Let Live* – a reading list created to accompany an exhibit commemorating the tenth anniversary of the New York State Law Against Discrimination; and *Read-Then Vote!* – a list of books to peruse before voting in the 1956 election. Librarians continue to assemble these lists to help showcase the wide range of materials in our collections.

## THE PRESIDENCY, ELECTIONS, AND YOU

*THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY*, by Clinton L. Rossiter.  
Probably the best and most complete history of the Office yet published.

*I'D RATHER BE PRESIDENT*, by Charles H. Ellis, Jr. and Frank Weir.  
A humorous guide for the men with the highest political ambitions.

*POLITICS, PRESIDENTS, AND COAT-TAILS*, by Malcolm C. Moos.  
How Congressmen can ride into power on the popularity of a President.

*IS THERE A REPUBLICAN MAJORITY?* by Louis Harris.  
Political trends, 1952-1956.

*HOW WE ELECT OUR PRESIDENTS; OR, POLITICS IS APPLESAUCE*, by Will Rogers. Opinions on the political process by the famous American humorist.

*PROFESSIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS AND POLITICAL POWER*, by Stanley Kelley, Jr. How the mass-media specialists help the voter make up his mind.

*THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT*, by Sidney Hyman.  
The nature of the job, its historical background, and the qualifications required to make a success of it.

*THE FABULOUS DEMOCRATS*, by David L. Cohn.  
History of the Democratic party in text and pictures.

*VOTING: A STUDY OF OPINION FORMATION IN A PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN*, by Bernard R. Berelson. A report on one community's vote in the last Dewey-Truman race.

*THE PRESIDENCY TODAY*, by Edward S. Corwin and Lewis W. Koenig.  
A conservative study of the sources and nature of Presidential powers.

*BALLOT FOR AMERICANS*, by Lamont Buchanan.  
A pictorial history of American elections and electioneering.

*PARTY POLITICS*, by Ivan Hinderaker.  
A practical look at the facts of political life.

## CAMPAIGN ISSUES

*CAN WE SOLVE THE FARM PROBLEM?* by Murray R. Benedict.  
Covers the current midwest agricultural distress.

➔ To learn more visit  
[bklynlibrary.org/blogs/brooklynology](http://bklynlibrary.org/blogs/brooklynology)

## GIVE THE GIFT OF DISCOVERY

Consider a legacy gift to Brooklyn Public Library in your estate plan.

Remembering Brooklyn Public Library as a beneficiary in your will, trust or retirement plan ensures your legacy while providing for the Library's future.

To learn more about including Brooklyn Public Library in your estate plan and become a member of the Ingersoll Circle, the Library's planned giving society, please contact Lauren Arana, Director of Individual Giving, at 718.230.2009 or [larana@bklynlibrary.org](mailto:larana@bklynlibrary.org).



# BARD AT BPL



BPL has long been committed to helping individuals from all walks of life gain access to information and education to help empower themselves both personally and professionally. A new addition to the Library's roster of educational opportunities is **Bard at BPL**, an associate's degree program created in partnership with Bard College. The program—which is completely free for students—targets individuals who would not otherwise have the opportunity to attend a liberal arts college. These include nontraditional students who have been deterred, discouraged or excluded from higher education. Through the program, students take college-level liberal arts courses that are held at Central Library, eventually earning a liberal arts associate's degree. In its first year, the program has already admitted a total of 56 students. From a 'zine created by current Bard at BPL students entitled *Sirens: Voices from the Void* comes this assertion: "Educating those who have been marginalized seems to be a revolutionary act, even in the age of self-driving vehicles and smartphones. This act is not simply in allowing access to quality education but in a new approach to education. As the first cohort of Bard Microcollege at Brooklyn Public Library, we are proud to be part of a new approach to learning."



Classes are conducted as they would be in a traditional school setting, but students are also immersed in the Library's unique environment of cultural curiosity and self-directed learning. Additionally, students benefit from their immediate proximity to the significant resources of the Library's collections and staff. "This program is the logical next step in the Library's commitment to providing New Yorkers with the highest quality academic resources, at every point of their lives and at absolutely no cost," said Linda Johnson, BPL's President & CEO.

➔ To learn more visit  
[microcollege.bard.edu](https://microcollege.bard.edu)

Bard at BPL is generously supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation with additional support for the 2018-19 academic year provided by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.



# CREATIVE AGING

Lifelong learning is just that—the opportunity to continue enriching one's life no matter what stage of it you are in.

Photo by Andre Wagner

BPL's **Creative Aging** programming, serving over 600 older adults each year, is a perfect example of how the philosophy noted above is infused throughout the organization. In the words of one of our patrons, **"The program helps me not only improve my creative expression with the teacher's help but also stimulate my brain. If I was staying home I wouldn't learn all these things."**

Creative Aging provides beginners and experienced individuals with arts instruction in a variety of disciplines including watercolor, drawing, poetry and collage, memoir writing, calligraphy and Chinese brush painting, jewelry making, soap carving, textile design and much more. As a recent participant noted, "This class has reinvigorated and renewed my interest in poetry." Experienced teaching artists typically lead 15-25 students in weekly two-hour classes over eight weeks concluding with a celebratory culminating performance or exhibition where participants share their finished work with friends, family and other library visitors.

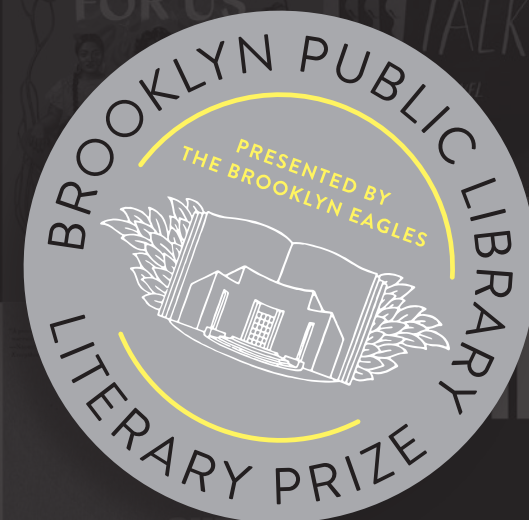
BPL programs such as Creative Aging are also designed to help support community building, providing older patrons with opportunities to interact with their peers in a low-stress environment,

often developing friendships that extend outside of BPL's walls. Conducting programs at the Library also fosters engagement with members of all ages from the community. Participants have shared that they prefer attending programs at BPL, rather than at a senior center, specifically because of the diversity of individuals they encounter. They also benefit from the wide range of additional BPL branch programs and services available to them, including free computer access, collections materials and community-focused events.

The Sills Family Foundation, based in New York City, has supported BPL's Creative Aging programs since 2013. In the words of Foundation trustee Deborah Iarussi, "The Sills Family Foundation has been delighted to offer long-term support to the Creative Aging program at BPL. We believe strongly in the value of maintaining connections and opportunities for creativity throughout the aging process. We have been able to witness firsthand the positive impact of the Creative Aging program and hope to remain partners for many years to come!"

In addition to the Sills Family Foundation, 2018-2019 Creative Aging programs were supported by the National Library of Medicine and National Institutes of Health, Rose M. Badgeley Residuary Charitable Trust, Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Apple Bank, Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership, Laura B. Vogler Foundation, Festa Family, and several BPL Friends Groups and volunteers.

We are delighted to announce the Shortlist for this year's **Brooklyn Public Library Literary Prize**, presented by the Brooklyn Eagles. The works nominated for the Shortlist were reviewed and chosen by a committee of BPL librarians from across the borough. Likewise, the winners will be selected by a jury of BPL librarians with the results announced in November 2019. The Prize, generously underwritten by The Peck Stacpoole Foundation, with additional support from City Point, is awarded annually to a writer in each of two categories: Nonfiction and Fiction & Poetry. The winners will be celebrated on November 8 at the Brooklyn Classic at Park Slope Library.



For more information visit  
➔ [bklynlib.org/classic](http://bklynlib.org/classic)

## FICTION & POETRY

*If They Come for Us*  
by Fatimah Asghar

*American Sonnets for My Past  
and Future Assassin*  
by Terrance Hayes

*How Long 'Til Black Future Month?*  
by N. K. Jemisin

*Women Talking*  
by Miriam Toews

## NONFICTION

*The Death and Life of Aida  
Hernandez: a Border Story*  
by Aaron Bobrow-Strain

*Thick: and Other Essays*  
by Tressie McMillan Cottom

*Our History Is the Future*  
by Nick Estes

*Losing Earth: A Recent History*  
by Nathaniel Rich



# HOGWARTS READING LIST

A BookMatch list with selections based on each of the four famous Hogwarts houses! Created by BPL librarian Katrina R.

*A costumed volunteer welcomes visitors to the Harry Potter Celebration at Central Library.*



**Dragon Pearl**  
by Yoon Ha Lee

For Slytherins: 13-year-old Min comes from a long line of fox spirits, but to keep the family safe, Min's mother insists that none of them use any fox-magic.



**Nimona**  
by Noelle Stevenson

For Slytherins: Nemeses! Dragons! Science! Symbolism! All these and more await in this brilliantly subversive, sharply irreverent epic from Noelle Stevenson.



**The Hate U Give**  
by Angie Thomas

For Gryffindors: 16-year-old Starr moves between two worlds: rich and poor. The uneasy balance is shattered when her childhood best friend is shot by police.



**The Storm Runner**  
by Jennifer Cervantes

For Gryffindors: Zane has always enjoyed exploring the dormant volcano near his home. What Zane doesn't know is that the volcano is a gateway to another world!



**The Diviners**  
by Libba Bray

For Ravenclaws: It's 1926 and Evie O'Neill has been shipped off to the bustling streets of New York City to live with her occult-obsessed uncle Will.



**Akata Witch**  
by Nnedi Okorafor

For Ravenclaws: Now living in Nigeria, 12-year-old albino New Yorker Sunny is plunged into the world of the Leopard People, where your worst defect becomes your greatest asset.



**Red, White & Royal Blue**  
by Casey McQuiston

For Hufflepuffs: A romantic comedy in which First Son Alex falls for Prince Henry of Wales, but an international incident forces them to pretend to be best friends.



**A Boy Called Bat**  
by Elana Arnold

For Hufflepuffs: For Bixby (nicknamed Bat), life is full of surprises — like when Bat's mom, a veterinarian, brings home a baby skunk to care for.



This past August, Brooklyn Public Library's **BookMatch** service celebrated its fifth anniversary. BookMatch is a readers' advisory service that uses what readers like (and dislike) to create customized reading recommendations based on the interests or needs of patrons. This particular list was created to celebrate Harry Potter's birthday this past July.

# AWARDS RECOGNIZE OUTSTANDING LIBRARY SERVICE

## IT'S NO SECRET THAT BPL'S STAFF IS ONE OF THE LIBRARY'S GREATEST RESOURCES.

There are over 1,000 dedicated individuals working to serve our patrons, provide programs and keep our many branches running. To highlight individual achievements, BPL offers two annual staff awards. **The Dr. Lucille C. Thomas Award for Excellence in Librarianship** is awarded to a librarian who provides exemplary service to the public and upholds the highest ideals of the profession. The award is named for Dr. Thomas, a longtime BPL Trustee and the first African American to serve as president of both the New York Library Association and the New York City School Librarians Association. **The Feder Leonard Family Award for Excellence in Service to the Library's Public**, inaugurated in 2019, was established by the Feder Leonard family to recognize non-librarian staff who have done outstanding work in advancing and strengthening BPL's services to the people of Brooklyn. Both prizes, awarded in June, are made via peer nominations, making this recognition especially meaningful to recipients.



**Dr. Lucille Cole Thomas** (October 1, 1921 – June 23, 2019) started her career as a school teacher in Macon, GA. In 1955, after desegregation, she and her husband moved to Brooklyn, where she worked as a librarian at BPL while also earning an MA in English from New York University and an MLS from Columbia University.



Brooklynites **Leslie Feder and Garrick Leonard** are following a family tradition in creating the Feder Leonard Family Award: there are awards established at the New York Public Library in honor of Leslie's parents, Ruth and Arthur Feder and grandmother, Bertha Franklin Feder.



This year, the Dr. Lucille C. Thomas Award for Excellence in Librarianship was awarded to **Yosenex Orenego**, a Young Adult Librarian at Stone Avenue Library. Yosenex has worked at Stone Avenue since 2017. Raised in Brownsville, he returned to the neighborhood after completing his education in order to give back to his community. In working with the teens of Brownsville, he has become an advocate for a population that is often marginalized by society. He has made the branch a haven for local youth, serving as an educator, mentor, confidant and friend. Capitalizing on his interests in Japanese anime and gaming, he has created and runs weekly classes on gaming, Dungeons & Dragons, anime and Japanese language. Thanks to his charisma and ability to engage, Stone Avenue has become one of BPL's top five branches for Young Adult program attendance.

The winner of the first annual Feder Leonard Family Award for Excellence in Service to the Library's Public was **Nurys Pimentel**, the Library Circulation Supervisor at Red Hook Library. Nurys has been with BPL for over 18 years. Starting as a part-time administrator, she was promoted to Technical Resource Specialist (assisting patrons with computer-related issues) before taking on her current position as Library Circulation Supervisor. Having grown up in Red Hook, she has relished the opportunity to give back to her community. Her coworkers describe her as nurturing, funny and inspirational and they admire her personal connection with the public. She is always setting books aside for her regular patrons. "I thought of you when this book came in!" is her common greeting. According to a peer, all of Red Hook seems to know and love Nurys.



# BPL PRESENTS

Unless otherwise noted all events take place in  
Central Library's Dr. S. Stevan Dweck Cultural Center.

## 'TIL VICTORY IS WON: 400 YEARS OF MAKING REVOLUTION AND INVENTING UTOPIA

Saturday, October 26, 7 pm to 12 am / Central Library

A teach-in at the Library observing the 400th anniversary of the arrival of enslaved Africans to the shores of Jamestown, Virginia. Over the course of five hours, delve into American and trans-Atlantic history from 1619 to the present and engage with historical facts while learning more about their profound ramifications on this country. Co-curated by Brian Tate.

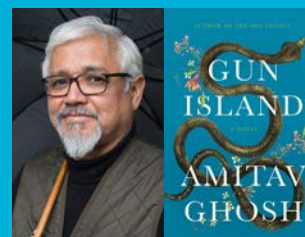
➔ View the full program and RSVP at  
[bklynlib.org/TilVictory](http://bklynlib.org/TilVictory)

Baron Caliborn, *Clara as Saint 2*

## BEAUTIFUL WORDS ARE SUBVERSIVE

October 28, 2019–January 5, 2020  
Central Library

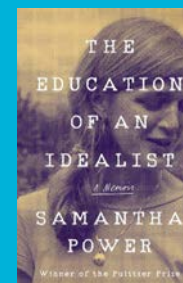
An exploration of language, readings  
and inscribed meanings, with a focus on  
Zimbabwean and African diasporic  
literatures, curated by **Black Chalk & Co.**



### AMITAV GHOSH ON *GUN ISLAND*

Thursday, Oct. 3, 7:30 pm  
Dweck Center

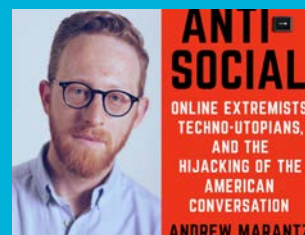
From the award-winning  
author of the bestselling epic  
Ibis trilogy comes a globe-  
trotting, folkloric adventure  
novel about family and  
heritage.



### SAMANTHA POWER ON *THE EDUCATION OF AN IDEALIST*

Monday, Oct. 21, 7 pm  
Grand Lobby

Pulitzer Prize-winner  
Samantha Power offers an  
urgent response to the  
question, "What can one  
person do?"



### ANDREW MARANTZ ON *ANTISOCIAL*

Monday, Oct. 7, 7:30 pm  
Trustees Room

A chronicle of how Silicon  
Valley entrepreneurs set out  
to create a free, democratic  
internet—and how cynical  
propagandists of the alt-right  
exploited that freedom.



### TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS ON *EROSION: ESSAYS OF UNDOING*

Friday, Nov. 8, 7:30 pm  
Dweck Center

Fierce, timely and unsettling  
essays from one of our most  
impassioned defenders of  
public lands.



### MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY: LAURIE ANDERSON

Sunday, Nov. 3, 7 pm  
Grand Lobby

A biannual series,  
Message from the Library is  
a meaningful dialogue about  
today's most precarious  
issues.

## THE REVIEW PANEL

Tuesday, Oct. 1, 7 pm  
Dweck Center

Wednesday, Nov. 6, 7 pm  
Dweck Center

Leading art critics join  
moderator David Cohen in  
lively debate about current  
exhibitions around the five  
boroughs. Presented in  
association with Artcritical.





## CURTIS ON TOUR: VERA QUARTET AND PIANIST MENG-CHIEH LIU

Tuesday, Nov. 12, 7 pm  
Dweck Center  
Curtis on Tour co-presents  
the Vera Quartet with guest  
Meng-Chieh Liu.

## CLASSICAL INTERLUDES

Sundays at 4 pm  
Dweck Center

Formosa Quartet  
Oct. 27

Bohemian Trio  
Nov. 10

Carnegie Hall Citywide:  
Catalyst Quartet  
Nov. 17

Turtle Island Quartet  
Nov. 24

BPL Chamber Players  
Dec. 15

For complete  
listings visit:  
→ [bklynlibrary.org/  
bpl-presents](http://bklynlibrary.org/bpl-presents)



## JACQUELINE WOODSON ON RED AT THE BONE

Tuesday, Nov. 19, 7:30 pm  
Dweck Center  
An extraordinary new  
novel about the influence of  
history on a contemporary  
family, from the *New York  
Times*-bestselling and  
National Book Award-  
winning author.

## SILENT MOVIE MATINEE

Sundays at 12 noon,  
doors open at 11:30 am  
Dweck Center

*The Phantom of the Opera*  
(1925/1929)  
Oct. 13

*The Extra Girl* (1923)  
Nov. 10

*The Informer* (1929)  
Dec. 15

# EVENTS



## A BILINGUAL FAMILY CONCERT WITH MISTER G

Saturday, Oct. 5, 1 pm  
Dweck Center  
Mister G's spirited, bilingual  
performances foster cross-  
cultural connections.

## NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL: KID FLICKS ONE

Saturday, Oct. 12, 1 pm  
Dweck Center  
Fun, clever stories of  
growth and transforma-  
tion. Ages 3–7.

## STOMP, CLAP & SING

Tuesdays at 11 am  
Dweck Center

Sunny Songsters  
Oct. 8

Fiddle Foxes  
Oct. 22

Music with Marc: Around  
the World and Back Again!  
Nov. 5

Silly Jazz & Camille  
Nov. 19

Little Maestros  
Dec. 3

# FOR YOUTH & FAMILIES



## JAMES RANSOME: COUNTRY ROADS, CITY STREETS October 1, 2019–January 7, 2020 Youth Wing

BPL celebrates the sweeping output  
of award-winning book illustrator  
James Ransome with over 40  
original works of collage, acrylic  
and oil painting.

## SCHOOLHOUSE ROCK BY PLAZA THEATRICAL PRODUCTION

Saturday, Oct. 19, 1 pm  
Dweck Center  
A pop culture phenomenon  
comes to the musical stage  
in *Schoolhouse Rock Live!*



## MEET THE AUTHOR: ANGIE THOMAS

Friday, Oct. 25, 7 pm  
Grand Lobby  
Powerhouse young adult  
author Angie Thomas joins  
us to discuss themes from  
her bestselling novels.

## HOT PEAS 'N BUTTER LIVE!

Saturday, Oct. 26, 1 pm  
Dweck Center  
The award-winning family  
music band wows young  
audiences with their  
interactive roots music from  
around the world.

## CALPULLI COMMUNITY CELEBRATES DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS (DAY OF THE DEAD)

Saturday, Nov. 2, 1 pm  
Dweck Center  
Join young dancers from  
Calpulli Community as they  
perform to festive songs.

## JUNO VALENTINE AND THE FANTASTIC FASHION ADVENTURE BY EVA CHEN

Saturday, Nov. 9, 1 pm  
Dweck Center  
BPL and Stories Bookshop  
are thrilled to present an  
afternoon of fun and fashion  
for families.



## THE MONSTER WHO ATE MY PEAS BY ART SPOWER

Saturday, Nov. 16, 1 pm  
Dweck Center  
ArtsPower's musical tells the  
funny, poignant story of a  
young boy who doesn't want  
to eat his peas.

## BOOK LAUNCH SOFIA VALDEZ, FUTURE PREZ BY ANDREA BEATY

Tuesday, Dec. 3, 6 pm  
Dweck Center  
Did you hear? There's a new  
Questioneer! Acclaimed  
author Andrea Beaty and  
illustrator David Roberts join  
forces once again for the  
latest addition to their best-  
selling *Questioneer* series,  
*Sofia Valdez, Future Prez*.



Brooklyn Public Library gratefully acknowledges the many donors who have provided generous support for BPL Presents programs, including: Cheryl and George Haywood Endowment for Cultural Diversity, The Kahn Endowment for Humanities Programs, Dr. Beverly S. Jacobs, Janet Anderson, Todd Ferguson, The Miriam Katowitz and Arthur Radin Fund, Los Blancos, Mapleton Endowment, New York State Council on the Arts, Stavros Niarchos Foundation, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, Sandra and Peter Schubert Endowment Fund, Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, The Weissman Family Foundation, Inc., Cultural Services of the French Embassy, City Point, the Estate of Pearl S. Reuillard in memory of her parents Yetta and Louis Schwartz and many other generous supporters.

Programs are also supported by Brooklyn Public Library's Fund for the Humanities which was established through the generous support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, The Hearst Foundation, Inc., Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, The Starr Foundation, the Leon and Muriel Gilbert Charitable Trust, Henry and Lucy Moses Fund, Inc. and a gift in memory of Samuel and Pauline Wine.

WNYC is a media partner of the 2019 BPL Presents Season.



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Council on  
the Arts



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Brooklyn Public Library gratefully acknowledges the generous support of our corporate donors (fiscal year 2019–2020).



New York Life  
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Bloomberg  
Philanthropies



Everything Matters



BPL Youth Council members celebrating at the annual **Urban Art Jamm**, a night of performance produced by teens, for teens, at Central Library.





**Central Library**

10 Grand Army Plaza  
Brooklyn, NY 11238

For more information visit [\*\*\*bklynlibrary.org\*\*\*](http://bklynlibrary.org)



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