

PRESS RELEASE

SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATION BY PRECIOUS OKOYOMON
NOW ON VIEW AS PART OF WHITNEY BIENNIAL 2026

New York, NY, March 25, 2026 — Opening today, March 25, 2026, the Whitney Museum of American Art presents *Everything wants to kill you and you should be afraid* by Precious Okoyomon as part of [Whitney Biennial 2026](#). Occupying the Museum’s entire 8th-floor gallery space, this site-specific installation expands Okoyomon’s ongoing exploration of vulnerability, transformation, and the entanglement of beauty and violence. Working across sculpture, installation, and poetry, Okoyomon creates immersive environments where tenderness and brutality coexist, inviting viewers into spaces of emotional and historical reckoning.

Everything wants to kill you and you should be afraid features hybrid, angel-like figures: discarded stuffed animals dismantled and reassembled, then fitted with bird wings sourced from taxidermy. Suspended from nooses, these forms invoke the history of racial violence in the United States while resisting singular interpretation. For Okoyomon, they embody contradiction, simultaneously weightless and burdened, innocent and grotesque, animated yet stilled. Their presence reflects the artist’s ongoing interest in what she describes as the merging of “unbearable cuteness and unbearable violence,” a visual language that mirrors the conditions of contemporary life.

The installation is also complemented by a sculptural figure on the Museum’s 5th floor. Here the artist combined a plush bunny suit from the 1960s with the head of a blackface doll from the 1930s or 1940s, featuring bright blue eyes and racially stereotyped features. The soft animal

body, a sign of childhood innocence and comfort, serves as a silent host to racial caricature. As the artist notes, the doll “inhabits the uneasy threshold between object and subject, play and punishment, animation and death.”

ABOUT THE 2026 WHITNEY BIENNIAL

Whitney Biennial 2026 is the 82nd edition of the Museum’s landmark exhibition series and the longest-running survey of American art. Featuring 56 artists, duos, and collectives across most of the Museum’s galleries, the Biennial is accompanied by a robust schedule of performance and public programs at the Museum and online. Co-organized by Marcela Guerrero and Drew Sawyer, the exhibition brings together artists working across media and disciplines, reflecting evolving notions of American art.

Whitney Biennial 2026 offers a vivid, atmospheric survey shaped by a moment of profound complexity. The work on view examines varied forms of relationality, from interspecies and familial kinships to geopolitical entanglements, technological affinities, shared mythologies, and the infrastructures that support and constrain contemporary life. Rather than offering a definitive answer to life today, the exhibition foregrounds mood and texture, inviting visitors into environments that evoke tension, tenderness, humor, and unease, while proposing imaginative, unruly, and unexpected forms of coexistence.

Whitney Biennial 2026 is organized by Marcela Guerrero, DeMartini Family Curator, and Drew Sawyer, Sondra Gilman Curator of Photography, with Beatriz Cifuentes, Biennial Curatorial Assistant, and Carina Martinez, Rubio Butterfield Family Fellow.

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EXHIBITION SUPPORT

Whitney Biennial 2026 is presented by



The exhibition is also sponsored by

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Leadership support for the 2026 Whitney Biennial is provided by David Cancel, and Stephanie March and Dan Benton.

Major support is provided by the Adam D. Weinberg Artists First Fund; Marcia Dunn and Jonathan Sobel; The Holly Peterson Foundation; the Kapadia Equity Fund; The KHR McNeely Family Foundation | Kevin, Rosemary, and Hannah Rose McNeely; and the Whitney's National Committee.

Significant support is provided by Sotheby's.

2026 Biennial Committee Co-Chairs: Sarah Arison, Paul Arnhold and Wes Gordon, Suzanne and Bob Cochran, Salvador Espinoza and Jonathan Rozoff, Amanda and Glenn Fuhrman, Further Forward Foundation, Becky Gochman, Christina Hribar, Stephanie and Tim Ingrassia, Peter H. Kahng, Deepa Kumaraiah and Sean Dempsey, Miyoung Lee and Neil Simpkins, Dawn and David Lenhardt, Sueyun and Gene Locks, George Petrocheilos and Diamantis Xylas, Nancy and Fred Poses, Dr. Jan Siegmund and Dr. Benjamin Maddox, Ron and Ann Pizzuti, Jackson Tang, Teresa Tsai, and Todd White and Cameron Carani.

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Biennial funding is also provided by endowments created by Emily Fisher Landau, Leonard A. Lauder, and Fern and Lenard Tessler.

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Support is also provided by the Marshall Weinberg Fund for Performance, endowed in honor of his parents Anna and Harold Weinberg who taught him the meaning of giving.

The Whitney Biennial and 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 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](#).

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 twenty-five 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:

Installation view of *Whitney Biennial 2026* (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, March 8–August 23, 2026). Precious Okoyomon, *Everything wants to kill you and you should be afraid*, 2026. Photograph by Reagan Brown

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