

WHITNEY

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PRESS RELEASE

WHITNEY MUSEUM ANNOUNCES POIGNANT AND ENGAGING PERFORMANCE PROGRAM FOR 2024 BIENNIAL



New York, NY, April 18, 2024 — *Whitney Biennial 2024: Even Better Than the Real Thing* offers a robust performance program of five live events highlighting the work of interdisciplinary artists, composers, choreographers, and musicians. While sight tends to be the dominant sensory experience within museums, this Whitney Biennial performance program offers an alternative approach, forefronting sound and sonic space.

Guest curated by Taja Cheek, the performances expand on the 2024 Biennial's explorations of identity, healing, autonomy, relationships to AI, and more. Kicking off on April 27, this series of five performances will feature artists Holland Andrews, Debit, Sarah Hennies, JJJJerome Ellis, and Alex Tatarsky in the Museum's Susan and John Hess Family Theater.

Curator and musician Taja Cheek, also known professionally as L'Rain, worked in close collaboration with Whitney Biennial 2024 co-organizers Chrissie Iles, Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Curator, and Meg Onli, Curator at Large, to develop this performance series. Cheek is currently the Artistic Director of Performance Space New York. She has led performance programs at

MoMA PS1 and worked closely with artists to realize projects at institutions like Creative Time, Weeksville Heritage Center, and The High Line. She also co-founded a DIY rehearsal and performance space in her Brooklyn neighborhood that primarily supports independent, improvised, and experimental music.

2024 Whitney Biennial Performance Schedule:

April 27–28: *The Long Count* by Debit

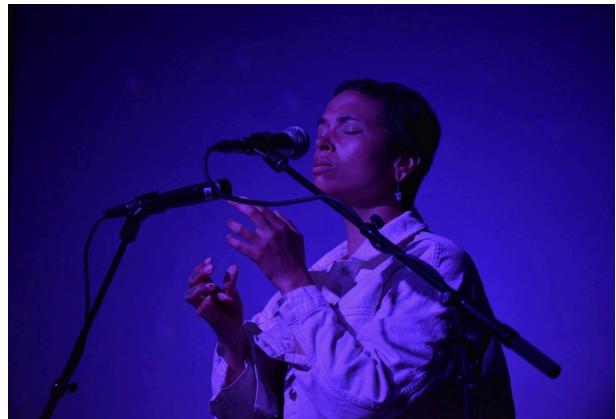
June 8: *Motor Tapes* by Sarah Hennies

June 29–July 1: *Speaker* by Holland Andrews

July 20–21: *FEELING\$ FEELING\$ FEELING\$* by Alex Tatarsky

August 2–4: *Offerings* by JJJJJerome Ellis

More information about the performances and how to purchase tickets will be available online. Details will be added to the Museum’s website as they become available. For the most up-to-date information, please visit whitney.org/exhibitions/2024-biennial.



PERFORMANCE LISTINGS

The Long Count

Debit

Saturday, April 27, 7 pm; Sunday, April 28, 7 pm

For the first event in the 2024 Whitney Biennial performance lineup, Debit will perform her album *The Long Count*. The performance features live musical arrangements made with machine-learning synth instruments that have sampled and processed the sounds of Late Postclassic Maya wind instruments. Bringing together tones from an ancient culture and current technologies, *The Long Count* shuttles the distant past into our contemporary artistic universe.

Location: Floor 3, Susan and John Hess Family Theater

Tickets: Tickets are available online.

Event Link: whitney.org/events/the-long-count

About Debit

Debit has long straddled two distinct worlds; born and raised in Monterrey, Mexico, her family relocated to Texas when she was a teenager. As a DJ, her selections burn the unmistakable swing of Latin club music into ironclad techno frameworks. As a producer and composer, she drifts seamlessly from avant-garde and drone modes into experimental dance music without hesitation. Debit has been performing and recording since 2009, first experimenting in the DIY noise scene and later attending classes and workshops on synthesis and circuit bending, eventually learning to make her own oscillators and effects pedals.

Motor Tapes

Sarah Hennies

Saturday, June 8, 2 pm and 4 pm

Motor Tapes is a large ensemble performance composed of densely overlapping sound patterns. The musicians fire independently and work together to achieve complex arrangements representing the connections and communication between neurons in the human brain. The performance is inspired by a concept developed by neuroscientist Rodolfo Llinás, who characterizes the brain as “a continuous, random, motor pattern noise generator” containing innumerable “tape loops.” Llinás’s strikingly musical description of this phenomenon sparked Hennies’s interest: “it suggests that alongside lived experience, there is a mysterious biological basis for our inclinations, talents, and identities,” the artist has said.

Motor Tapes will be performed by Lauren Cauley, Laura Cocks, David Friend, Madison Greenstone, Judith Hamann, Tristan Kasten-Krause, Hannah Levinson, Christopher McIntyre, Erin Rogers, Brendon Randall-Myers, Bill Solomon, and Nate Wooley.

Location: Floor 3, Susan and John Hess Family Theater

Tickets: Ticket information will be released on May 10.

Event Link: whitney.org/events/motor-tapes

About Sarah Hennies

Sarah Hennies is a composer based in upstate New York whose work is concerned with a variety of musical, sociopolitical, and psychological issues, including queer and trans identity, psychoacoustics, and the social and neurological conditions underlying creative thought. She is primarily a composer of acoustic ensemble music but is also active in improvisation, film, and performance art and is currently Visiting Assistant Professor of Music at Bard College. She presents her work internationally as both a composer and percussionist with notable performances at MoMA PS1, New York, Monday Evening Concerts, Los Angeles, and more.

Speaker

Holland Andrews

Saturday, June 29, 8 pm; Sunday, June 30, 8 pm; Monday, July 1, 8 pm

Commissioned by the Whitney for the 2024 Biennial, *Speaker* will debut in the Museum’s theater. In this performance, Andrews engages harmonic disintegration and radical changes to

language to call forward the wisdom held inside the body and, through sound, achieve physical relief.

In addition to this performance, the 2024 Biennial exhibition includes two site-specific sound installations composed by Andrews. Presented in the Museum's main stairwell and large freight elevator, sound is featured in the Whitney Biennial like never before.

Location: Floor 3, Susan and John Hess Family Theater

Tickets: Ticket information will be released on May 31.

Event Link: whitney.org/events/speaker-biennial24

About Holland Andrews

Holland Andrews is a vocalist, composer, music producer, and performer whose work focuses on the abstraction of operatic and extended-technique voice to build cathartic and dissonant soundscapes. Andrews arranges music for voice, clarinet, and electronics, frequently highlighting themes of vulnerability and healing. Andrews harnesses these instruments' innate qualities of power and elegance to serve as cohesive vessels for these themes. As a vocalist, their influences stem from a dynamic range, including contemporary opera, theater, and jazz, while their unique vocal style integrates these influences with language disintegration, vocal distortion, and environmental ambiance.

FEELING\$ FEELING\$ FEELING\$

Alex Tatarsky

Saturday, July 20; Sunday, July 21 (Exact times forthcoming; visit whitney.org for more information.)

Alex Tatarsky's live performances are highly responsive to venue and audience, toeing the line between scripted sequences and improvisation. The artist often plays with perceptions of language and narrative structure and, through their experience as a trained clown, embraces the art of mockery. In this performance commissioned by the Whitney for the 2024 Biennial, Tatarsky will chew up remnants of past works and spit them out. Acting as a voice for materials, they treat the associative language that emerges as a sculptural material to be disassembled and manipulated.

Location: Floor 3, Susan and John Hess Family Theater

Tickets: Ticket information will be released on June 21.

Event Link: whitney.org/events/material-tatarsky

About Alex Tatarsky

Alex Tatarsky makes live performances in the in-between zone of dance, theater, performance art, music, and comedy, drawing on traditions from vaudeville to futurist poetry and postmodern dance. Tatarsky has performed original solo works at a wide array of venues, including La MaMa, MoMA PS1, and The Kitchen, as well as comedy clubs, bars, basements, and DIY spaces. As a curatorial fellow at the Poetry Project, they organized a series on the poetics and

politics of rot. Along with collaborator Ming Lin, they form one half of Shanzhai Lyric and its fictional office, Canal Street Research Association.

Offerings

JJJJerome Ellis

Friday, August 2; Saturday, August 3; Sunday, August 4 (Exact times forthcoming; visit whitney.org for more information.)

JJJJerome Ellis's *Offerings* is a series of performances involving sound and text commissioned by the Whitney for the 2024 Biennial. Ellis will base these performances on the unique musical score they created for the Biennial and the billboard they created as part of the collective People Who Stutter Create.

Ellis was invited to score the exhibition, responding to its sounds, artworks, and spaces to create a musical composition. Offering another interpretation of the Biennial and sonic point of entry, the artist started to develop the score when the exhibition opened and they were able to observe the final installation and how visitors engage within the space. Once complete, the score will be displayed on the gallery walls as a set of drawings and notations.

Location: Floor 3, Susan and John Hess Family Theater

Tickets: Ticket information will be released on July 5.

Event Link: whitney.org/events/offerings

About JJJJerome Ellis

JJJJerome Ellis is an artist and person who stutters. Through music, performance, writing, video, and photography, the artist asks what stuttering can teach us about justice. Born in 1989 to Jamaican and Grenadian immigrants, the artist lives in Norfolk, Virginia, with their wife, ecologist-poet Luísa Black Ellis.

ABOUT THE WHITNEY BIENNIAL

A constellation of the most relevant art and ideas of our time, the Whitney Biennial showcases contemporary artists working across media and disciplines, representing evolving notions of American art. Established by the Museum's founder, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, in 1932, the Whitney Biennial is the longest-running survey of American art. More than 3,600 artists have participated to date, including Jean-Michel Basquiat, Lynda Benglis, Louise Bourgeois, Frank Bowling, Mark Bradford, Alexander Calder, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Raven Chacon, Ellen Gallagher, Jeffrey Gibson, Nan Goldin, Renee Green, Wade Guyton, Rachel Harrison, Jenny Holzer, Edward Hopper, Joan Jonas, Ellsworth Kelly, Mike Kelley, Willem de Kooning, Barbara Kruger, Pope. L, Jacob Lawrence, Carolyn Lazard, Zoe Leonard, Roy Lichtenstein, Glenn Ligon, Agnes Martin, Daniel Joseph Martinez, Julie Mehretu, Sarah Michelson, Joan Mitchell, Tiona Nekkia McClodden, Georgia O'Keeffe, Claes Oldenburg, Laura Owens, Jackson Pollock, Postcommodity, Yvonne Rainer, Robert Rauschenberg, Cindy Sherman, Lorna Simpson, Martine Syms, Wu Tsang, Cy Twombly, Kara Walker, Andy Warhol, and David Wojnarowicz.

The 2024 Whitney Biennial is organized by Chrissie Iles, Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Curator, and Meg Onli, Curator at Large, with Min Sun Jeon and Beatriz Cifuentes. The performance program is organized by Chrissie Iles and Meg Onli, with guest curator Taja Cheek. The film program is organized by Chrissie Iles and Meg Onli, with guest curators Korakrit Arunanondchai, asinnajaq, Greg de Cuir Jr., and Zackary Drucker.

PRESS CONTACT

For press materials and image requests, please visit our press site at whitney.org/press or contact:

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EXHIBITION AND PROGRAM SUPPORT

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Major support is provided by The Keith Haring Foundation Exhibition Fund.

Significant support is provided by the 2024 Biennial Committee Co-Chairs: Sarah Arison, Paul Arnhold, Jill Bikoff, Beth Rudin DeWoody, Miyoung Lee, Joel Lubin, Michael Kassan, and George Wells; 2024 Biennial Committee members: Barbara Bluhm-Kaul and Don Kaul, Alexandre and Lori Chemla, Suzanne and Bob Cochran, Deepa Kumaraiah and Sean Dempsey, Sheree and Jerry Friedman, Ashley Leeds and Christopher Harland, the Kapadia Equity Fund, Dawn and David Lenhardt, the McCallum Family, Orentreich Family Foundation, Nancy and Fred Poses, Jonathan M. Rozoff, Katherine Sachs, Alice and Manu Sareen, Annette and Paul Smith, and Patricia J. Villareal and Thomas S. Leatherbury; and Susan and Matthew Blank, James Keith (JK) Brown and Eric Diefenbach, Jung and Nelson Chai, Jill Cowan and Stephen Davis, Martha and Paddy Farrell, Melanie Shorin and Greg S. Feldman, Charlotte Feng Ford, Cindy and Mark Galant, Christy and Bill Gautreaux, Debra and Jeffrey Geller Family Foundation, Peter H. Kahng, Cathy M. Kaplan, Lisa H. Kim and Eunu Chun, the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, Iris Z. Marden, Marjorie Mayrock, Shelley and David Sonenberg, Gloria H. Spivak, Jackson Tang, and anonymous donors.

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New York magazine is the exclusive media sponsor.

The Whitney Biennial and the Hyundai Terrace Commission are a multiyear partnership with Hyundai Motor. The Hyundai Terrace Commission is an annual site-specific installation on the Whitney Museum's fifth-floor outdoor gallery.

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 Saponnkanikan (“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](#).

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. The Museum offers FREE admission and special programming for visitors of all ages every Friday evening from 5–10 pm and on the second Sunday of every month.

Image credit:

Sarah Hennies, *Falsetto*, 2016. Performance, Ende Tymes Festival, Silent Barn, Brooklyn, 2017. Photograph by Walter-Wlodarczyk

Holland Andrews performing at Weirdo Night at Zebulon, Los Angeles, 2022. Image courtesy the artist. Photograph by Indra Dunis

JJJJerome Ellis playing the saxophone at Performance Space, New York, 2023. Photograph by Annie Forrest

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