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ART

PRESS RELEASE

FONDAZIONE RICCARDO CATELLA PRESENTS THE RUBIN MUSEUM'S MANDALA LAB @BAM IN MILAN, ITALY

BAM – Biblioteca degli Alberi Milano's 2024 cultural program opens with the Rubin Museum's large immersive installation and will be enhanced with a rich calendar of cultural events produced by BAM to explore emotions

March 24–April 21, 2024



MILAN, ITALY, March 25, 2024 — On Sunday, March 24, **Fondazione Riccardo Catella** inaugurated BAM – Biblioteca degli Alberi Milano's 2024 cultural program — curated and directed by Francesca Colombo — with the **Mandala Lab @BAM**, an immersive and interactive installation from New York's **Rubin Museum of Art** that offers visitors a unique experience inspired by neuroscience, Buddhist principles, and Himalayan art. The Italian cultural partner of the Mandala Lab, [BAM – Biblioteca degli Alberi Milano](https://www.bam-milano.org) is an innovative cultural park in the district of Portanuova, appointed as the first neighborhood in the world to obtain the LEED for Cities and Communities and WELL Community sustainability certifications. The Mandala Lab installation gives individuals the opportunity to explore the challenging mind states of **pride, attachment, envy, anger, and ignorance** and increase levels of empathy and compassion.

The Rubin Museum is renowned for its extraordinary collection of Himalayan art that holds insights into the human condition. The Rubin recently announced its transformation into a

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global museum, with traveling exhibitions and experiences as a cornerstone of its new model and its mission to support the appreciation of Himalayan art across the world. The Rubin's traveling Mandala Lab installation is inspired by powerful Buddhist wisdom teachings. Its structure comprises four mirroring rooms surrounding a central one dedicated to the mind state of ignorance, or lack of understanding oneself and the surrounding world, which serves as the nerve point of the Mandala Lab experience. The four adjacent rooms, each dedicated to a particular feeling including anger, envy, attachment, and pride, feature contributions from artists of various disciplines aiming to create experiences that elicit self-awareness and awareness of others.

Visual artist **Palden Weinreb** designed a pulsating light sculpture that evokes the perfect circle of a mandala and guides synchronized breathing meditations. Interdisciplinary artists **Laurie Anderson, Sanford Biggers, Tenzin Tsetan Choklay, Amit Dutta, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, and Wang Yahui** contributed videos based on personal reflections and memories associated with a specific scent, which perfumer **Christophe Laudamiel** then recreated. Renowned international musicians **Sheila E., Billy Cobham, Peter Gabriel, Evelyn Glennie, Sarah Hennessey, Taku Hirano, Huang Ruo, and Shivamani** curated and selected instruments in the room of gongs suspended over water. Peter Gabriel, a supporter of the healing power of music, chose a 28-inch bronze Paiste gong in collaboration with sound artist Samer Ghadry.

The Mandala Lab @BAM will be the starting point for a series of cultural and educational activities designed and produced by BAM, always free to the public. Weekly events will invite the public to discover the installation through guided tours, workshops, and performances, delving into self-exploration with approaches that skillfully harness the energies of the explored emotions with newfound clarity. The Mandala Lab @BAM is free and open to visitors of all ages from Monday to Sunday through April 21. It is available for school and group tours on select weekday mornings.

This is the Mandala Lab's third international appearance after its transformation from a permanent installation at the Rubin Museum in New York to a traveling, free-standing structure with the help of architecture studios EXTUDIO and ENORME STUDIO. The Rubin Museum's traveling Mandala Lab debuted in Bilbao at the 2022 Wellbeing Summit for Social Change, and traveled to the London Design Festival in 2023. It fits within BAM – Biblioteca degli Alberi Milano's cultural agenda, which is linked to themes of mental health and emotional well-being, connecting the external world with the inner world, and the fields of art and performance with the spiritual and philosophical themes of our time. The Mandala Lab highlights BAM's intercultural and inclusive mission and its innovative approach as a cultural player in support of the community.

BAM's cultural program is supported by BAM Park Ambassador Volvo Car Italia and Assiteca – Howden.

"The sixth edition of BAM's cultural program kicks off with an extraordinary and socially impactful project from the Rubin Museum of Art: the Mandala Lab @BAM. It is an interactive space for the community and emotional rebalancing, specifically designed to manage emotions, including negative ones scientifically proven to have manifested dysfunctionally during the pandemic," says **Francesca Colombo, Cultural General Director of BAM**, who adds, "Thanks to its strong emphasis on emotional well-being, exploration of emotions, and a

focus on others, BAM reaffirms itself as a contemporary space that invites citizens not only to enjoy culture but to experience it in an experiential manner."

"What the Rubin's Mandala Lab offers is an opportunity to test out our more divisive emotions in a sometimes playful but always safe space," says **Rubin Museum Chief Programmatic Officer Tim McHenry**. "Ultimately the lesson to come away with — so helpful in these troubled times — is an awareness that what we feel about an event is not the same as the event itself. Gaining that perspective gives us room to maneuver better around things we at first perceive as obstacles."

The Mandala Lab reinforces the Rubin's commitment to bringing Himalayan art to communities around the globe through traveling exhibitions, support for contemporary artists, innovative programming, and more. The Rubin's initiatives as a "museum without walls" will continue to support this mission, which includes the Mandala Lab's installation at venues around the world.

ABOUT RICCARDO CATELLA FOUNDATION AND BAM – BIBLIOTECA DEGLI ALBERI MILANO

Riccardo Catella Foundation has been active since 2005 with the primary mission to promote the sustainable development of the territory and urban public spaces. Over the past 19 years the Foundation has developed several civic and cultural programs dedicated to environmental sustainability and social inclusion. As of 2019, thanks to an innovative public-private partnership with the Municipality of Milan and COIMA, the Foundation, with the [BAM – Biblioteca degli Alberi Milano](#) project, became responsible for the management, security, maintenance and cultural programming of the public park in Portanuova — a neighborhood that is a symbol of innovation and the first in the world to have obtained the double LEED® and WELL® for Community sustainability certification. BAM is a 10-hectare contemporary park designed as an urban botanical library with an incredible plant heritage. BAM is a cultural player with a rich annual program — curated by Francesca Colombo, BAM Cultural Managing Director — made of more than 250 free activities inspired by nature and culture, and able to talk about sustainability and well-being and engage the community with a multidisciplinary artistic language.

NOTES TO THE EDITOR

This fall the Rubin will transition into a global museum, a "museum without walls," with the goal of bringing greater awareness and understanding of Himalayan art to more people around the world. As part of this evolution, the Rubin will close its physical galleries on 17th Street on October 6, 2024, and sell its building.

In its new global model, the Rubin will continue to care for, study, and share its celebrated collection of Himalayan art through traveling exhibitions curated by the Rubin, an extensive long-term object loan program, partnerships with organizations, research initiatives, and multimedia and educational resources. The Rubin will also expand its commitment to supporting artists and creatives engaging with Himalayan art with a grant program and Rubin Himalayan Art Prize. [Learn more about this transition.](#)

CREDITS

BAM – Biblioteca degli Alberi Milano, managed by the Riccardo Catella Foundation, is a Cultural Partner of the Rubin Museum of Art for Mandala Lab, Milan.

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ABOUT THE RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART

The Rubin is a global museum dedicated to sharing Himalayan art with the world. Founded in 2004, the Rubin serves people internationally through a dynamic digital platform, participatory experiences, exhibitions, and partnerships. Inspired and informed by Himalayan art, the Rubin invites people to contemplate the human experience and deepen connections with the world around them in order to expand awareness, enhance well-being, and cultivate compassion. The Rubin advances scholarship through a series of educational initiatives, grants, long-term loans, and the stewardship of a collection of nearly 3,500 Himalayan art objects spanning 1,500 years of history — providing unprecedented access and resources to

scholars, artists, and students across the globe.
rubinmuseum.org

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