



**Inaugural Lenape Pow Wow on Manhattan Island
Marks First Congregation of Lenape Leaders Since 1700s in a Gathering to
Reestablish the Cultural and Educational Presence of The Lenape in Manhattan
After Centuries of Dispossession**

Taking Place at Park Avenue Armory, in Joint Presentation with the Greater Lenape Community

Pow Wow to feature a Standing Ground Symposium, with conversations led by Lenape Elders and artists, along with traditional Native American festivities and vendors, including crafts, art, jewelry, food, dance competitions for all ages, and cultural performances

Sunday, November 18, 1:00-9:00 p.m.

New York, NY – October 31, 2018 – Park Avenue Armory announced it is partnering with members of the Lenape community to host the first ever Lenape Pow Wow on Manhattan Island, taking place throughout Park Avenue Armory’s Wade Thompson Drill Hall and historic period rooms. The event—transpiring on land that once belonged to the Lenape—marks the first congregation of dispersed Lenape Elders in Manhattan since their forced migrations in the early 1700s. Organized with Lenape Elder George Stonefish, the Pow Wow provides an opportunity for members of the Lenape community and Native American New Yorkers to gather and celebrate their culture, and for the greater New York City community to learn about the Lenape’s historical and cultural ties to the region at an event that is both festive and enlightening. The eight-hour event features a symposium of conversations with Lenape Elders, historians, and activists, along with film presentations, First Nation fashion, and special performances by Indigenous dancers, singers, musicians, and story-tellers.

The Lenape were the original inhabitants who cultivated the land and gave Manhattan island its name, Mannahatta (“hilly island”). The Pow Wow at the Armory will hold deep significance, allowing the Lenape to reclaim their traditions in their original homeland where they thrived centuries ago. One of these traditions was holding meetings once a year with all the bands of Lenape and neighboring Native nations, creating what is now known as a Pow Wow and which became a tradition shared by Native American Nations throughout the area, making this event resonate as participants “give thanks”—in a custom they have done for thousands of years—for those coming together to learn about their culture and recognize their people.

The Lenape, known as the grandparents of Algonquian speaking nations, were forced out in the early 1700s by Dutch and English settlers, exiled from their original home here in Lenapehoking to other parts of the United States and Canada, including Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Kansas, Ohio, and Ontario. The Pow Wow at the Armory will celebrate the vibrant culture of the Lenape and other Native American Nations, and will also explore the fraught history of Lenape forced dispersal, providing a significant moment for the New York City community to recognize the visionary role the Lenape have had in shaping what is known today as Manhattan and the estuarial region, and setting a path to reinvigorate Lenape traditions, culture, and renewal. The convening of Lenape Elders inaugurates the historical reclamation work of the newly formed *New York – Newark Public History Project* (NYN PHP), spearheaded by Professors Jack Tchen (Rutgers-Newark and NYU) with Mabel O. Wilson and Audra Simpson (both of Columbia University), which emerged from their work on the Mayor’s Monuments Commission supported by a seed grant from the Ford Foundation. The NYN PHP aims to anchor the story of American immigration and migration with the histories of dispossession and enslavement of Native American and African American communities.



“We are honored to host and partner with the Lenape Nations for such an historic event in our community’s history,” said **Rebecca Robertson**, Founding President and Executive Producer of Park Avenue Armory. “At the Armory, we are proud to be an institution that is not only bringing together some of the most innovative artists of our time, but also a place that is reshaping how our community understands culture. The Armory sits on land that has centuries of storied cultural history, and we look forward to honoring the Lenape people’s incredible traditions.”

“The Lenape Nations from throughout Turtle Island (North, Central, and South America) are pleased and honored to enter into a partnership with Park Avenue Armory,” said Lenape elder **George Stonefish**. “We have been waiting for a progressive, politically conscious organization like the Armory that would, first, acknowledge the historical role and contributions of the Lenape to the development of not just New York City, but the United States. Second, have the courage to actively do something about it, by working in partnership with the Lenape Nations of Turtle Island in creating this upcoming Pow Wow to celebrate the Lenape’s return to its historic homeland.”

Pow Wow is anglicized from the Algonquian “pau-wau” or “pauau” and adopted by many Native Nations on Turtle Island as a social event to celebrate, honor, and mark significant occasions such as the Lenape’s return. Originally, Pow Wows for the different Native Nations were adopted as a way for them to congregate and to honor, preserve, and share culture. They also served an important role in the conduction of trade of dances, songs, pelts, shells, flints, and other necessities, while making new and cementing existing social and political alliances. Today, they prevail as social and celebratory opportunities to dance, come together, and recognize ancestors and shared histories. As part of the Pow Wow, the Armory and the Lenape will present an engaging symposium, an element not typically customary at Pow Wows, but important for the historic nature of this gathering. Featuring conversations with Lenape Elders about their personal histories and stories of dispersion, scholars discussing the contributions of the Lenape, and activists who continue to fight for equality of indigenous populations, the symposium is intended to catalyze discussion between the Lenape people and the greater New York community. The roster of engaging speakers includes **Vincent Mann**, Chief of the Turtle Clan of the Ramapough Lunaape Nation; scholar, journalist, and author **Steven Newcomb**; internationally renowned activists for indigenous people **Winona LaDuke** and **Roberto Mukaro Borrero**; award-winning Inuit (Inuk) experimental vocalist, artist, and writer **Tanya Tagaq**; and others to be announced.

All the components of a traditional Pow Wow will take place at the Armory, including:

- Traditional Native American dance competition with 100 dancers, ranging in age from toddlers to seniors
- Performances, demonstrations, and story-telling by indigenous theater groups and art collectives, including La MaMa Safe Horizons Indigenous Collective and The Eagle Project
- Showcase of films by Native American filmmakers on view throughout the event
- A traditional grand entry, featuring George Bearskin (head male dancer) and Beedoskah Stonefish (head female dancer)
- Dancers, dance groups, and singers, including the Red Blanket Singers, Young Blood Singers, and Silver Cloud Singers, Aztec and Taino dance groups
- Over 20 vendors selling crafts, food, jewelry, and clothing
- Showcase of Native fashion from Shenandoah Deer Skins Designs, Mohawk Couture, and Tammy Beauvais Designs

The Pow Wow is part of Park Avenue Armory’s 2018 *Interrogations of Form* series, which convenes artists, community, and thought-leaders to engage in a vigorous, multi-dimensional exploration of today’s social and cultural landscape. Now in its third year, the *Interrogations of Form* series is part of the Armory’s expanded public offerings, which include talks and panel discussions that draw together artists, scholars, cultural leaders,



and social visionaries to explore cultural and civic issues and ideas; use Armory productions as springboards for examining contemporary interests and concerns; and provoke audiences to think beyond conventional interpretations and perspectives of art. Past 2018 Interrogations of Form showcased artists such as acclaimed Australian immersive artist and film director Lynette Wallworth; comedian, writer, and performer Aparna Nancherla; and Armory Artist-in-Residence and playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins. Still to come is ***Fashion: A New Social and Environmental Standard***, a conversation with Amanda Hearst and Hassan Pierre, sustainable fashion pioneers and founders of MAISON-DE-MODE.COM who explore the power of fashion to effect social change in a multi-day, interactive exhibit culminating in a conversation about the future of fashion.

Sunday, November 18

1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.. Grand Entry at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Thompson Arts Center at Park Avenue Armory

Tickets: \$15 adults; \$10 seniors, students/military (with ID), and children ages 6–12, Free: children 5 and under

ABOUT PARK AVENUE ARMORY

Part palace, part industrial shed, Park Avenue Armory fills a critical void in the cultural ecology of New York by enabling artists to create, students to explore, and audiences to experience, unconventional work that cannot be mounted in traditional performance halls and museums. With its soaring 55,000-square-foot Wade Thompson Drill Hall—reminiscent of 19th-century European train stations—and an array of exuberant period rooms, the Armory offers a platform for creativity across all art forms. Together, these and other spaces within the historic building utilized for arts programming comprise the Thompson Arts Center, named in recognition of the Thompson family’s ongoing support of the institution.

Since its first production in September 2007, the Armory has organized and commissioned immersive performances, installations, and cross-disciplinary collaborations in its vast drill hall that defy traditional categorization and challenge artists to push the boundaries of their practice. In its historic period rooms, the Armory presents small-scale performances and programs, including its acclaimed Recital Series, which showcases musical talent from across the globe within the intimate salon setting of the Board of Officers Room; and the new Artists Studio series in the newly restored Veterans Room, which features innovative artists and artistic pairings that harken back to the imaginative collaboration and improvisation of the original group of designers who conceived the space. The Armory also offers robust arts education programs at no cost to underserved New York City public school students, engaging them with the institution’s artistic programming and the building’s history and architecture.

Programmatic highlights from the Armory’s first 10 years include Bernd Alois Zimmermann’s harrowing *Die Soldaten*, in which the audience moved “through the music”; *the event of a thread*, a site-specific installation by Ann Hamilton; the final performances of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company across three separate stages; *WS* by Paul McCarthy, a monumental installation of fantasy, excess, and dystopia; an immersive *Macbeth* set in a Scottish heath and henge by Rob Ashford and Kenneth Branagh; a profound and radically inclusive staging of Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* staged by Peter Sellars and performed by Sir Simon Rattle and the Berliner Philharmoniker; Louis Andriessen’s *De Materie* in a highly imaginative staging by director Heiner Goebbels that included floating zeppelins and a flock of 100 sheep; *Circle Map*, two evenings of immersive spatial works by internationally acclaimed composer Kaija Saariaho performed by the New York Philharmonic with mise-en-espace by Armory Artistic Director Pierre Audi; and Taryn Simon’s *An Occupation of Loss*, a monumental work with 30 professional mourners from around the world that blended sculpture, sound, architecture, and performance in an exploration of the boundaries of grief between living and dead, past and present, performer and viewer; Julian Rosefeldt’s *Manifesto*, a multi-channel cinematic installation featuring Cate Blanchett; eight-time Drama Desk-nominated play *The Hairy Ape*, directed by Richard Jones and starring Bobby Cannavale; *Hansel & Gretel*, a new commission by Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron, and



Ai Weiwei that transformed and activated the Drill Hall to explore the meaning of publicly shared space in the era of surveillance; and Simon Stone's Obie-award-winning production of *Yerma* starring Billie Piper in her North American debut.

Concurrent with its artistic program, the Armory has undertaken an ongoing \$215-million revitalization of its historic building, designed by architects Herzog & de Meuron. www.armoryonpark.org.

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