

WHITNEY

Press Release

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Sarah Michelson *Devotion Study #1—The American Dancer*, February 26, 2012 at 2012 Whitney Biennial
Photograph © Paula Court.

BUCKSBAUM AWARD BESTOWED BY THE WHITNEY

2012 recipient Sarah Michelson to be honored on April 25

NEW YORK, April 19, 2012 – Adam D. Weinberg, the Alice Pratt Brown Director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, has announced that choreographer Sarah Michelson is the recipient of the seventh Bucksbaum Award. The award is given every two years to one of the

artists in the Biennial; Michelson was selected by a jury from among the fifty-one artists showing in the current 2012 Biennial. The Bucksbaum Award ceremony will take place at the Whitney on Wednesday evening, April 25.

Sarah Michelson (b. 1964) is a New York-based, British-born choreographer. Her Biennial piece, *Devotion Study #1—The American Dancer*, commissioned by the Whitney for the 2012 Biennial, employed a text written for the occasion at Michelson's request by another Biennial artist, theater director/playwright Richard Maxwell, founder of New York City Players.

As her epigraph, Michelson chose the following quote from the choreographer George Balanchine: "Superficial Europeans are accustomed to say that American artists have no 'soul.' This is wrong. America has its own spirit—cold, crystalline, luminous, hard as light... Good American dancers can express clean emotion in a manner that might almost be termed angelic. By angelic I mean the quality supposedly enjoyed by the angels, who, when they relate a tragic situation, do not themselves suffer."

In addition to creating the concept and choreography, Michelson constructed a sound design, together with James Lo, and also created the visual design, which included design of the lighting (with Zack Tinkelman), the costumes (with James Kidd), and the floor. The dance was performed by six dancers, one of whom wore a horse's head, upon an enormous white-painted surface depicting blueprints of the floor plans for the Whitney's building, designed by Marcel Breuer.

Melva Bucksbaum, a Whitney trustee since 1996, launched The Bucksbaum Award in 2000. The most recent recipient, in 2010, was conceptual artist Michael Asher, whose Biennial project involved keeping the museum open around the clock for three consecutive days. In addition to Asher, the previous Bucksbaum recipients are Paul Pfeiffer (2000), Irit Batsry (2002), Raymond Pettibon (2004), Mark Bradford (2006), and Omer Fast (2008).

The Bucksbaum Award, created and produced by Tiffany & Co., is given every two years in recognition of an artist, chosen from those included in the Biennial, whose work demonstrates a

singular combination of talent and imagination. The selected artist is considered by the jurors to have the potential to make a lasting impact on the history of American art, based on the excellence of past work as well as present work in the Biennial. In addition to receiving a \$100,000 grant, each Bucksbaum laureate is invited to present an exhibition at the Whitney, sometime within the succeeding two years.

Devotion Study #1—The American Dancer was created during a residency provided by The Joyce Theater Foundation, New York City, with major support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and with support from the Sophie and Leonard Davis Fund.

The jury for the 2012 Bucksbaum Award was comprised of Adam D. Weinberg, the Whitney's Alice Pratt Brown Director; Donna De Salvo, Whitney Deputy Director and Chief Curator; the Biennial curators Elisabeth Sussman and Jay Sanders; and three guest panelists, Lia Gangitano, Branden Joseph, and Christophe Cherix.

Funding for the Bucksbaum Award is provided by an endowment from the Martin Bucksbaum Family Foundation.

The 2012 Whitney Biennial, remains on view at the Whitney in its entirety through May 27, 2012, with portions of the show continuing into June.

About the Whitney

The Whitney Museum of American Art is the world's leading museum of twentieth-century and contemporary art of the United States. Focusing particularly on works by living artists, the Whitney is celebrated for presenting important exhibitions and for its renowned collection, which comprises over 19,000 works by more than 2,900 artists. With a history of exhibiting the most promising and influential artists and provoking intense debate, the Whitney Biennial, the Museum's signature exhibition, has become the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in the United States. In addition to its landmark exhibitions, the Museum is known internationally for events and educational programs of exceptional significance and as a center for research, scholarship, and conservation.

Founded by sculptor and arts patron Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney in 1930, the Whitney was first housed on West 8th Street in Greenwich Village. The Museum relocated in 1954 to West 54th Street and, in 1966, inaugurated its present home, designed by Marcel Breuer, at 945 Madison

Avenue on the Upper East Side. While its vibrant program of exhibitions and events continues uptown, the Whitney is moving forward with a new building project, designed by Renzo Piano, in downtown Manhattan. Located at the corner of Gansevoort and Washington Streets in the Meatpacking District, at the southern entrance to the High Line, the new building, which has generated immense momentum and support, will enable the Whitney to vastly increase the size and scope of its exhibition and programming space. Ground was broken on the new building in May 2011, and it is projected to open to the public in 2015.

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art

Whitney Biennial	March 1–May 27, 2012
Singular Visions	Through April 2012
Sharon Hayes	June 21–September 9, 2012
Signs & Symbols	June 28–October 28, 2012
Oskar Fischinger	June 28–October 28, 2012
Yayoi Kusama	July 12–September 30, 2012

The Whitney Museum is located at 945 Madison Avenue at 75th Street, New York City. Museum hours are: Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., closed Monday and Tuesday. General admission: \$18. Full-time students and visitors ages 19–25 and 62 & over: \$12. Visitors 18 & under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 6–9 p.m. For general information, please call (212) 570-3600 or visit whitney.org.

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