



**ROYAL ACADEMY AMERICA 2017 GALA TO HONOR MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ HON RA,
ARYEH B. BOURKOFF AND THOMAS HEATHERWICK RA**

Tuesday, September 26, 6.30pm
IAC Building, 555 West 18th Street



IAC Building, Image courtesy of IAC.

NEW YORK, NY – August 17, 2017 – Royal Academy America, the US office for the Royal Academy of Arts, announced today that it will honor celebrated performance artist **Marina Abramović Hon RA**, philanthropist and CEO of LionTree LLC **Aryeh B. Bourkoff** and renowned British designer **Thomas Heatherwick RA** at its annual Gala on Tuesday September 26. The evening will be hosted by esteemed British comedian, actor and writer Stephen Fry at the IAC Building in West Chelsea, with generous sponsorship from Moët Hennessy USA and LionTree.

“We are delighted to honor Marina Abramović, Aryeh B. Bourkoff and Thomas Heatherwick at this year’s Gala. Each of them has made indelible, transformational contributions to the arts,” said **Declan Kelly**, Chairman of RA America. “As we look toward the Royal Academy’s 250th anniversary in 2018, it is clear that our role as a unique place to make, exhibit and debate art is more important today than ever before. Thanks in large part to the honorees’ support, this year’s Gala will raise a record amount, which will provide essential funding for the continuation of the Royal Academy’s important and invaluable work.”

The gala will honor these three individuals for their contributions to the art world and support of the Royal Academy:

- **Marina Abramović Hon RA** – In a career spanning more than 40 years, Marina Abramović has earned legendary status and worldwide acclaim for her performance art. Often enduring repeated injuries or remaining motionless for hours at a time, she transcends the limits of her body. Through her extreme displays, she has sought to reclaim the genre of performance art from its marginal position in the art world by showing that it can be a vehicle for highly emotive and political messages. She was awarded the Golden Lion for Best Artist at the 1997 Venice Biennale and in 2008, she was decorated with the Austrian Commander Cross for her contribution to Art History. Ms. Abramović was elected an Honorary Royal Academician in 2011.
- **Aryeh B. Bourkoff** - As Founder and CEO of LionTree, a global investment and merchant bank at the intersection of entertainment, media, and technology, Mr. Bourkoff brings together some of the most creative and forward-thinking executives in business. He contributes this connectivity to select private company boards, is a trustee of the Foundation for Fighting Blindness, and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Additionally, Mr. Bourkoff is a member of the Board of Trustees of The Paley Center for Media, the New York Philanthropic Advisory Board of UNICEF, Royal Academy America, and Lincoln Center's Business Advisory Council as well as the Lincoln Center Media & Entertainment Council.
- **Thomas Heatherwick RA** - The iconic British designer and Founder of Heatherwick Studios is internationally recognized for his work in architecture, urban infrastructure, sculpture, design and strategic thinking. His projects include the UK pavilion at Expo, Shanghai (2010), the new bus for London (2010), the Olympic cauldron (2010), *Vessel*, the new public landmark commissioned as the centerpiece for the Hudson Yards development in Manhattan, due for completion in 2018, and Zeitz MOCAA, a museum in Cape Town, South Africa, scheduled to open in late 2017. Mr. Heatherwick has won numerous awards including Prince Philip Designers Prize (2006), a RIBA National Award (2008), the London Design Medal (2010), the RIBA Lubetkin Prize (2010) and the Lend Lease Award for a first-time exhibitor in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition (2013). He was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2013 and was elected a Royal Academician in the same year.

The members of the gala committee include: **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, Christopher Le Brun PRA, 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, H el ene Marie & Jake Shafran, Laine Siklos, Emma Stibbon RA, Universal Music Group, Weil, Gotshal & Manges, Dasha Zhukova, and Eric & Aerin Zinterhofer.**

RA America is also pleased to announce that Herman Miller has generously donated five *Spun Chairs* to be auctioned during the Gala. Both sculptural and functional, the iconic *Spun Chair* was designed by Thomas Heatherwick for notable Italian furniture company Magis, and is distributed by Herman Miller in the USA and Canada. All proceeds of sales will be donated to RA America.

The Royal Academy of Arts is one of the world's leading arts institutions. Founded in London in 1768 by King George III, it has a unique position in being an independent and privately-funded

institution led by eminent artists and architects – Royal Academicians – whose purpose is to be a clear and strong voice for art and artists. Its public program promotes the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the visual arts through exhibitions, learning and debate. Alongside its high-profile exhibitions of historic and contemporary art and architecture, the RA has provided art education at no cost to the most promising talent through its prestigious art school, which is the oldest art school in the United Kingdom.

For more information on the Gala or to purchase tickets, please contact April Moorhouse, Head of Programmes & Membership, at april.moorhouse@raamerica.org or on (212) 980-8404.

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