

WHITNEY

Whitney Museum
of American Art
Press Office

99 Gansevoort Street
New York, NY 10014

pressoffice@whitney.org
(212) 570-3633

PRESS RELEASE



Laura Ortman, *My Soul Remainer*, 2017

Artists Announced for the 2019 Whitney Biennial: Opening on May 17

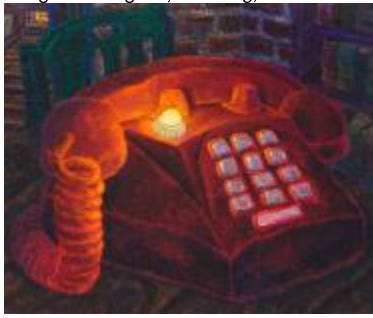
NEW YORK, February 25, 2019– The Whitney Museum of American Art announced today that seventy-five artists have been selected to present their work in the 2019 Whitney Biennial, co-organized by two Whitney curators, Jane Panetta and Rujeko Hockley. This will be the seventy-ninth in the long-running series of exhibitions launched by the Museum’s founder, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, in 1932. Considered the country’s foremost survey of contemporary American art, the Whitney Biennial delivers a frontline report on what’s happening in American art today. The 2019 edition will run from May 17 through September 22.

Panetta remarked: “Ru and I especially focused on emerging artists and first time Biennial participants: approximately seventy-five percent of the artists in the show are under forty and only five have previously appeared in a Whitney Biennial. In part, this emphasis resulted from what we saw during our research across the U.S., as we were struck by the profound difficulties of our current moment and the ways in which so many artists we encountered are struggling and facing fewer opportunities to present their work publicly.”

Hockley noted, “Although intentionally broad in scope, the exhibition explores key themes, including the mining of history in order to reimagine the present or future, a profound and sustained consideration of questions of equity along financial, racial, and sexual lines, a concern with climate change, and explorations of the vulnerability of the body. Artists in the exhibition are engaged with notions of what community means and can provide while using art to confront and cope with our current world.”

Adam D. Weinberg, the Museum’s Alice Pratt Brown Director, commented: “Taking the pulse of American creativity and culture, the Whitney Biennial has been finding the future of contemporary art for nearly a century. The Biennial is an essential strand of the Museum’s DNA, a chance to reaffirm one of the Whitney’s deepest commitments: to support the work of living artists and to engage in a cultural dialogue about what contemporary art is and why it matters.”

Keegan Monaghan, *Incoming*, 2016-17



Iman Issa, detail of *Heritage Studies #20*, 2016



The artists selected for the 2019 Whitney Biennial, ranging from emerging to well-established individuals and collectives, are working in painting, sculpture, drawing, installation, film and video, photography, performance, and sound. Work will be presented throughout the Fifth and Sixth Floor exhibition galleries, as well as in numerous spaces both inside and outside the Museum. The curators traveled throughout the country and made more than 300 studio visits over the past year. Panetta and Hockley noted, “Our studio visits were an opportunity to meet new artists but also to see new work by many we already knew. These visits were a critical opportunity to get a general feel for what artists were doing and making across the United States in 2018-19. While we might have expected to find work that was more strident in tone given the difficulties and instabilities of the times we are living in, the art we encountered continues to put forth a deliberate sense of forward-looking optimism. We found something incredibly hopeful—and even productive—about the work we’ve selected for this exhibition.” A small number of the artists in the exhibition are Canadian, several are based in Puerto Rico, and a number were born abroad or now live and work outside the U.S.

Scott Rothkopf, Senior Deputy Director and Nancy and Steve Crown Family Chief Curator, noted, “Jane and Ru have gathered an extraordinary group of artists to create a show that will feel extremely timely. Much of the work has an intensely personal and even a deliberately handmade quality, which will be amplified through a strong presence of live performance. In addition, the exhibition’s galleries will emphasize groupings of artists, rather than monographic installations, to create poetic—and at times pointed—conversations among their works.”

Steffani Jemison, *Sensus Plenior*, 2017



Brendan Fernandes, *The Master and Form*, 2018



A broad range of performance projects and artists will be presented, with some artists directly engaged with dance (and the history of the medium), and others working in the space of social engagement and critique. Eight artists (including one collective) will be working in the galleries, in the theater, outdoors, and in various interstitial spaces throughout the Museum. The curators noted, “It felt particularly important to us to include a dynamic performance program in the exhibition, given that artists in this area often struggle even more than their peers with object-based practices.” Among the artists in the performance program are Morgan Bassichis, who combines stand-up comedy, music, and mysticism into stories of queer alienation, love, and liberation; Brendan Fernandes, whose sculptural installation in the galleries will be activated by ballet dancers; Madeline Hollander, whose choreographic work questions the boundaries between our bodies and the environments we inhabit; Sahra Motalebi, who will present a new iteration of her opera *Directory of Portrayals* in the theater; and Las Nietas de Nonó, comprised of two sisters, Lydela and Michel Nonó, whose joint practice encompasses performance, theater, dance, and visual art, combined with activism and education, in work that focuses on their home neighborhood, Barrio San Antón in Carolina, Puerto Rico.

Additionally, Greta Hartenstein (formerly a senior curatorial assistant at the Whitney, now an independent curator focused on performance) will co-curate the performance program of the Biennial, bringing in work by Autumn Knight, nibia pastrana santiago, and Mariana Valencia, each of whom will engage with the interstitial spaces of the Whitney. Knight will re-present a long-standing and ongoing performance *Sanity TV*, here reconsidered for specific locations and contexts within the Museum. santiago will present a new work in various sites throughout the building, combining her extensive background in dance and interest in research with considerations around the use of the Museum's building. And Valencia will also present a new work, expanding her interest in combining dance and durational performance within the particular space of the Museum.

Three guest curators were invited to select the eleven artists for the film program: Maori Karmael Holmes (BlackStar Film Festival founder), artist and filmmaker Sky Hopinka (whose work was shown in the 2017 Biennial), and filmmaker/documentarian Matt Wolf (*Wild Combination: A Portrait of Arthur Russell and Teenage*). Holmes's program includes work by the British-born Jenn Nkiru, whose works map global Black music, fashion, and visual culture; Darius Clark Monroe, part of the team behind the HBO series *Random Acts of Flyness*; and the Ghana-born musician and filmmaker Blitz Bazawule, also known as Blitz the Ambassador. Hopinka selected Thirza Cuthand, who combines pop genres like sci-fi, horror, and fairy tales into highly personal, confessional works; Colectivo Los Ingrávidos, a Mexican collective, whose moving-image works confront violence and corruption in contemporary Mexico; James Luna (d. 2018), whose work over a thirty-year career interrogated America's iconography of Indigenous experience through a wide array of practices, including multimedia installation, video, and performance; Caroline Monnet, whose moving-image works and mixed-media installations engage with the contradictions of Indigenous life and identity in Canada; and collaborators Adam Khalil, Zack Khalil, and Jackson Polys, whose video work challenges assumptions about Native American culture, notably through the story of a nine-thousand-year-old skeleton found in Washington state in 1996. Wolf will present work by Barbara Hammer, the prolific lesbian filmmaker whose films explore the bodies, relationships, and narratives of queer women in particular who have been absent from both cinema and history; Sam Green, whose documentaries fearlessly probe complex ideas and fraught historical events; and FIERCE/Paper Tiger Television, two groups who banded together to examine the conflict over the Christopher Street Pier, gentrification, and the erasure of queer histories and spaces.

Making use of an augmented reality component, Lucas Blalock will create a mural-sized photographic work to be exhibited on the façade of 95 Horatio Street, located opposite the Museum and across from the southern entrance to the High Line, on the corner of Gansevoort and Washington Streets. Jeffrey Gibson will create a work for the Lobby using fabric and text, to be installed above the admissions desk; Diane Simpson will have a solo presentation with multiple sculptures in the Lobby Gallery; Marcus Fischer's sound installation will be heard in the stairwell; the Fifthth Floor terrace will be the site of a new sculptural installation with embedded videos by Meriem Bennani; and there will be a new large-scale, multi-part sculpture by Nicole Eisenman, a tableau of monumental figures, installed on the Museum's Sixth Floor terrace.

The complete list of artists follows:

Eddie Arroyo

Born 1976 in Miami, FL
Lives in Miami, FL

Korakrit Arunanondchai

Born 1986 in Bangkok, Thailand
Lives in New York, NY, and Bangkok, Thailand

Olga Balema

Born 1984 in Lviv, Ukraine
Lives in New York, NY

Morgan Bassichis

Born 1983 in Newton, MA
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Blitz Bazawule

Born 1982 in Accra, Ghana
Lives in New York, NY

Alexandra Bell

Born 1983 in Chicago, IL
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Brian Belott

Born 1973 in East Orange, NJ
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Meriem Bennani

Born 1988 in Rabat, Morocco
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Robert Bittenbender

Born 1987 in Washington, DC
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Lucas Blalock

Born 1978 in Asheville, NC
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Garrett Bradley

Born 1986 in New York, NY
Lives in New Orleans, LA

Milano Chow

Born 1987 in Los Angeles, CA
Lives in Los Angeles, CA

Colectivo Los Ingrávidos
Founded 2011 in Tehuacán,
Mexico

Thirza Cuthand
Born 1978 in Regina,
Saskatchewan
Lives in Toronto, Ontario

John Edmonds
Born 1989 in Washington, DC
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Nicole Eisenman
Born 1965 in Verdun, France
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Janiva Ellis
Born 1987 in Oakland, CA
Lives in Brooklyn, NY, and
Los Angeles, CA

Kota Ezawa
Born 1969 in Cologne, West
Germany
Lives in Oakland, CA

Brendan Fernandes
Born 1979 in Nairobi, Kenya
Lives in Chicago, IL

**FIERCE and Paper Tiger
Television**
FIERCE
Founded 2000 in New York,
NY
Paper Tiger Television
Founded 1981 in New York,
NY

Marcus Fischer
Born 1977 in Torrance, CA
Lives in Portland, OR

Forensic Architecture
Founded 2010 in London,
United Kingdom

Ellie Ga
Born 1976 in New York, NY
Lives in Stockholm, Sweden

Nicholas Galanin
Born 1979 in Sitka, AK
Lives in Sitka, AK

Sofía Gallisá Muriente
Born 1986 in San Juan, PR
Lives in San Juan, PR

Jeffrey Gibson
Born 1972 in Colorado
Springs, CO
Lives in Germantown, NY

Todd Gray
Born 1954 in Los Angeles, CA
Lives in Los Angeles, CA, and
Akwidaa, Ghana

Sam Green
Born 1966 in Detroit, MI
Lives in New York, NY

Barbara Hammer
Born 1939 in Los Angeles, CA
Lives in New York, NY

Ilana Harris-Babou
Born 1991 in Brooklyn, NY
Lives in Williamstown, MA,
and Brooklyn, NY

Matthew Angelo Harrison
Born 1989 in Detroit, MI
Lives in Detroit, MI

Curran Hatleberg
Born 1982 in Washington, DC
Lives in Baltimore, MD

Madeline Hollander
Born 1986 in Los Angeles, CA
Lives in New York, NY

Iman Issa
Born 1979 in Cairo, Egypt
Lives in Berlin, Germany, and
New York, NY

Tomashi Jackson
Born 1980 in Houston, TX
Lives in New York, NY, and
Cambridge, MA

Steffani Jemison
Born 1981 in Berkeley, CA
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

**Adam Khalil, Zack Khalil,
and Jackson Polys**
Adam Khalil
Born 1988 in Nyack, NY
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Zack Khalil
Born 1991 in Newton, MA
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Jackson Polys

Born 1976 in Ketchikan, AK
Lives in New York, NY

Christine Sun Kim
Born 1980 in Orange County,
CA
Lives in Berlin, Germany

Josh Kline
Born 1979 in Philadelphia, PA
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Autumn Knight
Born 1980 in Houston, TX
Lives in New York, NY

Carolyn Lazard
Born 1987 in Upland, CA
Lives in Philadelphia, PA

Maia Ruth Lee
Born 1983 in Busan, South
Korea
Lives in New York, NY

Simone Leigh
Born 1967 in Chicago, IL
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Daniel Lind-Ramos
Born 1953 in Loíza, PR
Lives in Loíza, PR

James Luna
Born 1950 in Orange, CA
Died 2018

Eric N. Mack
Born 1987 in Columbia, MD
Lives in New York, NY

Calvin Marcus
Born 1988 in San Francisco,
CA
Lives in Los Angeles, CA

Tiona Nekkia McClodden
Born 1981 in Blytheville, AR
Lives in Philadelphia, PA

Troy Michie
Born 1985 in El Paso, TX
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Joe Minter
Born 1943 in Birmingham, AL
Lives in Birmingham, AL

Keegan Monaghan
Born 1986 in Evanston, IL
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Caroline Monnet

Born 1985 in Ottawa, Ontario
Lives in Montreal, Quebec

Darius Clark Monroe

Born 1980 in Houston, TX
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Ragen Moss

Born 1978 in New York, NY
Lives in Los Angeles, CA

Sahra Motalebi

Born 1979 in Birmingham, AL
Lives in New York, NY, and
Delaware County, NY

Marlon Mullen

Born 1963 in Richmond, CA
Lives in Rodeo, CA

Jeanette Mundt

Born 1982 in Princeton, NJ
Lives in Somerset, NJ

Wangechi Mutu

Born 1972 in Nairobi, Kenya
Lives in Brooklyn, NY, and
Nairobi, Kenya

Las Nietas de Nonó (Lydela Nonó and Michel Nonó)

Established 2011

Lydela Nonó

Born 1979 in San Juan, PR
Lives in Carolina, PR

Michel Nonó

Born 1982 in San Juan, PR
Lives in Carolina, PR

Jenn Nkiru

Born 1987 in London, United
Kingdom
Lives in London, United
Kingdom

Laura Ortman

Born 1973 in Whiteriver, AZ
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Jennifer Packer

Born 1984 in Philadelphia, PA
Lives in New York, NY

nibia pastrana santiago

Born 1987 in Caguas, PR
Lives in San Juan, PR

Elle Pérez

Born 1989 in the Bronx, NY
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Pat Phillips

Born 1987 in Lakenheath,
United Kingdom
Lives in Pineville, LA

Gala Porras-Kim

Born 1984 in Bogotá,
Colombia
Lives in Los Angeles, CA

Walter Price

Born 1989 in Macon, GA
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Carissa Rodriguez

Born 1970 in New York, NY
Lives in New York, NY

Paul Mpagi Sepuya

Born 1982 in San Bernardino,
CA
Lives in Los Angeles, CA

Heji Shin

Born 1983 in Seoul, South
Korea
Lives in New York, NY

Diane Simpson

Born 1935 in Joliet, IL
Lives in Wilmette, IL

Martine Syms

Born 1988 in Los Angeles, CA
Lives in Los Angeles, CA

Kyle Thurman

Born 1986 in West Chester,
PA
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Mariana Valencia

Born 1984 in Chicago, IL
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Agustina Woodgate

Born 1981 in Buenos Aires,
Argentina
Lives in Miami, FL, and
Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Curatorial Credit

The 2019 Whitney Biennial is organized by Jane Panetta and Rujeko Hockley, with Ramsay Kolber.

The film program is organized by Maori Karmael Holmes, Sky Hopinka, and Matt Wolf.

The performance program is organized by Jane Panetta, Rujeko Hockley, and Greta Hartenstein.

Catalogue

The 2019 Whitney Biennial catalogue is designed by Yoonjai Choi and Ken Meier, partners in the design studio Common Name. The book includes a foreword by Adam D. Weinberg; a joint introduction by the curators, Jane Panetta and Rujeko Hockley, as well as individual essays by each of them; individual entries on each of the 75 participants in the exhibition; reproductions of finished work; a section with images submitted by the artists relating to their work and process, including preparatory sketches, research, and source material, and other material that informs or describes their practice. The catalogue is published by the Whitney Museum of American Art and distributed by Yale University Press.

Membership and Ticketing

Information about Membership and early viewing opportunities, as well as general ticket information, is available at whitney.org.

Exhibition Support

Whitney Biennial 2019 is presented by

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Significant support is provided by 2019 Biennial Committee Co-Chairs: Beth Rudin DeWoody, Bob Gersh, Miyoung Lee, and Fred Wilson; 2019 Biennial Committee members: Ashley Leeds and Christopher Harland, Diane and Adam E. Max, Annette and Paul Smith, Bill Block, the Debra and Jeffrey Geller Family Foundation, Rebecca and Martin Eisenberg, Amanda and Glenn Fuhrman, Barbara and Michael Gamson, Marjorie and James D. Kuhn, Kouros Larizadeh and Luis Pardo, Melanie Shorin and Greg S. Feldman, and Dora and Cranford Stoudemire; Further Forward Foundation, the Kapadia Equity Fund, The Keith Haring Foundation Exhibition Fund, Katie and Amnon Rodan, and Sotheby's.

Funding is also provided by special Biennial endowments created by Melva Bucksbaum, Emily Fisher Landau, Leonard A. Lauder, and Fern and Lenard Tessler.

Curatorial research and travel for this exhibition were funded by an endowment established by Rosina Lee Yue and Bert A. Lies, Jr., MD.

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art

Programmed: Rules, Codes, and Choreographies in Art, 1965 – 2018	September 28, 2018 – April 14, 2019
Andy Warhol – From A to B and Back Again	November 12, 2018 – March 31, 2019
Kevin Beasley: A view of a landscape	December 15 – March 10, 2019
Where We Are: Selections from the Whitney's Collection 1900–1960	Ongoing
Derek Fordjour: Half Mast	Ongoing
2019 Whitney Biennial	May 17 – September 22, 2019
Spilling Over: Painting Color in the 1960s	Opens March 29, 2019
Moved by the Motion: Sudden Rise	April 26–27, 2019
Jason Moran	September 20, 2019 – January 5, 2020
Rachel Harrison	October 25, 2019 – January 12, 2020
Julie Mehretu	June 26–September 20, 2020
Pope.L: Instigation, Aspiration, Perspiration	Opens October/November 2019

The Whitney Museum of American Art is located at 99 Gansevoort Street between Washington and West Streets, New York City. Museum hours are: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday from 10:30 am to 6 pm; Friday and Saturday from 10:30 am to 10 pm. Closed Tuesday except in July and August, and in March 2019 during the exhibition *Andy Warhol—From A to B and Back Again*. Adults: \$25. Full-time students, visitors 65 & over, and visitors with disabilities: \$18. Visitors 18 years & under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 7–10 pm. For general information, please call (212) 570-3600 or visit whitney.org.

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Captions

Laura Ortman, *My Soul Remainer*, 2017. High-definition video, color, sound; 5:44 min. Image courtesy the artist

Keegan Monaghan, *Incoming*, 2016-17. Oil on canvas, 60 3/8 x 72 in. (153.4 x 182.9 cm). Collection of Ninah and Michael Lynne. Image courtesy the artist and James Fuentes Gallery, New York. Photograph by Jason Mandella

Iman Issa, detail of *Heritage Studies #20*, 2016. Bronze, painted box, and vinyl text, 49 1/4 x 9 1/8 x 15 in. (125 x 23 x 38 cm). Image courtesy the artist and Rodeo, London; Piraeus, Greece; and carlier gebauer, Berlin. Photograph by Gunter Lepkowski

Steffani Jemison, *Sensus Plenior*, 2017. High-definition video, black-and-white, sound; 34:36 min. Image courtesy the artist

Brendan Fernandes, *The Master and Form*, 2018. Performance view, Graham Foundation, Chicago, IL, 2018. Image courtesy the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. Photograph by Brendan Leo Merea