

WHITNEY

Whitney Museum
of American Art
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PRESS RELEASE

THE WHITNEY'S REIMAGINED DINING SPACES—INCLUDING A NEW FRENCHETTE BAKERY AND CAFE OPENING IN FALL 2023—TO FEATURE NEW COMMISSIONS BY ARTISTS RASHID JOHNSON AND DYANI WHITE HAWK



The Whitney's new food and beverage program will include Frenchette Bakery and cafe on the ground floor, and a new eighth-floor eatery opening in 2024.

New York, NY, November 1, 2023 — A new Frenchette Bakery and cafe are coming to the Whitney Museum of American Art.

As part of the Whitney's [reimagined food and beverage program](#)—which aims to create welcoming, approachable spaces for people to gather, connect, and recharge—Frenchette Bakery, which opened in TriBeCa in 2020, will open a new flagship location, with its first-ever cafe in the Museum's redesigned ground-floor restaurant space in November 2023.

Frenchette Bakery's second, significantly expanded location incorporates a cafe element and will first offer take-away breakfast, lunch, and on-premises baked sweet and savory fare, with plans to add sit-down dining options for breakfast and lunch later this year.

In addition to the ground-floor restaurant, the Whitney is working with the team behind Frenchette on a new concept for the Museum's eighth-floor cafe space, which operated as Studio Bar. The new eighth-floor space will open in 2024; Studio Bar closed on October 16 for construction to begin.

To connect the restaurant spaces with the Museum's mission to celebrate and support contemporary art and artists, both spaces will be anchored by significant, newly commissioned artworks. The ground floor will feature an installation by artist Rashid Johnson, and the eighth-floor space will showcase a work by artist Dyani White Hawk.

Both dining spaces are being designed by New York City–based architectural firm Modellus Novus.

“The bakery and cafe will be a welcoming, approachable neighborhood destination and gathering space open to Museum visitors and non-visitors alike,” said **Amy Roth, co-chief operating officer at the Whitney Museum**. “Anyone can stop by for baked goods, coffee, or a snack to enjoy on the Whitney's steps, the nearby High Line, or Hudson River Park, or linger and recharge over a meal. There will be something for everyone. We are proud to bring this exciting new addition to the community and to the Museum. We have the ideal partner in the Frenchette team—whose philosophies and mission are aligned with ours—to help forge new connections between the Whitney and the neighborhood.”

“As long-time New Yorkers, we have always loved the energy and history of the neighborhood and are excited to become a more permanent part of it with our new bakery and cafe inside the Whitney,” said **Lee Hanson and Riad Nasr, Chef/Owners of Frenchette**.

At the center of the new Frenchette Bakery and cafe will be the sprawling indoor-outdoor installation [New Poetry](#) by artist Rashid Johnson, whose work is in the Whitney's collection and has been featured in several recent exhibitions, including *America Is Hard to See* and *An Incomplete History of Protest: Selections from the Whitney's Collection, 1940–2017*.

Johnson's sculpture—a new addition to the Whitney's permanent collection—helps create an immediate connection between the Museum, the community, the new space, and visitors. A massive black steel sculpture with shelves holding books, ceramics, monitors playing films, lights, plants, and more, the piece expands through the interior space and past the walls of the restaurant to also inhabit the exterior space in front of the Museum, allowing all passing by to see and walk through it. According to Johnson, “the steel grid works are multifaceted. They work as a brain, delivering disparate materials and information into one location where conceptual connections and new ways of thinking come from their physical proximity.” Experiencing the work—which features plants to create a more intimate connection, and books of poetry to nod to the medium's importance in Johnson's life—is an opportunity for visitors to “look at the way I think but also allow space for the interior lives and personal experiences of the viewer.”

“Poetry is a vehicle for the exploration of critical concerns, aesthetics, and the romantic,” said **Rashid Johnson**. “It is a mode that acts as a mirror of all other mediums. I consider this sculpture to be a poem.”

The eighth-floor space will incorporate a new installation by artist Dyani White Hawk, whose work is in the Whitney's collection and was featured in *Whitney Biennial 2022: Quiet as It's Kept*.

White Hawk's new installation *Nourish* combines influences from her *Wopila | Lineage* series, first created for the 2022 Whitney Biennial, and her ongoing *Quiet Strength* series. Both bodies of work honor legacies of Indigenous art by centering the original practices of abstraction on this continent, and calling out the lack of representation of Indigenous history and contemporary peoples in national narratives. White Hawk's work encourages critical thinking on how we choose to tell our stories as nations, institutions, and communities—advocating that through sharing the full and complicated truths of our shared histories, we increase opportunities for compassion and healing, necessary building blocks for a healthier future. *Nourish* introduces new exploration in ceramic tile for the artist (in part as a nod to NYC subway tiles). The ceramic tiles are handmade and fabricated by Mercury Mosaics (Minneapolis, MN). The composition is rooted in Lakota abstraction incorporating symbolism that embodies themes of balance, connection, and honoring connectivity across life and land.



“I am honored and grateful to create work that will contribute to the beauty of a space in which people will gather, share sustenance and ideas, build and nurture relationships, or take the time needed to rest, reflect, and recharge. This is especially important in a museum when we are experiencing tremendous amounts of sensory input and deeply charged human expression.” said **Dyani White Hawk**. “When cared for intentionally, the spaces in which we share meals together, and/or find respite, can be the most sacred of spaces—where we take part in nourishing mind, body, and spirit, gathered together, or individually among the company of others. I pray that this work enriches the experience of all those that gather here, feeding and soothing people’s minds, hearts and bodies. I pray that the work nurtures, inspires, warms, and welcomes all.”

For the design of both dining spaces, Modellus Novus has applied its expertise in projects that warmly welcome the public to enjoy dynamic cultural and dining experiences, having most recently designed Lincoln Center's celebrated restaurant Tatiana. The firm's aim was to blur interior and exterior to help create connections between diners and their surrounding community, as well as maintain the original open concept of the Museum's design by architect Renzo Piano. The architects worked closely with the artists to ensure the open, friendly, and welcoming spaces are fitting for the artworks being created and supportive of dialogue around those works.

"For both the museum's ground-floor and eighth-floor dining spaces, our aim is to create holistic, unified environments that center the artists and their work while offering guests serene spaces to enjoy the museum's enriched culinary offerings," said **Jonathan Garnett, Partner/Creative Director, Modellus Novus**. "It's been a privilege to collaborate closely with Rashid Johnson and Dyani White Hawk throughout every step of the design process to ensure the new spaces seamlessly integrate art and architecture, as well as celebrate the museum's intent to welcome the public through remarkable transparency and clear sight lines to the Hudson River and city views beyond."

PRESS CONTACT

For press materials and image requests, please visit [whitney.org/press/dining](https://www.whitney.org/press/dining) or 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.

Whitney Museum Land Acknowledgment

The Whitney is located in Lenapehoking, the ancestral homeland of the Lenape. The name Manhattan comes from their word Mannahatta, meaning “island of many hills.” The Museum’s current site is close to land that was a Lenape fishing and planting site called Sapponckanikan (“tobacco field”). The Whitney acknowledges the displacement of this region’s original inhabitants and the Lenape diaspora that exists today.

As a museum of American art in a city with vital and diverse communities of Indigenous people, the Whitney recognizes the historical exclusion of Indigenous artists from its collection and program. The Museum is committed to addressing these erasures and honoring the perspectives of Indigenous artists and communities as we work for a more equitable future. To read more about the Museum’s Land Acknowledgment, [visit the Museum’s website](#).

ABOUT FRENCHETTE BAKERY

Frenchette Bakery opened in the TriBeCa neighborhood of New York City in October 2020 under the direction of Chef/Owners Lee Hanson and Riad Nasr, who also run the restaurants Frenchette (TriBeCa) and Le Rock (Midtown). The bakery focuses on French baking and viennoiserie traditions by lead baker Pete Edris and Executive Pastry Chef Michelle Palazzo, incorporating ancient and local heirloom grains where possible.

It is located at 220 Church Street between Worth and Thomas Streets and is open seven days a week.

In the Fall 2023 Frenchette Bakery opened a new larger and expanded second location at the Whitney Museum in the Meatpacking District, with cafe service planned. Follow along on Instagram at [@frenchettebakery](#)

ABOUT MODELLUS NOVUS

Modellus Novus (MN) is an architecture firm creating spaces that shape and define culture. Founded in 2015, the New York City-based team is led by individuals united not only by diverse backgrounds and perspectives but an optimistic commitment to designing spaces for the many. Partnering with clients who share a belief that great design should not be elusive nor exclusive, MN’s work across commercial, retail, industrial, hospitality, residential, and cultural typologies prioritizes the experience of all users of a space. Global in its perspective, MN is a team of 25-plus full-time employees, half of which are women, hailing from 11 countries and four continents. The firm’s recent projects include Chef Kwame Onwuachi’s Tatiana as part of the redesign of David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center, Chef Melissa Rodriguez’s Al Coro fine-dining restaurant, Discolo bar and Mel’s pizzeria, and Hypebeast’s New York City Flagship, with

upcoming projects including the opening of COTE Singapore and the reimagining of New York's iconic Kitano Hotel.

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, 10:30 am–6 pm. Closed Tuesday. 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.

Image credits:

Rashid Johnson, *New Poetry*, 2023. Black steel, ceramics, grow lights, plants, wood, shea butter, books, films on CRT monitors, 190 x 359 1/2 x 65 in. (482.6 x 913 x 165 cm). © Rashid Johnson. Photograph by Max Touhey

Artist Dyani White Hawk in Mercury Mosaics' studio. Photograph by Kristen Torres Korman, Creative Director, Mercury Mosaics

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