

## LOWER MANHATTAN CULTURAL COUNCIL (LMCC) OPENS THE ARTS CENTER AT GOVERNORS ISLAND IN SEPTEMBER 2019



*Photo credits: Zachary Tyler Newton*

**40,000 square-foot home for arts of all disciplines in newly renovated building in Governors Island Historic District**

**First permanent arts space on Governors Island with Artists-in-Residence, Exhibition Spaces and Public Programs all under one roof**

**Inaugural season features opening exhibitions by Yto Barrada and Michael Wang**

**All events and programming free, all are welcome**

In **September 2019**, the **Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC)** will open the newly renovated **Arts Center at Governors Island**. Conceived as an incubator for creative exploration and a gathering space to engage in dialogue, the Arts Center is the **first permanent home for artists and audiences on Governors Island**, and the gateway to the island's Historic District, home to a diverse range of arts, cultural and educational programming.

LMCC's Arts Center at Governors Island will feature **Artist Residency Programs** with studio and presenting space for artists to develop their work, and a **broad range of events** to convene artists and the public in an exchange of ideas and creative practices. Programming in the inaugural season will focus on themes related to **ecology, sustainability and resilience**. Opening programs in 2019 include site-specific exhibitions by **Yto Barrada** and **Michael Wang**, plus **Open Studios** and related public events surrounding the Center's signature Artist Residency programs and work developed in the space.

"We are thrilled to create a space on Governors Island that fosters curiosity and engagement with artists' research, development and presentation. As artists seek serene spaces to work and share

practices with audiences, LMCC's Arts Center meets this need in a compelling way. The newly renovated Arts Center is designed for larger exhibitions and more public programs, enabling greater depth and insight into the artistic and creative process," said **Lili Chopra**, LMCC's Executive Director of Artist Programs.

**Diego S. Segalini**, LMCC's Executive Director of Finance & Administration, commented, "The Arts Center marks one of many significant contributions in Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's 45+ year history of enriching the cultural life of New York City. It embodies the organization's dedication to serving, connecting and making space for artists and community, and extends the scale and scope of our work."

"Lower Manhattan Cultural Council continues to build strong public and private partnerships to advance culture and the arts in New York City. LMCC's Arts Center at Governors Island is a powerful example of our ability to unite government, business, not-for-profits and individuals in creating a vibrant new artistic home for New Yorkers on Governors Island," said **Timur Galen**, Chair of LMCC's Board of Directors.

"We are unlocking the potential of Governors Island by investing in arts, culture and education," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "The public programming and free workspaces at LMCC's Arts Center will provide an affordable place for artists to work while continuing to grow Governors Island as a creative hub for New Yorkers from across the five boroughs."

"Governors Island is an inspiring environment to create and experience the arts unlike anywhere else in New York City. The Arts Center on Governors Island will be a place for artists across the city to deepen their practice year-round while inviting hundreds of thousands of visitors each season to witness the creative process and groundbreaking works first hand," said **Michael Samuelian**, President and CEO of the Trust for Governors Island. "The Trust's partnership with LMCC is a key part of our strategy to activate and expand access to this special place and a testament to our deep commitment to arts and culture. This is an important early step in our vision to create a year-round campus for learning, creativity and innovation on Governors Island."

"The arts have been integral to transforming Governors Island from a former military installation into a beloved destination for New Yorkers and visitors alike," said Cultural Affairs Commissioner **Tom Finkelpearl**. "Affordability for artists was one of the top priorities we heard during the CreateNYC public engagement process, so the Department of Cultural Affairs is proud to provide funding through the Affordable Real Estate for Artists initiative and to partner with LMCC and the Trust for Governors Island. The new Arts Center will thrive on and enhance the island's unique setting, providing a permanent hub for creation, collaboration and dialogue for artists and audiences alike."

Built in the 1870s as an ordnance warehouse and later used as military office space, LMCC has partnered with the **Trust for Governors Island** on the renovation to re-envision the space for the 21st century. The interior renovation, designed by **PEI Cobb Freed & Partners** and **Adamson Associates Architects** and engineered by **BuroHappold Engineering**, features **40,000 square feet** of artist studios, galleries, performance and rehearsal spaces and a café, and successfully reveals the stunning structure of the historic building while keeping its spaces flexible for a variety of uses.

Artists will be in residence year-round and cultural programming will take place throughout Governors Island's public season, which currently runs May 1 through October 31. In its inaugural year, the Center will open to the public in September 2019 through the end of October 2019. It will reopen in 2020 from May through October. **See below for major inaugural programming, with more to be announced in June.**

## YTO BARRADA

### Project Description

Much of Yto Barrada's work springs from observing ordinary lives and marginal spaces in Tangier, Morocco, a city that sits at one end of the Strait of Gibraltar, where the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean meet. In this new project, organized around notions of insularity, disaster and human inventiveness, Barrada puts her hometown in relation with two other locations on the water: Governors Island in New York and Tangier, Virginia, a small island in the Chesapeake Bay.

In Tangier, VA, rising sea levels are producing an accelerated version of what awaits much of the planet. The 500 inhabitants, many of them crab and oyster harvesters, will have to abandon the island in the next twenty or thirty years because of the very element—water—that has sustained their livelihood for generations.

By putting the environmental predicament of Tangier Island in conversation with the military past of Governors Island and the colonial history of Tangier, Morocco, Barrada develops a language of forms to evoke the various ways humans have dealt with the threat of an impending end of the world. Through sculpture, collage, pedagogical objects, hand-dyed textiles and video, this large-scale installation blurs the boundaries between document and fiction, between diagnosis and imagination, in order to reflect on the countdown to catastrophe. Within Barrada's characteristically playful seriousness, it questions art's role in times of need. Should art have a therapeutic aim? Can artworks be gestures of care? Will humor produce a wake-up call?

Curated by Omar Berrada.

### About Yto Barrada

Yto Barrada's work—including photography, film, sculpture, prints and installations—began by exploring the peculiar situation of her hometown Tangier. Her work has been exhibited at Tate Modern, the Barbican, MoMA, The Metropolitan Museum, Renaissance Society, Witte de With, the Walker Art Centre, Whitechapel Gallery and the 2007 and 2011 Venice Biennales. In 2013-14 she was Artist in Residence at the Textile Arts Center. She has taught at Bard College, Cooper Union, and the Vevey School of Photography.

Barrada was the 2011 Deutsche Bank Artist of the Year, the 2013 Robert Gardner Fellow in Photography (Peabody Museum at Harvard University), the 2015 Abraaj Group Art Prize winner, the 2016 Canon Tiger Awards for Short Films and was shortlisted for the 2016 Marcel Duchamp Award.

She is the founding director of the Tangier Cinematheque, North Africa's first cinema cultural center, which opened its doors as an artist-run nonprofit in 2007 and currently lives in New York.

### About Omar Berrada

Omar Berrada is a writer and curator, and the director of Dar al-Ma'mûn, a library and artists' residency in Marrakech. Currently living in New York, he teaches at The Cooper Union where he co-organizes the [IDS Lecture Series](#).

## MICHAEL WANG: *EXTINCT IN NEW YORK*

Presented in partnership with the Swiss Institute/Contemporary Art (SI), LMCC inaugurates the Arts Center's Lehman Gallery with artist Michael Wang's site-specific and site-responsive *Extinct in New York*. This new partnership builds upon SI and LMCC's shared mission to provide emerging artists with resources and a platform to realize progressive, timely projects. As part of his upcoming exhibition, Michael Wang will be provided with a studio on the premises of the Arts Center, allowing

him to develop his project within the immediate context of Governors Island.

## **Project Description**

*Extinct in New York* is artist Michael Wang's ongoing investigation of the boundaries of nature, nurture and human intervention. Of the 1,357 native plant species that appear in the botanical records of New York City, approximately 778 remain today as a consequence of urbanization and other processes of natural and man-made change. Over the past nine months Wang has researched and nurtured a selection of species known historically from New York City that no longer exists in the wild. At LMCC's Arts Center at Governors Island, young plants will be temporarily exhibited within a series of greenhouses. The exhibition space becomes an incubator—a life support system—for species that otherwise no longer have a home in the city. At the center of Wang's research are notions of curation, derived from the Latin word for care, and tending to entanglements between systems at a global scale and the traditional bounds of art.

Curated by Daniel Merritt, Swiss Institute.

## **About Michael Wang**

Michael Wang uses systems that operate on a global scale as his medium: climate change, species distribution, resource allocation and the global economy. His works include *Carbon Copies*, an exhibition linking the production of artworks to the release of greenhouse gases; *World Trade*, a series tracing the trade in steel from the World Trade Center following the attacks of September 11, 2001; and *Rivals*, a series that connects the readymade to systems of corporate finance. In 2017, he had a solo exhibition at Fondazione Prada in Milan. Recent group exhibitions include SI ONSITE at Swiss Institute, Manifesta 12 in Palermo, 20th Bienal de Arquitectura y Urbanismo in Chile and 99 Cents or Less at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit.

## **About Daniel Merritt**

Daniel Merritt is the curatorial associate at Swiss Institute, where he has worked on exhibitions by artists such as Julien Nguyen (2018), Christina Forrer (2017), Timothée Calame (2017), and Andrea Crespo (2015). He served as assistant curator for FADE IN 2: EXT. MODERNIST HOME—NIGHT at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade (2017). He holds a BA in art history and American Studies from Columbia University and an MA in art history from the Courtauld Institute of Art, London.

## **LMCC'S ARTS CENTER: 2019 ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE**

Integral to LMCC's Arts Center at Governors Island are its year-round artist residency programs in which artists at various career stages explore themes of social justice/social practice, NYC Harbor and/or Governors Island history, climate change and water. Resident artists have access to the Arts Center five days a week, extending to seven days a week during the public season, where they receive their own dedicated studio space as well as access to all of the Arts Center's common/shared spaces. Opportunities for professional and creative development are programmed throughout the residency period, and Open Studios Weekends and events take place multiple times throughout the public season. More artists-in-residence to be announced later this year.

Nicole Awai  
Yto Barrada  
Colleen Billing  
Baris Gokturk  
Maya Kaminishi Jeffereis

Brendan Kiely  
Amy Khoshbin  
Hilary Lorenz  
Jillian McDonald  
Ander Mikalson  
Lize Mogel  
Aviva Rahmani  
Leah Raintree  
Aida Šehović  
J. Soto  
Aaron Suggs  
Sam Van Aken  
Asiya Wadud  
Michael Wang

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS: TAKE CARE SERIES**

Conceived as a platform for engagement and discussion, **Take Care** furthers ideas presented in the Art Center's inaugural art installations and reframes art curation as a mindful practice stemming from the concept of care. Ecology, sustainability, diversity and the need to care for and protect one another and our planet are at the core of the series. Through events and participatory programs for all ages, Take Care offers audiences an opportunity to experience the art, explore one's own creative potential and carry the work beyond the island.

## **SUPPORTERS**

Leadership government supporters include the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the New York City Council, City Council Member Margaret Chin, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, the Mayor's NYC AREA Fund, in partnership with the New York City Economic Development Corporation, and the New York State Council on the Arts.

Leadership foundation supporters include the Booth Ferris Foundation, Charina Endowment Fund, Ford Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, the Robert Lehman Foundation, Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), and the May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation.

Major corporate supporters include American Express, Adamson Associates Architects, BuroHappold Engineering, Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP, Davis Brody Bond, Gardiner & Theobald, PEI Cobb Freed & Partners, Goldman Sachs Gives, and Gensler.

LMCC is grateful for the generosity of our Board of Directors throughout the year, and especially during this phase of growth for the organization.

LMCC also acknowledges the generosity of the individuals who have supported the project by making leadership gifts, including, Michael Ashworth, Kimberly Brown Blacklow, Dino Fusco, Timur Galen, Anne Goldrach, Francis Greenburger, Kevin Hoo, Meredith Kane, Richard Mines, Hans and Kate Morris, Peter Poulakakos, Brian Saluzzo, Craig Schwitter, David Solomon, and Jack and Suzy Wadsworth.

LMCC additionally acknowledges our partnership with the Trust for Governors Island.

## **ABOUT GOVERNORS ISLAND**

Governors Island is a 172-acre island in the heart of New York Harbor nestled between Lower Manhattan and the Brooklyn waterfront. Eight minutes from the energy and excitement of the City, the Island is a popular seasonal destination open to the public May 1-October 31. An award-winning new park is complemented by dozens of unique historic buildings, educational and cultural facilities, a rich arts and culture program and a 22-acre National Monument managed by the National Park Service. Looking ahead, the Island will be activated year-round as a sustainable campus for learning and entrepreneurship, with plans for expanded commercial and non-profit uses in its future.

## **ABOUT LMCC**

Founded in 1973 as Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, LMCC serves, connects and makes space for artists and community.

### **LMCC Serves Artists through:**

- [Residencies](#) that enable artists to experiment and develop their work and ideas, with professional development, financial training and networking opportunities
- [Grant funding](#) to artists that support local/neighborhood projects
- [Presentation opportunities](#) that allow artists to share their work and creative process with the public

### **LMCC Serves Community through:**

- [Free public programs](#) in Lower Manhattan that activate neighborhoods and bring people together through performances and rich artistic experiences
- [Access to artists and the artmaking process](#) to build connections and dialogue between artists and audiences
- [Grant funding](#) for neighborhood arts and community-based organizations

**[www.LMCC.net](http://www.LMCC.net)**

**For more information, please contact**

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