

WHITNEY

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Press Release

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Jenny Holzer, *Red Yellow Looming*, 2004. Kunsthau Bregenz, Bregenz, Austria. Text: U.S. government documents. Lent by Cari and Michael J. Sacks. © 2008 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY. Photo: Attilio Maranzano.

MAJOR EXHIBITION OF JENNY HOLZER'S WORKS FROM THE PAST 15 YEARS TO BE PRESENTED AT THE WHITNEY

March 12-May 31, 2009

NEW YORK, February 20, 2009 -- Jenny Holzer, one of the leading artists of her generation, is the subject of a major exhibition opening in New York at the Whitney Museum of American Art on March 12, 2009. *Jenny Holzer: PROTECT PROTECT*, centering on Holzer's work since the 1990s, is organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), Chicago, in partnership with the Fondation Beyeler in Basel, Switzerland. This is Holzer's largest and most comprehensive exhibition in the United States in more than fifteen years; it remains on view at the Whitney through

May 31 in the fourth-floor Emily Fisher Landau Galleries. The New York presentation is sponsored by Bloomberg.

Holzer's work pairs the use of text and the centrality of installation to examine emotional and societal realities. One of the most pioneering of contemporary artists, she has been lauded both for her approach to language and for her use of nontraditional media and public settings for her work. The frequent presence of her work in non-art as well as art world contexts is a testament to Holzer's commitment to connecting with the public about issues of social and cultural importance. Seamlessly blending form and content, her work is characterized by formal beauty and conceptual rigor. Alternating between fact and fiction, the public and the private, the universal and the particular, Holzer's work offers an incisive portrait of our times.

"As an organization committed to employing art, design and technology in our workspaces, Bloomberg is delighted to support an artist whose work reflects our own interests so closely. Weaving together lighting, words, technology and architecture, Jenny Holzer creates outstanding installations that are both visually stunning and socially meaningful," said Lex Fenwick of Bloomberg L.P.

Currently on view at the MCA in Chicago, the exhibition travels to the Fondation Beyeler in Switzerland following its Whitney presentation. At each venue, the components are reconfigured by the artist as the basis for a site-specific installation. The exhibition is curated by Elizabeth Smith, James W. Alsdorf Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Programs at the MCA. David Kiehl, the Whitney's curator of prints and special collections, will oversee the installation at the Whitney.

About the Exhibition

Presenting several distinct but related bodies of work in a range of media in which Holzer has worked in recent years, the exhibition is not a conventional survey. These bodies of work include major new works using LED technology, sculpture, and groupings of new paintings of government documents made available through the

Freedom of Information Act. Holzer chooses existing texts from sources ranging from these official documents to her own earlier series. The works in the exhibition foreground the way in which Holzer continues to innovate artistically while elaborating on themes that have been the touchstones of her practice: pain, love, peace, and survival.

LED Works and Installations

The LED sign is Holzer's signature medium—a vehicle she has used in differing configurations and contexts since the early 1980s, from simpler, horizontal wall-mounted versions to more recent sculptural and architectural examples. In this exhibition, Holzer presents several major new LED works that are shown for the first time in the U.S. In addition, the exhibition includes several other architecturally configured LED works in which bold color, sculptural form, and passages of text interplay. Each is programmed with a set series of texts: from declassified documents in *Thorax* (2007), *Purple* (2008), and *Red Yellow Looming* (2004) to Holzer's writings in *For Chicago* (2007), *Monument* (2008), *Blue Cross* (2008), and *Green Purple Cross* (2008). These works can offer an array of institutional statements as well as individual narratives, stimulating reflection on issues of violence, hope, and vulnerability. The works include *Red Yellow Looming* (2004), an assemblage of horizontal signs that pitch forward above the heads of viewers, and *Monument* (2008), a vertical sculpture of curving bands of moving text that is nearly 20 feet tall.

Redaction Paintings

In 2006, Holzer first exhibited a new body of silk-screened paintings incorporating declassified and often redacted texts. Two groups of paintings figure prominently in this exhibition, in particular, a series based on a U.S. Central Command PowerPoint presentation to the White House outlining strategies for the war in Iraq. The paintings reproduce maps of the Middle East with texts and graphics narrating a range of scenarios and possible outcomes of events. Another significant grouping of paintings offers images of handprints of American soldiers accused of crimes in Iraq, including detainee abuse and assault. The handprints themselves have been

redacted to efface individuating marks. Hanging the hands of the charged next to those found to be wrongly accused and those whose culpability has been lost, the artist represents the fog of war.

Sculpture

The earliest works to be included in the exhibition are the tables from Holzer's *Lustmord* series of 1993-95, triggered by events during the war in the former Yugoslavia. Here, human bones are laid out on large wooden tables with some bones wrapped with silver bands showing text. These signal a shift in Holzer's work toward a more transparent engagement with the physical and psychological aspects of violence and trauma. These powerful, poignant objects and writing offer a dramatic analogue to the thematic content found elsewhere in the exhibition, and a contrasting visual and physical experience to the presence of light and movement in many of the other pieces.

Exhibition Catalogue

Jenny Holzer: PROTECT PROTECT is accompanied by an illustrated exhibition catalogue with essays by authors including Elizabeth Smith; Joan Simon, curator-at-large at the Whitney Museum of American Art; and an interview with Jenny Holzer conducted by Benjamin H.D. Buchloh. The catalogue is co-published with Fondation Beyeler and Hatje Cantz and retails for \$45.

Funders

Jenny Holzer: PROTECT PROTECT is co-organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, and Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, Switzerland.

Major support for Jenny Holzer: PROTECT PROTECT is provided by Donald and Brigitte Bren, Anne and Burt Kaplan, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



Additional support is generously provided by Andrea and Jim Gordon, Penny Pritzker and Bryan Traubert, Sara Szold, Gretchen and Jay Jordan, the Kovler Family Foundation, Cari and Michael Sacks, Howard and Donna Stone, Kathy and Steven Taslitz, Helen and Sam Zell, Lannan Foundation, the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, Cheim &

Read, Monika Sprüth Philomene Magers, Yvon Lambert, Barbara Ruben, Irving Stenn, Jr., Lynn and Allen Turner, and The Orbit Fund.

Major support for the Whitney's presentation is provided by the National Committee of the Whitney Museum of American Art in honor of Linda Pace, Jack and Susan Rudin in honor of Beth Rudin DeWoody, and The Broad Art Foundation.

Significant support is provided by Elizabeth A. Sackler – JCF, Museum Educational Trust.

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About the Whitney

The Whitney Museum of American Art is the leading advocate of 20th- and 21st-century American art. Founded in 1930, the Museum is regarded as the preeminent collection of American art and includes major works and materials from the estate of Edward Hopper, the largest public collection of works by Alexander Calder, as well as significant works by Jasper Johns, Donald Judd, Agnes Martin, Bruce Nauman, Georgia O'Keeffe, Claes Oldenburg, Kiki Smith, and Andy Warhol, among other artists. With its history of exhibiting the most promising and influential American artists and provoking intense critical and public debate, the Whitney's signature show, the Biennial, has become the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in America today. First housed on West 8th Street, the Whitney relocated in 1954 to West 54th Street and in 1966 inaugurated its present home at 945 Madison Avenue, designed by Marcel Breuer. The Whitney is currently moving ahead with plans to build a second facility, designed by Renzo Piano, located in downtown New York at the entrance to the High Line in the Meatpacking District.

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art:

Alex Bag	Through April 12, 2009
Synthetic	Through April 19, 2009
Elad Lassry: Three Films	Through April 19, 2009
Sites	Through May 3, 2009
Jenny Holzer	March 12, 2009-May 31, 2009
Dan Graham: Beyond	Opens June 25, 2009

The Whitney Museum is located at 945 Madison Avenue, 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. Admission is \$15 for adults; Members, children (ages 11 and under), and New York City public high school students free. Senior citizens (62 and over) and students with valid ID: \$10. There is a \$6 admission fee for a pass to the Kaufman Astoria Studios Film & Video Gallery only. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 6-9 pm. For information, please call 212-570-3600 or visit whitney.org.