Bruce Presents

Architecture 20/20: New Visions for Public Spaces in the Age of COVID-19

Thursday, June 4, 2020, 7:00 – 8:30 pm, Virtual Webinar via Zoom

Museum Directors to Expand the Discussion with Leading Architects
Steve Dumez, Craig Dykers, Maitland Jones, and Paul Schulhof

GREENWICH, CT, May 26, 2020 — For museum directors, these are among the most pressing issues of our time: How will the global coronavirus pandemic change how public spaces are designed or modified, from classrooms to auditoriums, public restrooms to restaurants, hallways to elevators? How will the need for adequate social distancing impact how public spaces are used in a post-lockdown environment?

In a compelling new Bruce Presents virtual panel discussion via Zoom on Thursday June 4, 7:00 – 8:30 pm, three executive directors of prominent cultural organizations will expand the conversation with four world-class architects to discuss Architecture 20/20: New Visions for Public Spaces in the Age of COVID-19. They are Pamela Franks, Executive Director of the Williams College Museum of Art in Williamstown, MA; Nico Wheadon, Executive Director of NXTHVN, a multidisciplinary arts incubator in New Haven, CT; and Robert Wolterstorff, The Susan E. Lynch Executive Director of the Bruce Museum.
“The COVID-19 crisis makes urgent the need for new thinking about how we gather in our public spaces. It’s certain to lead to innovative, even surprising, ideas for how we can create new spaces, and for how we better use spaces that already exist,” says Robert Wolterstorff, an architectural historian by training who is leading the Bruce Museum’s transformative renovation and expansion project, already well under way.

“Museums are places where we come together, in real space, to engage in culture and discussion. Bringing people together is essential if a museum is to create a sense of community. These ideas of gathering and of community are deeply embedded in the designs for the New Bruce, and that’s why this topic is so important to me right now. The Bruce Museum is delighted to present this timely discussion.”

Providing expert insight into these new and urgent issues are four distinguished architects whose practices focus on the design of public buildings and spaces:

- **Steve Dumez**, Principal and Director of Design at [EskewDumezRipple](http://www.eskewdumezripple.com)
- **Craig Dykers**, Founding Partner at [Snøhetta](http://www.snøhetta.com)
- **Maitland Jones**, Principal at [Deborah Berke Partners](http://www.dbp.com)
- **Paul Schulhof**, Principal at [Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects](http://www.twbt.com)

The four architects will open the program at 7:00 pm; the three museum directors will join the panel at 7:45. The program will conclude with a Q&A session moderated by Leonard Jacobs, producer of *Bruce Presents*.

“Earlier this year, we aimed to convene a group of architects to imagine the 2020s—trends in design and technology,” says Jacobs. “With the disruption caused by COVID-19, now we’re making a powerful pivot, one that calls for insight from museum directors on the front lines of this rapid change: Will the crisis revolutionize the design, form and function of public space—and how?”

Participation in the virtual *Bruce Presents* on Zoom for the benefit of the Bruce Museum is $25 for Museum members, $35 non-members. To reserve a place, visit bruemuseum.org or call 203-869-0376; a link to join the online conversation will be sent to registered attendees prior to the program.

Support for *Bruce Presents* is generously provided by Northern Trust and Berkley One, a Berkley Company.

**More on our museum director panelists:**

**Pamela Franks** is the Class of 1956 Director of the Williams College Museum of Art. Prior to assuming this role in 2018, Franks served as Senior Deputy Director and the Seymour H. Knox, Jr., Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Yale University Art Gallery. She previously worked at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas.
Press Release

Since earning her Ph.D. in art history from the University of Texas at Austin in 2000, Franks has been a passionate advocate for academic and public engagement in art museums. Franks directed Yale’s Mellon-funded Collection Sharing Initiative with six partner college and university art museums from 2008 to 2013 and organized the 2014 conference Expanding a Shared Vision: The Art Museum and the University. While at Yale, she taught in the History of Art department and School of Art, and developed the Gallery’s curatorial training program, serving as a mentor for student-curated exhibitions including Embodied: Black Identities in American Art from the Yale University Art Gallery (2010–2011).

A specialist in contemporary art, Franks’ most recent curatorial project, Matthew Barney: Redoubt, originated at the Yale University Art Gallery in 2019 and travels to the UCCA in Beijing and the Hayward Gallery in London. Her work is inspired by a belief in the transformative power of art and of museums for individuals, institutions, and society.

Nico Wheadon is the founding executive director of NXTHVN, a multidisciplinary arts incubator in New Haven, CT, committed to fortifying the broader arts economy through strategic partnerships with the education, entrepreneurship, philanthropy, and government sectors. She is also an adjunct assistant professor of Art History and Africana Studies at Barnard College, and Professional Practices at Hartford Art School.

Wheadon is the former director of public programs and community engagement at the Studio Museum in Harlem, where she was celebrated for the pioneering artist projects, community engagement initiatives, and strategic partnerships she delivered during her five-year tenure. She has lectured internationally at universities, conferences and symposia, and currently serves on the advisory boards for the Lubin School of Business Transformative Leadership Program, the John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage, and More Art. Wheadon holds an MA in Creative & Cultural Entrepreneurship from Goldsmith’s College, University of London, and a BA in Art-Semiotics from Brown University.

Robert Wolterstorff was named The Susan E. Lynch Executive Director and CEO of the Bruce Museum in May 2019. He served as Executive Director of the Bennington Museum in Vermont from 2012 to 2019, leading the 167-year-old museum through a well-received curatorial makeover.

An architectural historian with a passion for contemporary art and Victorian design, Wolterstorff previously served as Director of the Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion in Philadelphia and as Executive Director of Victoria Mansion in Portland, Maine. Over a 27-year career in the arts and museum leadership, Wolterstorff has also held curatorial and research positions at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Clark Art Institute, the Williams College Museum of Art, and the college’s Chapin Rare Book Library. He served as a trustee for the New England Museum Association from 2006 to 2015.

Wolterstorff earned a master of fine arts and a doctorate in art history from Princeton University, where he wrote his dissertation on the 18th-century neoclassical architect Robert Adam. He has a master’s in
art history from Williams College and a bachelor’s in biology from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Conceived by Suzanne Lio, Managing Director of the Bruce Museum, and launched in 2019, Bruce Presents has received enthusiastic reviews for its topical programming. Presentations on art have featured philanthropist/collector Jennifer Stockman, filmmaker Olympia Stone, and art historian/author Dr. Ágnes Berecz. Programs on science have featured an exclusive live Skype with Antarctica researcher Dr. Kim Bernard and a provocative dialogue between artist/activist Alexis Rockman and David Abel, an award-winning environmental reporter at The Boston Globe.

“The Bruce Museum has long been an important resource in our community for forward-thinking public programs,” says Lio. “By leveraging our unique network of institutional and professional connections, the series offers unprecedented access for our members and visitors to major thought leaders in the fields of art and science.”

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About the Bruce Museum

The Bruce Museum is a community-based, world-class institution highlighting art and science. Changing galleries for art and permanent galleries for the natural sciences encompass regional to global perspectives. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and voted the best museum in Fairfield County by area media in recent years, the Bruce plays an integral role in the cultural life of area residents. The Museum attracts approximately 70,000 visitors annually, including 24,000 schoolchildren, and also has special programs for families, seniors, students, and community organizations. Located in a park setting just off I-95, exit 3, at 1 Museum Drive in Greenwich, Connecticut, the Museum is also a 5-minute walk from the Metro-North Greenwich Station. The Bruce Museum is temporarily closed in accordance with state and local guidelines. Normal operating hours: Open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 am to 5 pm; closed Mondays and major holidays. For additional information, call the Bruce Museum at 203-869-0376 or visit brucemuseum.org.

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