



Alicia Garza Added as Keynote Speaker for 2021 Brooklyn Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Joining PJ Morton, Tarriona "Tank" Ball, Sing Harlem!, and More

The digital event will stream live on BAM.org—Monday, January 18, 2021, at 11am

Bloomberg Philanthropies is the Season Sponsor

Presented by BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music) and The Office of the Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams, in Association with BRIC TV



[Left: Alicia Garza © Scott Hoag and Right: Stage shot of BAM's 2020 tribute to Dr. King ©] Downloadable photos are available [here](#)

December 30, 2020/Brooklyn, NY—Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) today announced **Alicia Garza**, author of *The Purpose of Power*, principal at Black Futures Lab, and co-founder of the Black Lives Matter Global Network, will provide the keynote address for the digital adaptation of its **35th Annual Brooklyn Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** The free virtual event will stream on BAM.org, **Monday, January 18, 2021, at 11am.**

Garza is the Oakland-based organizer, writer, public speaker, and freedom dreamer who started a movement that changed how the world thinks about race. One of the pioneers behind the phrase #BlackLivesMatter, Garza co-founded the Black Lives Matter Global Network in 2013 and remains a seminal leader in the effort to organize for racial justice. In her new book, *The Purpose of Power: How We Come Together When We Fall Apart*, Garza shares her thoughts on politics, and lessons from her life working as a community organizer. Garza believes that Black communities deserve what all communities deserve—to be powerful in every aspect of their lives.

In addition to Garza, the event will feature performances by **PJ Morton**, **Tarriona "Tank" Ball**, **Sing Harlem!**, **Timothy DuWhite**, **Ashley August**, and more. The annual celebration brings together artists, activists, civic leaders, and the public for a communal commemoration and reflection on the life and legacy of Dr. King.

BAM will also present the weeklong public art installation, ***Let Freedom Ring***—a provocative exploration of the notion of freedom and the legacy of Dr. King. The piece features work by newly announced photographer **Laylah Amatullah Barrayn** and interdisciplinary artist **Kameelah Rasheed** and **Derrick Adams**, **Alvin Armstrong**, **Lizania Cruz**, **Hank Willis Thomas**, and **Jasmine Wahi**. And a digital film screening of William Greaves's newly-restored documentary, ***Nationtime***. Details below and at BAM.org.

The *35th Annual Brooklyn Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* will stream on BAM.org, Monday, January 18, 2021. Following the stream, the event will be available on BAM's [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8v31111111111111111111) and [Vimeo](https://www.vimeo.com/11111111111111111111) through February 28, 2021. For the first time since its inception, New York City's largest public tribute to Dr. King will be pre-recorded to air locally on BRIC TV—the Emmy Award-winning cable TV and digital network. Visit BAM.org for more information.

For press information, contact Cynthia Tate at ctate@bam.org

EVENT AND PROGRAM DETAILS

The 35th Annual Brooklyn Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Alicia Garza, PJ Morton, Tarriona "Tank" Ball, Sing Harlem!, Timothy DuWhite, Ashley August, and more

Monday, January 18, 2021

Virtual

FREE (RSVPs are strongly encouraged, at BAM.org)

The *Annual Brooklyn Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, brings together artists, activists, civic leaders, and the public for a communal commemoration and reflection on the life and legacy of Dr. King, Jr. Audience members around the world are invited to join BAM for New York City's largest public celebration of Dr. King's legacy. **Alicia Garza**, author of *The Purpose of Power*, principal at Black Futures Lab, and co-founder of the Black Lives Matter Global Network, will provide the 2021 keynote address. The event will include performances by Grammy Award-winning gospel and R&B artist and Maroon 5 keyboardist **PJ Morton**, Tank and the Bangas lead vocalist **Tarriona "Tank" Ball**, Vy Higgensen's award-winning choir **Sing Harlem!**, Brooklyn-based poet and 2020-2021 BAM Artist Resident **Timothy DuWhite**, spoken word artist **Ashley August**, and presentations by leading artists, civic leaders, and changemakers.

Presented by BAM and The Office of the Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams, in association with BRIC TV, the 2021 event draws inspiration from Dr. King's words, his life, and the actions of those around the nation who continue the fight for equality and justice. BAM presents this annual event to celebrate with families and communities from Brooklyn and across New York City. To sustain the tradition while venues around the world remain closed, BAM will launch the annual event digitally, connecting communities across the nation. This event includes Closed Captioning. Visit BAM.org for more information.

Visual art: *Let Freedom Ring*

Curated by Larry Ossei-Mensah

Art by Derrick Adams, Alvin Armstrong, Laylah Amatullah Barrayn, Lizania Cruz, Kameelah Rasheed, Hank Willis Thomas, & Jasmine Wahi
January 15—21, 2021
The BAM sign screen (corner of Flatbush Ave & Lafayette Ave)
Run time: Looped continuously
FREE

Harnessing the scale of BAM's outdoor digital signpost as a vehicle for public art, ***Let Freedom Ring*** is a provocative exploration of the notion of freedom and Dr. King's legacy. The public art installation features the work of Brooklyn-based creatives who are deeply engaged in an ongoing dialogue about the role of artists, art, social justice, equity, and inclusion. Spearheaded by BAM Curator-at-Large **Larry Ossei-Mensah**, the project connects the Brooklyn community with larger cultural dialogues around freedom.

Let Freedom Ring includes new and existing work by **Derrick Adams, Alvin Armstrong, Laylah Amatullah Barrayn, Lizania Cruz, Kameelah Rasheed, Hank Willis Thomas, and Jasmine Wahi**. Timed to coincide with the nation's annual commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the historic 2021 Presidential and Vice-Presidential inauguration, the acclaimed artists invite the viewer to engage critically with the work and reflect on what freedom truly means in 2021. The installation will be presented on the BAM sign at the corner of Lafayette and Flatbush Avenues.

The project is an extension of the Freedom 2020 Awakening Campaign, a collaboration between For Freedoms and Unfinished, featuring artist-designed billboards throughout the United States. The year-long campaign launched in October 2020 and responds to For Freedoms' themes of healing, listening, justice, and awakening. Visit [BAM.org](https://www.bam.org) for more information.

Film: *Nationtime* (1972), directed by William Greaves

Special introduction by Rukia Lumumba

January 18, 2021

Virtual

FREE (RSVPs are mandatory, at [BAM.org](https://www.bam.org))

Tickets are limited

Best known for his avant-garde meta-documentary *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm*, William Greaves (1926—2014) was also the director of over 100 documentary films, the majority focused on African American history, politics, and culture. *Nationtime* is a report on the National Black Political Convention held in Gary, Indiana, in 1972, a historic event that gathered black voices from across the political spectrum, among them Jesse Jackson, Dick Gregory, Coretta Scott King, Richard Hatcher, Amiri Baraka, Charles Diggs, and H. Carl McCall. Narrated by Sidney Poitier, the film was considered too militant for television broadcast at the time and has since circulated only in an edited 60-minute version. This new 4K restoration from IndieCollect, with funding from Jane Fonda and the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, returns the film to its original length and visual quality. Courtesy of Kino Lorber. (80min)

Rukia Lumumba, Co-Founder and Executive Director of People's Advocacy Institute will give a special introduction, reflecting on the legacy of the 1972 National Black Political Convention and her work as the co-producer of the 2020 Black National Convention. View the *Nationtime* trailer [here](#). Visit [BAM.org](https://www.bam.org) for more information.

For press information, contact Cynthia Tate at ctate@bam.org

Editor's Notes

Derrick Adams was born in Baltimore, MD in 1970 and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. His work spans painting, collage, sculpture, performance, video, and sound installations. He received his MFA from Columbia University, BFA from Pratt Institute, and is an alumnus of the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and the Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program. He is a recipient of a Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Residency, Gordon Parks Foundation Fellowship, Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize, and Louis Comfort Tiffany Award. Adams' solo exhibitions include *Buoyant* at Hudson River Museum; *Where I'm From* at The Gallery in Baltimore City Hall; *Patrick Kelly: The Journey* at Studio Museum in Harlem satellite Countee Cullen Library, NY; *Sanctuary* at Museum of Arts and Design, NY; *Transmission* at Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver; *Network* at California African American Museum, Los Angeles; and *The Channel* at Brooklyn Academy of Music. His work is in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Studio Museum in Harlem, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Birmingham Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Alvin Armstrong was born in San Diego, CA, and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. He is a painter whose work explores the social and political landscape of Black American culture. His paintings are often filled with real and fictional subjects, culled from black and white archival material, his community, and lived experiences. Armstrong received an MS in Oriental Medicine and is a licensed acupuncturist. He's lived in Hawaii, Japan, and California all of which have informed his art practice. His solo exhibition *This Place Looks Different* was held at Medium Tings, a gallery and project space in September 2020 and he was just recently selected as a resident for Pioneer Work's 2021 class.

Ashley August is Black, alive, and loves a good list! She is an Afro-Latina actress, author, playwright, activist, teaching artist, and touring spoken word artist. August is ranked as the third woman poet in the world and is a former Youth Poet Laureate of New York City. She was recently named one of *The New York Times* 30 Under 30 Most Influential people. Stage and screen credits include Sundance Film Festival, Cannes Film Festival, Netflix, Aljazeera America, The GAP, BET, and HBO. Writer and performance credits include Adidas, Refinery 29, Under Armour, Nike, MTV, and more. August is the author of three self-exploratory books, *Love Handles*, *Licorice*, and *Say I Won't*. She is the former curator and Slam Master of the Legendary Bowery Poetry Club. With Belize and Brooklyn embedded into her (he)art, August is motivated to speak the unsaid truth and push the boundaries of spoken word and performance to realms they've yet to live in. August's work can be found in *The BreakBeat Poets Vol. 4*. She currently resides in Los Angeles. August's previous BAM appearances include *Word. Sound. Power. 2018* (2018 Spring) and *Poetry 2013: Game Changers* (2013 Spring).

Hailing from New Orleans, **Tarriona "Tank" Ball** is the frontwoman of the Grammy-nominated group Tank and The Bangas. The four-piece group has a rare knack for combining various musical styles - fiery soul, deft hip-hop, deep-drove R&B, and subtle jazz - into one dazzling, cohesive whole that evokes the scope of New Orleans music while retaining a distinctive feel all its own. Tank and The Bangas released their major-label debut album *Green Balloon* in May 2019 and most recently released the band's follow-up EP *Friend Goals* with a host of features including PJ Morton, CHIKA, Pell, and Duckwrth to name a few. Tarriona "Tank" Ball has collaborated with acts like Mikey Hart, Norah Jones, Tayla Parx, and Jacob Collier to name a few. She had the opportunity to add her stunning vocals to the *Can You Ever Forgive Me?* (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack) on the track "I'll Be Seeing You." Tank's previous BAM appearance includes a headline performance during the 2017 BAM R&B Festival at MetroTech with Tank and the Bangas.

Laylah Amatullah Barrayn is a documentary photographer. Barrayn is a frequent contributor to The New York Times and has been published in Le Monde, National Geographic, Vogue, NPR, VOX, Vanity Fair, among other publications. Her work was recently nominated for a 2020 News and Documentary Emmy. She is the co-author of the book *MFON: Women Photographers of the African Diaspora*. She is a member of Kamoinge, a pioneering collective of African American photographers founded in 1963. She was included as one of the Royal Photographic Society's (UK) Hundred Heroines.

Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, with solo exhibitions at The Museum of the African Diaspora San Francisco, The Taubman Museum of Art (VA), MAK Gallery (Venice + London), and the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporic Arts (NY). Her work has been shown collectively at the MANIFESTA Biennale (Italy); Brighton Photo Biennial (UK); The Museum of Contemporary Photography (Chicago). Barrayn is currently working on a book on contemporary Black photographers. www.LaylahBarrayn.com

Lizania Cruz is a Dominican participatory artist and designer interested in how migration affects ways of being and belonging. Through research, oral history, and audience participation, she creates projects that highlight a pluralistic narrative on migration. Cruz has been an artist-in-residence and fellow at the Laundromat Project Create Change (2018-2019), Agora Collective Berlin (2018), Design Trust for Public Space (2018), Recess Session (2019), IdeasCity: New Museum (2019), Stoneleaf Retreat (2019), Robert Blackburn Workshop Studio Immersion Project (SIP) (2019), A.I.R. Gallery (2020—2021), BRIClab: Contemporary Art (2020—2021), and Center for Books Arts (2020—2021).

Timothy DuWhite (he/they) is a Black/queer poet, actor, and activist based out of Brooklyn, NY. His essays and poetry can be found in *The Rumpus*, *The Root*, *Afropunk*, *Black Youth Project*, *The Griot*, and elsewhere. In the summer of 2018, DuWhite debuted his one-man show *NEPTUNE* as the headliner for Dixon Place's annual "Hot Festival." Following rave reviews and sold-out performances, *NEPTUNE* was then restaged as the 2019 kick-off event for Brooklyn Museum's acclaimed "First Saturday" series. DuWhite was named a "Black LGBTQ+ playwright you need to know" by *Time Out New York*. He is an alumnus of the Public Theater's #BARS program, the brainchild of actors/writers Daveed Diggs and Rafael Casal. He is a current member of the Public Theater's Emerging Writers Group 2020-2022 cohort. DuWhite is the Senior Editor at RaceBaitr.com, Program Director at NY Writers Coalition, and is represented by A3 Artist Agency for Acting & Playwriting. DuWhite is the Senior Editor at RaceBaitr.com, Program Director at NY Writers Coalition, and is represented by A3 Artist Agency for Acting & Playwriting. He is a 2020—2021 BAM Resident Artist. DuWhite's previous BAM appearances include *Word. Sound. Power. 2019* (2019 Spring) and *Essex Hemphill: Remembering and Reimagining* (2019 Spring).

Alicia Garza is an organizer, political strategist, and cheeseburger enthusiast. She is the principal at the Black Futures Lab and the Black to the Future Action Fund, co-founder of the Black Lives Matter Global Network. She has become a powerful voice in the media and frequently contributes thoughtful opinion pieces and expert commentary on politics, race, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Her work is featured in *Time*, *MSNBC*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Elle*, and *Essence*.

Garza has received numerous accolades and recognitions, including being on the cover of *TIME*'s 100 Most Influential People in the World issue (September 2020), named to *TIME*'s 100 Women of the Year list (March 2020), *Fortune*'s 40 Under 40, *Fast Company*'s Queer 50 list, *Politico* 50 and 3x recipient of *The Root*'s list of 100 African American achievers and influencers. Alicia has received the Sydney Peace Prize, Adweek Beacon Award, Glamour's Women of the Year Award, Marie Claire's New Guard Award, and was honored as the Community Change Agent at BET's Black Girls Rock Awards. Garza's first book, *The Purpose of Power: How We Come Together When We Fall Apart*, released in October 2020 with One World (Penguin Random House.) She shares her thoughts on politics and pop culture on her podcast, *Lady Don't Take No*.

Larry Ossei-Mensah uses contemporary art as a vehicle to redefine how we see ourselves and the world around us. The Ghanaian-American curator and cultural critic has organized exhibitions and programs at commercial and nonprofit spaces around the globe from New York City to Rome featuring artists such as Firelei Baez, Allison Janae Hamilton, Brendan Fernandes, Ebony G. Patterson, Modou Dieng, Glenn Kaino, Joiri Minaya and Stanley Whitney to name a few. Moreover, Ossei-Mensah has actively documented cultural happenings featuring the most dynamic visual artists working today such as Derrick Adams, Mickalene Thomas, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Federico Solmi, and Kehinde Wiley.

A native of The Bronx, Larry Ossei-Mensah is also the co-founder of ARTNOIR, a 501(c)(3) and global collective of culturalists who design multimodal experiences aimed to engage this generation's dynamic and diverse creative class. Ossei-Mensah currently serves as Curator at Large at BAM, where he curated

the inaugural exhibition *When A Pot Finds Its Purpose* featuring the work of Glenn Kaino at the Rudin Family Gallery. He will be co-curating with Omsk Social Club 7th Athens Biennale in Athens, Greece in 2021. Ossei-Mensah was named to Artnet's 2020 Innovator List. Ossei-Mensah has had recent profiles in such publications as the *New York Times*, *Artsy*, and *Cultured Magazine*, which recently named him one of seven curators to watch in 2019.

New Orleans-based singer-songwriter **PJ Morton** performs deeply soulful R&B with a passionate delivery that simultaneously comforts and entrances. A longtime keyboardist for Maroon 5 and music director for Solange, Morton boasts a roster of collaborators that include Lil Wayne, Busta Rhymes, and India.Arie. Morton's albums *Gumbo*, *Gumbo Unplugged*, and *Paul* have all earned him Grammy nominations for Best R&B Album, with additional wins for Best Traditional R&B Performance in 2019 and Best R&B Song in 2020. Morton returned to his gospel roots in 2020 with the release of his sixth self-released, self-produced, and first-ever full-length gospel project, *Gospel According to PJ*. The album is nominated for a Grammy for Best Gospel Album, marking the fourth consecutive year of Grammy nominations for Morton. His previous BAM appearance includes a headline performance during the 2018 BAM R&B Festival at MetroTech.

Kameelah Janan Rasheed (b. 1985) grapples with the poetics, politics, and pleasures of the unfinished. With interests in the generative qualities of incompleteness, leakage, dispersal, and syncretism, Rasheed works across an ecosystem of iterative and provisional projects. These projects include sprawling, architecturally-scaled Xerox-based collages; large-scale text banner installations; publications; digital archives; lecture-performances; library interventions; poems/poetic gestures; and other forms yet to be determined. Rasheed has had national and international solo exhibitions and projects at the New Museum, NY (two-person); Transmissions Gallery, Glasgow, UK; Rice University, Houston, TX; Brooklyn Public Library, NY; Brooklyn Historical Society, NY; and Brooklyn Museum, in addition to public installations with Public Art Fund and For Freedoms / Times Square Arts. Her work has also been exhibited at the 2017 Venice Biennale and will be included in the Glasgow International, UK (2021) and Prospect.5 (2021). She is the author of two artist books, *An Alphabetical Accumulation of Approximate Observations* (Endless Editions, 2019) and *No New Theories* (Printed Matter, 2019).

Sing Harlem!, originally the breakout choir for Mama Foundation for the Arts' School of Gospel, Jazz, and R&B Arts, this award-winning choir has flourished under the direction of Ahmaya Knoelle Higginson, serving as both a social impact initiative for young alumni and a commercial choir. They have performed at Lincoln Center, *Saturday Night Live*, and the Grammy Awards—among many others—and accompanied artists including Sting, Arianna Grande, and Madonna. All proceeds benefit the Mama Foundation's music training programs, which are provided to the Harlem community tuition-free.

Hank Willis Thomas is a conceptual artist working primarily with themes related to perspective, identity, commodity, media, and popular culture. His work is included in numerous public collections including the Museum of Modern Art in New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Brooklyn Museum, New York; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, and National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. His collaborative projects include *Question Bridge: Black Males*, *In Search Of The Truth (The Truth Booth)*, *Writing on the Wall*, and the artist-run initiative for art and civic engagement *For Freedoms*, which was awarded the 2017 ICP Infinity Award for New Media and Online Platform. Thomas is also a recipient of the Gordon Parks Foundation Fellowship (2019), Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship (2018), Art For Justice Grant (2018), AIMIA | AGO Photography Prize (2017), Soros Equality Fellowship (2017), and is a former member of the New York City Public Design Commission.

Jasmine Wahi is the Holly Block Social Justice Curator at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, and the Founder + Co-Director of Project for Empty Space, a Newark, NJ-based non-profit organization that supports artists who are interested in social discourse and activism. Her practice predominantly focuses on issues of femme empowerment, complicating binary structures within social discourses, and exploring multi-positional cultural identities through the lens of intersectional feminism. In 2019, Wahi joined the TED speaker family with her first TEDx talk on intersectionality and visibility, entitled *All The Women In Me Are Tired*. Wahi is a Visiting Core Critic at Yale University and a faculty member at the School of Visual Arts: MFA Fine Arts department. Wahi received her Masters in Art History from New York University's Institute of Fine Arts.

Founded in 2016, **For Freedoms** began as an investigation into how art can shape ideas, attitudes, and democratic institutions in American society. For Freedoms believes in the vital role of culture and transforming our social and political systems and that citizenship is defined by participation, not by ideology. Through anti-partisan nationwide programming, they use art as a vehicle to deepen public discussions on civic issues and core values. In essence, For Freedoms is a hub for artists, partner organizations, and citizens who want to be more engaged in public life.

Credits

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