

Press Release



Brooklyn Museum

The Brooklyn Museum to Honor Maria Grazia Chiuri, Sandra Williams-Cornwell, and W. Don Cornwell at 2022 Brooklyn Artists Ball

Tickets for the Museum’s annual gala and After Party, which return on April 12 as in-person celebrations, are now on sale.

On Tuesday, April 12, 2022, the Brooklyn Museum hosts its eleventh annual Brooklyn Artists Ball, this year honoring Maria Grazia Chiuri, Creative Director of Dior Women’s Collections, and longtime Trustee Sandra Williams-Cornwell and her partner, W. Don Cornwell, for their outstanding contributions to the Museum and unique thought leadership in the fine arts and fashion. Regarded as one of the most highly anticipated art world events, the Artists Ball is the Museum’s largest fundraiser, generating pivotal revenue in support of programming that spans special exhibitions and reimagined collection installations as well as educational programs for visitors of all ages.

Guests of this year’s Ball are encouraged to draw inspiration from the Museum’s recent blockbuster exhibition *Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams* and dress “like a star,” playing with the designer’s lucky symbol—the star—and related fascination with astrology, as well as the House of Dior’s history of dressing the red carpet’s most notable celebrities. Guests will be greeted with décor that looks at celestial objects, such as planets and

stars, as symbols of optimism, all brought to life by the imaginative event design of David Stark.

The glamorous evening begins with a reception with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres in the Museum's lobby at 6:30 pm, followed by an elegant seated dinner in the Beaux-Arts Court at 7:30 pm. Dinner guests are treated to a menu developed and catered by Great Performances. Finally, at 9 pm, Swizz Beatz headlines the Ball's always-lively After Party alongside a set of to-be-announced guest performances expected to bring the house down. Tickets for the After Party go on sale to the public on March 15.

This year's artist projects include a photo booth by Randy Polumbo and an immersive virtual reality experience from Marco Brambilla, both similarly inspired by the futuristic theme. Located in the Museum's Martha A. and Robert S. Rubin Pavilion and Lobby, the photo booth and interactive VR installation will be available to guests during the cocktail hour and After Party. Additionally, the Museum is partnering with ART FOR CHANGE—a marketplace connecting emerging artists with socially conscious collectors—to commission two new limited edition, hand-embellished prints by Ebony G. Patterson and Oscar yi Hou, the latter of whom was recently awarded the Museum's annual UOVO Prize. Patterson's *She is the Mourning* (2022) is in an edition of twenty-five prints selling for \$4,500 each, and yi Hou's *Sayonara, Suzie Wongs, aka: Out the Opium Den* (2022) is in an edition of twenty-five prints selling for \$1,500 each. For each print sold, ART FOR CHANGE will donate \$500 to the Museum, and the artists will receive fifty percent of the net proceeds.

This year's Artists Ball pays tribute to Maria Grazia Chiuri for her innovative contributions to the fields of fashion and material culture over the course of her illustrious career. Chiuri is the first woman in Dior's seventy-five-year history to lead the label. Her work brings a uniquely feminist voice to the House of Dior through thoughtful, interdisciplinary partnerships with artistic voices such as artist Judy Chicago, whose masterpiece, *The Dinner Party*, is a centerpiece of the Museum's collection.

The evening's celebrations also recognize the tireless advocacy and transformative support of Saundra Williams-Cornwell and her partner, W. Don Cornwell. Since Williams-Cornwell joined the Board of Trustees in 2002, she has played a pivotal role in shaping the Museum, beginning with her work advocating for First Amendment rights following the Brooklyn Museum exhibition *Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection* (1999). In founding both the Fund for African American Art and the Council for African American Art, as well as serving as co-chair of the Museum Board's Diversity Committee and leading the Collections Committee, Williams-Cornwell has sought to meaningfully expand the Museum's collection and embody its mission of inclusivity, demonstrating the importance of representation in every facet of the Museum's work.

"This year's honorees have blazed trails to a more inclusive world through culture," says Anne Pasternak, Shelby White and Leon Levy Director, Brooklyn Museum. "As the first woman to lead the House of Dior, Maria Grazia's decidedly feminist spirit has revolutionized couture with her breathtaking and wearable designs. Saundra and Don have helped lead the way—from co-founding the Museum's Fund for African American Art to supporting *The Obama Portraits Tour* (2021)—as the Museum addresses the historical absences of Black Americans in our exhibitions and collections."

Tickets for the 2022 Brooklyn Artists Ball start at \$2,500, and tables including tickets for ten guests start at \$25,000, both sold with limited availability. Tickets to the After Party

are now on sale starting at \$100, with discounts for Museum Members. For more information about the Artists Ball or how to purchase After Party tickets, please visit our [After Party ticketing page](#).

Chairing the Brooklyn Artists Ball are Brooklyn Museum Trustees Regina Aldisert, Henry B. Elsesser, and Carla Shen; Board Chairman Barbara M. Vogelstein serves as Honorary Chairman of the event. This year's Host Committee includes A\$AP Ferg, Judy Chicago, Kasseem "Swizz Beatz" Dean, Julia Fox, Ja'Tovia Gary, Katie Holmes, KAWS, Tonya Lewis Lee and Spike Lee, Marilyn Minter, Janet Mock, Samira Nasr, Nathaniel Mary Quinn, Duke Riley, Phoebe Robinson, Cindy Sherman, and Hank Willis Thomas.

The 2022 Brooklyn Artists Ball is generously supported by this year's Benefit Committee, including Regina Aldisert, Sarah Arison, Bank of America, Tamara and Greg Belinfanti, Alan Beller and Stephanie Neville, Dana Ben Ari and Nikola Duravcevic, Adele Bernhard and Peter Neufeld, Jill and Jay Bernstein, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Deenie and Frank Brosens, Nancy Brown, Lisa and Dick Cashin, Jim Chanos and Crystal Connors, Chargeurs Group, Sarah Chen and Matt Wilson, Kathryn and Kenneth I. Chenault, Rona and Jeffrey Citrin, Dior, Kathy and Henry Elsesser, Jodie Factor and Jonathan Donnellan, Sharon Fay and Maxine Schaffer, Michael Field and Doug Hamilton, Arline and Norman Feinberg, Michaël Fribourg, Amanda and Glenn Fuhrman, Galerie Lelong & Co., Amy and John Griffin, Agnes Gund, Kathy and Steven Guttman, Susan Hayden, Jennifer Herman-Feldman and David Feldman, Stephanie and Tim Ingrassia, Michi Jigarjian, Elizabeth and William Kahane, LaVon M. Kellner and Thomas W. Roush, Karen Kiehl and Peter Labbat, Miyoung Lee and Neil Simpkins, Marley B. Lewis and Yevgeny Vilensky, McKinsey & Company, Lynne Maguire and Will Miller, Janet Mock, Natura & Co., PPOW, Joanna Pozen and Anna Brenner, Leslie and David Puth, Tracey and Phillip Riese, Debbie and Jonathan Rosen, Carla Shen and Christopher Schott, Jamie and Robert Soros, Ellen and William Taubman, Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch, Colleen and Graves Tompkins, Barbara and John Vogelstein, Amanda and John Waldron, and Sandra Williams-Cornwell and W. Don Cornwell.

About Maria Grazia Chiuri

Maria Grazia Chiuri was appointed Creative Director of women's haute couture, ready-to-wear, and accessories collections for the House of Dior in July 2016. The house was looking for a designer who possessed a vision for and deep understanding of contemporary women's needs. Her talent for connecting fashion and many kinds of femininity as well as her intuitions and artistic passions led her to be the first woman named to this position.

In keeping with her belief that "haute couture is not just about ball gowns," Chiuri cultivates a design process that explores all aspects of the contemporary woman's wardrobe. Her creations encompass all ages, shapes, and attitudes. They embody elegance and refinement in accordance with concepts that are filled with meaning, as powerful as they are inspired.

Chiuri considers fashion as a fundamental part of life. She loves equally creating delicate, intricate eveningwear and sublime yet comfortable pieces for everyday wear. For her, fashion is not only a means for women to better understand themselves, it is also a tool to help express their authentic, multifaceted identity. Her work is inspired by female figures who embody a true balance of strength and grace. Among her muses are dancers, artists, activists, and writers as well as the brave young women of today, first among them her daughter, Rachele.

Chiuri was born in Rome, Italy, in 1964. Inspired by her mother, a dressmaker, she knew from a young age that she wished to pursue a career in fashion. She studied at Istituto Europeo di Design in Rome, where she trained in the technical side of fashion design while exploring the cultural and artistic heritage of the Italian capital. Art history and cinema have always informed her work, notably during her time at Fendi, a house for which she designed handbags, starting in 1989. In 1999, she was appointed head of accessories at Valentino and, from 2008 to 2016, was joint creative director with Pierpaolo Piccioli. Since arriving at Dior, in July 2016, Chiuri has encouraged universal empowerment and strong sorority. Through the messages in collections and runway presentations that are conceived like so many manifestos, from “We Should All Be Feminists” to “Sisterhood Is Powerful,” she reasserts and celebrates the values central to feminist (r)evolutions and young generations, beyond slogans and stereotypes.

On the occasion of the Dior Autumn–Winter 2019–20 haute couture show, Chiuri was decorated, in the name of the President of the French Republic, with the insignia for the Chevalier de l’Ordre National de la Légion d’Honneur (Knight of the National Order of the Legion of Honor), by the Secretary of State for Gender Equality, Marlène Schiappa. This prestigious recognition acknowledged the Creative Director’s passion for and commitment to the standing of France and the House of Dior around the world, which she expressed through her creative vision for fashion and haute couture.

About Sandra Williams-Cornwell and W. Don Cornwell

Sandra Williams-Cornwell and W. Don Cornwell have been steadfast supporters of the Brooklyn Museum and passionate collectors of historical and contemporary African American art and art of the African diaspora for more than twenty years.

Sandra Williams-Cornwell joined the Board of Trustees of the Brooklyn Museum in 2002 and now serves as its secretary and a co-chair of its Diversity Committee. Previously, she served as chair of the Governance and Bylaws Committee and co-chair of the Collections Committee in addition to co-founding the Fund for African American Art, which is devoted to enhancing the collection of works created by African American artists prior to 1945. Williams-Cornwell received a B.A. in psychology from Manhattanville College, Purchase, New York; an M.A. in African literature from Howard University, Washington, D.C.; and a J.D. from St. John’s University School of Law, Queens, New York. She had a career in law as a partner of Bower & Gardner from 1984 to 1994 and formerly served on the boards of the Manhattan Theatre Club, United Way of New York City, Brooklyn Heights Association, Center Against Domestic Violence, and various medical institutions including the Long Island College Hospital.

W. Don Cornwell retired in 2009 as chairman and CEO of Granite Broadcasting Corporation, a company he founded in 1988. Granite developed from an entrepreneurial idea into one of the nation’s twenty-five largest television station groups. Prior to founding Granite, Cornwell was an investment banker and manager for seventeen years. Cornwell received a B.A. in political science from Occidental College, Los Angeles, California, and an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School, Boston, Massachusetts. Currently, he is active on the boards of several corporations including AIG, Inc., Natura Holdings, and Viatrix Inc. Previously, he served on the boards of Pfizer, CVS Caremark Corporation, and Avon. He is also vice chairman of the board of Blue Meridian Partners, Inc., and a trustee of Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City.

About the Brooklyn Museum

Founded in 1823 as the Brooklyn Apprentices’ Library Association, the Brooklyn Museum contains one of the nation’s most comprehensive and wide-ranging collections, enhanced by a distinguished record of exhibitions, scholarship, and service to the public.

The Museum's vast holdings span 5,000 years of human creativity from cultures in every corner of the globe. Collection highlights include the ancient Egyptian holdings, renowned for objects of the highest quality, and the American collections, which are unrivaled in their diversity, from Native American art and artifacts and Spanish colonial painting, to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American painting, sculpture, and decorative objects. The Museum is also home to the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, which is dedicated to the study and exhibition of feminist art and is the only curatorial center of its kind. The Brooklyn Museum is both a leading cultural institution and a community museum dedicated to serving a broad audience. Located in the heart of Brooklyn, the Museum welcomes and celebrates the diversity of its home borough and city. Few, if any, museums in the country attract an audience as varied with respect to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, educational background, and age as the audience of the Brooklyn Museum.

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