

Bronx Museum Leads Multi-site Exhibitions Surveying The Young Lords Organization

Initiative to Explore Artistic and Cultural Impact of the Radical Social Activist Group

Exhibitions on View Beginning July 2015

Bronx New York—April 29, 2015—The Bronx Museum of the Arts is organizing a multi-venue artistic and cultural survey of The Young Lords Organization—a radical social activist group founded by Puerto Rican youth in the 1960s that demanded reform in health care, education, housing, employment, and policing. Exhibitions of art and archival materials at three cultural institutions in New York City will explore how the Young Lords’ activities, community-focused initiatives, and their affirmation of Puerto Rican identity inspired artists from the 1960s to the present day, and had a major impact on the City and the social history of the United States.

¡Presente! The Young Lords in New York will be exhibited at The Bronx Museum of the Arts (July 2 – October 18, 2015), El Museo del Barrio (July 22–October 17, 2015), and Loisaida Inc. (July 30 – October 10, 2015). The initiative will include public and educational programs across partnering venues to build awareness of the Young Lords’ innovative contributions to the struggle for civil rights and influence on contemporary artists, and to spark conversations about grassroots community activism today. The institutions partnering in *¡Presente! The Young Lords in New York* are all located in neighborhoods where the Young Lords were most active, and each exhibition reflects on the Young Lords’ activities in that part of the City.

“The Young Lords had a defining influence on social activism, art, and identity politics, but the lasting significance of their achievements has rarely been examined,” said The Bronx Museum’s Executive Director Holly Block. “In *¡Presente! The Young Lords in New York*, The Bronx Museum is partnering with El Museo del Barrio and Loisaida Inc. to explore the Young Lord’s cultural impact in New York and the country at large. The issues the Young Lords struggled with are still timely, and their aesthetic and cultural vision still inspires both artists and community leaders today. We’re pleased to work with our partner institutions to bring this story to the public.”

The Bronx Museum of the Arts

¡Presente! The Young Lords in New York at The Bronx Museum is organized by guest curator, scholar and professor Johanna Fernández and adjunct curator Yasmin Ramírez. The exhibition will feature more than 50 works, including paintings, installations, photographs, films, and rare archival materials that highlight the presence of women in the Young Lords, the struggle for equal representation of Latinos in the media, and community actions in the South Bronx—from the takeover of Lincoln Hospital in The Bronx and the implementation of a holistic drug detox program, to the publication of a bilingual newspaper *Pa’lante*.

Highlights of the exhibition at The Bronx Museum include:

- An artistic reconstruction of the Bronx office of the Young Lords by curator Johanna Fernandez and The Bronx Museum curator of education Hatuey Ramos-Fermín.
- An overview of the Young Lords influence on artistic activism and production in New York featuring works in The Bronx Museum of the Arts permanent collection curated by Yasmin Ramírez.

- An installation dedicated to the women in the Young Lords organized in collaboration with artist Sophia Dawson and members of Young Lords Women's Caucus.
- A rotating screening room with rarely-seen films featuring the Young Lords and their contemporaries.
- Free reproductions of the one-year anniversary issue of *Pa'lante* for visitors to take.

Programs at The Bronx Museum will include film screenings, workshops and panel discussions featuring members of the Young Lords Organization and contemporary artists

El Museo del Barrio

The exhibition at El Museo del Barrio will display work related to the Young Lords' work in East Harlem—including the organization's series of theatrical garbage-dumping protests and their peaceful occupation of the First People's Church.

Loisiada Inc.

Loisiada Inc. will focus on the Young Lords' founding in the Lower East Side—displaying rarely seen photographs and reportage of the announcement of founding of the Young Lords Party in Tomkins Square Park on June 26, 1969, and paraphernalia from the Young Lords Lower East Side offices. The exhibition will examine the impact of the Young Lords Gay and Lesbian Caucus. It will also focus on the cultural activism of Young Lord Eddie Figueroa, founder of The New Rican Village, an influential multi-disciplinary art space on Avenue A that later became home to the legendary gay performance space The Pyramid Club.

¡Presente! The Young Lords in New York continues The Bronx Museum's longstanding commitment to presenting works that reveal unique perspectives on the arts, culture, and history of the Bronx. Recent exhibitions include *Three Photographers from the Bronx: Jules Aarons, Morton Broffman, and Joe Conzo* (February 26 – June 14, 2015); *Here I Am: Photographs by Lisa Leone* (September 11, 2014 – January 11, 2015); *Orchard Beach: The Bronx Riviera* (October 13, 2013 – February 16, 2014); and *Road to Freedom: Photographs of the Civil Rights Movement* (March 28 – August 11, 2010).

Funding

Support for *¡Presente! The Young Lords in New York* was provided by the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, The Rosenberg Fund for Children, Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation, and an anonymous donor.

About the Young Lords Organization

Influenced by the Black Panthers and grassroots protests against the Vietnam War, the Young Lords were a radical social organization led by poor and working-class Puerto Rican youth in the 1960s. The Lords built a nationwide movement to address the social issues afflicting their communities—such as education, health care, affordable housing, high unemployment, and police brutality. The Young Lords' activities were innovative, highly effective, and often resulted in legal mandates that institutionalized their policies. In New York, the Young Lords' actions included theatrical garbage-dumping protests in East Harlem and series of audacious church and hospital occupations. In East Harlem and the South Bronx, where the Young Lords were highly active, the organization tested residential areas for lead poisoning, provided breakfast for schoolchildren, and demanded a "13 Point Program" calling for an end to discrimination, police brutality, and mass incarceration. Among other victories, the Young Lords' activities led to a formulation of a patient's bill of rights, the passing of new housing legislation, and the building of a new hospital complex in the Bronx.

About The Bronx Museum of the Arts

The Bronx Museum of the Arts is an internationally recognized cultural destination that presents innovative contemporary art exhibitions and education programs and is committed to promoting cross-cultural dialogues for diverse audiences. Since its founding in 1971, the Museum has played a vital role in the Bronx by helping to make art accessible to the entire community and connecting with local schools, artists, teens, and families through its robust education initiatives. In celebration of its 40th anniversary, the Museum implemented a universal free admission policy, supporting its mission to make arts experiences available to all audiences. The Museum's collection comprises over 1,000 modern and contemporary artworks in all media and highlights works by artists of African, Asian, and Latin-American ancestry, as well as artists for whom the Bronx has been critical to their development. Located on the Grand Concourse, the Museum's home is a distinctive contemporary landmark designed by the internationally recognized firm Arquitectonica.

About Johanna Fernández

Johanna Fernández holds a Ph.D. in History from Columbia University and a B.A. in Literature and American Studies from Brown University. She is a former Fulbright Scholar to Jordan and Assistant Professor of History at Baruch College of the City University of New York, where she teaches 20th-Century U.S. History and African American History. Professor Fernández has written numerous articles on the Young Lords and is author of the forthcoming *When the World Was Their Stage: A History of the Young Lords Party, 1968–1976* (Princeton University Press). She is editor of *Writing on the Wall, Selected Prison Writings of Mumia Abu-Jamal* (City Lights, 2015) and the writer and producer of the film, *Justice on Trial: the Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal*. Her writings have been published internationally, from Al Jazeera to the *Huffington Post*. She gives interviews often and has appeared in a diverse range of print, radio, online, and televised media including *Democracy Now! With Amy Goodman*, the Fox News shows *Hannity* and *The Kelly File*, the Spanish language HITN-TV and Telemundo 47, NPR, Al Jazeera, and *The New York Times*.

About Yasmin Ramírez

Yasmin Ramírez holds a Ph.D. in Art History from the Graduate Center of the City of New York. Currently Adjunct Curator at The Bronx Museum of the Arts, Dr. Ramírez's prior institutional affiliations include: The Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College; El Museo Del Barrio; The Studio Museum in Harlem; The Caribbean Culture Center; and Taller Boricua. A scholar and curator, Dr. Ramírez has organized numerous exhibitions and panels, notably *The Puerto Rican Art Workers and the Construction of the Nuyorican Art Movement* (2014), *Re-Membering Loisaída: On Archiving and the Lure of the Retro Lens* (2009), and *Esto A Veces Tiene Nombre: Latin@ Art Collectives in a Post-Movement Millennium* (2008). Dr. Ramírez's published essays include: *Snap Shots: A Short History of the Association of Hispanic Arts* (2013), *The Creative Class of Color in New York* (2009), *The Activist Legacy of Puerto Rican Artists in New York and the Art Heritage of Puerto Rico* (2007), and more. Dr. Ramírez serves on the national steering committee of the biennial conference, Latino Art Now, and the advisory board of the book series *Aver: Revisioning Art History*. In her former position as a Research Associate at The Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College, Dr. Ramírez oversaw the digitization of works on paper and writings on Puerto Rican artists in New York through a partnership with The International Center for Arts of the Americas, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

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