



For Immediate Release

CULTIVATING CULTURE: 34 INSTITUTIONS THAT CHANGED NEW YORK
Opening at the Museum of the City of New York on October 18

New Exhibition Features Images and Objects from NYC Cultural Institutions Group
A Celebration of the City's History of Art and Culture

(New York, NY, October 9, 2019) - *Cultivating Culture: 34 Institutions that Changed New York*, opening at the Museum of the City of New York on October 18th, will feature images, objects and ephemera from the almost three dozen members of New York City's Cultural Institutions Group (CIG). *Cultivating Culture* commemorates the 150th anniversary of the unparalleled public-private initiative that is now known as the CIG. Today, it provides support to 34 institutions, across all five boroughs, that helps cement New York City's status as the cultural capital of the world. On view through February 9, 2020, *Cultivating Culture* underscores the rich and broad spectrum of cultural offerings available to visitors to New York and residents alike.

"Today, New York City invests more in culture than any other US city – even more than the National Endowment for the Arts spends for the entire country each year," says **Whitney Donhauser**, Ronay Menschel Director and President of the Museum of the City of New York. "With the help of this support, CIG members have shaped the very fabric of New York City culture, and cemented New York City as a leader in the world's cultural landscape."

"This exhibition illustrates the nexus of the unique partnership between cultural community and the City of New York, which has been a key factor in turning New York City into the tourism capital of the world," says **John F. Calvelli**, Chair, Cultural Institutions Group, and Executive Vice President of Public Affairs, Wildlife Conservation Society. "This is the first official CIG exhibit to encapsulate the contributions of each member over the past 150 years. It demonstrates the importance of culture to both the economic viability of the City but most importantly, the countless communities that benefit from cultural and educational services and are inspired by our programming. Visitors will learn about the creative and innovative work that has and will continue to strengthen the diverse fabric of this City. We are honored to partner with the City of New York, Con Edison, the Museum of the City of New York and all of our CIG colleagues to bring the cultural history of New York to life."

This significant ongoing investment in cultural institutions across boroughs —from **Studio Museum in Harlem, New York City Center**, and **El Museo del Barrio** in Manhattan, to the Bronx’s **New York Botanical Gardens, Bronx County Historical Society**, and **Wave Hill**; Brooklyn’s **Weeksville Heritage Center, Brooklyn Children’s Museum**, and **Brooklyn Botanic Garden** to Queens’ **Museum of the Moving Image, Queens Theatre**, and **Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning**; and Staten Island’s **Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden, Staten Island Historical Society**, and **Staten Island Zoological Society**— continues to pay off, as member institutions consistently add value to the city’s culture, education, and economy. Contributing directly to more than 15,000 jobs and to business development in their respective neighborhoods, CIG members collectively receive approximately 18 million visitors, including more than 2.5 million school children every year.

Cultivating Culture shares these institutions’ stories through original imagery and objects — many of which have never been publicly displayed before — including founding charters, tickets, and ephemera related to opening night performances, along with other artifacts that bring the history and contemporary riches of the city’s cultural resources to life.

Exhibition highlights include:

- Ticket to opening night at **Brooklyn Academy of Music** (1861);
- A selection of enclosed objects originally stored in a time capsule in the cornerstone of **Flushing Town Hall** (1862);
- Signed and printed copy of the charter of **The Metropolitan Museum of Art** (1870);
- Program from the opening night of **Carnegie Hall** (1891);
- Invitation to the opening of **American Museum of Natural History** (1892)
- Visitors log from the opening day of **Brooklyn Museum** (1897);
- **Staten Island Museum** founder William T. Davis’ glasses, field notebook, and cicada collection (1920);
- Model of the **Museum of the City of New York**, designed and created Architect Joseph H. Freedlander (1936);
- A World's Fair Radio from the **Queens Museum** (1939);
- Booklet from *Gardens on Parade* at **Queens Botanical Garden** -- which was the largest outdoor flower show ever seen (1939)
- Birthday card from the Łódź Ghetto housed at the **Museum of Jewish Heritage - A Living Memorial to the Holocaust** (1944)
- Invitation and memo to the ground breaking at **Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts** (1959);
- Child’s Bug Costume from George Balanchine’s **New York City Ballet** production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1964);
- A Blue dalle de verre panel – one of the 5,400 concrete and stained-glass segments that create the façade of **New York Hall of Science** (1964)

- Catalogue for inaugural *Rooms* exhibition at **MoMA PS1** (1976);
- Reproduction of the architectural rendering of the **Bronx Museum of the Arts** building (1984)
- Child-sized shovel commemorating the groundbreaking on the Solar Tent and Wind Turbine at the **Staten Island Children's Museum** (2011)
- The original playbill from **The Public Theater** performances of *Hamilton* (2015);
and
- A painting collaboration by Sea Lions at the **Bronx Zoo** and the **New York Aquarium** (2019)

The Museum will present a range of family-oriented and educator events tied to *Cultivating Culture*, including an **Educator Evening** on **December 4th at 6PM**, which will include a free curator tour of the exhibition. More information here: <http://www.mcny.org/events> .

As well, the Museum of the City of New York will kick off a special scavenger hunt. Visitors can purchase a specially created #CultivatingCulture tote bag featuring a list of all CIG institutions and a mini Sharpie. All will be encouraged to visit each CIG institution and "check it off" on the bag and tag it on social media.

About the Museum of the City of New York

The Museum of the City of New York fosters understanding of the distinctive nature of urban life in the world's most influential metropolis. It engages visitors by celebrating, documenting, and interpreting the city's past, present, and future. To connect with the Museum on social media, follow us on Instagram and Twitter at @MuseumofCityNY and visit our Facebook page at Facebook.com/MuseumofCityNY. For more information please visit www.mcny.org.

About the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG)

The Department of Cultural Affairs' mission of fostering dynamic public partnerships with private cultural organizations has its most dramatic expression in its relationship with the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG). The 34 members of this group are each located on City-owned property, and receive significant capital and operating support from the City to help meet basic security, maintenance, administration, and energy costs. In return for this support, these institutions operate as publicly-owned facilities whose mandate is to provide cultural services accessible to all New Yorkers.

The genesis of this public-private partnership began in 1869, with the creation of the American Museum of Natural History. Since that time, each Institution's relationship with the City has commenced in ways that reflected the City's cultural priorities of the time.

Support

Cultivating Culture is made possible by Con Edison and the Cultural Institutions Group. The Museum gratefully acknowledges the generous support of Mayor Bill de Blasio, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and the New York City Council.

The exhibition was designed by “Once – Future Office.”

Made possible in part by The New Network Fund, supported by  JLGreene



#

Media Contact:

Meryl Cooper, (917) 974-0022 / meryl@theCOOPERationinc.com

Sheryl Victor Levy, (917) 492-3482 / svlevy@mcny.org