

OFF THE SHELF

A LOOK INSIDE
BROOKLYN PUBLIC
LIBRARY



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We spent 2023 re-envisioning what it means to be a public library. Brooklyn Public Library led the fight against book bans, hosted a large-scale cultural exhibit, helped local entrepreneurs jumpstart their businesses, provided affordable housing and mental health resources to patrons, and continued to offer books in all formats and all languages for readers of all ages.

This January, we kicked off an ambitious series of programs encouraging Brooklynites to write the next chapter of history. From a solar education series for children to a musical Anthem to Us project, an upcoming “Night in the Library: Out of Darkness” and a recent Salon at CBH, we hope our libraries serve as a town square for New Yorkers as they realize a more equitable, just future for our City.

Literacy remains at the core of our work. This winter, we dove into personalized reading recommendations from librarians, including the Black History Month BookMatch list and the two daring, genre-defying works that won the BPL Book Prize. We continued to advance the library profession by welcoming our third cohort of Pathways to Leadership scholars and celebrating the life of BPL’s legendary librarian Dr. Lucille Cole Thomas. And we recently launched Browse the Branches, inviting New Yorkers to explore bookshelves at all 62 BPL locations.

With the support of our dedicated patrons, supporters and staff, we will continue to push boundaries and peruse great books.

Linda E. Johnson
President & CEO

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All photos, unless indicated, by Gregg Richards.

Cover: Browse the Branches stickers, each with their own distinctive branch-related image.

Inside front cover: 2023 Gala attendees enjoying refreshments while taking in *The Book of HOV* exhibition at Central Library.



BROWSE THE BRANCHES

Wherever you are in Brooklyn, there is a library less than a mile away—and much like snowflakes, no two Brooklyn Public Library locations are alike.

In early 2024, BPL launched Browse the Branches, a new initiative designed to inspire residents to get to know (or reintroduce themselves to) the 62 different locations throughout the borough.

➔ Visit bklynlib.org/btb

Did you know that Brower Park Library is inside of Brooklyn Children’s Museum? That Gerritsen Beach Library overlooks the water and Greenpoint Library has a rooftop garden? Or that you can catch free, live jazz concerts at Kings Highway Library? To learn more, pick up a Browse the Branches booklet at any BPL location.

The booklet serves as a combination travel guide and treasure hunt, containing an entry for each location that highlights something unique to the neighborhood served, either geographically, historically or culturally.

As you make your way to the various locations, you can collect a uniquely designed corresponding sticker to place in your booklet marking your visit.

Individuals who visit at least half of the branches can present their booklet at any branch and receive a bookmark with a discount code for 25% off a single item at The Shop, BPL’s online store, or at The Shop at CBH inside of the Center for Brooklyn History. Adventurers who visit every location will receive a limited-edition tote bag, which can be picked up by presenting the completed booklet at Central Library—and the first 100 patrons to finish will receive more special surprises, to be announced.

Stop by your local BPL library today, pick up a Browse the Branches booklet and start exploring BPL locations across the borough to see all they have to offer!

Sunset Park Reopens



BPL President & CEO Linda E. Johnson with local kindergarteners from P.S. 001 cutting the ribbon at Sunset Park Library.

On November 15, BPL cut the ribbon on the spacious, new Sunset Park Library on the ground floor of a brand-new affordable housing project. The historic project, the first of its kind in New York City, establishes a new development model under which the creation of 100% affordable housing is paired with expanded public library facilities.

The project is part of an innovative partnership between Fifth Avenue Committee (FAC) and BPL, along with NY State Homes and Community Renewal and the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development and provides the first new affordable housing in Sunset Park in 20 years. Sunset Park Library and Brooklyn Heights Library, which opened in 2022, serve as examples of successful models for co-located housing.

The original Sunset Park Library opened to the public on December 9, 1905. By the time of the renovation, the branch was bursting at the seams. Noted BPL President and CEO Linda E. Johnson, “Sunset Park has always been one of our busiest libraries, and we’re thrilled to welcome the neighborhood back to a new space built on a foundation not only of concrete, but of community input, engagement and passion.” Added Sunset Park supervising librarian Roxana Benavides, “Both the community and the staff already feel like we are home.”

Occupying the first two and a half levels of the eight-story building, the state-of-the-art Sunset Park Library spans more than 20,000 square feet, almost twice the size of its predecessor. The bright, comfortable branch has an open design and up-to-date technological infrastructure, including a brand-new HVAC system. It also features the largest dedicated space for teens of any library in the borough, a recording studio and a community program room available both during and outside of library hours.

Welcoming library patrons into the space are two large-scale murals by Tatiana Arocha, featuring imagined naturescapes as intricate and diverse as the neighborhood itself. In the vestibule of the library, “destellos naranjas en la copa de los árboles” (“glimpses of oranges between the treetops”), 2023, is a portrait of an urban forest. Arocha’s second artwork, “Antes del amanecer” (“Before Dawn”), 2023, is in the main reading room and depicts a large, magical tree with two owls.

The rest of this building is occupied by the Sunset Park Apartments, a 100% affordable development providing 49 units of permanently affordable housing spread



A view of the refurbished Sunset Park Library exterior.



The new library vestibule featuring one of Tatiana Arocha’s murals.

across more than 50,000 square feet of residential space.

Said Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development and Workforce, Maria Torres-Springer, “I am grateful for the leadership of Brooklyn Public Library, Fifth Avenue Committee and our City and State partners to advance this innovative model of co-located housing and public library resources in the Sunset Park Community, building the foundation for a brighter and more inclusive future.”

LUCILLE THOMAS

PORTRAIT DEDICATION

Dr. Lucille Cole Thomas was a trailblazing educator and librarian who devoted her life to public service, inspiring generations of individuals to follow in her footsteps. Dr. Thomas pursued her profession for more than 60 years and was also deeply connected to Brooklyn Public Library.

To honor Dr. Thomas's legacy, a new portrait of her painted by contemporary visual artist Charles Edward Williams was recently installed in Central Library's Trustees Room. The portrait was a joint project of BPL; Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sorority Incorporated®, Eta Omega Omega Chapter, an international service organization; and Dr. Thomas's family.

Nick Higgins, BPL's chief librarian noted, "Dr. Thomas had a decades-long impact at BPL, starting as a branch librarian and rising to join our board of trustees in 1993, including as chair from 2003 to 2006. She actively participated in board meetings right up to the end of her life. Her wise counsel and fierce commitment to librarianship made her a mentor and role model to so many who follow in her footsteps. Having Dr. Thomas's portrait here in our flagship Library's trustees room is a powerful recognition of her life's work and enduring spirit."



The newly unveiled portrait of Lucille Thomas by artist Charles Edward Williams.

Dr. Thomas was the first African American to serve as president of both the New York Library Association and the New York City School Librarians Association. She was also president of the International Association of School Librarianship and served on the American Library Association Council and Executive Board.

Dr. Claudia Schrader, President of Eta Omega Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.®, attended the dedication ceremony and noted "Today we are proud to celebrate our trailblazing sister from the Eta Omega Omega Chapter, Dr. Lucille Cole Thomas. Her portrait will stand as a testament to her commitment to enriching the lives of so many throughout her storied career as a librarian and a leader."

Dr. Thomas's legacy also continues at BPL through the Dr. Lucille C. Thomas Award for Excellence in Librarianship awarded to an exemplary BPL librarian each year.

→ To learn more about the portrait, visit bklynlib.org/lucille-thomas-portrait.

BPL proudly announced its third Pathways to Leadership cohort in September 2023. Five BPL employees received scholarships to pursue a degree in Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS). Three will attend SUNY Albany; two will study at SUNY Buffalo.

With lead support from BPL board member Susan Marcinek and her husband David, along with other generous supporters, **Pathways to Leadership aims to increase the diversity of librarian staff, advancing BPL's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.** Non-librarian staff members of historically under-represented groups are especially encouraged to apply.

Jackson Gomes immigrated to the U.S. at age 10 from Cape Verde. By 15, he was a part-time BPL employee; fast forward 24 years and he now oversees two of BPL's largest teen internship programs as young adult internship coordinator. Gomes is involved in numerous initiatives, including Books Unbanned, for which he was named a 2023 Librarian of the Year by *Library Journal*.

Ann Joseph joined BPL over 20 years ago as a part-time employee in Technical Processing Services. Several promotions later, she is now circulation manager at Clarendon Library. Additionally, Joseph serves as a robotics coach, union leader and sits on various BPL committees. She is excited to pursue her MLIS with a concentration in youth services.



The third Pathways cohort (l to r): Joseph, Gomes, Sharmin, Jules, Torres.

Jessica Jules joined BPL in 2018 as a volunteer before becoming a part-time clerk at Bushwick Library. Currently, she is the department assistant for Volunteer Resources. Jules is eager to begin her journey toward to librarianship.

Shamima Sharmin started at BPL as a Librarians of Tomorrow intern. She later worked part-time at Williamsburgh Library and is currently a technology resource specialist at Park Slope Library. Sharmin looks forward to integrating her technology skills into her MLIS to develop creative programs.

Ashley Torres is a technology resource specialist at Pacific Library, where she teaches English and Spanish computer classes, facilitates "Ask-A-Tech" programs at the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office, and coaches the Brooklyn Robotics League. Working with BPL's English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs helped develop her passion for serving immigrant populations.

Pathways to Leadership is generously supported by Susan & David Marcinek, Institute of Museum and Library Services, Andrea Bozzo & John Martinez, Nina Collins, Goldhirsh Foundation, Betty Kahn, Henlopen Foundation, Miriam Katowitz, Kathy Weil, Sandra & Peter Schubert, Leslie Feder & Garrick Leonard and Amol Naik.

PATHWAYS to LEADERSHIP

20 YEARS POWERUP

BPL's PowerUP Business Plan Competition celebrated 20 years this past November, awarding over \$40,000 to aspiring entrepreneurs in a ceremony hosted by award-winning reporter Sally Herships, director of Columbia School of Journalism's Audio Program and a frequent guest host on NPR's *Planet Money*.

From April–November 2023, nearly 350 PowerUp participants attended free classes on subjects ranging from marketing, business financing and library resources. They also received one-on-one business plan assistance from established entrepreneurs and business experts. A judging panel of business owners, nonprofit leaders and academics selected the 2023 winners from a field of 66 entries, most of whom had no previous business experience.

Lead sponsor Dime Community Bank presented the \$20,000 grand prize to Noël Gaskin, Jovon Browne and Cheryl Culpepper for Hemp Thyself, a licensed CBD health and skin company. Second place and a prize of \$10,000 was awarded to Jessica Hartman, the founder of Brooklyn Click and Connect, a secondhand LEGO retail shop. Third place and a prize of \$5,000 was awarded to Ashley Marrero and Charles Asante for Kente Cones, a pop-up ice cream shop featuring homemade flavors with fair trade ingredients imported from Africa.

In addition, five participants were recognized with merit awards and \$1,200 of seed money. The merit winners also pitched their ideas to the audience with Emicia Parker and her online art boutique, Empress by Emicia, winning the \$1,000 Audience Favorite Award. This year also saw the debut of the \$1,000 Founders Award, which was given to Westen Johnson and Julie Joo for Soilless, a soil-free system for indoor vegetable gardening.

Stuart H. Lubow, President and CEO of Dime stated, "We are both proud and honored to be in our 7th year as the lead sponsor of PowerUP as a catalyst to unleash the next great generation of business leaders here in Brooklyn."

PowerUP first began in 2003 to offer businesses a helping hand after 9/11. Since then, the contest has provided over \$600,000 to over 200 entrepreneurs across the borough. Many of Brooklyn's most successful, beloved businesses launched with help from PowerUP including Greenlight Bookstore, Bogota Latin Bistro, Island Pops, Green in BKLYN, Brooklyn Tea and Tinsel Experiential Design. The kick-off orientation for PowerUP in 2024 will be held virtually on March 25.

BPL's PowerUP Business Plan Competition is generously supported by lead sponsor Dime Community Bank, with additional support provided by Data Axle Reference Solutions and Ridgewood Savings Bank.



2023 PowerUP prize winners (l to r): Ashely Marrero and Charles Asante; Jessica Hartman; Noel Gaskin, Cheryl Culpepper and Jovon Browne.



PowerUP Merit Award winners showing off their certificates (not pictured Deborah Magosci)

Black Freemasons

By Deborah Tint

Special Collections Cataloger

The following was excerpted from an article in *Brooklynology*, the Center for Brooklyn History's blog.



New temple dedicated—Past Deputy Grand Master Jacob Lawrence, Grand Master Daniel Mason and Deputy Grand Master Charles L. Weaver, left to right share the gavel at dedication of Universal Grand Lodge's new temple at 442 Willoughby Ave. A cornerstone-laying ceremony has been planned for later in the year. 1954. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* photographs.

I grew interested in Freemasonry after happening upon African American Masons in *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* photographs in CBH's archives. I have relatives who were Freemasons in the early-mid-20th century and, though I know little about the organization, I have always been curious about its purposes and what it provided to members and their communities. At that time, the Masons were one of the few fraternal organizations that would welcome Jews; I wondered if the same constraints led African Americans to become Masons as well.

What we know of present-day Freemasonry began in 18th century Britain. Its structure was based on the stonemason guilds of late medieval Europe, which established a professional and social network, protected and communicated trade secrets, and served as mutual aid societies for its members. In colonial America, many of the founding fathers were Freemasons.

The basic precepts of Masonry involve maintaining a sacred text in the lodge and belief in a Supreme Being (neither of which is specified); the exclusion of women from the membership; and eschewing the discussion of religion and politics in the lodge.

Prince Hall was a free Black abolitionist and leather artisan in Boston who, along with 14 other free Black men, was initiated into Freemasonry as African Lodge No. 1 in 1775. This lodge, though allowed to meet as Masons, was denied essential functions, like the conferring of degrees. After the departure of the British, white lodges refused to recognize the African Lodge. In 1784 they petitioned and were granted a charter by the Grand Lodge of England (UGLE), considered the Mother Lodge of the World, and African Lodge No. 1 became African Lodge No. 459 of Boston. Despite the imprimatur from UGLE, the fight for full acceptance for the African American lodges was long and continues to this day.

Though the wider white Masonic group insisted on segregation, there was recognition across the color line that Freemasonry could be a useful, even life-saving advantage for Black Masons. Free Black Americans could fight for liberation and education, support



Cornerstone laying ceremonies for new Mount Sinai Baptist Church, 109 Marion St. (l to r): the Rev. Paul Earl Jones presenting ceremonial trowel to Arthur T. Giddings, grand master of Grand Hall Lodge. In top row are members of Masonic lodge. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1952.

organizations with similar goals and provide mutual aid to members and their community.

The Masonic connection to the architectural trades explains why Masons were involved in laying church cornerstones in the Black community. The ranks of Black Masons included many distinguished professionals including politicians, doctors and clergy members. One notable example was writer, historian and activist Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, whose collection became the basis for the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, one of New York Public Library's four research libraries.

More than 200 years later, there are over 40 so-called Prince Hall Grand Lodges representing over 500,000 Black Freemasons in North America including the U.S., Canada and the Caribbean. In spite of persistent segregation, Black Freemasonry proudly perseveres as the oldest and largest African American fraternity in the world.

JAY-Z HONORED AT BPL'S 2023 GALA

2023 honoree Shawn 'JAY-Z' Carter enjoying his tributes at the BPL Gala

On October 2, 2023, BPL honored Shawn 'JAY-Z' Carter and his mother Dr. Gloria Carter at a gala held at Central Library. Attendees enjoyed dinner as they toured the exhibition *The Book of HOV: A Celebration of the Life and Work of Shawn 'JAY-Z' Carter*, then moved to a tent on the Plaza for an invigorating speaking program and champagne toast.

The evening included a DJ set by the renowned recording artist and music producer Questlove and a performance by rising recording artist Victory Boyd. The roster of speakers included Senator Chuck Schumer, Borough President Antonio Reynoso, Mayor Eric Adams, writer and BPL board member Baratunde Thurston, and Joshua and Jeremiah Jeffries, speaking on behalf of their father, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries.

Keynote speaker Jelani Cobb—celebrated author, *New Yorker* staff writer and dean of the Columbia Journalism School—noted, “We are here to celebrate two crucial institutions to the borough of Brooklyn: the Carter family and Brooklyn Public Library

and the contributions each has made to the greatness of this borough, the greatness of this city and the greatness of this nation. The most vital symbol of democracy is the building behind me. And we are having this conversation in the 50th year since the birth of hip-hop. It is impossible to listen to this body of work and not gain knowledge in the same way that this institution has provided.”

As part of the evening, an auctioneer from Christie's auctioned off two sets of BPL limited-edition library cards featuring JAY-Z's album art, each in a signed exhibition case. Thanks to the generosity of guests and supporters, the 2023 gala raised a record-breaking \$1.5M+ to support the Library's critical programs, services and resources.

The *Book of HOV*, a free, immersive experience curated by Roc Nation, featured never-before-seen images, art and ephemera from the artist's archive. During the six months it was on view at Central Library, it drew a staggering 617,000 visitors from Brooklyn and across the globe.

Solar Education Series

Rain or shine, the Library's interactive Solar Education series is the place to learn about solar energy. The series of environmental STEM workshops launched in fall 2021 at Greenpoint Library & Environmental Education Center with generous support from Con Edison; in 2022, it expanded to include Kensington Library—the first LEED-certified library in New York City—on that branch's 10th anniversary.

Workshops, which are led by BPL environmental educators, cover topics for both adults and children. The goal of the series is to increase knowledge and interest in STEM, climate change and electricity generation, as well as in renewable and efficient energies.

The program is offered in partnership with Solar One, a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to design and deliver innovative education, training and technical assistance that fosters sustainability in urban environments.

Children's programming centers on the power of the sun and the ways we can harness its energy. Youth are encouraged to understand energy dependence as a social issue. Through hands-on exploration—including the use of solar panel kits, cyanotypes (UV light-sensitive chemicals) and UV-sensitive beads—they are able to create nature prints and craft projects.



A child's poster from the Climate Advocacy Campaign workshop.

In a variety of community workshops for adult patrons (“Going Solar for Your Home or Business,” “Household Energy Efficiency”), energy efficiency specialists have offered tools and strategies for ensuring safe, efficient home electrical infrastructures. Other topics covered have included “The Incredible Carbon Cycle,” “Library Energy Audit,” “Climate Advocacy Campaign,” “Fun with Circuits,” “Wind Turbine Design,” “Hydroelectric Challenges,” “Solar Field Study” and “Solar Ovens, Energy Storage and Solar Cars.”

Programs for all ages have also featured tours of Greenpoint Library, highlighting its energy-efficient features including rooftop solar panels, a garden reading deck, windows that act as sun dials and a cistern to collect rainwater for the branch's rooftop demonstration garden.

“Con Edison's vision is for every New Yorker to be able to share in the benefits of a clean energy transition, including today's young people,” said **Johari Jenkins, Director of Regional & Community Affairs at Con Edison.**

“Con Edison is proud to support Brooklyn Public Library's Solar Education Series in its mission to educate children and adults on climate change, as well as in renewable and efficient energies, so we can all work towards a more sustainable future.”

BKLYN BOOKMATCH BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Brooklyn Public Library Book Prize 2023

BookMatch is a readers' advisory service that uses what readers like (and dislike) to create customized reading recommendations. In honor of Black History Month, several librarians collaborated on an all ages BookMatch list, including Nia Pierre (young adult librarian, Crown Heights), Djaz Zulida (job information resource specialist, Business & Career Library) and Emma Carbone (children's librarian, Central Library).

Bessie, The Motorcycle Queen

by Charles R. Smith

In 1929, 18-year-old Bessie Stringfield hopped on her motorcycle and headed out on an adventure, a daring choice for a young Black woman at the time. Paying her way by winning motorcycle races, she crisscrossed the country through small towns, big cities and wide-open spaces.

All Rise: The Story of Ketanji Brown Jackson

by Carole Boston Weatherford

Whatever she did, wherever she was, Ketanji Brown Jackson rose to the top. From the time their daughter was born, Jackson's parents taught her that if she worked hard and believed in herself, she could do anything.

Fearless Mary: Mary Fields, American Stagecoach Driver

by Tami Charles

The true story of Mary Fields, aka Stagecoach Mary, a trailblazing African American woman who helped settle the American West.

The Black Guy Dies First: Black Horror Cinema from Fodder to Oscar

Mark H. Harris & Robin R. Means Coleman

A nonfiction exploration of Black representations in modern horror cinema, from *Spider Baby* to the Oscar-winning *Get Out* and beyond. This eye-opening book delves into the themes, tropes and traits that characterized—and pigeonholed—Black roles in horror since 1968.

Banking on Freedom: Black Women in U.S. Finance Before the New Deal

by Shennette Garrett-Scott

Black financial innovation and its transformative impact on U.S. capitalism is highlighted through the story of Richmond, Virginia's St. Luke Bank: the first and only bank run by Black women. This is an unparalleled account of how Black women carved out economic, social and political power.

And The Category Is...: Inside New York's Vogue, House, and Ballroom Community

by Ricky Tucker

A love letter to the legendary Black and Latinx LGBTQIA+ underground subculture, uncovering its legacy and abundant influence on popular culture. Tucker's in-depth research reveals the complex cultural makeup and ongoing relevance of house and Ballroom.

I Am Debra Lee: A Memoir

by Debra Lee

A riveting memoir by the former CEO of Black Entertainment Television (BET) about the glamorous and ugly moments of being a high-powered Black woman executive in the entertainment industry. Lee shows readers how she broke through glass ceilings of gender and race.

The Art of Ruth E. Carter: Costuming Black History and the Afrofuture, from Do the Right Thing to Black Panther

by Ruth E. Carter

A career-spanning book by the iconic, Oscar-winning costume designer Ruth E. Carter.

Since 2015, the annual Brooklyn Public Library Book Prize has celebrated outstanding works of nonfiction and fiction that capture the spirit of Brooklyn, one of the most socially and culturally diverse communities in the country.

The 2023 prize winners announced October 2023, were Lanya H's *Hijab Butch Blues* for the Nonfiction Prize and Catherine Lacey's *Biography of X* for the Fiction Prize. Lanya H noted, "Libraries have been such a big part of my immigrant experience. Reading was how I learned to write, and so it's especially meaningful to me to win this prize." Added Lacey, "I'm very grateful for this support from the staff and readers at Brooklyn Public Library, especially as we find ourselves in this recurrent struggle with censorship and book banning and a baseless fear of queer narratives,"

"Both of the 2023 Brooklyn Public Library Book Prize winners have written daring, genre-defying works. Through a story of love, art and grief, Catherine Lacey's audacious new novel prompts us to question reality. While Lanya H's funny and poignant memoir is a palimpsest of stories about being brown, Muslim and queer in the Middle East and here in New York," noted Linda E. Johnson, BPL President and CEO.

The Prize is selected by a panel of library staff, drawing on their knowledge of literature, contemporary writing and the populations they serve at BPL's 62 locations across the borough.

The 2023 shortlist also included *Calling for a Blanket Dance* by Oscar Hokeah and *Yellowface* by R.F. Kuang in the fiction category and *Your Emergency Contact Has Experienced an Emergency* by Chen Chen and *Under the Skin: The Hidden Toll of Racism on American Lives and on the Health of Our Nation* by Linda Villarosa in the nonfiction category. In October, the shortlisted authors participated in a discussion at Central Library moderated by BPL librarian and Prize co-chair, Jess Harwick.

Nurys Pimentel, circulation manager at Red Hook Library and chair of BPL's Book Prize 2023 Fiction Committee, noted, "the Brooklyn Public Library Book Prize honors our universal love for reading and storytelling. Our selections celebrate the power of words and imagination that we hope resonate with our readers long after they've turned the last page."

The Brooklyn Public Library Book Prize is generously underwritten by the Peck Stacpoole Foundation.

➔ Find out more about this year's nominated titles at: bklynlib.org/bookprize

➔ Get your own BookMatch list at bklynlibrary.org/bookmatch

BPL PRESENTS

Unless otherwise noted, all events take place at Central Library. All programs are free and reservations are required for most adult programs. For complete listings visit: bklynlibrary.org/bplpresents

THE SALON AT CBH CURATED BY MOLLY CRABAPPLE

In September 2023, the Center for Brooklyn History (CBH) fully opened to the public for the first time since the pandemic began. In celebration, CBH debuted *The Salon at CBH*, a new signature programming series that opened CBH's landmarked building—one of the most beautiful in Brooklyn—to the public for an extended evening on January 19, 2024.

Over 650 individuals attended the inaugural Salon at CBH hosted by Brooklyn artist, journalist and writer Molly Crabapple. Attendees enjoyed a curated party of performances, readings and conversations, along with music and refreshments. Over the course of the evening, from 7–11 pm, guests were treated to a poetry reading by Nicole Sealey; an aria performance by opera singer Adriana Valdés on the Grand Staircase; a DJ set from electro-pop musician Maximum Fractal in the Great Hall; and acrobatic feats from lifesteet dancer Sony Jayy and his crew. Guests also lined up for glimpses into their future with tarot reader Gereve, while salsa band Anonima Orchestra serenaded the packed crowd later in the evening.

During the talk “Made in New York: A Conversation Between Molly Crabapple and Historian and Community Organizer Asad Dandia,” both speakers agreed that New Yorkers are made, not born, and that anyone—regardless of where they come

from or how long they are here—can become a New Yorker as long as they see themselves as contributing parts of the community, peoples and cultures.

The conversation included a variety of personal stories, anecdotes and quips from both Crabapple and Dandia's lived experiences.

The Salon also served to augment the current *Brooklyn Is...* exhibition, which combines photographs and maps from CBH's vast collection to illustrate the dynamic, idiosyncratic neighborhoods and people that make up our borough. The exhibition has been extended and is currently running through spring 2024.

The Salon at CBH is funded in part by Humanities New York with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and The Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation.



Lightfeet dancers defying gravity at the Salon at CBH.



Anthem to US invites all voices—those born within these borders and those who made their way here—to create a new anthem for the nation that echoes our collective hopes, struggles and untold histories.

The project is a collaboration presented by BPL and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts along with the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and Queens Public Library. Residents from across NYC are invited to share their vision and aspirations for the future. In March, participants will embark on an immersive three-part writing workshop series guided by instructors.

The workshops will explore themes, song structures and melodies across diverse styles. Eight outstanding song lyrics will emerge from the workshops and three applicants will advance to collaborate with composers who will craft a final composition.

The culmination? The final three anthems will be brought to life with performances at BPL and Lincoln Center, where the winning anthem will be announced.

Visit anthemto.us



BPL's Night in the Library will return to Central Library on March 16–17, 2024 7 pm–2 am

With the theme “Out of Darkness,” the evening will offer different takes on how to face—rather than evade—hardships in challenging times.

The overnight festival of ideas will include lectures and panel discussions with philosophers, intellectuals, authors and journalists alongside performances by live artists and other related events, including the ACLU's *At Liberty* podcast.

The roster of speakers includes: National Book Critics Circle Award-winning author Philip Gourevitch; Sarah Lewis, Associate Professor of History of Art and Architecture and African and African American studies at Harvard University; Farai Chideya, novelist, multimedia journalist and radio host; Astra Taylor, documentary filmmaker and cofounder of the Debt Collective; Yasmine Seale, writer and literary translator; and Ajay Singh Chaudhary, executive director of the Brooklyn Institute for Social Research.

BPLPresents BPL_Presents BPLPresents

Celebrate the library you love this **Library Giving Day!**

Now through April 3, join a national movement to support libraries by making a donation to Brooklyn Public Library. Every gift counts!

Visit bklynlibrary.org/support



Library **Giving Day**



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New York Public Library



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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.

Call 718.230.2469 or visit bklynlibrary.org/support to learn about the many ways you can support Brooklyn Public Library.

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