

## MEDIA ALERT



Sibyl Kempson, *12 Shouts to the Ten Forgotten Heavens*, Spring Equinox, March 20, 2016, at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Photograph (c) Paula Court

**Sibyl Kempson's *12 Shouts to the Ten Forgotten Heavens* at the Whitney  
Summer Solstice, June 20, 2016, 6:15pm**

**NEW YORK, June 8, 2016**—*12 Shouts to the Ten Forgotten Heavens*, a three-year performance project by American playwright, director, and performer Sibyl Kempson, will be presented at the Whitney Museum of American Art on twelve occasions through December 2018. An original work by Kempson commissioned by the Whitney, *12 Shouts to the Ten Forgotten Heavens* marks each solstice and equinox, creating a new ceremonial calendar. The first performance was held on March 20, 2016, to mark the spring equinox, and the next presentation of *12 Shouts to the Ten Forgotten Heavens* will take place on June 20, 2016, starting at 6:15 pm to celebrate the summer solstice.

Bringing into play the Whitney's architecture and its porous relationship with the city and natural world, Kempson engages the Museum as a strategic frame and entry point for each of these rituals. With a sensitivity and focus toward the specific cycles and rhythms of days, seasons, and human activities, *12 Shouts to the Ten Forgotten Heavens* explores the location's layered history and cultural significance. The June performance occurs throughout the Museum and in Hudson River Park. With dramaturgy and research by Thomas Riccio, a scholar of ritual, indigenous performance, and shamanism, Kempson's work stems from a deep exploration of cultural history, art history, mythology, metaphysics, and ritual. Through her writing process, she knits together multi-faceted narratives that provide the foundation for the world created in her performances.

This layering is further bolstered by artistic collaboration, and throughout the three-year process of presenting *12 Shouts to the Ten Forgotten Heavens* at the Museum, she will engage with various sound

artists, choreographers, and visual artists, among others. In addition to Riccio, collaborators for the 2016 summer solstice celebration include Tei Blow (sound design), Suzanne Bocanegra (costumes), Hye Young Chyun (props), Maurina Lioce (stage manager), Jodi Melnick (choreography), Amanda Villalobos (stained glass), and Sarah Willis (ceramics).

Kempson presents the work with her theater company, 7 Daughters of Eve Thtr. & Perf. Co. Featured performers in *12 Shouts to the Ten Forgotten Heavens* include Eryk Aughenbaugh, Dee Dorcas Beasnael, Anne Gridley, Eleanor Hutchins, Oceana James, Robert M. Johanson, Kempson, Maurina Lioce, Sarah Matusek, Melnick, Tavish Miller, Sahra Motalebi, Victoria Roberts-Wierzbowski, and Tanya Selvaratnam.

Following the summer solstice performance on June 20, *12 Shouts to the Ten Forgotten Heavens* will be presented on September 22, 2016 at 10:21 am to mark the autumn equinox, and on December 21, 2016 at 5:44 am to celebrate the winter solstice.

*12 Shouts to the Ten Forgotten Heavens* is organized by Greta Hartenstein, Senior Curatorial Assistant, and Jay Sanders, Engell Speyer Family Curator and Curator of Performance.

### **About the Artist**

Sibyl Kempson is a playwright, director, and performer. A resident playwright at New Dramatists, she recently founded 7 Daughters of Eve Thtr. & Perf. Co, presenters of *Let Us Now Praise Susan Sontag* at the Abrons Arts Center in 2015. Kempson's play *Fondly, Collette Richland*, a collaboration with Elevator Repair Service, premiered at New York Theatre Workshop in September 2015. Her plays have been presented in New York, Minneapolis, Baltimore, Omaha, Austin and Bonn, Germany. She is a 2010 MacDowell Colony Fellow, a 2013-14 McKnight National Resident and Commissionee, and a 2014 United States Artists Rockefeller Fellow.

### **Exhibition Support**

Significant support for the Whitney's Performance Program is provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Generous support is also provided by the Mertz Gilmore Foundation and the Performance Committee of the Whitney Museum of American Art.

*12 Shouts to the Ten Forgotten Heavens* was developed in residence at the Watermill Center. Special thanks to the Byrd Hoffman Water Mill Foundation and the Hudson River Park. Development support is also provided by a residency at Abrons Arts Center. The 2016 performances are partially funded by a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grant.

### **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.

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