

# WHITNEY

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# PRESS RELEASE



Photograph: Whitney Museum of American Art

## **The Whitney Announces Curators For 2017 Biennial**

**NEW YORK, November 4, 2015**—The Whitney Museum of American Art announced today that the 2017 Whitney Biennial will be co-curated by Christopher Y. Lew and Mia Locks. This will be the 78th in the Museum's series of Annual and Biennial exhibitions inaugurated in 1932 by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney. The Museum's signature survey of contemporary art in the United States, the Biennial goes on view in Spring 2017. It will be the first Biennial presented in the Whitney's new building in Manhattan's Meatpacking District. The 2017 Whitney Biennial is presented by Tiffany & Co, lead sponsor of the Biennial through 2021.

Scott Rothkopf, the Whitney's Deputy Director for Programs and Nancy and Steve Crown Family Chief Curator, said, "With the opening of the new building, we're rededicating ourselves to the Whitney's longstanding commitment to emerging artists. Chris's keen eye has been critical to this renewed focus in our program, which just launched with his presentations of Jared Madere, Rachel Rose, and the New Theater. Mia's interest in both historical figures and new tendencies, as well her years on the West Coast will add important perspective to the Biennial. The two of them have great intellectual chemistry, and it's exciting to see the first Biennial in our new home in the hands of such talented young curators."

The Whitney's Alice Pratt Brown Director Adam D. Weinberg noted: "Every Whitney Biennial is a galvanizing process for the Museum, a tradition that goes back to the institution's roots while retaining its freshness and immediacy. Endeavoring to gauge the state of art in America today, the Biennial demands curators who are attuned to the art of the current moment and there is no question that Chris Lew and Mia Locks have their fingers on the pulse. The expanded spaces and possibilities offered by our new downtown building will make this Biennial particularly lively and groundbreaking."

**Scott Rothkopf** will lead a team of advisors who will work closely with the curators to help shape the exhibition. They include: **Negar Azimi**, writer and senior editor at *Bidoun*, an award-winning publishing, curatorial, and educational initiative with a focus on the Middle East and its diasporas; **Gean Moreno**, artistic director of Cannonball, a Miami-based nonprofit dedicated to the advancement of critical discourse and contemporary art through residencies, grants, commissions, and public programs; **Aily Nash**, co-curator of Projections, the New York Film Festival's artists' film and video section, and Film and Media Curator at Basilica Hudson; and **Wendy Yao**, a publisher and founder of both the exhibition space 356 South Mission Road and Ooga Booga, a shop with two Los Angeles locations that specializes in independent books, music, art, and clothing.

### **About the Curators**

**Christopher Y. Lew** is Associate Curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art, where he has organized the first U.S. solo exhibitions for Rachel Rose and Jared Madere. He has also organized, with Curator and Curator of Performance Jay Sanders, the first U.S. theatrical presentation by New Theater. His upcoming exhibitions at the Whitney include a solo show by Sophia Al-Maria (summer 2016). Prior to joining the Whitney in 2014, he held positions at MoMA PS1 since 2006 and organized numerous exhibitions including the group shows *New Pictures of Common Objects* (2012) and *Taster's Choice* (2014). His notable solo shows include *Clifford Owens: Anthology* (2011), *GCC: Achievements in Retrospective* (2014), *James Ferraro: 100%* (2014), and *Jack Smith: Normal Love* (2013), which received an award from the International Association of Art Critics. Lew has contributed to several publications including *Art AsiaPacific*, *Art Journal*, *Bomb*, Huffington Post, and *Mousse*.

From 2013 until recently, **Mia Locks** was Assistant Curator at MoMA PS1, where she organized exhibitions including *Math Bass: Off the Clock* (2015); *IM Heung-soon: Reincarnation* (2015); *Samara Golden: The Flat Side of the Knife* (2014); and *The Little Things Could Be Dearer* (2014). Prior to MoMA PS1, Locks organized *Cruising the Archive: Queer Art and Culture in Los Angeles, 1945–1980* (2012), with David Frantz, at ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives as part of the Getty's Pacific Standard Time initiative. From 2010–2013, she worked at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA), where she helped to organize *Blues for Smoke* (2012), which traveled to the Whitney, and *Bob Mizer and Tom of Finland* (2013), both with Bennett Simpson. Locks was part of the curatorial team for the *Greater New York* exhibition now on view at MoMA PS1. She is currently publishing a book on the work of Samara Golden, forthcoming in July 2016.

## **About the Biennial**

With a history of exhibiting the most promising and influential artists and provoking debate, the Whitney Biennial—the Museum's signature exhibition—is the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in the United States. The Biennial, an invitational show of work produced in the preceding two years, was introduced by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney in 1932, and it is the longest continuous series of exhibitions in the country to survey recent developments in American art.

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Major support is also provided by The Brown Foundation Inc., of Houston and the National Committee of the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Significant support is provided by the Philip and Janice Levin Foundation.

Generous support is provided by 2017 Biennial Committee Co-Chairs: Leslie Bluhm, Beth Rudin DeWoody, Bob Gersh, and Miyoung Lee; 2017 Biennial Committee members: Diane and Adam E. Max, Teresa Tsai, Suzanne and Bob Cochran, Rebecca and Martin Eisenberg, Amanda and Glenn Fuhrman, Barbara and Michael Gamson, Kourosh Larizadeh and Luis Pardo, and Jackson Tang; the Henry Peterson Foundation; and anonymous donors.

Funding is also provided by special Biennial endowments created by Melva Bucksbaum, Emily Fisher Landau, Leonard A. Lauder, and Fern and Lenard Tessler.

Additional endowment support is provided by The Keith Haring Foundation Exhibition Fund, Donna Perret Rosen and Benjamin M. Rosen, and the Jon and Mary Shirley Foundation.

Curatorial research and travel for this exhibition were funded by an endowment established by Rosina Lee Yue and Bert A. Lies, Jr., MD.

*New York* magazine is the exclusive media sponsor of Whitney Biennial 2017.

## **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 at the Whitney Museum of American Art

as of November 4, 2015

<i>The Whitney's Collection</i>	Ongoing
<i>Jared Madere</i>	Through–Jan 3, 2016
<i>Archibald Motley: Jazz Age Modernist</i>	Through–Jan 17, 2016
<i>Frank Stella: A Retrospective</i>	Through–Feb 7, 2016
<i>Rachel Rose: Everything and More</i>	Through–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 1, 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 65 & over: \$18. Visitors 17 and under 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](http://whitney.org).

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