

WHITNEY

Press Release

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THE WHITNEY TO PRESENT XAVIER CHA'S *BODY DRAMA*



Audition for *Body Drama*, May 21, 2011

NEW YORK, June 6, 2011 – Beginning June 30, the New York-based artist Xavier Cha, whose work merges performance, video, and installation, will present a new work she conceived for the Whitney Museum of American Art. The exhibition, *Body Drama*, is curated by Whitney curatorial assistant Diana Kamin. It will be on view through September.

Cha's works challenge the traditional relationship between artist and audience. Frequently collaborating with performers from other disciplines, Cha invites clowns, opera singers, and

actors to become protagonists in her work and stand-ins for the artist herself. With some direction from Cha, these collaborators develop their own acts within environments that Cha has found or constructed. Windows and walls, for instance, serve as screens or physical barriers that simultaneously highlight the sculptural nature of each performance space and echo the psychological divide between performer and audience. In her recent work, Cha has included cameras as props in performances to suggest alternative perspectives.

Cha conceived *Body Drama*, a work that oscillates between live performance and projected video, for the Whitney's Anne & Joel Ehrenkranz Lobby Gallery. Several times a day, an actor will be on hand to perform, wearing a specialty body-mounted camera trained on the actor's face as he or she moves through the gallery. Cha's directions to the actor are to project the internal experience of being in an unknowable place, and to express that alienation and fear without using words. Between performances, videos from earlier performances are projected onto the wall, revealing the actor's face against a distorted image of the gallery space.

Entering the exhibition, viewers encounter either the live performance or the projected video. Neither provides a complete picture, and both withhold visual information: the camera's point of view is inaccessible to the viewer during the live performance and the physical movement of the actor is impossible to recognize in the video. Cha has described *Body Drama* as operating within three different planes of space: the psychological space of the actor's performance, the physical space of the gallery's architecture, and the temporal space between the live performance and the video. Refusing to cohere, these shifting planes attune viewers to the impossibility of discerning the authentic experience amid the endless loop of live and recorded performance.

Performances will occur every hour on the hour, starting at 12 pm on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday, and at 3 pm on Friday. For a list of participating actors, please visit whitney.org/Exhibitions/XavierCha in the coming weeks.

About the Artist

Xavier Cha was born in Los Angeles, in 1980; she currently lives and works in New York. Cha received her B.F.A. from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2002 and her M.F.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 2004. Her performance-based work has been shown in solo exhibitions at the Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis (*Two-Way Mirror*, 2010) and Taxter & Spengemann Gallery, New York (*The Third I*, 2009, *Voicedoor*, 2008, and *Holiday Cruise!*, 2006). Group exhibitions include *The Absolutely Other*, 2010, The Kitchen, New York; *Convention*, 2009, Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami; and *In Practice*, 2006, The Sculpture Center, Long Island City.

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

Dianna Molzan: Bologna Meissen	Through June 19, 2011
Cory Arcangel: Pro Tools	Through September 11, 2011
More Than That: Films by Kevin Jerome Everson	Through September 18, 2011
Breaking Ground: The Whitney's Founding Collection	Through September 18, 2011
Lyonel Feininger: At the Edge of the World	June 30–October 16, 2011
Xavier Cha: Body Drama	Opens June 30, 2011
Singular Visions	Through November 2011
Designing the Whitney of the Future	On continuous view

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 to the Kaufman Astoria Studios Film & Video Gallery only: \$6. 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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