

Press Release



July 2009

Brooklyn Museum Reports Record Attendance of More than 80,000 Visitors at *Target First Saturdays* in Past Year

Brooklyn, NY.....July 3, 2009. During the past year more than 80,000 visitors have attended the Brooklyn Museum's *Target First Saturdays*, a free evening of art and entertainment that takes place from 5 p.m. until 11 p.m. the first Saturday of each month, except September. This establishes a new eleven-month attendance record for the event, which began nearly ten years ago and has served as a model and inspiration for similar evening programs at arts institutions throughout the United States.

Each *Target First Saturday* features a wide range of public programs, among them films, gallery talks, dance performances, hands-on art-making projects, and live music. The evenings feature a 9 p.m. dance party to the music of a different DJ or live band every month. The July 4 *First Saturday* celebrates Independence Day and the diverse cultures of America with six hours of continuous live music, including performances by the Mandingo Ambassadors, Alex Battles and the Whiskey Rebellion, the Shondes, and Samba Nation Batucada. The evening's Dance Party features DJ Cosmo Baker, spinning disco and hip-hop.

Target First Saturdays was conceived of by Museum Director Arnold L. Lehman and is a critical component of an ongoing effort to expand audience by attracting diverse visitors of all ages, including families and young adults.

"The presentation of *Target First Saturdays* has been a rewarding and exciting experience to me and to the entire staff, which has worked so hard to make this event such a remarkable success. Not only is the size and diversity of the audience extraordinary, what is also extremely satisfying is the fact that all of the galleries, whether they be permanent collections or special exhibitions, are full of visitors each month, many of whom return at other times," comments Museum Director Arnold L. Lehman.

First Saturdays was launched in October 1998. Museum officials were surprised by the attendance that night of more than 2,500 visitors. Since then, that number has grown significantly, with a high during the Annie Leibovitz exhibition two years ago when more than 14,000 participated. *Target First Saturdays* is not presented in September because the Museum parking lot, where the dance parties take place in warm weather, is used as a venue for several concerts that are a part of the West Indian-American Carnival that culminates in the Labor Day parade down Eastern Parkway.

Brooklyn Museum

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Not only has the audience for *Target First Saturdays* expanded, it also has gotten younger. In 2005 65% of *Target First Saturday* visitors were under age 45, compared to 71% in 2008. Most of the growth was in the 18-24 group, which comprises 19% of the audience, compared to 13% in 2005. The event continues to attract an audience that is even more diverse than the Museum's overall attendance. Typically, more than four in ten of Museum visitors are people of color, a number which expands to more than 50% at *First Saturdays*. In the past year *First Saturdays* has attracted more first-time visitors, along with a core group of repeat visitors who attend at least three times a year. Families continue to be a significant part of the *First Saturday* audience, with 15% of visitors accompanied by children under 18, as was the case in 2005.

In addition to longtime sponsor Target, *First Saturdays* are made possible by the Wallace Foundation Community Programs Fund, established by the Wallace Foundation with additional support from DLA Piper US LLP, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, The Ellis A. Gimbel Trust, National Grid, and other donors. *The New York Times* Community Affairs Department and WNYC Radio are media sponsors.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Admission:

Contribution \$10; students with valid I.D. and older adults \$6. Free to Members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling extension 234.

Directions:

Subway: Seventh Avenue express (2 or 3) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop; Lexington Avenue express (4 or 5) to Nevins Street, cross platform and transfer to the 2 or 3. Bus: B71, B41, B69, B48. On-site parking available.

Museum Hours:

Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; First Saturday of each month, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; all other Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.