

WHITNEY

PRESS RELEASE

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Photograph by Filip Wolak

THE WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART RECEIVES A GIFT FOR EDUCATION FROM THE STEVEN & ALEXANDRA COHEN FOUNDATION

NEW YORK, July 30, 2015—The Whitney Museum of American Art has received a \$2 million gift from the Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation to support its award-winning education programs, Adam D. Weinberg, Alice Pratt Brown Director of the Whitney, announced today. Over the next five years, the Foundation's gift will provide essential support for the Museum's education programs which serve children, teens, seniors, and the community at large.

"The Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation's generous gift recognizes that education is one of the cornerstones of the Whitney's mission. Visiting the Museum can be a life-changing experience at any age, opening us up to new ideas and ways of thinking, increasing our understanding of the human condition, and showing us how artists perceive the world," said Mr. Weinberg. "Our education programs deepen and enrich our experience of art and enhance our power to see and to think about what we've seen. We are profoundly grateful for Steven and Alexandra Cohen's ongoing support, which enables us to continue this essential aspect of our work."

"Steven and I were inspired to give more after we saw the amazing impact that art has on children first-hand at the Whitney's Jeff Koons exhibition last summer," said Alex Cohen, President of the Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation. "Jeff helped the art come alive to the kids and engaged them in a completely different way. We are thrilled that our gift will help the Whitney expand its education programs and reach more people in our community."

The Whitney's educational programs are designed to make the Museum's permanent collections and temporary exhibitions accessible and welcoming to a broad range of visitors. The Cohen Foundation's gift will enable the Museum to offer more free guided visits to students from New York City Schools; to expand public school and community partnerships; to serve a diverse group of teens through its renowned after school programs; and to provide expanded art workshops and open access days for senior citizens and community members. As such, the Museum will become an even more vital resource and cultural anchor in its new downtown community and will help to build and expand an audience for the Whitney's exhibitions and programs that is as diverse as New York City itself.

The Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation focuses on children's health, education, veterans, and the arts. In 2014 the Cohen Foundation co-sponsored the Whitney's Jeff Koons retrospective, providing support, lending works, and enabling the Whitney to expand the number of New York City public school tours of the exhibition, the Museum's final offering uptown before moving to the Meatpacking District. In the past, the Cohen Foundation has supported Whitney exhibitions devoted to the work of Christian Marclay and Terence Koh.

Kathryn Potts, Associate Director and Helena Rubinstein Chair of Education at the Whitney, commented, "We are enormously grateful to the Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation for recognizing the importance of education at the Whitney and for continuing to support the Museum. With the opening of the new Whitney downtown we have been given an unprecedented opportunity to consider what an art museum can be and do for our community. Just as the Whitney's new building, with its transparency, outdoor spaces, and free first-floor gallery, suggests a receptive relationship between the Museum and the surrounding community, our education programming works to open up the Whitney to New York City's students, teens, families, artists, schools, seniors, and neighborhood residents. The Whitney's new downtown home is situated in a diverse neighborhood with a rich artistic and industrial history, and this grant will help the Museum to become a community anchor in this evolving cultural district."

About Whitney Education Programs

The Whitney's new building houses the Laurie M. Tisch Education Center, the hub of the Museum's Education Department. Education programs, one of the central concerns of the Museum, aim to make the Whitney a dynamic platform for audiences to experience art as integral to their own lives and the world around us. Whitney educators work in multifaceted ways as facilitators, translators, advocates, and producers, as well as teachers. They are committed to an approach that privileges research, responsiveness, and reflection. As educators, they create opportunities for visitors with different needs, experiences, and interests to make meaningful connections with art. The Whitney engages the community through a range of programs, reaching out to people at schools, community-based organizations, senior centers, and those living in NYCHA housing. Better understanding of these audiences and collaboration with other organizations that serve them has been central to the Museum's planning for its new programming. The Whitney has devoted resources and research to understanding the needs and priorities of New York City audiences and has worked to develop long-term relationships with the Whitney's audiences by fostering their understanding and love of art.

School Guided Visits and Educator Programs

Students from New York City public schools are welcome to visit the Whitney free of charge. Themed, guided visits to the Museum's galleries for K–12 students allow them to explore the multifaceted roles artists play in our culture—as experimenters, observers, critics, and storytellers—and forge thoughtful connections between classroom learning and the art on view. The Whitney also offers guided visits and studio workshops in its Hearst Artspace, a space that can be used for making art, where students can experiment with art materials and techniques following their tours of the Museum.

Programs for K–12 teachers include special preview events, conferences, and Teacher Exchange, a yearlong program in which participants trade ideas with colleagues, Museum educators, artists, and curators.

School Partnerships

Long-term, multiyear partnerships with a number of New York City schools include tours when the Museum is closed to the public, work with museum educators in the classroom, hands-on art workshops, professional development workshops, and parent involvement programs. Museum educators work closely with administrators and teachers from partnership schools to design and implement programs that meet their specific needs.

Teen Programs

Youth Insights is an after-school program that connects New York City high school students to contemporary art and artists, providing opportunities to work collaboratively, discuss art critically, think creatively, and make art inspired by the exchange. Semester-long programs introduce students to the Whitney's art and artists, while participants in a yearlong Leaders program plan events and tours for their peers. Offered in the summer, Youth Insights Arts Careers introduces teens to careers in the arts and practical job skills, and Youth Insights Introductions provides experiences at the Whitney for high school students who are English Language Learners and recent immigrants. Large-scale and drop-in teen programs, including teen openings, workshops, and artist-led events, reach additional New York City teens.

Community Programs

Community Programs build sustained connections that go beyond the single museum visit, bringing art, ideas, and dialogue to classrooms, senior centers, and community-based organizations around the city. Community Partnerships offer extended programming tailored to the needs and interests of partner organizations, promoting the Museum as an essential resource. Since 1994, the Whitney has partnered with some of New York's most vital community-based senior organizations, such as United Neighborhood Houses, to create customized programs that challenge seniors to actively engage with the Whitney's collection and exhibitions, make art, share ideas, and relate what they learn to their own lives and experiences.

Access Programs

The Whitney invites visitors of all abilities to experience the richness and complexity of American art in an inclusive, welcoming environment. Access Programs include Whitney Signs, tours in American Sign Language led by expert deaf educators; Verbal Description and Touch Tours that allow visitors to experience the Whitney's exhibitions with a highly skilled museum educator trained to provide vivid, detailed verbal description of the works on view, while experiencing a selection of objects through touch; and the Vlog Project, the Whitney's award-winning, open-captioned, online video series in American Sign Language.

About the Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation

The Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation is committed to achieving lasting and meaningful change in our community through four main areas of focus: education, children's health, veterans, and the arts. The Foundation places an emphasis on improving the lives of children through education reform and healthcare initiatives, providing help to our returning heroes with mental health and employment programs for veterans, and supporting the arts that inspire us all.

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.

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions

<i>America Is Hard to See</i>	Through Sept 27, 2015
<i>Archibald Motley: Jazz Age Modernist</i>	Oct 2, 2015–Jan 17, 2016
<i>Jared Madere</i>	Oct 16, 2015–Jan 3, 2016
<i>Frank Stella: A Retrospective</i>	Oct 30, 2015–Feb 7, 2016
<i>Rachel Rose</i>	Oct 30, 2015–Feb 7, 2016
<i>Collected by Thea Westreich Wagner and Ethan Wagner</i>	Nov 20, 2015–Mar 6, 2016
<i>Laura Poitras</i>	Feb 5–May 15, 2016
<i>Stuart Davis: In Full Swing</i>	June 30–Oct 10, 2016
<i>Carmen Herrera</i>	Fall 2016
<i>Sophia Al-Maria</i>	Summer 2016
<i>David Wojnarowicz</i>	Fall 2016/Winter 2017
<i>Whitney Biennial</i>	Spring 2017

The Whitney Museum is located at 99 Gansevoort Street between Washington and West Streets, New York City. Museum hours are: Monday, Wednesday, and Sunday from 10:30 am to 6 pm, Thursday through Saturday from 10:30 am to 10 pm, closed Tuesday. General admission: \$22. Full-time students and visitors ages 19–25 and 62 & over: \$18. Visitors under 18 and Whitney members: FREE. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 7–10 p.m. For general information, please call (212) 570-3600 or visit whitney.org.