

Amant

Amant Foundation Will Open SO-IL Designed 'Art Campus' Amant in Brooklyn with Solo Exhibition by Grada Kilomba

Interdisciplinary, Research-based Artist Residency Begins This Fall

Brooklyn, NY — May 5, 2021 — The Amant Foundation is pleased to announce that on June 5th it will open the doors on Amant, a 21,000 square foot multi-building “art campus” in East Williamsburg, designed by the award-winning architecture firm SO-IL. The complex will serve as Amant’s new headquarters, as well as the home for its exhibitions, public events, archival projects, performances, and residency program. Conceived as a research and process-oriented platform, Amant provides a public forum that presents and supports the practices of both established and under-recognized artists working across diverse creative fields.

With its main entrance located at 315 Maujer Street, the Amant facility bisects two blocks and comprises four buildings connected by walkways and public courtyards. Purpose-built for Amant’s kunsthalle-style programming, spaces include a performance venue, two galleries, a cafe/bookstore and four studios.

Amant will open with a survey of work by Grada Kilomba (b.1968), the Portuguese artist, writer and academic of West African descent whose work deals with the difficult legacies of slavery and the colonial past. It will mark Kilomba’s first show in the United States.

The Amant Foundation made its debut with the launch of its Siena residency in the summer of 2020. The foundation is the vision of philanthropist and art collector Lonti Ebers, with the Brooklyn programs to be spearheaded by Artistic Director Ruth Estévez, former Gallery Director at REDCAT in Los Angeles and Senior Curator at Large at the Rose Art Museum. She is also the co-curator of the 34th São Paulo Bienal, which opens this fall.

The New York residency will welcome its first group of four artists in September and will host similarly sized groups three times a year. While its summer residency in Siena is geared towards mid-career artists as a “working retreat,” the Brooklyn program is research-focused, facilitating cross-discipline collaborations between Amant’s residents.

“The idea behind Amant was to create studios and exhibition spaces that would encourage artistic research and experimentation, free of the time restrictions and financial and administrative confines that typically accompany art practices in New York,” said Ebers. Amant’s program will focus on research-based projects that do not always neatly fit into pre-existing systems of artistic and cultural production. Forthcoming collaborations include a commission by Gala Porras-Kim exploring current practices in the restitution and repatriation of cultural objects, and a new work by New York-based filmmaker Manthia Diawara depicting a series of hypothetical conversations between Martinican poet Édouard Glissant and thinkers of the African diaspora, drawn from Diawara’s own archive.

“At a moment when New York is still reeling from the pandemic, Amant wants to stress the importance of human relations,” said Estévez. “We want to provide opportunities to seed

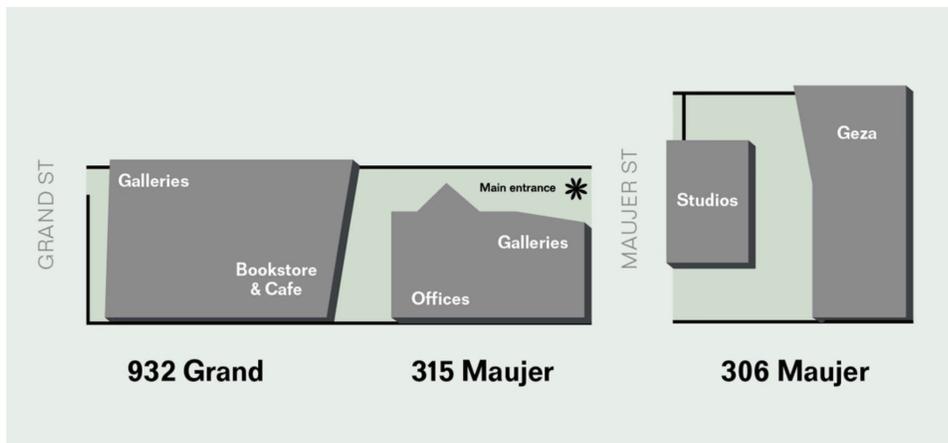
Amant

long-term cohesion between artists and audiences, supporting a tissue of intellectual, creative and emotional togetherness.”

Most of Amant’s time-based programming will occur at Géza, a 1800-square foot multipurpose building on campus for performances and screenings. In the fall, as conditions permit, Géza will host a screening series featuring Grada Kilomba, Olivia Plender, Dora García, and Clara Ianni, whose cinematic works dissect and re-assemble history through found footage, news archives, and other epistolary documents and ephemera.

The selection committee for Amant’s New York residency includes Lauren Cornell, director of the graduate program and chief curator at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, Elvira Dyangani Ose, director of The Showroom in London, and Reem Fadda, director of the Abu-Dhabi Cultural Center, Abu-Dhabi.

The Space



Amant’s home in New York is a research and artistic platform spread across four different buildings in East Williamsburg, Brooklyn at 315 Maujer Street, 306 Maujer Street, and 932 Grand Street, with construction projected to conclude in May 2021. Flexibility is of deep pragmatic and conceptual importance for Amant, which, due to its interdisciplinary program, requires its premises to fulfill multiple purposes.

“With the design of the Amant campus we introduce a more humane grain and texture to the industrial neighborhood,” said SO-IL. “Both robust and intimate, we believe the complex of buildings will offer an oasis for creative thought and production, as well as an inviting and intriguing environment for visitors.”

Designed by architectural firm SO-IL as an “art campus,” the new space includes exhibition galleries, a bookstore, a courtyard garden and a multifunctional space dedicated to moving images and live art. The overall complex allows for an internal networking of activities while connecting, spatially, with the dynamics of the surrounding neighborhood. SO-IL’s design is both a new landmark and a seamless addition to East Williamsburg. Their intimate

Amant

reinterpretations of materials like concrete, brick, and steel were conceived with Amant's industrial surroundings in mind.

The main entrance is located in the center of the complex at 315 Maujer Street, which houses Amant's offices and a daylit, 22 ft. tall gallery space. Across the courtyard at 932 Grand Street, what was once a marble shop has been converted into a vast second gallery space spanning over 2,000 square feet, in addition to a cafe and bookstore.

To the south at 306 Maujer is a dedicated studio building for residents featuring a large communal meeting area, library, and dining space, encouraging social exchange. Four daylit studios occupy the floor above. Walkways at the east and west perimeter lead to a second concrete volume housing Géza, a 1,800 square foot multipurpose space for performances and screenings.

Residency

In September, Amant's Brooklyn campus will welcome its inaugural group of national and international residents. The four artists will come from a wide range of artistic fields and reflect Amant's commitment to geographic diversity. Residencies take place three times a year and form the heart of Amant. The New York residency is open to artists at all stages of their careers, with the sole restriction that residents may not already live in New York.

With a focus on research, rather than production and fabrication, residents will enrich their creative practices by observing, absorbing, and listening to the many perspectives, lived experiences, places, and communities that New York has to offer. More specifically, the residency will foster an active dialogue between local art and academic institutions, art professionals, and cultural producers. Additionally, the Amant residency will emphasize engagement with informal centers of knowledge often overlooked by the art historical canon or wider historical record.

The selection process prioritizes artists who require resources for long-term research and archival work, in line with Amant's ethos of supporting thoughtful, experimental practices that "slow down" and ease the time pressures of the art production process.

In addition to individual studio space at 306 Maujer, each resident will receive a \$3,000 monthly stipend, and Amant will cover the cost of transportation to and from New York.

Amant

Exhibitions

Grada Kilomba: Heroines, Birds, and Monsters
June 3 – October 3

Gala Porras-Kim
Opening October 2021

Manthia Diawara: Towards the New Baroque of Voices
Opening October 2021

Carla Zaccagnini: Cuentos de Cuentas
Opening February 2022

Jayne Cortez: A Poet's Guide to the World
Opening June 2022

Siren: An Exhibition
Opening September 2022

Amant's gallery spaces will host three exhibitions in 2021. The first, on view from June 3 through October 3, is the first solo exhibition of Berlin-based artist Grada Kilomba in the United States, presenting her unique form of storytelling. Working with theory, performance, film, and literature, Kilomba reveals the narratives of the colonial past, giving space to the silenced voices whose traumas are ever present. In her own words: *"What if history has not been told properly? What if our history is haunted by cyclical violence precisely because it has not been buried properly?"*

Kilomba's work is showcased across three of Amant's buildings, transforming them into a theatre stage where characters, gestures, words, sounds and props unfold into a hybrid body, exchanging roles and staging a new dramaturgy that traverses geographies and temporalities.

In the exhibition's centerpiece, *A World of Illusions* (2017-2019), Kilomba radically reinterprets three well-known Greek myths to expose the unresolved tragedies of the postcolonial condition. Drawing on her academic background in psychoanalysis, the artist dedicates *Narcissus and Echo* to the politics of invisibility and *Oedipus the King* to the politics of violence, while the tragedy of *Antigone* exposes the politics of erasure and the importance of ceremonial memory. Combining music, mime, and dance, she re-stages the fables through African traditions of oral storytelling —the Griot— and building on analogies to the modern patriarchal system through the inclusion of a postcolonial lens.

The trilogy reincarnates as a sequence of photographs with the shared title of *Heroines, Birds and Monsters* (2020), portraying the female protagonists in a sculptural pose. In *The Desire Project* (2016) the representational image disappears entirely, with text displayed as the only

Amant

visual element, accompanied by musical rhythms substituting for the narrator's voice. The concluding work, *Table of Goods* (2017), a sculpture born out of ritual-performance, presents as both an object and landscape of the whole exhibition. The trans-atlantic trade between Europe, America, and Africa—sugar, coffee, cacao—are interred in a pile of soil. Kilomba displays these extracted materials as a burial, a symbolic ritual of remembrance of the slave trade as historical trauma, of which the consequences on the psyche are yet to be thoroughly explored.

Heroines, Birds and Monsters applies a new poetic, theoretical, and political framework to the colonial past, and the ways by which these narratives continue to embed themselves.

"Retelling history anew and properly is a necessary ceremony, a political act. Otherwise, history becomes haunted. It repeats itself. It returns intrusively, as fragmented knowledge, interrupting and assailing our present lives." – Grada Kilomba

In the fall, Amant will present a new commission by Colombian-Korean artist Gala Porras-Kim. The artist will present works drawn from key projects over the past decade, in addition to the new commission, which she is currently in the progress of creating. Her proposed work is an installation that investigates the various laws that have moved the objects dredged from the cenote at Chichen Itza, a sacred Maya's site in the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico, to their current location at the Peabody Museum in Harvard University, where they were installed during the first years of the 20th century. Porras-Kim is working with lawyers to take legal action to return the relics into the cenote. The proposed litigation will be quite unique, using material and supernatural documents to support the legal case for Chaac, the Mayan rain god, as the true and original owner of the objects.

Other 2021 debuts include the premiere of a new project titled *Towards the New Baroque of Voices* by New York based filmmaker Manthia Diawara. The work cuts together footage from Diawara's extensive personal archive with Martinican poet Édouard Glissant at its center, placing one of the most important writers and poets of the French Caribbean into various hypothetical dialogues with other thinkers on Africa and the African Diaspora.

An archival exhibition dedicated to the legacy of American poet Jayne Cortez will debut in 2022 as part of an ongoing series focusing on multidisciplinary artists whose work broke crucial ground on the dialectic between art and politics. Upon the show's conclusion, the Cortez archival exhibition—as with all archival presentations to follow—will live on as part of Amant's library and research center, which will be open to the public as well as residency participants.

As part of Amant's continuing emphasis on exploring the relationships between literature, poetry and storytelling, poet Quinn Latimer will curate *SIREN: an exhibition*, a semi-historical group exhibition featuring contemporary poets, artists, performers, and writers whose productions variously employ or address the voice (as idea, as instrument, as shelter, as contaminate, as speaker or receiver) and circulate fluently between both visual art and literary worlds.

Performance and Time-Based Programming

In late 2021, conditions permitting, Amant will present its first film and video series, "First Person, Third Person, Same Person." These screenings will be housed at Géza, a

Amant

multifunctional structure on the southern corner of Amant's Brooklyn campus dedicated to the moving image and time-based projects. The fall program focuses on the cinematic work of four artists: Grada Kilomba, Olivia Plender, Dora García, and Clara Ianni. The presented works will each present multifaceted assemblages of history through news, testimonials, memories, documents, diaries, books and other epistolary documents.

Amant will also open its performance program at Géza in the fall, hosting a monographic study of choreographer and performer Mette Edvardsen.

Publications

As part of Amant's publishing program, Argentinian artist and writer Carla Zaccagnini will create a series of episodic visual essays investigating the symbolic and political role of the U.S. Dollar, and other currencies, in Latin America. Drawing on personal memories and appropriated stories, the artist will investigate the societal relationship to money in times of high inflation, political uncertainty, and material insecurity.

Mission and History

Amant believes that art organizations can and should cultivate a new ecology of social relations by facilitating the flow of individuals, communities, and ideas. One of Amant's guiding principles is "slowing down" the art-making process by experimenting with different formats and focusing on long term collaborations over one-off commissions. More than "disciplines" Amant focus on "practices", offering artists the time and conditions to crucially engage with their work. Amant is proud to be immersed in Brooklyn, home to thousands of artists, an environment that offers endless resources for inspiration and dialogue.

The Foundation also hosts two residency programs in New York and Siena that are at the center of its activities. By emphasizing this commitment to process, Amant remains responsive to the ever-changing dynamics between artists, institutions, and their audiences.

Amant is designed as an art campus, and its architecture was created to be responsive to the ethos of the program: A space for showing, broadcasting, and making things public, and at the same time, a space for reflectiveness and collaboration.

About Lonti Ebers

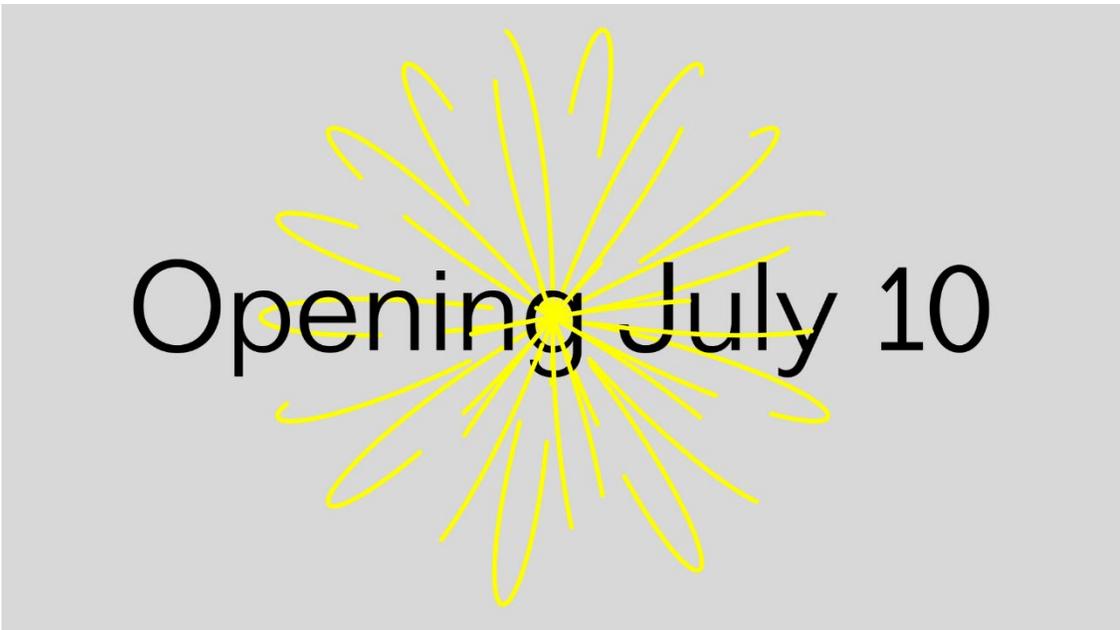
Lonti Ebers is a long-time art collector and supporter of contemporary art. Lonti hired the renowned architectural firm SO-IL to design Amant's innovative performance and art complex.

Lonti has served on the boards of several museums in both the US and abroad and is currently a trustee of New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMa), serves on the board of the Centre for Curatorial Studies at Bard College in Upstate New York, and sits on the European Committee of the Tate Gallery in London.

Amant

About Ruth Estévez

Ruth Estévez is a curator and stage designer. She is the co-curator of the 34th São Paulo Biennial, which opens in September 2021. From 2018 to 2020 she was Senior Curator-at-large at the Rose Art Museum in Waltham, Massachusetts and curator of *Idiorhythmias*, the performance program at MACBA in Barcelona. She was Redcat Gallery Director in Los Angeles and Chief Curator at the Carrillo Gil Museum in Mexico City, where she also founded LIGA, Space for architecture (2010-), a non-for-profit platform focused on spatial practices.



Opening July 10