



**ROYAL ACADEMY AMERICA CELEBRATES MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ HON RA, ARYEH B. BOURKOFF AND THOMAS HEATHERWICK RA AT THEIR 2017 GALA**

**Tuesday, September 26, 2017**

**NEW YORK, NY** – On Tuesday, September 26, Royal Academy America, the US office for the Royal Academy of Arts, honored performance artist **Marina Abramović Hon RA**, philanthropist and CEO of LionTree LLC **Aryeh B. Bourkoff** and renowned British designer **Thomas Heatherwick RA** at their annual gala in New York.

The evening was hosted by esteemed British comedian, actor and writer **Stephen Fry** at the IAC Building in West Chelsea, and was attended by a diverse group of leading artists, curators, gallerists, philanthropists and cultural influencers from around the world. The event was supported with generous sponsorship from Moët Hennessy USA and LionTree,

The evening kicked off with a lively cocktail reception in the IAC Building's incredible Frank Gehry-designed atrium for approximately 320 guests, who had the opportunity to experience a special preview of *Rising*, Marina Abramović's foray into virtual reality as a medium, presented by **Acute Art**, the world's first Virtual Reality arts platform that will launch this fall with VR installations from three world renowned Royal Academicians - Marina Abramović, Olafur Eliasson, and Jeff Koons. Attendees also enjoyed a multi-layered interactive installation from **Bang & Olufson's** contemporary incubator **B&O PLAY** in collaboration with **Love Watts** and digital artist **Nic Courdy**. A silent auction of five iconic *Spun Chairs*, designed by Thomas Heatherwick and generously donated by **Herman Miller** and **Magis Design**, took place throughout the cocktail hour.

Guests then made their way to the dining area for an elegant seated dinner and dynamic program led by host **Stephen Fry**. The evening opened with a toast from President of the Royal Academy **Christopher Le Brun PRA**, followed by Chairman of Royal Academy America **Declan Kelly**, who introduced the honorees to the stage with descriptions of their unique contributions to the global cultural community and the Royal Academy.

To close the dinner **Andrea Fiuczynski** led a fast-paced live auction of three once in a lifetime experiences, including a private dinner for the winner and nine guests with Marina Abramović Hon RA and Sean Kelly, sponsored by Moët Hennessey; and a private walk up Thomas Heatherwick

RA's *Vessel*, the new landmark centerpiece of Hudson Yards development due for completion in 2019, led by the designer himself.

At the end of the night, guests were treated to gift bags that contained copies of Marina Abramović's newest publication, *Walk Through Walls: A Memoir*, donated by **Crown Archetype**, as well as other items donated by **By Kilian**, **The Daily Edited** and **Molton Brown**. Event design and production was by **Frank Mullaney Floral Design**, **GLOW Audio Visual** and **MF Productions** with catering by **Silkstone Catering**.

The 2017 gala committee included: Albertz Benda, Avenue Capital, Blavatnik Family Foundation, Ilaria Bulgari, Charter Communications, Chrome Hearts, Jim Clerkin, Chuck Close, Cooley, Eileen Cooper RA, Creative Artists Agency, Lisa Dennison, Discovery Communications, Stephen Farthing RA & Dr Ami Abou-bakr, Martin E. Franklin, Larry Gagosian, Victoria Major & Ben Gore, IAC, Bill Jacklin RA, Marilyn & Jeffrey Katzenberg, Julia & Declan Kelly, Sean & Mary Kelly, Sean Kelly Gallery, Liberty Global, Live Nation, Monika McLennan, Mrs. Rupert Murdoch, Oath, Grace & Usher Raymond IV, Prof. David Remfry MBE RA, Dame Jillian Sackler DBE, Rebecca Salter RA, Hélène Marie & Jake Shafran, Laine Siklos, Emma Stibbon RA, Universal Music Group, Weil, Gotshal & Manges, Dasha Zhukova and Eric & Aerin Zinterhofer.

All proceeds raised from the event will support the Royal Academy's unique exhibition, public and educational programming.

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## **SPECIAL GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE**

**HONOREES:** Marina Abramović Hon RA, Aryeh B. Bourkoff and Thomas Heatherwick RA.

**ARTISTS, GALLERISTS, MUSEUM and CULTURAL LEADERS:** Thorsten Albertz (Albertz Benda); Tony Bechara (artist); Catharine Becket (Sotheby's); Justin Brice Guariglia (artist); Zoe Buckman (artist); Chuck Close (artist); Eileen Cooper RA (artist); Lisa Dennison (Sotheby's); Katy Erdman (303 Gallery); Stephen Farthing RA (artist); JiaJia Fei (The Jewish Museum); Andrea Fiuczynski (Sotheby's); Yvonne Force Villareal (Art Production Fund); Casey Fremont (Art Production Fund); Ben Gore (Christie's); Loïc Gouzer (Christie's); Hugh Hildesley (Sotheby's); Bill Jacklin RA (artist), Declan Kelly (Royal Academy America); Lauren Kelly (Sean Kelly Gallery); Sean Kelly (Sean Kelly Gallery); Thomas Kelly (Sean Kelly Gallery); Christopher Le Brun PRA (Royal Academy); Alex Logsdail (Lisson Gallery); Victoria Major; Tim Marlow (Royal Academy); Julie Mehretu (artist); Tiffany Nesbit (Royal Academy America); Scott Nussbaum (Phillips); Nina del Rio (Sotheby's); Rebecca Salter RA (artist); Edwina Sandys (artist); Charles Saumarez Smith

CBE (Royal Academy); Bradley Theodore (artist); Billie Tsien (Tod Williams & Billie Tsien Architects), Ed Vaizey; Marlies Verhoeven (The Cultivist); Leo Villareal (artist); Daryl Wickstrom (Artory); Tod Williams (Tod Williams & Billie Tsien Architects), and Chloe Wise (artist).

**PHILANTHROPISTS:** Michael Aiello, Tim Armstrong, Anna Bulgari, Ilaria Bulgari, Natalia Bulgari, Veronica Bulgari, Elizabeth Crain, Rob Fairbairn, Stephen Fry, Edwin Goodman, LaVon Kellner, Josh Kaufman; Joshua Kushner, Joey Levin, Monika McLennan, Curt & Amy Middleton, Jacco Reijtenbagh, James Rothschild, Thomas Rutledge, Dame Jillian Sackler DBE, Jake & H  l  ne Marie Shafran, and Laine Siklos.

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### **About the Royal Academy of Arts**

The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by King George III in 1768. It has a unique position in being an independent, privately funded institution led by eminent artists and architects whose purpose is to be a clear, strong voice for art and artists. Its public program promotes the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the visual arts and architecture through exhibitions, education and debate.

The RA is undergoing a transformative redevelopment which will be completed in time for its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018. Led by the internationally-acclaimed architect Sir David Chipperfield RA and supported by the National Lottery, the plans will link Burlington House on Piccadilly and Burlington Gardens for the first time, uniting the two-acre site. The redevelopment will also reveal the elements that make the RA unique, sharing with the public [the historic treasures in its Collection](#), the work of its [Academicians](#) and [the RA Schools](#), alongside its world-class exhibitions program. For more information on the RA visit: [www.royalacademy.org.uk/ra250#video](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk/ra250#video)

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