



BROOKLYN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Brooklyn Historical Society Honors Black History Month with new exhibits, programs and workshops

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – January 2007, Brooklyn, NY – On February 15th, BHS opens two new exhibitions in celebration of Black History Month: *Slavery in New York: Brooklyn Stories* in collaboration with the Weeksville Heritage Center and *A Drum Beats in Brooklyn: A Photography Exhibition Celebrating the Drum-Based and African Influenced Traditions of Brooklyn* as part of the *Public Perspectives* series.

The Brooklyn Historical Society and Weeksville Heritage Center, in collaboration with the New-York Historical Society's (N-YHS), are pleased to present *Slavery in New York: Brooklyn Stories* a traveling poster exhibition from N-YHS' landmark *Slavery in New York* exhibit. First presented at N-YHS, this graphic exhibition tells the story of Dutch New Amsterdam, the commercial and economic implications of enslavement, the work of the enslaved, the American Revolution, and ultimately the organizing of African New Yorkers in search of community faith and freedom. BHS and Weeksville Heritage Center have also expanded the exhibit to include additional panels plus objects and artifacts from their collections that explore Dutch Breucklen, abolitionism, the African-American community of Weeksville, and urban development and the Brooklyn experience. Brooklyn's complex relationship to the history of enslaved people will be the focus of programs planned in conjunction with N-YHS and Weeksville Heritage Center.

A Drum Beats in Brooklyn, part of BHS' community curated series *Public Perspectives*, visually relates the stories of several of Brooklyn's public, drum-based gatherings such as the West Indian Day Parade, J'ouvert, Tribute to the Ancestors of the Middle Passage, BAM's DanceAfrica, and Drummer's Grove. "For this show we rallied around the drum as a conceptual focal point," explains co-curator, Laylah Amatullah Barrayn. "On many levels, aesthetically, historically and spiritually, the drum is one of the essential connectors of dispersed Africans and our diversified traditions." *A Drum Beats in Brooklyn* seeks to immerse the viewer in the communal culture that has been established in Brooklyn and illustrates how these gatherings preserve African influenced culture in New York's most populous borough. *A Drum Beats in Brooklyn* is curated by the She Shootin' Photography Collective, five women photographers, ranging from mid-career to emerging, hailing from the U.S., the Caribbean and Africa, and who live and work in Brooklyn. The members of the collective are Laylah Amatullah Barrayn, Nsenga Knight, Delphine Fawundu-Buford, Kerika Fields, Ava Griffiths. *A Drum Beats in Brooklyn* is on view from February 14 – May 13, with accompanying programs including a family drum workshop, panel discussion, and brunch with the curators (see attached listing for details).

On February 24th BHS' Othmer Library will host *Brooklyn Roots: African American Family Research*, as part of its monthly Library Workshop series, lead by experienced genealogist Wilhelmena Kelly, author of *John W. Hamlin of Dinwoodie County, Virginia* (2004) and a history of Bedford-Stuyvesant to be published in 2007.

The Brooklyn Historical Society is open Wednesday through Sunday, 12 noon to 5:00 p.m. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$4 for seniors and children and children under 12 are free.

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Founded in 1863, the Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) is a museum, library, and educational center dedicated to preserving and encouraging the study of Brooklyn's rich 400-year past, while recording and reflecting upon the future of our culturally rich borough. BHS houses a treasure trove of materials relating to the founding of our country and the history of Brooklyn and its people. We draw from all of these holdings to create interpretive exhibitions illuminating the past and informing the future. The exhibits at BHS are dynamic learning experiences for audiences of all ages.

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***A Drum Beats in Brooklyn* Calendar of Programs**

February 15, Thursday 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Opening Reception

A Drum Beats in Brooklyn

Please join us for an evening of riveting photography documenting the drumming traditions of Brooklyn and enjoy live drumming from the African Diaspora. Meet the curators and artists, too! *Free.*

March 17, Saturday 2:00 - 4:00 pm

Panel Discussion

Behind the Drum

You are invited to join the discussion with the historians and organizers who have kept Brooklyn's African-based traditions alive. Representatives from BAM's DanceAfrica, Weeksville Heritage Center, West Indian American Day Carnival, Drummer's Grove, and International African Arts Festival will discuss the history and influence that these gathering has had on New York most populous borough. *Free with admission.*

April 14, Saturday 2:00 – 4:00 pm

A Family Arts and Crafts Afternoon

Fun with Drums

Participate in an afternoon of arts and crafts based around the drum. Families and children learn to make their own drums, and partake in painting and collage-making. There will be drumming workshops alongside of traditional African story telling. *Free with admission.*

May 12, Saturday 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Brunch with the Curators of *A Drum Beats in Brooklyn*

Sip n' Chat

Join the curators, the She Shootin' Photography Collective for a discussion on photography, culture and the arts. The ladies, Laylah Amatullah Barrayn, Kerika Fields, Delphine Fawundu-Buford, Ava Griffiths and Nsenga Knight will share stories on curating a *Drum Beats in Brooklyn* over a light brunch of delicious Caribbean and Senegalese appetizers and tea. *Free with admission.*

Library Workshop Series

February 24, Saturday 2:00 – 3:30 pm

Library Workshop Series

Brooklyn Roots: African American Family Research

Lead by research genealogist Wilhelmena Kelly.

Pre-paid reservations required as space is limited. \$30 for non-members, \$15 for members. Call for reservations Wednesday-Sunday 12:00 pm – 5:00 pm, 718-222-4111 ext. 250 or email vservice@brooklynhistory.org.

March 17, Saturday 2:00 – 3:30 pm

Library Workshop Series

Genealogy

Mrs. B-Ann Moorhouse, author, certified genealogist and long-time resident of Brooklyn Heights, will share her expertise and experiences in a workshop setting.

Pre-paid reservations required as space is limited. \$30 for non-members, \$15 for members. Call for reservations Wednesday-Sunday 12:00 pm – 5:00 pm, 718-222-4111 ext. 250 or email vservice@brooklynhistory.org.