

MEDIA ALERT

WHITNEY MUSEUM DEBUTS PERFORMANCE BY
ALEX TATARSKY

New York, NY, July 18, 2024 — The Whitney Museum of American Art will debut *MATERIAL*, Alex Tatarsky's new performance commissioned by the Whitney for the 2024 Biennial. 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.

[*MATERIAL*](#) will be presented in the Whitney Museum's theater on Saturday, July 20 at 6:30 pm and 8:30 pm, and on Sunday, July 21 at 6:30 pm and 8:30 pm. In this performance, Tatarsky considers the dual meanings of the word "material," on one hand referring to the physical elements of an object, and on the other relating to the ideas and information that become a performance. Tatarsky's performance will be prompted by varying items gathered from their clown closet, the garbage, and audience members. Acting as a voice for materials, the artist generates layered scores and monologues by combining objects and responses in surprising and unexpected ways. Traces of the previous night's performance will remain on view for

visitors to encounter during the day. A preview video of Alex Tatarsky's performance can be found in the 2024 Whitney Biennial digital press kit: whitney.org/press/2024-biennial.

There will also be an open rehearsal on Friday, July 19 from 6–10 pm in advance of the performances. This preview will be open to all Museum guests and does not require an additional ticket. The open rehearsal coincides with the Whitney's ongoing [Free Friday Nights](#) program that provides free admission to the Museum each Friday from 5–10 pm.

Performance Details

MATERIAL

Alex Tatarsky

Open Rehearsal: Friday, July 19, 2024 from 6–10 pm

Performances: Saturday, July 20, 6:30 pm, 8:30 pm; Sunday, July 21, 6:30 pm, 8:30 pm

Location: Floor 3, Susan and John Hess Family Theater

Tickets: Tickets are available online.

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.

About the 2024 Whitney Biennial Performance Program

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. Sound is featured in the Whitney Biennial like never before, both in the galleries and across the performance program. 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 curator Taja Cheek worked closely with Biennial curators Meg Onli and Chrissie Iles to develop this performance series, which expands on the 2024 Biennial's explorations of identity, healing, autonomy, relationships to AI, and more.

The performance program is guest curated by Taja Cheek, who closely collaborated with Whitney Biennial 2024 co-organizers Chrissie Iles, Anne and Joel Ehrenkrantz Curator, and Meg Onli, Curator at Large. Cheek, also known professionally as L'Rain, is a curator and musician, and 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.

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.

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 Saponckanikan (“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:

Photograph by River L. Ramirez

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