

# Lincoln Center

## First-Ever Mixed Reality Experience at Lincoln Center Premieres June 2024

### *The Dream Machine Experience* *before the before and after the after* by Nona Hendryx Commissioned by Lincoln Center

Site-specific activation combines art, music, and poetry with  
Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other technologies

Features interactive open forum with Bina48

NEW YORK, NY (May 23, 2023) – Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts today announced *The Dream Machine Experience, before the before and after the after*, the first-ever mixed reality experience at Lincoln Center, will premiere on campus in June 2024. In development by Nona Hendryx for 4 years, the Lincoln Center commission invites audiences of all ages on a journey to explore the possibilities at the intersection of the arts and technology, and is produced by Baby Buddha’s House & Sozo Creative.

The free, in-person activation will be open at various times of day in June 2024, and combines Afrofuturist art, music, and poetry with Artificial Intelligence (AI), as well as Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR). The experience will take audiences across multiple spaces indoors and outdoors: the David Rubenstein Atrium, Josie Robertson Plaza, and David Geffen Hall.

Conceived by **Nona Hendryx**, *The Dream Machine Experience* includes an interactive open forum **with Bina48**, the beginning of an open-ended discussion with the only humanoid robot inspired, created, and programmed with mind files from an African American woman, and powered by AI. Two additional components—an AR Ritual Path that uplifts the history of the communities that once populated the neighborhood, and a VR experience featuring virtual avatars and VR performances by artists including **George Clinton, Laurie Anderson, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Vernon Reid, Skin of Skunk Anansi**, and **Nona Hendryx as Cyboracle**—round out *The Dream Machine Experience*.

“Imagine a world where you can instantly project your feelings, your thoughts, and your ideas onto what is happening around you. This is the Dream Machine, a world where audiences become dreamers of the past, dream in the present, and dream together of a future,” said **Nona Hendryx**. “The Dream Machine is an imaginative world rooted in Afrofuturism where communities can gather, grow, and heal. A crucial part of this project has been the participation of BIPOC technologists and the use of art as a vehicle to bridge

the technology gap. Through this intergenerational endeavor, we are working to ensure a future that holds *all* our diverse and vibrant voices. Come dream with us.”

“Core to our role at Lincoln Center is to incubate new artistic ideas. *The Dream Machine Experience* exemplifies this commitment to innovation and investing in artists who are experimenting and pushing boundaries,” said **Shanta Thake, Ehrenkranz Chief Artistic Officer, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts**. “Seeking compelling intersections of art and technology that center our collective humanity is a key part of this. We are thrilled to be partnering with Nona—a multimedia artist, composer, icon, teacher, and rock star—to guide us through our first major foray into this larger world of mixed reality, discovering how technology and the arts can build community, and carving a pathway into the future.”

“AI technology and mixed realities are here to stay, and we must find ways to imbue these technologies with humanity. We believe artists can help us do that, and we are thrilled to have the legendary Nona Hendryx leading the way, inspiring us all to dream bigger,” said **Jordana Leigh, Vice President of Artistic Programming at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts**. “So much of technology has been designed to keep us separated, in our own little worlds. *The Dream Machine Experience* challenges us to think about the ways technology can bind us together, bring us back to who we are, and help us build forward collectively and positively.”

*The Dream Machine Experience* will be a modular journey across the Lincoln Center campus, in three segments:

## **Bina48 Interactive Open Forum** **David Rubenstein Atrium**

- During the month of June 2024, community members will be able to enter the David Rubenstein Atrium and immerse themselves in live interactions, art happenings, and conversations with [Bina48 herself](#). Bina48 is the only humanoid robot inspired, created, and programmed with mind files from an African American woman, [Bina Rothblatt](#).

The interactive open forum offers an opportunity for community members, artists, and students from New York City schools to teach AI and share the best of humanity. As one of the world’s most advanced social robots, these interactions during Bina48’s time at Lincoln Center will help shape, diversify, and enrich the understanding of AI for generations to come. Bina48 will also partake in conversations open to the public with luminaries including **Carrie Mae Weems, Stephanie Dinkins, and Francesca Harper**.

**Bina48** will be at the Atrium in an Afrofuturistic garden designed by renowned multimedia artist **Mickalene Thomas** with interior and set design by **Lutfi Janania Zablah**.

## **The Bridge: AR Ritual Path**

### **From David Rubenstein Atrium to David Geffen Hall**

- **The Bridge** is an AR Ritual Path that brings audiences on a journey led by music and visual artist **Cyboracle**—a virtual avatar portrayed by Nona Hendryx. AR devices will be made available and will overlay digital content onto real-world surroundings within Lincoln Center’s outdoor spaces.

Throughout the experience, the Dreamers (audiences) will discover the history of the communities that once populated the land—from the Lenape to the diverse communities of San Juan Hill. Various touchpoints along the way will animate the path, including indigenous drummers and vocals, poetry that visually morphs and transforms, and iconography and symbolic collectible tokens representing healing energy. Afrofuturistic markers act as wayfinders, leading the Dreamers around the exterior of David H. Koch Theater, across Josie Robertson Plaza, and inside to David Geffen Hall.

## **The Dream Machine**

### **David Geffen Hall**

- **The Dream Machine** is a full-scale VR experience inside David Geffen Hall’s Griffin Sidewalk Studio. VR headsets will be provided so the Dreamers can be transported, fully immersed, into The Dream Machine.

The Dreamers will interact with each other and various objects in the virtual world—traversing a labyrinth, climbing virtual trees, air painting, solving puzzles and playing virtual instruments in the Mushroom Garden—while exploring colorful worlds unique to their individual choices. Thrilling virtual performances await in the Crown with avatars designed in partnership with some of Hendryx’s most electrifying collaborators including **George Clinton, Laurie Anderson, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Vernon Reid, and Skin**.

*The Dream Machine Experience* is proudly supported by leading sponsors including Goldman Sachs’ *One Million Black Women*, MetLife, and Diana Chen.

Known for her work as a solo artist and a founding member of the revolutionary trio Labelle, Nona Hendryx has relentlessly innovated throughout her career, including creative collaborations with new technologies. *The Dream Machine Experience* is being

developed in collaboration with Hendryx and the Electronic Production and Design Department (EPD) at Berklee College of Music, the Media and Immersive eXperience (MIX) Center at Arizona State University, and Barnard's Movement Lab, and is produced by Baby Buddha's House & Sozo Creative. Additional collaborators to be announced.

For its world premiere at Lincoln Center in June 2024, *The Dream Machine Experience* will welcome various New York-based community partners to participate, including Willie Mae Rock Camp and SISTERSMATR, an organization Hendryx co-founded in 2018 to engage young women of color in music, arts, technology, and robotics.

Click [here](#) for imagery.

More info at [LincolnCenter.org/DreamMachine](https://LincolnCenter.org/DreamMachine)

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### **About Nona Hendryx**

Nona Hendryx is an African American multidisciplinary artist, notably known for being one-third of the music trio Labelle. Hendryx is an Ambassador for Artistry in Music for Berklee College of Music and Boston Conservatory. Hendryx has curated and performed in a production of Refrigerated Dreams at Joe's Pub, Theaster Gates' 3-day Black Artists Retreat, mounting a celebration of the iconic singer and artist Grace Jones at the Park Avenue Armory and a mind-expanding Afrofuturism theatrical performance for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Nona Hendryx and Disciples of Sun Ra in the Temple of Dendur*. Hendryx is passionate about music, visual art, and technology, and continues to be a prolific artist.

### **About Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts**

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) is a cultural and civic cornerstone of New York City. The primary advocate for the entire Lincoln Center campus, our strategic priorities include: fostering collaboration and deepening impact across the Lincoln Center resident organizations; championing inclusion and increasing the accessibility and reach of Lincoln Center's work; and nurturing innovation on stage and off to help ensure the arts are at the center of civic life for all. LCPA presents hundreds of programs each year, offered primarily for free and choose-what-you-pay, including many specially designed for young audiences, families, and those with disabilities.

### **About Sozo Creative**

Sozo Creative works alongside artists, institutional partners and corporate entities to bring artistic and community visions to life. As BIPOC leaders and DEIA-driven producers, Sozo leverages innovative skillset to execute unique and transformative experiences imbued with social impact and joy. Sozo Creative's global portfolio is intentionally platform-agnostic, comprising apps, installations, educational curriculums, digital content, performances and short films, bringing thought provoking projects to diverse audiences via digital mediums and live activations. [www.SozoMedia.com](http://www.SozoMedia.com)

### **About the *One Million Black Women* Initiative**

In partnership with Black-women-led organizations, financial institutions and other partners, Goldman Sachs has committed \$10 billion in direct investment capital and \$100 million in philanthropic capital over the next decade to address the dual disproportionate gender and racial biases that Black women have faced for generations, which have only been exacerbated by the pandemic. The initiative, *One Million Black Women*, is named for and guided by the goal of impacting the lives of at least one million Black women by 2030. Goldman Sachs' research Black Womenomics has shown that sustained investments in Black women will catalyze economic growth, making for not only a fairer, but also a richer society.

### **About MetLife**

MetLife, Inc. (NYSE: MET), through its subsidiaries and affiliates ("MetLife"), is one of the world's leading financial services companies, providing insurance, annuities, employee benefits and asset management to help individual and institutional customers build a more confident future. Founded in 1868, MetLife has operations in more than 40 markets globally and holds leading positions in the United States, Japan, Latin America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. For more information, visit [www.metlife.com](http://www.metlife.com).

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*Additional Support is provided by Goldman Sachs' One Million Black Women, MetLife, and Diana Chen.*

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**#DreamMachineExperience**

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