



Portrait of Adrienne Edwards; image by Bryan Derballa

## **WHITNEY ANNOUNCES PROMOTION OF ADRIENNE EDWARDS TO DIRECTOR OF CURATORIAL AFFAIRS**

**NEW YORK, April 8, 2021**—The Whitney Museum of American Art announced today that Adrienne Edwards, Engell Speyer Curator and Curator of Performance, is receiving a promotion to Director of Curatorial Affairs, effective July 1, 2021. By expanding her role, the Museum recognizes Edwards’s significant contributions to the Whitney and the broader field. In her new position as Engell Speyer Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs, Edwards will hold a

leadership role as part of the upper-level management team charged with strategic planning for the Museum. She will continue to direct the Whitney's performance program and work closely with Scott Rothkopf, Senior Deputy Director and Nancy and Steve Crown Family Chief Curator, to oversee the operations of the Curatorial department and contribute to the formulation of the Museum's artistic direction.

"Adrienne is one of the great visionaries in our field who truly understands both artists and institutions," said Scott Rothkopf. "She has already made a transformative impact on the Whitney, and now will not only helm our performance program but will also bring her deep knowledge, innovative practice, and collaborative spirit to the Whitney's leadership team. I thank her predecessor Emily Russell for her sixteen years of extraordinary service to the Museum."

Edwards commented, "I am very much looking forward to taking on this new, more institutional role, and deepening and expanding my involvement in the Whitney's artistic program at a moment when so many dynamic projects are underway and forthcoming. I'm thrilled to continue working with my colleagues on the curatorial team in this larger capacity, and collaborating to advance their individual and our collective ideas, voices, and perspectives, and those of the artists.

Since joining the Whitney in 2018, Edwards has enhanced the strength and vitality of the Museum's performance program and has curated acclaimed exhibitions *Jason Moran* (2019) and *Moved by the Motion: Sudden Rise* (2019). Edwards is the curator of two exhibitions in the Museum's 2021 program: New York-based artist Dave McKenzie's first solo museum show and concurrent performance series, debuting this May; and the twenty-year survey of performance trio My Barbarian, which opens to the public on October 22. She is also part of the team working on *Day's End*, David Hammons's monumental public art project set to be completed this May in Hudson River Park on the Gansevoort Peninsula. Additionally, she is co-curating the 2022 Whitney Biennial with David Breslin, the Museum's DeMartini Family Curator and Director of Curatorial Initiatives. The flagship exhibition is set to open in April 2022.

Edwards comes into her new position with a wealth of experience drawn from her established career and her current fellowship at the Center for Curatorial Leadership, a program for curators of exceptional achievements and innovative thinking. Collaborating with departments across the Museum, Edwards has also contributed to initiatives that speak directly to the Whitney's mission, including serving on the Equity and Inclusion Committee, contributing to the Collection Strategic Plan, and leading an ongoing important study on how we consider the demographics of artists in our program and collection.

Prior to joining the Whitney in 2018, Edwards worked as Curator at Large for the Walker Art Center from 2016-2018, where she co-led the Mellon Foundation Interdisciplinary Initiative, a multi-year effort to curate, produce, document, and contextualize new models of working between the visual and performing arts. From 2010 to 2018, Edwards served as curator of Performa, organizing boundary-defying commissions, film programs, and symposia. Her other curatorial projects include the critically acclaimed exhibition and catalogue *Blackness in Abstraction*, hosted by Pace Gallery in 2016. Edwards has also taught art history and visual

studies at New York University and The New School, and previously served as Vice President of Development, Planning, and Special Projects at the Apollo Theater Foundation, following three years as Director of Foundation and Government Relations at the Whitney. She is a contributor to the National Gallery of Art's forthcoming publication *Black Modernisms* and *African American Art World*.

### **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.