

WHITNEY

Whitney Museum
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PRESS RELEASE

CELEBRATING *EDGES OF AILEY* AT THE WHITNEY MUSEUM

Julie Mehretu, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Mickalene Thomas, Vanessa Williams, and more celebrated the life, dances, influences, and enduring legacy of visionary artist and choreographer Alvin Ailey



From left to right: Carmen De Lavallade, Adrienne Edwards, Ben Vereen
Photo by Jason Lowrie/BFA.com

New York, NY, September 20, 2024 — On Tuesday, September 17, and Wednesday, September 18, the Whitney Museum of American Art welcomed supporters from the worlds of art, dance, fashion, and philanthropy for two electrifying evenings to celebrate the opening of [Edges of Ailey](#), the first large-scale museum exhibition to celebrate the life, dances, influences, adjacencies, and enduring legacy of visionary artist and choreographer Alvin Ailey. *Edges of Ailey* opens to the public on September 25.

Edges of Ailey Opening Events

September 17 Dinner images are available for download here:

https://bfa.com/events/46560/share/60b17c_3bd4950a

Photos by [Jason Lowrie/BFA.com](https://www.bfa.com)

September 18 Opening Party images are available for download here:

<https://bfa.com/events/46570/share/bec5a8bd2d515d> and

<https://bfa.com/events/46571/share/8bee93bc5ec389>

Photos by [Jason Lowrie/BFA.com](https://www.bfa.com)

Photos by [Mike Vitelli/BFA.com](https://www.bfa.com)



From left to right: Mickalene Thomas, Julie Mehretu; Vanessa Williams; Lin-Manuel Miranda
Photo by Jason Lowrie/BFA.com

This dynamic showcase brings together visual art, live performance, music, a range of archival materials, and a multi-screen video installation drawn from recordings of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (AAADT) repertory to explore the full range of Ailey's personal and creative life. Presented in three parts, *Edges of Ailey* consists of an immersive exhibition in the Museum's 18,000-square-foot, fifth-floor galleries, an ambitious suite of performances in the Museum's third-floor theater, and an accompanying scholarly catalogue.



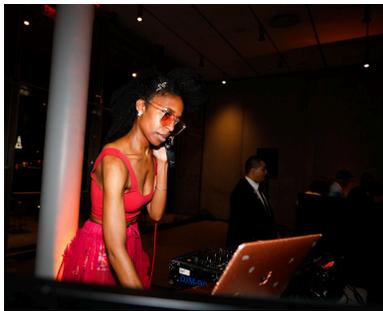
From left to right: Rashid Johnson; Adanna Smalls, Alfred Jordan II, Jordyn White, Isaiah Day, Darion Turner; Thelma Golden
Photo by Jason Lowrie/BFA.com

On Tuesday, September 17, the Museum hosted an intimate dinner for supporters, artists, dancers, and members of the Whitney and AILEY organizations. Guests were welcomed by a jazz trio from **Julliard, On Stage & Beyond**, and invited to the Museum's third-floor theater for cocktails and to explore *Edges of Ailey* on the Museum's fifth floor. A seated dinner by **Union Square Events** took place in the Museum's lobby. Colorful and festive florals for the evening were designed by **Oat Cinnamon Studios**. Board President **Fern Kaye Tessler** welcomed guests as they sat down for dinner. During dinner, Whitney Museum Director **Scott Rothkopf** introduced former AILEY dancer and Artistic Director Emerita of Ailey II, **Sylvia Waters**, who spoke about her relationship with Alvin Ailey and the artist's enduring legacy. *Edges of Ailey* curator **Adrienne Edwards** and president of the Ford Foundation **Darren Walker** also offered remarks.



From left to right: Sylvia Waters; Karon Davis
Photo by Jason Lowrie/BFA.com

On Wednesday, September 18, the Museum continued celebrations with a vibrant opening party that welcomed an exciting mix of artists, dancers, curators, gallerists, influencers, museum leaders, philanthropists, and tastemakers. Throughout the evening, guests were given the opportunity to view *Edges of Ailey* on the museum's fifth floor and enjoy a selection of smooth cocktails by **Maestro Dobel® Tequila** and a DJ set by **April Hunt**.



From left to right: April Hunt; Adrienne Edwards
Photo by Mike Vitelli/BFA.com and Jason Lowrie/BFA.com

Notable guests included ***Edges of Ailey* curator** Adrienne Edwards; **Alice Pratt Brown Director of the Whitney Museum** Scott Rothkopf; **Actors** Denée Benton, Stephanie March, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Ryan Jamaal Swain, Ben Vereen, Vanessa Williams; **Dancers and Choreographers** Kyle Abraham, Masazumi Chaya, Carmen De Lavallade, Bill T. Jones, Tracy Inman, Vicky Lambert, Renaldo Maurice, Yusha-Marie Sorzano, Sylvia Waters; **Artists** Josh Begley, Karon Davis, Torkwase Dyson, Ebony Haynes, Rashid Johnson, Josh Kline, James Little, Kya Lou, Julie Mehretu, Jennifer Packer, Mickalene Thomas, Blaise Tobia; **Photographer** Tyler Mitchell; **Designer** Wes Gordon; **Museum supporters** Judy Hart Angelo, Paul Arnhold, Jill T. Bikoff, David Cancel, Michael Gamson, Susan K. Hess, Gaurav K. Kapadia, Neal Katyal, Claudia Laviada, Jonathan Lee, Stephanie March, Raymond McGuire, Julie Ostrover, Nancy Poses, Robert Rosenkranz, Jen Rubio, Anne-Cecilie Engell Speyer, Fern and Leonard Tessler; **Supporters of the arts** Deana Haggag, Roselee Goldberg, Thelma Golden, Chris McInerney, Raymond McGuire, Jordan Roth, Antwaun Sargent, Jack Shainman, Nicola Vassell, Darren Walker; **Whitney curators** Kim Conaty, Jennie Goldstein, Barbara Haskell, Rujeko Hockley, Chrissie Iles, Meg Onli, Christiane Paul, Laura Phipps, Drew Sawyer, Elisabeth Sussman.



From left to right: Hannah Richardson; Bill T Jones
 Photo by Mike Vitelli/BFA.com and Jason Lowrie/BFA.com



From left to right: Josh Begley, Kya Lou; Jordan Roth; Toreno Herbert
 Photo by Jason Lowrie/BFA.com



From left to right: Kaneza Schaal, Rhonda Ross Kendrick, Rujeko Hockley; Karon Davis, Vicky Lambert; Masazumi Chaya
 Photo by Jason Lowrie/BFA.com



From left to right: Scott Rothkopf, Adrienne Edwards; Renaldo Maurice; Anne-Cecilie Engell Speyer, Paul Arnhold
 Photo by Mike Vitelli/BFA.com and Jason Lowrie/BFA.com

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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](#).

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