

WHITNEY

Whitney Museum
of American Art
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PRESS RELEASE

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART PRESENTS THE FIRST SOLO MUSEUM EXHIBITION OF COUMBA SAMBA



A major new commission by the Harlem-born artist transforms the Whitney's Lobby Gallery into an immersive environment examining power, militarism, and the global infrastructures that shape contemporary life.

New York, NY, September 2, 2026— The Whitney Museum of American Art presents [Coumba Samba: Stars and Stripes](#), opening September 19, 2026. This exhibition is the first solo museum presentation devoted to New York–based Senegalese American artist Coumba Samba (b. 2000). Her ambitious installations examine the social, political, and economic systems embedded within the built environment.

Born and raised in Harlem, Samba studied at the Rhode Island School of Design before earning her BA from Camberwell College of Arts in London. Through sculpture, installation, sound, and light, she draws upon the histories of modernist abstraction and minimalism while exposing the structures of power concealed within seemingly neutral forms. Alongside her visual art practice, Samba is also the vocalist for the experimental pop music duo NEW YORK.

Presented in the Whitney's Lobby Gallery, *Stars and Stripes* is an immersive installation created specifically for the Museum. At its center is a group of monumental freestanding sculptures modeled after depleted uranium shells. The multicolored stripes on the sculptures reference both the American flag and the flags of Gabon, Niger, Namibia, and the Democratic Republic of

Congo, nations whose uranium resources have supplied U.S. nuclear weapons programs since World War II.

Opening at a pivotal moment in the artist's career, the exhibition follows Samba's recent participation in *Greater New York 2026* at MoMA PS1 and *Fade* at the Studio Museum in Harlem. While her work has been exhibited extensively in Europe, *Coumba Samba: Stars and Stripes* represents a significant homecoming and landmark moment of recognition in New York, the city where she was born and raised.

"Coumba Samba is one of the most exciting young artists working in New York today," said Rujeko Hockley, Guest Curator. "This thoughtful exhibition, which engages the aesthetics of modernist abstraction to reflect on geopolitics and the development of nuclear power, is emblematic of the Whitney's commitment to both emerging artists and telling new and nuanced stories about art, history, culture, and society."

"I am so grateful for the incredible opportunity," Samba states. "This installation is bright and dark, which I love to play with and am excited to share with people that may be unfamiliar with my work. I hope audiences walk away having their own special relationship to the work and maybe having learned something."

The exhibition is organized by Rujeko Hockley, Guest Curator, with Antonia Pocock, Curatorial Assistant.

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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](#).

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:

SIERRA Uninhabited Aerial System (UAV plane) in the Ames hangar, 2006, with editing by Coumba Samba, 2026. Source photograph by Tom Trower, courtesy NASA Image and Video Library

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