

# ● BROOKLYN MUSEUM ●

Dear Community,

In the spirit of open and honest engagement, we are sharing key strategic decisions the Brooklyn Museum is implementing in response to a challenging economic climate.

As we celebrate our 200th anniversary, continuing next month with the opening of *Breaking the Mold: Brooklyn Museum at 200*, we honor the innovative and forward-thinking spirit that has always defined our institution. Anniversaries are also a time for reflection—an opportunity to ask important questions, confront challenges, and advance necessary change. Over the past two years, Brooklyn Museum leadership has undertaken a critical, data-driven review of its operations, finances, and program. With these insights, we have a clear-eyed understanding of both our tremendous successes and unquestionable challenges, as we work to set a foundation now for the Brooklyn Museum's future.

In the last decade, our critically acclaimed exhibitions have driven audiences, our board has roughly doubled in size, and we've seen increases to our endowment and our contributed and earned revenues. Despite these achievements, like many other institutions, we are also experiencing strong headwinds: inflation has dramatically impacted our operating budget, adding millions of dollars to everyday costs and outpacing funding. We also face challenges in growing our operating budget to align with growing compensation and institutional needs, leading to budgetary deficits and straining cash flow. These pressures are further compounded by slow post-pandemic attendance recovery across the field.

To stimulate visitor engagement, improve our workflows, and decrease budgetary gaps, we invested in key areas of our program and capabilities, from new retail and dining opportunities, to advancements in our technology, data insights, and business infrastructure. While these are important initiatives, they take time to yield material results. More simply put, our expenses have grown more rapidly than our revenue. This requires changes to our program, operations, and the size of our team, to help set the course for longer-term sustainability.

Given this, we will be realigning our strategies for exhibitions and public and education programming. For example, we will reduce the number of exhibitions we present each year—from an average of 12 to an average of 9—with two special ticketed exhibitions alongside focused shows and active rotations of our exceptional collections. In 2026, we will begin renovations for our first dedicated galleries for the Arts of Africa collection—a project largely supported through government funds. The Arts of Africa galleries will provide new context, interpretation, and experiences with our African holdings, which are among one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of African art in the United States. Our programming will also be freshly grounded in our collections. While we will increase weekend events to better accommodate families and working individuals, we will reduce the number of fragmented weeknight events. Beloved series like First Saturdays will continue with an adjusted schedule, but programs that have historically seen low attendance or been inconsistently funded will be discontinued.

As we scale our program and realign our budget, we must also implement an approximate 10% reduction in force, impacting union and non-union roles up and down the institution. We are proceeding to negotiations with our unions in accordance with our contracts to align details of the reductions for union roles. Our research and planning work explored all avenues for financial relief before turning to the elimination of positions. The reality is, though, that wages comprise our largest operational line item—approximately 70% of our operating budget—and a financial realignment

sadly requires reductions in our team. Alongside the reduction in force, the Brooklyn Museum senior leadership team will be taking salary reductions of 10-20%.

Our team members are essential to the vitality of the Brooklyn Museum. The decision to eliminate any position is deeply difficult, especially as we start a new year and reflect on the Brooklyn Museum's many milestones over the past 200 years. While nothing can change the challenge of losing members of our team, we can say that the steps we are taking today are part of a long-term strategy that will in time allow us to emerge stronger, grow sustainably, and continue to support our community.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the Brooklyn Museum.

Anne Pasternak and the Brooklyn Museum Leadership Team