

# WHITNEY

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# MEDIA ALERT



Jill Kroesen, *The Original Lou and Walter Story*, The Kitchen, 1978. Photograph by Robert Alexander

## **New Performance by Jill Kroesen to debut at the Whitney on July 29**

**NEW YORK**—June 16, 2016—Artist, composer, and singer Jill Kroesen was an essential figure in the 1970s downtown New York performance milieu, working at the intersection of experimental music and then-emerging performance art. After an artistic hiatus of over thirty years, she debuts *Collecting Injustices, Unnecessary Suffering*, a theatrical performance featuring original songs and dance, at the Whitney Museum of American Arts from July 29-31, 2016.

In this new performance, Kroesen deals with the structures of parenting, socialization, and control that shape individual lives and collective society. Coinciding with the Whitney's collection exhibition *Human Interest*, Kroesen's performance employs portraiture as a means of exploring power dynamics. Kroesen also enlists the participation of many of her past collaborators—including set design by Jared Bark and costume design by Mary Kay Stolz. Performers include Eric Barsness, Carol Clements, Beth Franzese, Peter Gordon, Marcy Gregory, Joe Hannan, Greta Hartenstein, Massimo Iacoboni, Pooh Kaye, Sharon Mattlin, and Jay Sanders. The theatrical environment for *Collecting Injustices, Unnecessary Suffering* will be on view from 10:30 am–4 pm, July 27–31 in the Museum's Hess Theater.

Tickets are required for all performances, and include the cost of admission to the galleries. Advanced tickets may be purchased online beginning at 10 am on June 21. Due to limited capacity, visitors are strongly encouraged to purchase tickets in advance. Any remaining tickets will be sold at the admissions desk on a first-come, first-served basis. For ticket information, additional details and schedule updates for performances of Jill Kroesen's *Collecting Injustices, Unnecessary Suffering*, please visit <http://whitney.org/Exhibitions/JillKroesen>.

*Collecting Injustices, Unnecessary Suffering* is organized by Jay Sanders, Engell Speyer Family Curator and Curator of Performance.

### **About the Artist**

Jill Kroesen was born in 1949 in Berkeley, California. She trained in avant-garde music and earned a B.A. (1972) and M.F.A. (1974) at Mills College, studying with composer Robert Ashley and later performing a prominent role in Ashley's "television opera" *Perfect Lives* (1978-83). In the late 1970s, she also orchestrated a series of performances that defied categorization, such as *Stanley Oil and His Mother: A Systems Portrait of the Western World* (1977), *The Original Lou and Walter Story* (1978), and *Excuse Me, I Feel Like Multiplying* (1979). She performed her hybrid works at art spaces and small theaters including The Kitchen, AIR Gallery, and Franklin Furnace. With these performances, Kroesen invented a space between structuralist theater, graphically-scored musical composition, and cabaret. Kroesen's "systems portraits," as she came to call her works, manifested socioeconomic, sexual, and gender politics through funny, ramshackle, and chaotic performances.

Kroesen was also an early member of Peter Gordon and David Van Tieghem's Love of Life Orchestra, performing in the premiere of Gordon's *Symphony in Four Movements* at The Kitchen in 1976 along with Kathy Acker, Laurie Anderson, Rhys Chatham, Philip Glass, Arthur Russell, and others. She received Creative Artists Public Service grants from New York State Council on the Arts (1979) and a video fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts (1985). In 1982, she released the album *Stop Vicious Cycles* (Lovely Music) which featured select songs from her performance pieces.

### **Exhibition Support**

Significant support for the Whitney's Performance Program is provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Generous support is also provided by the Mertz Gilmore Foundation and the Performance Committee of the Whitney Museum of American Art.

### **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.

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