

WHITNEY

Whitney Museum
of American Art
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PRESS RELEASE

WHITNEY MUSEUM DEBUTS PERFORMANCE BY MAIA CHAO AS PART OF WHITNEY BIENNIAL 2026



New York, NY, April 20, 2026 — The Whitney Museum of American Art will debut [*BEING MOVED*](#), Maia Chao's new performance commissioned by the Whitney for the 2026 Biennial. As an artist working across performance, video, sculpture, and public practice, Chao creates anthropological works. For this performance, Chao will activate the Whitney's collection galleries and engage with the artworks on view, emulating the experience of a museum visitor.

BEING MOVED will be presented in the Museum's seventh-floor galleries at 7 pm on Thursday, May 14, Saturday, May 16, and Sunday, May 17. This performance explores the theatricality and choreography of a museum visit in the galleries of the Whitney's permanent collection exhibition, *"Untitled" (America)*. Centering the visitor's experience, *BEING MOVED* locates its subject not in the artworks themselves, but in the social rules, scripts, and patterns that condition our encounters with art. Tracing the gap between the fantasy of a profound encounter and the ambivalent realities of contemporary spectatorship, the work plays with the ordinary and minor dramas of a museum visit. This performance was created in collaboration with the performers.

Performance Details

BEING MOVED

Maia Chao

May 14, 16, 17 at 7 pm

Location: Floor 7, Exhibition Galleries

Tickets: Tickets are required (\$30 adults; \$25 members, seniors, and students). Capacity is limited; visitors are encouraged to purchase tickets in advance.

Event Link: whitney.org/events/maia-chao

About the Artist

Maia Chao is an artist making anthropological work across performance, video, sculpture, and public practice. Chao has made commissions for Times Square Arts, the Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden with Ethan Philbrick, and The Shed. Her collaborative projects have been presented at the RISD Museum, Bronx Museum, Mural Arts Philadelphia, Boston Center for the Arts, Smack Mellon, and Oregon Contemporary. She has completed fellowships and residencies at the Fine Arts Work Center, Pioneer Works, and Queer|Art, among others. Chao was a 2022 Pew Fellow and is a 2026 United States Artist Fellow. She is based in Philadelphia and is currently faculty of Interdisciplinary Sculpture at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA).

About Whitney Biennial 2026

[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.

PRESS CONTACT

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EXHIBITION SUPPORT

Whitney Biennial 2026 is presented by



The exhibition is also sponsored by



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.

2026 Biennial Committee: Shelley Fox Aarons and Philip Aarons; Susan and Matthew Blank; Estrellita and Daniel Brodsky; James Keith Brown and Eric Diefenbach; Yolanda Colón-Greenberg and Craig Greenberg; Stephen Dull; Charlotte Feng Ford; Christy and Bill Gautreaux; Elaine Goldman and John Benis; Grace Gould and Jonathan Goldberg; Marieluise Hessel; Judelson Family Foundation; Michèle Gerber Klein; Gina Feldman Love and Steven Feldman; Joel Lubin; Bernard I. Lumpkin and Carmine D. Boccuzzi; Marc S. Solomon, Cindy Levine & Interlaken LLC; The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation; Jamie Watson in memory of Emmett Watson; George Wells and Manfred Rantner; Casey and Lauren Weyand; and an anonymous donor.

Generous support is provided by The James Howell Foundation, The Keith Haring Foundation Exhibition Fund, and the Trellis Art Fund.

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

Curatorial research and travel for this exhibition were funded by an endowment established by Rosina Lee Yue and Bert A. Lies, Jr., MD.

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:

Photograph by Amelia Golden

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