



2020 BRENDAN GILL PRIZE CEREMONY

HONORING
Julia Wolfe for *Fire in my mouth*

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2021

5:30 PM Arrivals and welcome reception

6:00 PM Award presentation
and conversation with
Brendan Gill Prize Honoree

6:45 PM Performance by the Young
People's Chorus of New York City

7:00 PM Closing reception

The Municipal Art Society of New York
MASNYC

PROSPECT PARK CONCERT GROVE

THE MUNICIPAL ART SOCIETY OF NEW YORK WELCOMES YOU TO THE 2020 BRENDAN GILL PRIZE CEREMONY

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Elizabeth Goldstein

President, The Municipal Art Society of New York

BRENDAN GILL PRIZE PRESENTATION

Presented to

Julia Wolfe

Composer, *Fire in my mouth*

Special recognition honorees

Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani for *Contested City: Art & Public History as Mediation at New York's Seward Park Urban Renewal Area*

Thomas J. Campanella for *Brooklyn: The Once and Future City*

Stanley Greenberg for *CODEX New York; Typologies of the City*

Eric K. Washington for *Boss of the Grips: The Life of James H. Williams and the Red Caps of Grand Central Terminal*

IN CONVERSATION: BRENDAN GILL PRIZE HONOREE

Patricia Cruz, Moderator

Artistic Director and CEO, Harlem Stage, Brendan Gill Prize Jury

Cassim Shepard, Moderator

Filmmaker and Author, *Citymakers: The Culture and Craft of Practical Urbanism*,
Brendan Gill Prize Jury

Julia Wolfe

Brendan Gill Prize Honoree

later joined by

Francisco J. Núñez

Artistic Director and Founder, Young People's Chorus of New York City

PERFORMANCE

Young People's Chorus of New York City

CLOSING REMARKS

Elizabeth Goldstein

President, The Municipal Art Society of New York

RECEPTION

Join us under the Concert Grove Pavilion for hors d'oeuvres and refreshments, as well as the opportunity to view video clips from *Fire in my mouth*.

BRENDAN GILL PRIZE

“The Brendan Gill Prize was established in 1987 by fellow MAS Board Members Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Helen Tucker, and Margot Wellington to honor the creator of a building, book, essay, musical composition, play, film, painting, sculpture, choreographic work, or landscape design completed in the previous year that best captures “the energy, vigor, and verve of our incomparable city.”



2020 BRENDAN GILL PRIZE JURY

John Haworth

Brendan Gill Prize Jury Chair, Senior Executive Emeritus,
National Museum of the American Indian/NY, Smithsonian Institution

Randall Bourscheidt

Director, Archive of New York City Cultural Policy

Patricia Cruz

Artistic Director and CEO, Harlem Stage

Gail Gregg

Artist and Journalist

Cassim Shepard

Urbanist, Filmmaker, and Author

Laurie Beckelman

Not-for-profit Consultant

Helen Tucker

MAS Director Emerita

A Special Thank You

MAS and the Brendan Gill Jury would like to especially thank Phyllis Cohen, MAS's Director of Public Art, for her many years of service and stewardship of the Brendan Gill Prize

ABOUT *FIRE IN MY MOUTH*

Music and Text by Julia Wolfe

This spectacular conception, managed in one large multimedia piece and presented in David Geffen Hall from January 24–26, 2019, conveys the story of the promise of immigration; the treatment of unfair labor practices; and the history of women-led protests that would shape the civic and political life of New York City.

Fire in my mouth, commissioned and performed by the New York Philharmonic under the baton of Music Director Jaap van Zweden, with the chamber choir The Crossing and the Young People's Chorus of New York City, mines an emotional tragedy of contemporary relevance.

Julia Wolfe's oratorio illuminates what a piece of orchestral music can be and do. The 146 female singers, standing in for the 146 garment workers who perished in the fire, also speaks to the power of our city, its history, and all of the people who have made it what it is today. For all of this, the 2020 Brendan Gill Prize Jury sat in deep admiration.

Click the image below to watch the *Fire in my mouth* trailer!



Julia Wolfe: *Fire in my mouth* libretto

I. Immigration

adapted from an interview with Mollie Wexler, oral history:

Without passports or anything
we took a boat
a big beautiful boat
and off we went
five of us girls.
It took about ten days
we went third class
with the poverty stricken
and off we went
five of us girls.
But it was lively
everyone talking
and looking
to God knows what kind of future it was going to be.



Click the image to play a clip from I. Immigration

II. Factory

adapted from a Yiddish folk song:

Mit a nodl, on a nodl
Ney ikh mir b'kovid godl
Zitsn zits ikh mir
A fis oyf a fis
Vayl mayn arbet
iz tsiker zis

*With a needle, without a needle
I do my sewing with great dignity
I sit on my work-table
With my legs crossed under me
Because my work
Is sugar sweet*

adapted from an Italian Pizzica folk song:

e com' aggiu fare ca vulia te vasu
pigliate 'na paletta e va allu focu
e ca' pe la mamma dice ca hai 'tardatu
dinne ca' e' stata 'na spitta te focu
e spitta te focu, nun e' stata mai
qualche figiu te mamma me l'ha vasata

*[Girl:] What can I do to give you a kiss?
[Boy:] Tell your mother that you have to fetch some fire
and if she says that you are late
tell her a spark of fire burned you
[Mother:] It never was a spark of fire
Someone kissed her*



Photo credit: Chris Lee

Click the image to play a clip from II. Factory

III. Protest

Women's Choir

I want to talk like an American
I want to look like an American
I want to sing like an American
I want to walk like an American
I want to dream like an American
Scheme like an American
I want to stand like an American
I want to smile like an American
I want to pray like an American
Play ball like an American
Cook like an American
I want to laugh like an American
I want to dance like an American
Have a chance like an American
I want to feel like an American
I want to shout like an American
I want to scream like an American
I want to cry like an American
I want to try like an American
Hurt like an American
Bleed like an American
Burn like, burn like, burn like, burn

Girls' Choir

*excerpt from a speech by
Clara Lemlich, November 22, 1909:*

I want to say a few words.
I am a working girl.
One of those striking against
intolerable conditions.

*adapted from The Jobless Girls,
written by Theresa Malkiel,
in the New York Call,
December 29, 1909:*

We laid down our scissors
shook the threads off our clothes
and calmly left the place that stood
between us and starvation.

Women's Choir

hem stitcher, sleeve setter, cuff maker, lace
runner, ironer, yoke setter, plain stitcher, belt
maker, finisher, sample hand, back maker,
dampener, stamper, starcher, sample maker,
steamer, front maker, rag sorter, labeler, baster,
binder, cleaner, closer, cutter, draper, hemmer,
joiner, mender, buttonhole maker, buttonhole
marker, buttonhole stitcher, buttonhole sewer,
presser, plaiter, trimmer, tucker, facer, sorter

Girls' Choir

I WANT TO FEEL LIKE AN AMERICAN

Women's Choir

from an interview with Clara Lemlich:

Ah — then I had fire in my mouth

Girls' Choir

fire fire fire fire fire fire fire fire fire fire fire



Click the image to play a clip from III. Protest

IV. Fire

Women's Choir

I heard someone cry fire
Everyone said fire

*adapted from the testimony of Kate
Alterman, ninth floor worker,
at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory
fire trial:*

And then I saw her bending down on
her knees.
Her hair was loose.
And the trail of her dress was a little
far from her.
Then a big smoke came.
I noticed the trail of her dress, and the
ends of her hair, began to burn like,
burn like, burn like, burn like,
burn

*adapted from the eyewitness account
of William Shepherd, reporter for the
Milwaukee Journal, March 27, 1911:*

Those of us who were looking,
saw her put her arms about him
and kiss him.
And then he dropped her into space.
Then quick as a flash, he jumped.

All Voices

I see them
falling
see them
falling

Women's Choir

*excerpt from a speech by Rose
Schneiderman at The Metropolitan
Opera House, April 2, 1911:*

I would be a traitor
to those poor burned bodies
if I were to speak
of good fellowship.
I have tried you good people of the
public,
and I have found you wanting.

*The names of the workers who perished in the
Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire,
listed in The Triangle Fire, by Leon Stein:*

Lizzie Adler, Anna Altman, Annina Ardito, Rose Bassino, Vincenza Benanti, Yetta Berger, Morris Bernstein, Jacob Bernstein, Essie Bernstein, Gussie Bierman, Vincenza Billota, Abraham Binowitz, Rosie Brenman, Sarah Brenman, Ida Brodsky, Sarah Brodsky, Ada Brooks, Laura Brunetti, Josephine Cammarata, Francesca Caputo, Josephine Carlisi, Albina Caruso, Annie Ciminello, Rosina Cirrito, Anna Cohen, Annie Colletti, Sarah Cooper, Michelina Cordiano, Bessie Dashefsky, Josie Del Castillo, Clara Dockman, Kalman Donick, Celia Eisenberg, Dora Evans, Rebecca Feibisch, Yetta Fichtenholz, Daisy Fitzie, Mary Floresta, Max Florin, Jennie Franco, Rose Friedman, Diana Gerjuoy, Molly Gerstein, Catherine Giannattasio, Celia Gitlin, Esther Goldstein, Lena Goldstein, Mary Goldstein, Yetta Goldstein, Rosie Grasso, Bertha Greb, Rachel Grossman, Mary Herman, Esther Hochfeld, Fannie Hollander, Pauline Horowitz, Ida Jukofsky, Ida Kanowitz, Tessie Kaplan, Beckie Kessler, Jacob Klein, Beckie Koppelman, Bertha Kula, Tillie Kupferschmidt, Benjamin Kurtz, Annie L'Abbate, Fannie Lansner, Maria Lauletta, Jennie Lederman, Max Lehrer, Sam Lehrer, Kate Leone, Mary Leventhal, Jennie Levin, Pauline Levine, Nettie Liebowitz, Rose Liermark, Bettina Maiale, Frances Maiale, Catherine Maltese, Lucia Maltese, Rosaria Maltese, Maria Manaria, Rose Mankofsky, Rose Mehl, Yetta Meyers, Gaetana Midolo, Annie Miller, Beckie Neubauer, Annie Nicholas, Michelina Nicolosei, Sadie Nussbaum, Julia Oberstein, Rose Oringer, Beckie Ostrovsky, Annie Pack, Providenza Panno, Antonietta Pasqualicchio, Ida Pearl, Jennie Pildescu, Vincenza Pinelli, Emilia Prato, Concetta Prestifilippo, Beckie Reines, Fannie Rosen, Louis Rosen, Israel Rosen, Julia Rosen, Yetta Rosenbaum, Jennie Rosenberg, Gussie Rosenfeld, Nettie Rosenthal, Emma Rothstein, Theodore Rotner, Sarah Sabasowitz, Santina Salemi, Sarafina Saracino, Teresina Saracino, Gussie Schiffman, Theresa Schmidt, Ethel Schneider, Violet Schochet, Golda Schpunt, Margaret Schwartz, Jacob Seltzer, Rosie Shapiro, Ben Sklover, Rose Sorkin, Annie Starr, Jennie Stein, Jennie Stellino, Jennie Stiglitz, Sam Taback, Clotilde Terranova, Isabella Tortorelli, Meyer Utal, Catherine Uzzo, Frieda Velakofsky, Bessie Viviano, Rosie Weiner, Sarah Weintraub, Tessie Weisner, Dora Welfowitz, Bertha Wendorff, Joseph Wilson, Sonia Wisotsky.

Photo credit: Chris Lee

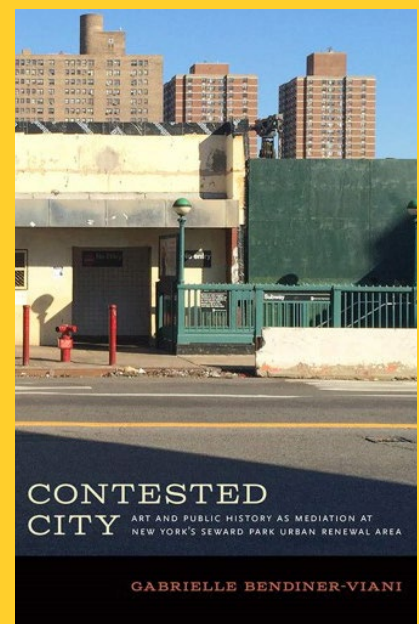
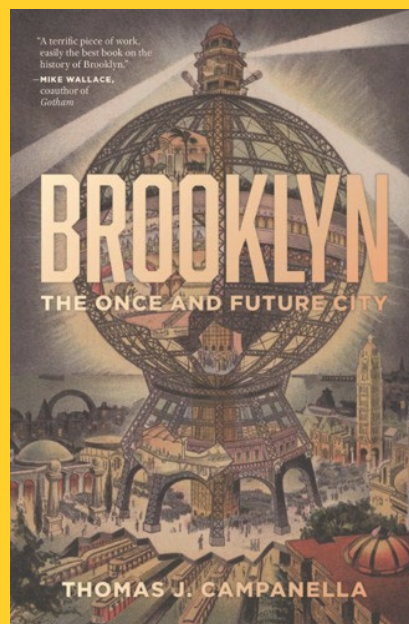
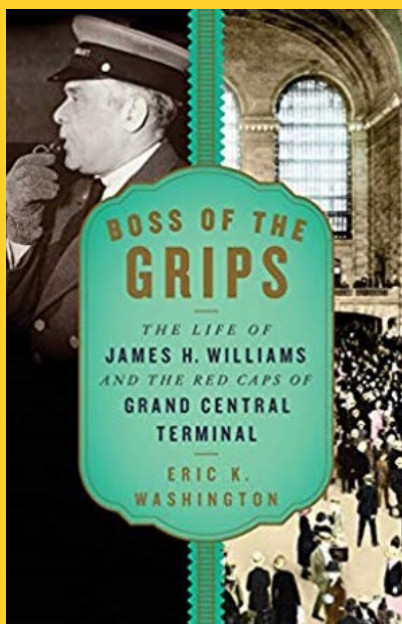


Click the image to play a clip from IV. Fire

ABOUT THE SPECIAL RECOGNITION HONOREES

During deliberations for the 2020 Gill Prize, the jury was struck by the quality of four books that draw on the historical record of our City in quite special and particular ways. We are proud to honor these four writers—all finalists for the Gill Prize—with special designation:

- ***Contested City: Art & Public History as Mediation at New York's Seward Park Urban Renewal Area***, by Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani
- ***Brooklyn: The Once and Future City***, by Thomas J. Campanella
- ***CODEX New York; Typologies of the City***, by photographer Stanley Greenberg
- ***Boss of the Grips: The Life of James H. Williams and the Red Caps of Grand Central Terminal***, by Eric K. Washington



ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHORUS OF NEW YORK CITY



Photo credit: Stephanie Berger

It is the mission of the Young People's Chorus of New York City (YPC) to provide children of all cultural and economic backgrounds with a unique program of music education and choral performance that seeks to fulfill each child's potential, while creating a model of artistic excellence and diversity that enriches the community.

Learn more and support YPC [here](#)!

**YOUNG
PEOPLE'S
CHORUS**
OF NEW YORK CITY

ABOUT THE NEWLY RESTORED CONCERT GROVE PAVILION



The Concert Grove Pavilion, completed in 1874, was designed by Calvert Vaux. Situated in the Upper Concert Grove, the Pavilion is an open-air shelter that consists of eight cast-iron columns supporting a decorative metal and wood roof with a multi-colored, elaborate stained-glass skylight. Typical of the day, its design borrows motifs from Hindu, Chinese, Moorish, and Egyptian architecture. Its rehabilitation restored a key element in Olmsted and Vaux's formally designed axial layout of the Concert Grove, as the Pavilion sits on axis with Music Island, which the Prospect Park Alliance reconstructed in 2012. The careful restoration of this public amenity maintains the Pavilion's historic character while allowing for contemporary uses, offering park visitors a place to rest, picnic, gather and have small performances.

Learn more and support the work of Prospect Park Alliance [here](#)!



Prospect
Park
Alliance

ABOUT MAS

The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS) lifts up the voices of the people in the debates that shape New York's built environment and leads the way toward a more livable city from sidewalk to skyline.

MAS envisions a future in which all New Yorkers share in the richness of city life—where growth is balanced, character endures, and a resilient future is secured. Over more than 125 years of history, our advocacy efforts have led to the creation of the New York City Planning Commission, Public Design Commission, Landmarks Preservation Commission, and the Tribute in Light; the preservation of Grand Central Terminal, the lights of Times Square, and the Garment District; the conservation of more than 50 works of public art; and the founding of such civic organizations as the Public Art Fund, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, P.S. 1, the Historic Districts Council, the Park Avenue Armory Conservancy, and the Waterfront Alliance.



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NOT YET AN MAS MEMBER?

MAS is your voice for the future of New York—your membership support will strengthen MAS’s ability to protect legacy spaces, encourage thoughtful planning and urban design, and foster inclusive neighborhoods across the five boroughs. Did you know that MAS has been offering historic, art, and architecture tours since 1956, and we now offer online virtual tours as well? [Click here](#) to check out the schedule of upcoming events and tours, where you can visit and learn about places like [Grand Central Terminal](#), [Flushing in the 19th and 20th century](#), and more!

[Join MAS](#) today and take advantage of member discounts and priority registration now!

ABOUT THE COVER ART

“The Municipal Art Society’s seal, designed by the esteemed American sculptor Daniel Chester French, was created to represent an ‘allegory of Municipal Art: a woman enthroned, flanked by symbols of the arts—a bough of oak leaves (emblem of wisdom) and another of laurel (the mark of glory, distinction and honor).”

Shaping the City, New York and the Municipal Art Society, Gregory F. Gilmartin