

# WHITNEY

Whitney Museum  
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# PRESS RELEASE

## WHITNEY MUSEUM APPOINTS SOYOUNG YOON AS DIRECTOR OF ITS INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM



**New York, NY, June 16, 2026** — The Whitney Museum of American Art has appointed Soyoung Yoon as director of its Independent Study Program (ISP). Yoon, a distinguished scholar of contemporary art and media theory, begins June 16, 2026. She will lead the program as it welcomes a new class of artists, curators, and scholars in fall 2027.

Prior to joining the Whitney Museum, Yoon served as the Director of the Fine Arts MFA Program at Parsons School of Design at The New School, where she strengthened its international reputation as a leading program for the theorization and practice of art. She also redesigned the program's graduate admissions process to recruit one of its most ambitious cohorts in recent history, while overseeing more than 200 BFA and MFA students. Yoon is also Associate Professor of Art History and Visual Studies at The New School's Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts. From 2013 to 2024, she served as the Director of the Visual Studies Program at Lang, where she developed a new curriculum and grew the undergraduate program to triple its original size, building one of the most international and diverse faculties and student bodies on campus, with program strengths in photography, film, media, and performance studies, along with curatorial studies and research-based art practices.

Yoon comes to this position with a unique familiarity and connection to the ISP. She was a Helena Rubinstein Critical Studies fellow as part of the 2006–2007 ISP class. She then returned to the program as a faculty member from 2012 to 2023, leading seminars in critical theory and advising students across the Studio, Curatorial, and Critical Studies tracks. Yoon was named the Joanne Cassullo Faculty Fellow in 2013–2014 and served on the editorial board and organizing committee for the ISP’s 50th Anniversary Symposium in 2018. Most recently, Yoon served on an advisory committee dedicated to helping shape the future of the ISP. Convened by Adrienne Edwards, the Engell Speyer Family Senior Curator and Associate Director of Curatorial Programs at the Whitney Museum of American Art, who oversees the ISP, the group consisted of 15 external advisors drawn from the ISP alumni and faculty network.

“This appointment is the culmination of a process undertaken with deep consideration over many months,” said Edwards. “Soyoung stood out as a compelling leader during her time as a member of our ISP working group. She knows the ISP intimately, as a former participant and longtime member of its faculty, and understands what makes the program unique and vitally important to our field. She brings intellectual rigor, a superb administrative acuity, and unwavering belief in the importance of theoretical and artistic inquiry and I cannot imagine a more thoughtful or committed steward to lead the Whitney’s ISP forward.”

“The Independent Study Program holds a singular place in the Whitney’s history and in the wider field as a laboratory and learning community for artists, critics and curators,” said Scott Rothkopf, the Alice Pratt Brown Director of the Whitney Museum. “Over the past half century, its distinguished alumni have made important contributions to the arts and broader critical inquiry. As an exceptional scholar and leader, Soyoung will build on this legacy while charting a bright path for the ISP’s future.”

“I first encountered the ISP as an ideal for theory in practice, as a mode of study as well as politics and ethics, through my activism in the student movements in Seoul. The ISP continues to be a community for those who are not quite at home in their institutions, disciplines, and practices, for those who question the methodologies, the discourses, the habitus, the social worlds of such practices, and thereby effect changes, become leaders, new legends, teachers for those to come,” said Yoon. “In continuity with this history, I am honored and thrilled to helm the Program that speaks to, strengthens, and champions new desires that find their emergent form in the desire to *be* an artist. For much is demanded of our imagination today: we must meet that demand.”

Yoon earned her PhD in art history from Stanford University and her BA from Seoul National University, with a focus on film and media studies and modern and contemporary art. Her writing engages the politics of mobility and the rhetorics of testimony, witnessing, and storytelling in the moving image, drawing on Marxism, psychoanalysis, critical theory, feminist, queer, and disability studies. Her essays have appeared in publications including *Grey Room*, *Discourse*, *Camera Obscura*, *Millennium Film Journal*, and the catalogue for the *Whitney Biennial 2022: Quiet as It’s Kept*, as well as in monographs on artists such as Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Sondra Perry, Yvonne Rainer, and Carolee Schneemann. She is currently working on two books, *Walkie Talkie* and *TV Buddhas*, with a third, *A Mattress is Not a Bed*, also in production.

Yoon's recognition includes the Creative Capital | Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant, a Hauser & Wirth Institute Research Fellowship, fellowships at Brown University's Pembroke Center and The New School's Robert L. Heilbroner Center for Capitalism Studies and GIDEST (Graduate Institute for Design, Ethnography, & Social Thought), SUNY's Guiding Light Award in Excellence of Teaching, and Stanford University's Centennial Teaching Award.

"I am very pleased to endorse the appointment of Soyoung Yoon to be the director of the Whitney Independent Study Program," said Ron Clark, founder and longtime director of the ISP, from 1968-2023. "She has a strong and enduring commitment to the critical and theoretical practices that have historically defined the ISP. These practices have formed the foundation of the program's intellectual content. Under Soyoung's leadership, I have full confidence in the program's future."

The ISP has been a core component of the Whitney's role as a champion of American art and artists since 1968. The program has nurtured more than two generations of artists, curators, art historians, and critics, providing participants with the instruction, space, and support needed to pursue their work. In addition to Yoon, alumni of the program include artists Jennifer Allora, Tony Cokes, Mark Dion, Andrea Fraser, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Renée Green, Sharon Hayes, Jenny Holzer, Emily Jacir, David L. Johnson, Pope. L, Simon Leung, Glenn Ligon, Park McArthur, Alan Ruiz, Julian Schnabel, Rirkrit Tiravanija, and Constantina Zavitsanos; critics and art historians Alexander Alberro, Jack Bankowsky, Geoffrey Batchen, Lisa Cartwright, Huey Copeland, Eva Díaz, Jennifer González, Miwon Kwon, Pamela M. Lee, and Roberta Smith; and curators Richard Armstrong, Carlos Basualdo, Naomi Beckwith, Johanna Burton, Lisa Phillips, Bennett Simpson, and Sheena Wagstaff. In 2023, the ISP moved to its new permanent home in the renovated Roy Lichtenstein Studio, located in Greenwich Village close to the Whitney Museum.

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## PRESS CONTACT

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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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## **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:**

Soyoung Yoon, Director of the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program. Photograph by Bryan Derballa

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