

WHITNEY

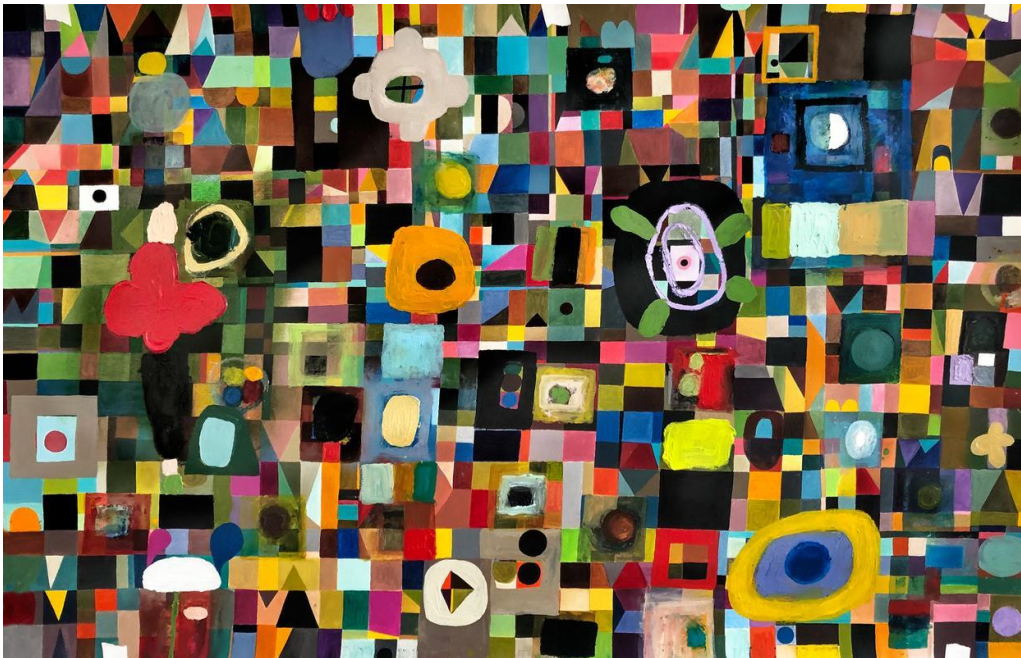
Whitney Museum
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PRESS RELEASE

RALPH LEMON RECEIVES THE WHITNEY'S 2022 BUCKSBAUM AWARD



Ralph Lemon, *Untitled*, 2021. Oil and acrylic on paper, 26 x 40 in. (66.1 x 101.6 cm). Image courtesy the artist

NEW YORK, September 22, 2022—The Whitney Museum of American Art announces that Ralph Lemon is the recipient of the 2022 Bucksbaum Award. Lemon was chosen from the sixty-three intergenerational artists and collectives working across disciplines and media in *Whitney Biennial 2022: Quiet as It's Kept*.

An interdisciplinary artist, who works primarily in performance, Ralph Lemon has made drawings throughout most of his creative life. He has described the purpose of these works, which have been constant and mostly private, as “a mapping akin to an anthropological practice,” involving research and art making in places such as Japan, Haiti, Côte d’Ivoire and, for many years, the Mississippi Delta. For the Biennial, he developed a choreography of presentation, exhibiting hundreds of drawings from over or more than twenty-five years in five transient variations that unfolded monthly over the course of the exhibition. Themes in Lemon’s work range from elaborate visual meditations and the nature of the artistic process itself to experiments refracting Black American culture, symbols, icons, music, and joy.

“Ralph Lemon’s talent and range over a career dedicated to performance, drawing, educating, and the pursuit of an imaginative creative process make him one of the most compelling American artists working today,” said Adam D. Weinberg, the Alice Pratt Brown Director of the Whitney. “I am thrilled that he is receiving the Bucksbaum Award, which was initiated by our long-time trustee Melva Bucksbaum, and celebrates the excellence of living artists.”

“With the Bucksbaum Prize, the Whitney seeks to honor an artist with the promise to make a lasting contribution to the history of American art. In Ralph Lemon’s case that has already happened,” said Scott Rothkopf, the Nancy and Steve Crown Family Chief Curator of the Whitney. “His body of work has shifted paradigms around performance, sculpture, drawing, and more, as well as the distinctions among them—all with rigor, ethics, humor, and heart.”

The six-member Bucksbaum jury included Weinberg, Rothkopf, the Whitney Biennial 2022 co-curators David Breslin, DeMartini Family Curator and Director of Curatorial Initiatives at the Whitney and Adrienne Edwards, Engell Speyer Family Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs at the Whitney, Huey Copeland, BFC Presidential Associate Professor, University of Pennsylvania, and Meg Onli, Curator and Writer.

Melva Bucksbaum (1933–2015), a patron of the arts, collector, and Whitney trustee from 1996 until her death, launched The Bucksbaum Award in 2000. The Bucksbaum Award is given in each Biennial year in recognition of an artist, featured in the Biennial, whose work demonstrates a singular combination of talent and imagination. The selected artist is considered by the jurors to have the potential to make a lasting impact on the history of American art, based on the excellence of their past work, as well as of their present work in the Biennial. The award is accompanied by a check for \$100,000. McClodden is the tenth Bucksbaum laureate to be named since the Award was introduced.

The ten previous Bucksbaum recipients are Paul Pfeiffer (2000), Irit Batsry (2002), Raymond Pettibon (2004), Mark Bradford (2006), Omer Fast (2008), Michael Asher (2010), Sarah Michelson (2012), Zoe Leonard (2014), Pope.L (2017), and Tiona Nekkia McClodden (2019).

Lemon will participate in a special project at the Museum that will take place in the coming months. More information will be [available on the Museum’s website](#) as details are confirmed.

Funding for the Bucksbaum Award is provided by an endowment from the Martin Bucksbaum Family Foundation.

About Ralph Lemon

Ralph Lemon, is a choreographer, writer, visual artist, and curator based in New York, NY. He is currently the Artistic Director of Cross Performance, a company dedicated to the creation of cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary performances and presentations. His most recent works include *Chorus* (2015), *Scaffold Room* (2015), *Four Walls* (2012), and *How Can You Stay in The House All Day And Not Go Anywhere?* (2008-2010). Lemon’s works, live performance, film, and visual art have toured throughout the U.S. His solo visual art exhibitions include *Chorus* at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Holland and the Underground Museum, Los Angeles (2017/2018), *1856 Cessna Road* at Studio Museum in Harlem, NYC (2012); *How Can You Stay*

In The House All Day And Not Go Anywhere?, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2010); *(the efflorescence of) Walter*, Contemporary Art Center, New Orleans (2008), *The Kitchen*, NYC (2007) and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2006); *The Geography Trilogy*, Zilkha Gallery at Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT (2001); and *Temples*, Margaret Bodell Gallery, NYC (2000). Group exhibitions include: *Move: Choreographing You*, Hayward Gallery, London, UK, and *The Record: Contemporary Art and Vinyl*, Nasher Museum at Duke University, Durham, NC. His works are in the collections of the Walker Art Center, Studio Museum in Harlem, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

In 2012, Lemon was honored with one of the first Doris Duke Performing Artist Awards; he was also one of the first artists to receive the United States Artists Fellowship (2006). He is a recipient of three "Bessie" Awards (1986, 2005, 2016); two Foundation for Contemporary Art Awards (1986, 2012); a 2009 Guggenheim Fellowship; a 2004 Bellagio Study Center Fellowship; and the 1999 CalArts Alpert Award.

Among his many teaching positions, Lemon has been an IDA Fellow at Stanford University (2009); artist-in-residence at Temple University (2005-06); Miller Endowment Visiting Artist at the Krannert Center (2004); Fellow of the Humanities Council and Program in Theater & Dance at Princeton University (2002); and Associate Artist at Yale Repertory Theater (1996-2000). For the fall 2011 semester, he was a Visiting Critic with the Yale University School of Art, Sculpture Dept. He was also the 2014 Annenberg Fellow at the Museum of Modern Art, where he curated a series of "performance essays" titled *Value Talks*. In 2015 Lemon was a Mellon Foundation Visiting Artist Fellow at Columbia University, and in 2017 he was Professor of Practice of Theater Arts and Performance Studies at Brown University. He was the 2018 Josep Lluís Sert Practitioner at the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts at Harvard University. In 2019 he was the Sachs Visiting Professor at University of Pennsylvania. Lemon is currently a Visual Arts Mentor at Columbia University School of the Arts.

In 2015 Lemon received the National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama. He is a 2018 recipient of the Heinz Family Foundation Award, a 2019 recipient of the Francis J. Greenberger Award, a 2020 recipient of an American Academy in Berlin Fellowship, a 2020 John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, and he was elected as a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2021.

PRESS CONTACT

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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 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 ninety 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, 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.

VISITOR INFORMATION

The Whitney Museum of American Art is located at 99 Gansevoort Street between Washington and West Streets, New York City. Public hours are: Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10:30 am–6 pm; Friday, 10:30 am–10 pm; and Saturday and Sunday, 11 am–6 pm. Closed Tuesday. Member-only hours are: Saturday and Sunday, 10:30–11 am. Visitors eighteen years and under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 7–10 pm. COVID-19 vaccination and face coverings are not required but strongly recommended. We encourage all visitors to wear face coverings that cover the nose and mouth throughout their visit.

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