

PRESS RELEASE



Production still, *Sudden Rise*. Photography by Mick Bello/EMPAC. Courtesy the artists

MOVED BY THE MOTION: SUDDEN RISE MAKES ITS NEW YORK CITY DEBUT AT THE WHITNEY ON APRIL 26 AND 27

NEW YORK, March 29, 2019 – Premiering at the Whitney on April 26 and 27, *Sudden Rise* features *Moved by the Motion*, an ensemble formed in 2013 by MacArthur award-winning filmmaker and visual artist Wu Tsang, interdisciplinary artist boychild, and collaborators including cellist Patrick Belaga, dancer Josh Johnson, electronic musician Asma Maroof, and poet and critic Fred Moten.

Sudden Rise is a boundary-defying performance that draws on a collection of fragments excerpted from the text “*Sudden Rise at a Given Tune*,” co-written by Tsang, boychild, and Moten, to present a collage of words, film, movements, and sound. *Moved by the Motion* resists the structural hierarchies inherent within and between artistic disciplines and reflects the spirit of the continually shifting improvisational ensemble.

Also interwoven are the language and actions of a number of pivotal twentieth-century civil rights activists, poets, and essayists, including Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, and W.E.B. Du Bois, together with lyrics by Jimi Hendrix and musings by Hannah Arendt. The presentation at the Whitney also features lighting design by Alena Samoray.

Adrienne Edwards, Engell Speyer Family Curator and Curator of Performance at the Whitney, organizer of the performance, stated: “Having had the opportunity to watch this work grow, I am thrilled we are presenting the New York City debut of this marvelous collective’s most ambitious ensemble piece and first evening length performance to date. Reimagined especially for our theater, *Sudden Rise* is uniquely emblematic of the cross-boundary approach, visual lushness, and experimental verve the Whitney performance program fosters.”

Scott Rothkopf, Senior Deputy Director and Nancy and Steve Crown Family Chief Curator, added, "We are honored and delighted to be welcoming Wu, along with her collaborators, back to the Whitney, where she first appeared in the 2012 Biennial. As Adrienne's inaugural curatorial project since joining the Museum last May, *Sudden Rise* literally sets the stage for her vision of interdisciplinary innovation, which will continue this fall with our survey of Jason Moran."

Sudden Rise was commissioned by EMPAC / Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute where it premiered on October 13, 2018. The Whitney's presentation is organized by Adrienne Edwards, Engell Speyer Family Curator and Curator of Performance, with Clémence White, curatorial assistant.

Artist Bios

Wu Tsang is an award-winning filmmaker and visual artist who combines documentary and narrative techniques with fantastical detours into the imaginary in works that explore hidden histories, marginalized narratives, and the act of performing itself. Her projects have been presented at museums, biennials, and film festivals internationally. She was a 2016 Guggenheim Fellow (Film/Video), a 2018 Hugo Boss Prize Nominee, and a 2018 MacArthur Fellow.

boychild is a movement-based performance artist whose work operates through improvisation as a mode of survival. Her performances have been presented at MoMA PS1, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Kulturhuset, Stockholm, MOCA Los Angeles, MOMA Warsaw, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst (Zürich), Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, ICA London, the Sydney Biennial and Berghain Berlin. boychild has toured with Mykki Blanco, and collaborated with Korakrit Arunanondchai, Wu Tsang, as well as the streetwear label Hood By Air.

Josh Johnson is a Frankfurt-based performer, dancer, and choreographer. He joined the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre in 2009 and has subsequently worked with the Forsythe Company (2010–15). He is co-founder of SAD collective, which has created performances, DJ sets, video works, and installations throughout Europe, the U.S., and Asia. He has performed and collaborated with artists Anne Imhof, Kandis Williams, Wu Tsang and boychild. Johnson's performance works include: *Piety* (Total Freedom, The Shed, 2018), *Allegory* (Martin Gropius Bau, 2018), *Anthony* (Phillip Pflug Contemporary, 2018).

Patrick Belaga is a classically trained cellist and composer. He has performed internationally, including The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, The Getty Center in Los Angeles, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Parcours Basel, and Donaufestival Austria. In addition to his ongoing performance collaboration with artists boychild and Wu Tsang, Belaga has recently worked with artists Jacolby Satterwhite and Nick Weiss, Ligia Lewis, Thibault Lac, Jeremy O. Harris, Justin Sayre, Joey Arias, and Kai Kight. Recent compositional work includes the original score for the Netflix documentary *Gaga: Five Foot Two*, and a self-published solo album, *Groundswell*.

Asma Maroof (aka Asmara) is a Los Angeles-based electronic producer and DJ, who tours internationally and has worked with M.I.A., Kelela, Tink, Princess Nokia, and Venux X and is a member of the musical groups NGUZUNGUZU (Fade to Mind) and Future Brown (Warp Records).

Alena Samoray is a freelance designer currently working on her Master's degree in Lighting Design at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Recent past work includes *You Sad Legend* with the Moved by the Motion ensemble, *The Rape of Lucretia* and *November Dance: Moving Forward, Looking Back* at UIUC, as well as a multitude of work completed at EMPAC in Troy, NY with Andrew Schneider, France Jobin, Kate Super, Charles Atlas, and many more.

Ticketing Information

Tickets are required and include Museum admission (\$25 adults; \$18 students and seniors; free for members). Capacity is limited and visitors are encouraged to purchase tickets in advance. A limited number of standby tickets may be available at the admissions desk on a first-come, first-served basis. The standby line will open one hour prior to the program's start time.

About the Whitney

The Whitney Museum of American Art, founded in 1930 by the artist and philanthropist Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney (1875–1942), houses the foremost collection of American art from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Mrs. Whitney, an early and ardent supporter of modern American art, nurtured groundbreaking artists at a time when audiences were still largely preoccupied with the Old Masters. From her vision arose the Whitney Museum of American Art, which has been championing the most innovative art of the United States for more than eighty years. The core of the Whitney's mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit American art of our time and serve a

wide variety of audiences in celebration of the complexity and diversity of art and culture in the United States. Through this mission and a steadfast commitment to artists themselves, the Whitney has long been a powerful force in support of modern and contemporary art and continues to help define what is innovative and influential in American art today.

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
Spilling Over: Painting Color in the 1960s	Opens March 29, 2019
2019 Whitney Biennial	May 17 – September 22, 2019
The Whitney Collection: Selections From 1900-1965	Opens Summer 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
Alan Michelson: Wolf Nation	October 25, 2019 – January 12, 2020
Pope.L: Instigation, Aspiration, Perspiration	Opens October 2019
Vida Americana: Mexican Muralists Remake American Art, 1925–1945	February-May 2020
Agnes Pelton: Desert Transcendentalist	Opens Spring 2020
Julie Mehretu	June 26 – September 20, 2020
David Hammons: Day's End	2020
Jasper Johns	Opens Fall 2020

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. 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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