



BARCLAYS CENTER ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL ART COMMISSIONS

*Works by Mickalene Thomas, José Parlá, OpenEndedGroup Launch Series of Installations in
New Sports and Entertainment Venue*

BROOKLYN, NY (September 21, 2012) – Today, the Barclays Center announced the inaugural works in a series of visual arts projects that will be installed throughout the new arena, including new commissions inspired by the creative energy of the borough and installations that celebrate the lives of the people in Brooklyn. The initiative will grow over time, with additional commissions and projects to be announced in the coming months.

The inaugural projects include Mickalene Thomas’s monumental mural combining photo collage and painting to depict the Brooklyn cityscape; José Parlá’s 70-foot-long painting inspired by Brooklyn’s history and the artist’s experience as a resident of the borough; and two works by OpenEndedGroup, a collaborative of three digital artists—Marc Downie, Shelley Eshkar, and Paul Kaiser—that will be displayed on the Barclays Center Oculus, a 3,000-square-foot, 360-degree LED marquee outside the Center’s main entrance.

“As the Barclays Center becomes a new crossroads for Brooklyn, it is also defining a new model for the role that sports and entertainment arenas can play in the life of their communities,” said Bruce Ratner, co-owner of the Barclays Center. “The works by Mickalene Thomas, José Parlá, and OpenEndedGroup are just the beginning, and we look forward to displaying art inspired by the narratives of Brooklyn.”

The Barclays Center is developing its arts initiative under the guidance of David Berliner, member of the Barclays Center board, with input from Arnold Lehman, director of the Brooklyn Museum, and Eugenie Tsai, the John and Barbara Vogelstein curator of contemporary art of the Brooklyn Museum. Curator, author, and art historian Sarah Elizabeth Lewis consulted on these inaugural commissions.

“The new art commissions—and those still to come—reflect our commitment to strengthening the connections between the Barclays Center and Brooklyn’s great cultural institutions. BAM’s visionary support for local artists and original commission of José Parlá’s first public work in Brooklyn for the BAM Fisher inspired us to commission our own Parlá mural. We’re creating exciting synergies for the borough and underscoring our relationship with BAM, which includes a partnership tapping BAM’s artistic guidance to identify unique, large-scale international productions for the Barclays stages,” said Mr. Berliner of the Barclays Center.

“In addition,” Mr. Berliner continued, “we share a special interest in Mickalene Thomas’s work with our friends at the Brooklyn Museum. When we unveil Mickalene’s work next week, it will coincide with the opening of a major exhibition of her work at the museum.”

Mickalene Thomas

Brooklyn-based artist Mickalene Thomas was commissioned to create a 120-foot-long vinyl mural for the South Club at the Barclays Center that combines digital photo collage and painting to depict Brooklyn’s mix of urban architecture. Known for her elaborate paintings adorned with rhinestones, enamel, and colorful acrylics, Thomas has recently begun to explore landscapes and interiors in her site-specific work. For the Barclays Center commission, Thomas juxtaposes angular views of the cityscape alongside geometric patterns reminiscent of 1970s textiles to pay tribute to the bustling energy and distinct characteristics of the borough. Featuring some of Brooklyn’s iconic landmarks—including the Brooklyn Bridge, the Brooklyn Museum, the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch at Grand Army Plaza, and the borough’s fabled brownstones—the mural is a vibrant ode to the community in which Thomas lives and works. The Brooklyn Museum is presenting her first solo exhibition, *Mickalene Thomas: Origin of the Universe* from September 28, 2012, through January 20, 2013.

OpenEndedGroup

OpenEndedGroup’s inaugural installation at Barclays Center is a version of the group’s 2010 work, *After Ghostcatching*, adapted specifically for display on the arena’s massive outdoor Oculus. A re-envisioning of the group’s previous work *Ghostcatching* (1999), *After Ghostcatching* is built up from a larger sampling of the motions and vocalizations of dancer/choreographer Bill T. Jones first captured for the earlier work. The work explores the themes of disembodiment and identity with the new possibilities opened up by 3D projection and a custom 3D renderer created in the OpenEndedGroup’s Field software. A disembodied dancer is rendered as a moving hand-drawn sketch – and that sketch moves in a projected 3D space. Though the work’s imagery comes entirely from a computer simulation, it bears an unmistakable trace of dancer Bill T. Jones, abstracted from his physical body via a process of optical motion capture that preserves his movement but not his likeness.

OpenEndedGroup’s second work at the Barclays Center is a new commission that will be completed in spring 2013. Titled *All Day*, the piece focuses on the childhood games played out on Brooklyn playgrounds, sidewalks, and stoops, ranging from pick-up basketball games to chalk drawings, from games of catch to games of tag. Rendered in colorful non-photorealistic fashion, the work will be a kaleidoscopic view of the energy of childhood in the borough. The spaces of the action will be captured from Brooklyn itself using OpenEndedGroup’s custom 3D capture methods, which allow them to take thousands of shots using simple cameras, and then using a computer to stitch them together into a fully 3D representation.

José Parlá

Fort Greene-based artist José Parlá has created a site-specific, 70-foot-long painting for the Dean Street lobby entrance that will be visible from the street. Titled *A Diary of Brooklyn*, the work of art was inspired by the book *Brooklyn Is* by James Agee, the long history of the borough, the artist’s personal experiences living in Brooklyn, and the recent transformation of the Atlantic Yards area. The artist, who lives and works near the Barclays Center, incorporated the neighborhood’s energy into the piece through multiple layers of writing, including phrases from Agee’s book, hip-hop lyrics, and the artist’s personal thoughts. Parlá recently completed a site-specific commission for BAM—*Gesture Performing Dance, Dance Performing Gesture*—which was inspired by the dance and theater performances that have taken place on the performing arts center’s stages. The two pieces, just down the road from one another, create a vibrant dialogue about the life of the borough. Parlá’s work will be installed at the Barclays Center at a future date to be announced.

About Barclays Center

Scheduled to open on September 28, 2012, Barclays Center will be a major sports and entertainment venue in the heart of Brooklyn, New York. Developed by Brooklyn-based real estate developer Forest City Ratner Companies, designed by the award-winning architectural firms AECOM (www.aecom.com/architecture) and SHoP Architects (www.shoparc.com), and home to the Brooklyn Nets, Barclays Center will have one of the most intimate seating configurations ever designed into a modern multi-purpose arena, with unparalleled sightlines and first-class amenities. Barclays Center will offer approximately 18,000 seats for basketball and up to 19,000 seats for concerts, and will also have 101 luxury suites, four bars/lounges, four clubs, and 40/40 CLUB & Restaurant by American Express.

For more information on Barclays Center, please visit www.barclayscenter.com. For more information on the Brooklyn Nets, please visit www.brooklynets.com.

Contact:

Molly Kurzius / Alison Buchbinder
Resnicow Schroeder Associates
mkurzius / abuchbinder@resnicowschroeder.com
212-671-5163 / 5165