

PRESS RELEASE



Steffani Jemison (1981-), *Sensus Plenior*, 2017. High-definition video, black-and-white, sound; 34:36 min. Image courtesy the artist

2019 WHITNEY BIENNIAL TO FEATURE A VARIETY OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS WITH ARTISTS AND CURATORS

NEW YORK, May 22, 2019 – For the 2019 Biennial, the Whitney Museum of American Art presents a series of conversations, lectures, performances, and screenings that feature the voices of exhibiting artists. These programs emphasize the ways in which artists working in the United States today are grappling with profound questions about the role of art in the present and offer visitors the opportunity to engage with a number of Biennial participants as well as with co-curators Jane Panetta and Rujeko Hockley.

Themes in the exhibition will be explored, such as the changing nature of photographic practices, the ways in which artists are creating new spaces for community through their work, and artistic engagements with archives and research. Performances by Marcus Fischer, Ellie Ga, Steffani Jemison, and Laura Ortman are featured, highlighting the multidisciplinary approach to artmaking of the many artists in the exhibition.

Given the challenging questions raised by many of the works on view, the Museum will also offer drop-in discussion sessions throughout the run of the exhibition. As a platform for art that engages with pressing social issues, the Whitney Museum is committed to fostering dialogue and debate in these ongoing weekly sessions.

Public Programs

Curating the Whitney Biennial 2019

Thursday, June 6
7PM

Join Whitney Biennial 2019 co-curators Rujeko Hockley and Jane Panetta in conversation with Scott Rothkopf, Senior Deputy Director and Nancy and Steve Crown Family Chief Curator, as they discuss the making of the seventy-ninth edition of the Whitney Biennial. The conversation addresses the curators' research process, observations about contemporary art across the United States, and the challenges they faced in planning the exhibition.

Tickets are required (\$10 adults; \$8 members, students, seniors, and visitors with a disability).

Stonewall 50 Celebration with Tiona Nekkia McClodden

Thursday, June 13
7:30PM

The Whitney is hosting a celebration in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the Stonewall Riots organized in collaboration with 2019 Biennial artist Tiona Nekkia McClodden. Inspired by McClodden's ongoing artistic research and practice, as well as the rich LGBTQ+ history of the Whitney's surrounding neighborhood, the party looks to the legacy of the Meatpacking District's queer club culture. The festivities will include drinks, music by DJ SHYBOI, and performances by McClodden and other guest artists.

This event is for visitors age 21 and over. Free but registration is required.

Photographic Activities: A Salon

Sunday, June 16
4PM

This program brings together seven artists in the 2019 Biennial who work with the medium and activity of photography. Following brief presentations, the conversation takes up questions of how and why artists continue to use (and reinvent) photography today, different approaches to the medium in light of the proliferation of photographic technologies, the digital and physical spaces in which photographs exist, and how artists make interventions within the field. Speakers include Lucas Blalock, John Edmonds, Todd Gray, Curran Hatleberg, Elle Pérez, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, and Heji Shin.

Tickets are required (\$10 adults; \$8 members, students, seniors, and visitors with a disability).

Laura Ortman

Friday, June 21
7PM

With varied natural and urban instrumentation, this solo musical performance by 2019 Whitney Biennial artist Laura Ortman (White Mountain Apache) showcases the wide range of her practice as a composer and visual artist. The artist plays against the backdrop of an installation she is creating for the Hess Family Theater, which can be viewed during Museum hours from Wednesday, June 19 through Saturday, June 22.

Tickets are required and include Museum admission (\$10 adults; \$8 members, students, seniors, and visitors with a disability).

Ellie Ga: *The Fortunetellers*

Monday, July 22
7PM

The Fortunetellers is a narrative-based performance drawn from 2019 Biennial artist Ellie Ga's experiences during a five-month expedition near the North Pole. Ga combines memories with a vast array of documents—including photographs, videos, annotated sketches, maps, and travel logs—created and archived during her travels. She superimposes live storytelling, recorded sound, still images, and moving images to conjure up the terms and rituals of daily life in the Arctic night. The project meditates upon the nature of prediction as it was manifested during the expedition, including ancient forms of fortunetelling, weather forecasting, oceanographic research, and the day-to-day routines of a crew drifting in the Arctic with no control over their immediate future, where they will be next, or when they will return home.

The total runtime of *The Fortunetellers* is fifty minutes.

Tickets are required (\$10 adults; \$8 members, students, seniors, and visitors with a disability).

A Conversation with Beta-Local

Friday, July 26
6:30PM

This conversation between the three co-directors of Beta-Local—2019 Biennial artist Sofía Gallisá Muriente and artists Pablo Guardiola and Michael Linares—presents the programs of the artist-run nonprofit through the many

forms of collaboration put into practice over the last ten years. Founded in 2009 by two artists and a curator, Beta-Local is based in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Through their programs, they develop long-term relationships that strengthen a wide network of cultural workers and generate new ways of sharing artistic and cultural work beyond established circuits. Beta-Local's critical and practical workshops engage with the conditions of the tropics, the Caribbean, the Puerto Rican colonial context, and the present.

Tickets are required and include Museum admission (\$10 adults; \$8 members, students, seniors, and visitors with a disability).

Barbara Hammer's *History Lessons*: Screening and Discussion

Wednesday, July 31

7PM

In *History Lessons* (2000), Barbara Hammer reclaims and rewrites lesbian history through her playful but empowering manipulation of a vast array of archival footage, from popular films to newsreels, sex ed pics, stag reels, medical and educational films, old nudies, and more. Following the screening, Matt Wolf, one of the guest curators for the 2019 Whitney Biennial film program, moderates a conversation with several people who appear in the film. This screening of *History Lessons* is presented in conjunction with *History Lessons Redo: Meat Market*, a 2019 remake by Hammer that will be screened as part of the 2019 Biennial.

The total runtime of *History Lessons* is sixty-one minutes.

Tickets are required (\$10 adults; \$8 members, students, seniors, and visitors with a disability).

Marcus Fischer

Friday, August 9

7:30PM

This performance by 2019 Biennial artist Marcus Fischer brings together signature aspects of his practice: textural soundscapes created from field recordings, found objects, and chance, along with tape loops and live instrumentation. The artist combines these elements to create an immersive sonic environment.

Tickets are required (\$10 adults; \$8 members, students, seniors, and visitors with a disability).

On *Similitude*: Steffani Jemison with Garrett Gray

Friday, September 13

7:30PM

What can be conveyed through physical gestures and expressions but not in language? How can the exaggerated frown of a painted face or the dramatic twist of a torso be understood, if not through words? Steffani Jemison reflects on these questions in a performance that engages with the rich and various history of mime and the role of mimicry in addressing audiences and intimates.

In a companion performance to her video *Sensus Plenior*, on view in the 2019 Whitney Biennial, Jemison draws on the work of Étienne Decroux, who popularized mime in the mid-twentieth century and pitted physical movement against language. Jemison connects this history to mime ministry, which combines physical theater with gospel recordings and has become a fixture in churches with African American congregations over the past two decades. Ultimately, Jemison asks, how we can use our bodies to amplify and extend the reach of speech?

Tickets are required (\$10 adults; \$8 members, students, seniors, and visitors with a disability).

From Seneca Village to Brooklyn: A conversation with Tomashi Jackson

Sunday, September 15

4PM

Drawing on research for her recent paintings on view in the 2019 Biennial, Tomashi Jackson convenes this conversation about the long history of displacement and gentrification in New York City. Jackson's project examines the destruction of Seneca Village, a free Black community that was razed in the 1850s for the creation of Central Park. The artist draws a parallel between this historical event and contemporary practices of redevelopment that rely on the targeted dispossession of Black and Brown property owners through the third-party transfer program.

The full list of speakers will be announced at a later date.

Free with registration.

Drop-in Discussions

Ethics of Looking: Biennial 2019

May 17–September 22

Fridays, 8 pm

Saturdays, 5 pm

These drop-in programs provide Museum visitors with an opportunity to discuss the complexities and challenges of works on view. Artworks in this year's Biennial offer a profound consideration of race, gender, and equity, and explore both the vulnerability of the body and the meaning of community. After seeing the exhibition, please join us to explore its themes and ideas in depth by engaging with a Joan Tisch Teaching Fellow in open discussion about the important issues raised. As a platform for art that engages with pressing social issues, the Whitney Museum is committed to fostering dialogue and debate in these ongoing weekly sessions.

Free with Museum admission.

Courses

Whitney Courses give participants the opportunity to dive deeper into Whitney exhibitions and to learn more about the histories of American art that they engage.

Inside the Whitney Biennial 2019

Wednesdays May 29, June 5 and 12

6:30–8 pm

Thursdays, May 30, June 6 and 13

11 am–12:30 pm or 2–3:30 pm

The Whitney Biennial is the Museum's flagship exhibition, with a history of presenting emerging and established artists who explore the fundamental issues of their time. This three-week course gives participants an in-depth view of the works in the exhibition and probes urgent questions—about race, gender, optimism, community, and vulnerability—that artists are grappling with today. We consider artists working in a range of media, including painting, sculpture, drawing, installation, film and video, and performance. Course participants have the unique opportunity to meet with a Biennial artist. Participants in the evening sessions gain access to the Biennial galleries after museum hours.

Registration is required and is \$375 (\$300 for members).

Crash Courses on Contemporary Art: The 2019 Biennial

Thursday, July 10, and Wednesdays, July 17 and 24

7–8:30 pm

In these intensive, single-session courses, noted experts provide an overview of key topics in modern and contemporary art. The summer 2019 Crash Courses will focus on major themes in the 2019 Biennial and look at the ways in which this year's exhibition is in dialogue with previous editions of the Biennial and the history of American art.

Registration is required and is \$40 (\$30 for members). Check whitney.org in June for more information about registration.

Curatorial Credit

The 2019 Whitney Biennial is organized by Jane Panetta, associate curator, and Rujeko Hockley, assistant curator, with Ramsay Kolber, curatorial project assistant.

Exhibition Support

Whitney Biennial 2019 is presented by

TIFFANY & CO.

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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, Sarah Arison and Thomas Wilhelm, 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, Kourosch Larizadeh and Luis Pardo, Melanie Shorin and Greg S. Feldman, Dora and Cranford Stoudemire, and the William and Ellen Taubman Foundation; and Further Forward Foundation, the Kapadia Equity Fund, The Keith Haring Foundation Exhibition Fund, Katie and Amnon Rodan, and Sotheby's.

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New York magazine is the exclusive media sponsor.

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

Where We Are: Selections from the Whitney's Collection 1900–1960	April 28, 2017 – June 2, 2019
Spilling Over: Painting Color in the 1960s	March 29 – August 2019
2019 Whitney Biennial	May 17 – September 22, 2019
The Whitney's Collection: Selections from 1900 to 1965	Opens June 28, 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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