

WHITNEY

PRESS RELEASE

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Hito Steyerl (b. 1966), *Factory of the Sun*, 2015. High-definition video, color, sound; 22:56 min., looped; with environment, dimensions variable. Installation view: *Invisible Adversaries*, Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, 2016. Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; Marieluise Hessel Collection. Image courtesy of the artist and Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York. Photograph by Sarah Wilmer

Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art, 1905–2016, an Overview of Cinematic Experimentation, to be Presented at the Whitney

NEW YORK, October 26, 2016—This fall, the Whitney Museum of American Art presents *Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art, 1905–2016*, a landmark exhibition that focuses on the ways in which technology has created new forms of immersive experience using the moving image. Artists have dismantled and reassembled the conventions of cinema—screen, projection, darkness—to create new readings of space, optical form, and time. The exhibition will fill the Museum's 18,000-square-foot Neil Bluhm Family Galleries on the fifth floor, as well as the adjacent Kaufman Gallery, and will include a substantial film program in the Susan and John Hess Family Theater, and a series of expanded cinema events at Microscope Gallery in Bushwick, Brooklyn, organized in collaboration with the Whitney. *Dreamlands* will be on view from October 28, 2016 through February 5, 2017.

"*Dreamlands* brings together a group of artists whose work articulates the profound shift that has taken place as technology has altered the ways in which space and the image are constructed and experienced," states the Whitney's Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Curator Chrissie Iles, who is curating the exhibition. "The exhibition's title refers to the science fiction writer H.P. Lovecraft's alternate fictional dimension, whose terrain can be visited only through dreams. Similarly, the spaces in *Dreamlands* connect different historical moments of cinematic experimentation, creating a story that unfolds like a map of dreaming. A series of immersive spaces fracture the conventions of optical vision, open up its relationship to all the senses, and explore the implications of technology on the cyborgian body."

The exhibition, with works spanning from the early 1900s to the present, is the result of four years of intensive scholarly research by curator Iles, involving experts from all corners of the worlds of art and film. It will be the most technologically complex project mounted in the Whitney's new building to date, embracing a wide range of moving image techniques, from hand-tinted film to the latest digital technologies.

The works on view engage our senses using color, touch, 3D, music, light, and surface, flattening space through animation and abstraction, or heightening the illusion of three dimensions. Visitors will experience projections, sculptures, and installations that allow them to walk through projection beams and reams of film stock; watch a video made with a 360-degree camera projected inside the ceiling of a cardboard geodesic dome; view concept artwork made for Walt Disney's *Fantasia*; view a synesthetic environment in which music is written according to

color; see the visual futurist Hollywood designer Syd Mead's concept artwork for Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*; and look at the world through 3-D glasses. The elements by which cinema is conventionally known are transformed into new forms that are, in some cases, barely recognizable as having any relationship to cinema at all—spaces, textures, and surfaces that we can touch, walk on, or move through, stepping inside the image and becoming part of it.

The exhibition features works by American artists and filmmakers, and also includes a small number of works from 1920s Weimar Germany, with a strong relationship to, and influence on, American art and film. Featured are works in installation, drawing, 3-D environments, sculpture, performance, painting, and online space, by Trisha Baga, Ivana Bašić, Frances Bodomo, Terence Broad, Dora Budor, Ian Cheng, Bruce Conner, Ben Coonley, Joseph Cornell, Andrea Crespo, François Curlet, Alex Da Corte, Oskar Fischinger, Liam Gillick, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Pierre Huyghe, Alex Israel, Mehdi Belhaj Kacem and Pierre Joseph, Aidan Koch, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Anthony McCall, Josiah McElheny, Syd Mead, Lorna Mills, Jayson Musson, Melik Ohanian, Philippe Parreno, Jenny Perlin, Mathias Poledna, Edwin S. Porter, Oskar Schlemmer, Hito Steyerl, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Stan VanDerBeek, Artie Vierkant, and Jud Yalkut, some of which have been made especially for the exhibition.

As film historian Tom Gunning writes in his catalogue essay, "What is Cinema? The Challenge of the Moving Image Past and Future": "Cinema, before it is anything else, before it is a story, a canvas for special effects, a display of the beauty and grace of stars, before it weaves a tissue of ideology or makes us laugh and cry, presents images that move. This is why it was invented, what separates it from the previous arts of depiction, and also what it shares with the torrent of emerging technological media. But this is also what we take for granted in watching movies and other moving-image media."

The exhibition is organized into three parts:

1905 – 1930s

The first part, beginning in 1905 and including a group of works from the 1920s and 1930s, shows some of the earliest experiments with cinematic space, and the way in which sweeping camera shots, abstraction, color, music, and kaleidoscopic space were used to create what Tom Gunning has called a "cinema of attractions," in which the spectator is jolted out of the conventions of seeing. In a 1968 film reconstruction of Oskar Schlemmer's classic *Triadic Ballet* (1922), androgenous dancers move across a flattened space of color like animated figures on a screen. In Oskar Fischinger's 1926 work *Raumlichtkunst* (*Space Light Art*), three films project hand-tinted abstract color forms, including hypnotic spirals and geometric shapes, to percussive music, creating what Fischinger described as "an intoxication of light." In a rare presentation of Joseph Cornell's film *Rose Hobart* (1936), a found film print of the Hollywood B-movie *East of Borneo* (1931) is cut up and reassembled to show only its star, Rose Hobart. The film is projected through a blue glass filter whose color diffuses into the room, creating an unworldly, dreamlike atmosphere.

1940s – 1980s

In the second part of the exhibition, which includes concept artwork from Walt Disney's *Fantasia* (1940) as well as Bruce Conner's spectacular *CROSSROADS* (1976), a montage of de-classified military film footage depicting atomic test explosions in the Bikini Atoll in 1946, the idealistic experiments of the previous decades give way to a darker and more fragmented experience of the cinematic. Drawings and watercolors from three key moments of Disney's immersive sensory fusion of music and image clearly situate *Fantasia* as both part of the end of the pre-World War II utopian vision for cinema, and the beginning of a new media environment that followed the end of the war and the dropping of the atomic bomb. Projective installations by Jud Yalkut (*Destruct Film*, 1967) and Anthony McCall (*Line Describing a Cone*, 1973) detach the screen from its fixed position, dispersing it into a dark space in which the light beam becomes a sculptural form furthering the shift from image to surface that had begun in the 1920s. Stan VanDerBeek's *Movie Mural* (1971) disperses colorful still and moving images across several large screens and the walls of the gallery, articulating the new interconnected cybernetic system that was taking form in both cinema, and society. A group of atmospheric concept artwork drawings by 'visual futurist' Syd Mead for the science fiction film *Blade Runner* (1982), have been specially assembled for the exhibition, revealing the uncanny atmosphere of *Blade Runner*'s futuristic, dystopian city.

1990s – the present

The third part of the exhibition articulates the breadth and complexity of more recent works in which cinematic space has been reassembled into new models by contemporary artists. The relationship between the body and technology has been recalibrated through the touch screen and virtual space, through a continual online exchange of images, visual styles, avatars, anime, and identities. The infinite manipulability of the digital image, now dominated

by the graphic, animated form, special effects, and virtual reality, has produced a new visual ecosystem, in which artifice and reality have become versions of each other.

The body appears as a technologically mediated presence, in cyborgs, anime characters, animated figures, and Artificial Intelligences. Some serve as avatars, troubling the boundary between artifice and reality. Some works use technology to reflect on the possibilities of creating multiple constitutions of the self. The fear and exhilaration around the idea of the organic living body becoming fused with technological elements, seen in the earliest robotic figures of Oskar Schlemmer, return here in the form of an artificial intelligence persona played by actress Tilda Swinton, who talks to viewers through a mirrored screen and a microphone in the pioneer Lynn Hershman Leeson's *DiNA*.

Apocalyptic science fiction fusions between the body, nature and technology articulate our ambivalence towards the implications of technology's saturation of the world. In Ian Cheng's "live simulations," chat bots projected onto a large screen talk to each other, or to themselves, creating a narrative in a state of perpetual evolution. Dora Budor's new immersive installation, made for the exhibition, is a large environment with interior walls that pulse with electrical light from floor to ceiling when triggered by human movement in the space. The ascending flickering light directs the viewer's gaze upward, where a luminous ceiling teems with thousands of frogs—special-effects props used in the amphibian rain scene in Paul Thomas Anderson's film *Magnolia* (1999). Our presence brings Budor's immersive environment to life, reanimating the image on its ceiling through a conduction of impulses, as though triggering a memory. Also included in the exhibition will be Hito Steyerl's immersive installation *Factory of the Sun*, commissioned for the German Pavilion at the 2015 Venice Biennale and shown in New York for the first time here.

As the line between the real and the virtual is being constantly rewritten by digital space, re-shaping everything from military strategy, economics, and politics, to architecture, entertainment, and self-representation, the works presented here explore, even redraw, those boundaries, generating new meanings, identities, and realities.

Screening Program

The exhibition will also include a substantial film program in fourteen parts, featuring artists and filmmakers from the earliest days of cinema to the most cutting-edge artists working with virtual reality and digital space. An Afro-Futurism program brings together young women filmmakers from the African diaspora, whose films use time travel, technology, and ancient African mythology to explore alternative models of science fiction, and the future. Optical vision and color, the space of the screen, noir, and a program of animations exploring dreams and nightmares, as well as a program devoted to apocalyptic visions of the disrupted natural world, continue the themes explored in the galleries. Screenings of *Fantasia* (1940) projected onto the big screen with surround sound will take place in the Hess Theater.

About the Catalogue

A catalogue has been published by the Whitney (distributed by Yale University Press) to accompany the exhibition, including essays by Karen Archey, Giuliana Bruno, John Canemaker, Brian Droitcour, Noam Elcott, Tom Gunning, J. Hoberman, Esther Leslie, David Lewis, and Chrissie Iles.

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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 at a time 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 more than eighty 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 themselves, 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.

About Audi

Audi of America, Inc. and its U.S. dealers offer a full line of German-engineered luxury vehicles. AUDI AG is among the most successful luxury automotive brands globally. The Audi Group delivered over 1,800,000 vehicles to customers globally in 2015, and broke all-time company sales records for the 6th straight year in the U.S. Through 2019, AUDI AG plans to invest about 24 billion euros - 70 percent of the investment will flow into the development of new models and technologies.

As a champion of innovative art, Audi is proud to sponsor *Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art, 1905-2016*, at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Audi has a long history of supporting fine arts and film across the globe. With a story that began in 1899 in Cologne, Germany, every Audi model has been inspired by a core philosophy of beautiful design and intelligent, state-of-the-art technology. Audi integrates artistry in every detail without a single compromise in quality.

About Microscope Gallery

Microscope Gallery is dedicated to presenting works of moving image, sound, performance and digital artists from the emerging to pioneers of their art forms through regular exhibitions and a weekly series of events. Since its founding in 2010 by co-directors Elle Burchill and Andrea Monti, the gallery has addressed what it perceives as an unnecessary divide between the white box setting of the gallery and black box of the screening/performance venue. Microscope Gallery is located in Bushwick, Brooklyn.

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art

<i>Human Interest: Portraits from the Whitney's Collection</i>	Through Feb 12, 2017
<i>Sophia Al-Maria: Black Friday</i>	Through Oct 31, 2016
<i>Carmen Herrera: Lines of Sight</i>	Sept 16, 2016–Jan 2, 2017
<i>Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art, 1905–2016</i>	Oct 28, 2016–Feb 5, 2017
<i>Virginia Overton: Winter Garden</i>	Through Sept 25, 2016
<i>MPA: RED IN VIEW</i>	Nov 11, 2016–Feb 27, 2017
<i>Fast Forward: Painting from the 1980s</i>	Winter 2017
<i>Whitney Biennial</i>	Spring 2017
<i>Helio Oiticica: To Organize Delirium</i>	Summer 2017
<i>Jimmie Durham: At the Center of the World</i>	Fall 2017/Winter 2018
<i>David Wojnarowicz: History Keeps Me Awake at Night</i>	Summer 2018

The Whitney Museum is located at 99 Gansevoort Street between Washington and West Streets, New York City. Museum hours are: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday from 10:30 am to 6 pm, Friday and Saturday from 10:30 am to 10 pm, closed Tuesday. Adult tickets: \$22; full-time students and visitors 65 & over: \$18; visitors 18 and under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 7–10 pm. Same-day adult admission tickets are \$25; advance tickets purchased via whitney.org remain \$22 for adults and \$17 for full-time students and visitors 65 & over (same-day tickets are not available on whitney.org). For general information, please call (212) 570-3600 or visit whitney.org.