

WHITNEY

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of American Art
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PRESS RELEASE



Running People at 2,616,216 (1978–79) by Jonathan Borofsky installed on the West Ambulatory, Fifth Floor, the inaugural exhibition, *America Is Hard to See* (May 1–September 27, 2015). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Photograph © Nic Lehoux.

The Whitney's Inaugural Exhibition in Its New Building Presents Fresh Narratives of American Art

America Is Hard to See Features Work by 400 Artists and Fills Every Indoor and Outdoor Exhibition Space in the Whitney's New Meatpacking District Location, Opening on May 1, 2015

NEW YORK, March 27, 2015—The Whitney Museum of American Art will open its new Renzo Piano-designed home at 99 Gansevoort Street between Washington and West Streets on May 1, 2015, with an ambitious exhibition that reexamines the history of American art from 1900 to today. *America Is Hard to See* presents new perspectives on the Whitney's collection, reflecting on art in the United States with more than 600 works by some 400 artists. The exhibition—its title taken from a Robert Frost poem that was also used by the filmmaker Emile de Antonio for one of his political documentaries—is the most extensive display to date of the Whitney's collection.

Drawn from the Whitney's holdings, *America Is Hard to See* examines the themes, ideas, beliefs, visions, and passions that have preoccupied and galvanized American artists over the past one hundred and fifteen years. The exhibition's narrative is propelled by a dynamic sense of invention and conflict, as artists struggled to work within and against established conventions and often directly engaged their political and social contexts. Works of art across all mediums will be displayed together, acknowledging the ways in which artists have engaged various modes of production and broken the boundaries between them. Numerous pieces that have rarely, if ever, been shown will appear alongside familiar icons, in a conscious effort to challenge assumptions about the American art canon.

America Is Hard to See is organized by a team of Whitney curators led by Donna De Salvo, Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Programs, which includes Carter E. Foster, Steven and Ann Ames Curator of

Drawing; Dana Miller, Curator of the Permanent Collection; and Scott Rothkopf, Nancy and Steve Crown Family Curator and Associate Director of Programs; with Jane Panetta, Assistant Curator; Catherine Taft, Assistant Curator; and Mia Curran, Curatorial Assistant.

Adam D. Weinberg, the Whitney's Alice Pratt Brown Director, commented: "The DNA of the Whitney Museum—and Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney's vision to champion the art and artists of the United States—is encoded in its collection. Accordingly, to display a larger portion of our unparalleled holdings of American art was a key impetus for the new building. The opening exhibition offers an unprecedented occasion to display one hundred and fifteen years of American art, throughout the new Whitney. This will be the first of many opportunities to show the complexities, subtleties, and glories of the art of our country in a new light and to share aspects of the breadth and depth of our collection in all mediums."

Donna De Salvo noted: "The title *America Is Hard to See* points to the impossibility of offering a tidy picture of this country, its culture and, by extension, its art. The exhibition takes up this challenge through the lens of the Whitney's collection, re-examining well-known art historical tropes, proposing new narratives, and even expanding the definition of who counts as an American artist. We did not conceive of this exhibition as a comprehensive survey, but rather as a sequence of provocative thematic chapters that taken together reflect on American art history from the vantage point of today."

Installed throughout the building, *America Is Hard to See* is organized as a series of twenty-three "chapters"—sections that build on a particular theme through related artworks. Each chapter is named after a work of art that appears in that section of the show. The exhibition unfolds chronologically, beginning with a display relating to the Whitney's origins on Eighth Street, on view in the first-floor gallery (a space which is open to the public free of charge), and proceeding with works from the first decades of the twentieth century on the Museum's top gallery floor on Eight. The exhibition continues on Floors Seven and Six with work from the mid-twentieth century, and concludes on Five, where works from the late 1960s to the present will be displayed in the Museum's largest space, an 18,000-square-foot column-free gallery with floor-to-ceiling windows and striking views to the east and west. The show will also occupy the Museum's terraces, which provide nearly 13,000 square feet of additional exhibition space. The majority of the exhibition will be on view through September 27, 2015, with some floors closing on a staggered schedule before and after that date.

Highlights

The first section of the exhibition, "Eight West Eighth," focuses on the Museum's roots. The Whitney Museum of American Art was founded as a place for artists, a legacy it has cherished since its earliest incarnation as an exhibition space opened by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney in 1914. With the energetic support of her assistant, Juliana Force, in 1918 Mrs. Whitney developed the Whitney Studio Club, which served as a social and creative hub for its artist-members. The works on view in this section evoke the diverse activities of the Studio Club, as well as the broad tastes of these two women. Paintings by Robert Henri, William Glackens, John Sloan, Everett Shinn, and George Luks are evidence of Mrs. Whitney's adventurous early advocacy of a group of mavericks known as "The Eight," proponents of a new and gritty urban realism (who later became known as the Ashcan School). Photographs by Charles Sheeler and Berenice Abbott depict the interiors and exhibitions on Eighth Street, while humorous watercolors by Guy Pène Du Bois (one of which gives this section its name) chronicle the characters on the scene. A group of Edward Hopper's figure studies from life drawing classes at the Studio Club reveal it as a site not just for exhibiting art but for making it.

"Forms Abstracted" takes its title from a painting by Marsden Hartley, in which Hartley combined the fragmented forms of Cubism and the brilliant color of German Expressionism. The European avant-garde jolted American artists who encountered the latest movements abroad through reproductions and exhibitions in New York, or who discovered them by traveling to Paris and beyond. Some artists sought to emulate these stylistic advances, while others adapted European Modernism to images of America's fast-changing culture. In works on view here, we see artists bending Cubism and Futurism to meet their own needs, depicting quintessentially American subjects such as baseball and the cocktail. Some artists responded by breaking away from describing recognizable subjects to invent new abstract forms. Other artists on view in this section include Georgia O'Keeffe, Isamu Noguchi, Arthur Dove, Joseph Stella, Oscar Bluemner, Lyonel Feininger, Stuart Davis, and Max Weber.

The American landscape—and the reaction of artists to America as a place—is the subject of the chapter "Breaking the Prairie," which takes its name from a mural study by Grant Wood. This section is devoted to America as myth, a narrative featuring the archetypal figures of the heartland: the preacher, the

farmer, the immigrant, the laborer. In the decades leading up to World War II, Grant Wood, Chiura Obata, Thomas Hart Benton, Edward Hopper, and others became deeply interested in America as both a real place and an abstract idea, one often expressed through stylized or imagined images of the land and its people. James Castle, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Bill Traylor invested humble subjects with a sense of mystery and symbolism.

Calder's Circus (1926-1931)—one of the most beloved works in the Whitney's collection—is at the center of a chapter devoted to spectacle. The decade after the First World War brought the U.S. into a period of prosperity and social freedom, fueling a massive appetite for entertainment that has grown unabated to this day. Cinemas and theaters opened at a rapid pace, tabloid newspapers exploded in circulation, and celebrity photographs and gossip columns became the common currency of a booming spectacle-mad culture. Largely inspired by these mass amusements and their audiences, the works on view here play with the entwinement of voyeurism and exhibitionism, seeing and being seen. Among the artists in this section are Edward Steichen, Reginald Marsh, Charles Demuth, Paul Cadmus, George Bellows, William H. Johnson, Weegee, Lisette Model, and Roy DeCarava.

The chapter "Fighting with All Our Might" (the title comes from one of the works in Hugo Gellert's series of prints about war made in 1943) presents powerful images made by artists who became activists, often using printmaking as a way of circulating their ideas and awakening social conscience. Following the catastrophic stock market crash of 1929, many American artists committed themselves to using the expressive power of their art in the struggle for social change. Ben Shahn's *The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti* (1931-1932), captured the political concerns and conscience of the time. Some artists joined the government programs of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, which aimed to revive the nation by creating jobs, aiding farms and small businesses, and regulating finance. Photographers such as Walker Evans and Dorothea Lange were hired to document farm life for the Resettlement Administration, while printmakers working for the Federal Art Project made thousands of prints. Other artists in this section advocated for more progressive reforms and used their art to encourage workers to mobilize and strike. Among the works in this section is a selection of harrowing prints made to support an anti-lynching bill in Congress. Artists such as José Clemente Orozco and Paul Cadmus made images condemning the brutal violence perpetrated against African Americans across the United States. The section ends with artists' responses to the devastation of World War II. A selection from Jacob Lawrence's *War Series*, made a year after the artist finished serving in the Coast Guard, plumbs the drudgery as well as the depths of human suffering brought about by war.

The section devoted to Abstract Expressionism is named for Hedda Sterne's painting *New York, N.Y., 1955*. In the aftermath of World War II, a number of artists in the U.S. felt compelled to make art that was unmistakably new. European surrealism offered crucial inspiration, especially its exploration of the psyche through automatic drawing, anthropomorphism, and personal symbolic languages—elements that can be seen in the work of Arshile Gorky, Lee Krasner, and Richard Pousette-Dart. Others, like Joan Mitchell, Alfonso Ossorio, and Jackson Pollock, focused on how the spontaneous interaction between materials and radical processes like spraying and pouring might convey authenticity and immediacy. The section features masterpieces by Willem de Kooning, Mark di Suvero, Barnett Newman, Franz Kline, and Mark Rothko. On the contiguous terrace, the works of the sculptor David Smith are installed, continuing the narrative flow between the indoor galleries and outdoor exhibition space. The terrace will feature the Whitney's first display of Smith's *Cubi XXI* (1964), jointly acquired in 2011 by the Whitney and Storm King Art Center, together with Smith's *Running Daughter* (1956/1960) and *Lectern Sentinel* (1961).

By titling a film *Scotch Tape*, after a bit of detritus that got caught in the camera while he was filming, Jack Smith underscored the embrace of accident and the real world's intrusion into art. Many of the artists represented in this section— also called "scotch tape"— shared this attitude, and their work features extensive use of nontraditional materials, often scavenged in junk shops and along city streets. There are assemblages including bits of burned paper, deconstructed furniture, comics, conveyor belts, newsprint, and a stuffed pheasant. Making art from castoffs and embracing chance could be seen as a way of resisting the norms of postwar American consumer society. Bruce Conner's sculptural *PORTRAIT OF ALLEN GINSBURG* (1960)—made of wood, fabric, wax, glass, feathers, metal, string, and spray paint—is included in this section, along with works by Jay DeFeo, Cameron, Robert Rauschenberg, Ray Johnson, John Cage, Sam Middleton, Louise Nevelson, and Lee Bontecou.

The title of the section "Large Trademark" is taken from Ed Ruscha's painting of a movie studio's logo. In the early 1960s, Pop art challenged the gestures of Abstract Expressionism with an unflinching embrace of America's exploding commercial and media culture. The sources of this new art were neither the artist's imagination nor direct observation of the world, but rather images themselves—product

packaging, print advertisements, newspaper photography, or comic books. Andy Warhol's *Before and After, 4* (1962) posits a symbol of American reinvention and assimilation with an image taken from a newspaper, challenging conventional notions of beauty and perfection. Early in their careers, many of Pop's key figures worked as commercial artists: Warhol was an illustrator and James Rosenquist a billboard painter, while Ed Ruscha trained in graphic design. These commercial backgrounds inspired flat, boldly graphic, impersonal surfaces. On view are works by Diane Arbus, Alex Katz, Tom Wesselmann, Marisol, Garry Winogrand, William Eggleston, Claes Oldenburg, Romare Bearden, Roy Lichtenstein, and Yayoi Kusama. Here also is Jasper Johns's *Three Flags* (1958), one of the icons of the Whitney's collection, in which, by shifting the visual emphasis from the American flag's symbolic meaning to the geometric patterns and variegated texture of the picture surface and canvas structure, Johns explores the boundary between abstraction and representation.

In the section "Rational Irrationalism," we find the artists who came to be known as Minimalists and post-Minimalists, including Donald Judd and Robert Morris, radically challenging established notions of art. Some of these artists used new production processes, pursuing geometric forms with high finishes, while others investigated a vast range of new materials, including neon, latex, lead, and resin. The resulting work emphasized the dynamic between the viewer's body, the work, and the environment. Some artists explored these issues in shaped canvases and reliefs that toyed with the relationship between actual physical experience and spatial illusionism, as in Alvin Loving's *Rational Irrationalism*. The rigid geometries of these works were followed by a response from artists who sought to use these new materials in more spontaneous ways that captured the sense of making art as an active process, subject to forces like gravity or the movement of the artist's body. In 1969, the Whitney included many of the figures in this section—Eva Hesse, Rafael Ferrer, Richard Serra, Keith Sonnier, and Richard Tuttle—in the landmark exhibition *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials*. Among the other artists on view here are Michelle Stuart, Sol LeWitt, Anne Truitt, and David Novros. The story continues outside, where sculptures by Tony Smith and Robert Morris are installed on the adjacent terrace.

In "Threat and Sanctuary," named for Neil Jenney's 1969 painting of a lifeboat floating in dangerous waters, the focus is on artists who continued to prioritize painting during a period that was dominated by Conceptual art. Painting seemed to have fallen out of fashion at the end of the 1960s, but not for the artists in this section who created the enduring works on view: Jack Whitten's *Sorcerer's Apprentice* (1974), recently acquired but shown at the Whitney in a solo show devoted to the artist in 1974; Philip Guston's *Cabal* (1977); Susan Rothenberg's *For the Light* (1978–1979); Elizabeth Murray's *Children Meeting* (1978); and Chuck Close's monumental portrait of Philip Glass, *Phil* (1969). Exhibitions such as *New Image Painting*, held at the Whitney in 1979, recognized the power and importance of this body of work.

"Racing Thoughts"—the title comes from a work by Jasper Johns—gives us artists using the image as a way to critique modern culture and society. Nam June Paik, Louise Lawler, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Jeff Koons, Sarah Charlesworth, Sherrie Levine, Barbara Kruger, Richard Prince, David Salle, and Peter Halley are among the artists in this section. These artists, working in the wake of Minimalism and Post-Minimalism, made the image central to their work, returning to media imagery as a source, subject, and strategy in their work. The Whitney's 1989 exhibition *Image World* was one of the first attempts to consider this phenomenon as an important chapter in American art.

A chapter devoted to identity, race, and gender is named after Fred Wilson's *Guarded View* (1991), which confronts viewers with four black headless mannequins dressed as museum guards. By placing these often unnoticed figures at the center of our attention, Wilson points to the hidden power relations and social codes that structure our experience of museums and the world outside, exploring issues that were central to *Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art*, presented by the Museum in 1994. This exhibition and the Whitney's controversial 1993 Biennial featured Wilson and many of the other artists on view here: Matthew Barney, Jimmie Durham, David Hammons, Mike Kelley, Karen Kilimnik, Lorna Simpson, Sue Williams, among them. Collectively, the artists in this section explore how our identities are shaped by culture as much as by birth, and how categories like race and gender depend on the complicated interaction between how we see and present ourselves and how others see us.

The exhibition concludes with a chapter entitled "Course of Empire," after Ed Ruscha's series (previously shown at the Whitney following its debut at the Fifty-first Venice Biennale in 2005), which deals with the theme of progress. Ruscha's series was inspired by Thomas Cole's nineteenth-century painting cycle, *The Course of Empire*. This section looks at the period we are living in now—post-9/11, post-Katrina,

post-financial crisis of 2008—and includes work by such artists as Nicole Eisenman, Mark Bradford, Rachel Harrison, Glenn Ligon, and Aleksandra Mir.

Film and Video

Reflecting the Whitney's longtime commitment to time-based art, *America Is Hard to See* will include examples of film and video from the collection throughout the entire exhibition. Comprising some of the earliest examples of film in the collection, the section "Free Radicals"—which takes its name from Len Lye's 1958 abstract film—displays American filmmakers working from the 1930s to the 1950s outside of the established commercial system of film production and distribution. These works relate to many of the themes found in the other prewar sections of the exhibition, such as abstraction, surrealism, and spectacle. Mary Ellen Bute's *Synchromy No. 4: Escape* (1937-1938) is a dynamic experimental animation that combines motion, light, sound, and color to produce what the artist called "visual music." *At Land* (1944), by auteur filmmaker Maya Deren, is a dream-like vision of personal psychology, feminine sensuality, and identity, which the artist wrote, produced, financed, distributed, publicized, and in which she even starred. This section also includes work by Robert Breer, Helen Levitt, and Raphael Montañez Ortiz.

Examples of film from the 1960s will be presented, with some key works found in the sixth-floor galleries: Nam June Paik's *Magnet TV* (1965) is an important early example of his "prepared televisions" that paved the way for his revolutionary, multi-channel video sculptures, including *V-yramid* (1982), which is a highlight of the fifth-floor galleries. Earl Reiback's *Thrust* (1969) also deconstructs the composition of a television set by manipulating its cathode ray tube to almost psychedelic ends. Both Paik and Reiback transform televisions into sculptural objects that question the monolithic authority of broadcast media. These works are exhibited alongside a selection of politically driven art from the 1960s and 1970s in the section "Raw War," which features Howard Lester's poignant meditation on loss, the film *One Week in Vietnam* (1970), listing the names of soldiers killed during one week of war while The Everly Brothers' "Bye Bye Love" plays along.

Video technology was still in its infancy at the start of the 1970s, yet many artists turned to the medium as a groundbreaking new tool for personal expression. Many feminist artists recognized the radical potential of video and the section "Learn Where the Meat Comes From" features a strong selection of these works. The section takes its name from Suzanne Lacy's 1976 video that is at once a humorous parody of a cooking show—the kind that made Julia Child famous—and a biting commentary on the objectification of the female body. Howardena Pindell's *Free White and 21* (1980) is a confessional-like recounting of the artist's personal experience of racism, punctuated by the artist using derisive language and performing in white-face. This gallery presents a number of works that center on performance—both politically-engaged happenings and body-oriented actions—throughout the 1970s. It includes videos by Vito Acconci, Eleanor Antin, Ulysses Jenkins, Paul McCarthy, William Wegman, and Hannah Wilke, among others.

The section "Get Rid of Yourself" draws its title from a semi-fictional 2003 video by Bernadette Corporation. The work combines footage from the 2001 protests at the G-8 Summit in Genoa, Italy, with dramatic monologues to interrogate decentralized political resistance in a global age. Bernadette Corporation's call to "get rid of yourself" speaks to the questioning of individuality, altered notions of subjectivity, and the general feeling of instability at the beginning of a new millennium, themes that relate to all twenty-four videos on view here. This section features two alternating programs of contemporary video from the Whitney's collection. While one program features works that cleverly engage popular entertainment, advertising, music, dance, and technology, the other highlights politically driven works that explore the role of mass media in social and cultural consciousness. Artists on view here include Charles Atlas, Alex Bag, Ericka Beckman, Luis Gispert, Kalup Linzy, Tala Madani, Tony Oursler, Walid Raad, Ryan Trecartin, Wu Tsang, and others.

A screening series of seventeen film and video programs will be presented in the theater on selected Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays during the run of the exhibition. The Whitney's state-of-the-art theater allows for the display of film in a dedicated cinema space for the first time in the Museum's history. Including works by approximately fifty artists, this series will showcase film and video highlights from the collection that relate to the themes, styles, and decades of art making on view throughout the exhibition. The series will kick off with a concentration of works screened from May 1 through May 4 and will continue through September, featuring each program multiple times. One program, for example, screens Yvonne Rainer's *Five Easy Pieces* (1966–1969) with Walter De Maria's rarely seen *Hardcore* (1969), David Lamelas's *The Desert People* (1974), and Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels* (1978). Another

program presents the avant-garde experimentations of Stan Brakhage, Brian Frye, Sandra Gibson, Julie Murray, Luis Recoder, and Matt Saunders. The theater allows for the presentation of feature-length film and video works such as Mike Kelley's *Day is Done* (2005–2006) and Liz Magic Laser's *I Feel Your Pain* (2011). The series will include special Saturday evening presentations involving live projections; rare screenings of works shown on celluloid, such as Jonas Mekas's *Lost Lost Lost* (1976); and conversations in conjunction with the *99 Objects* public program.

Performance

Concurrent with the inaugural exhibition, the Whitney will present a series of single artist and artist-group performances in the theater, reflecting on the exhibition's themes. Each of these iconoclastic artists has created live work which fundamentally extends our understanding of the art form(s) in which they engage, and challenges the definitions of American art as it can be presented within a museum context. Taking the form of performance installations, concert series, retrospectives, festivals, residencies, and new site-specific commissions, the work of these artists signals a need for innovative approaches to presenting ephemeral performance. Some highlights follow:

Yuji Agematsu: *Walk On A,B,C*, May 6–11

Since the late 1980s, the obsessive and visionary artistic practice of Yuji Agematsu has included daily walks through Manhattan's streets, documenting and collecting the flotsam and jetsam that comprises our urban experience. For the second half of 2014, Agematsu directed his vision to the Whitney's new location. An installation of highly choreographed sequences of timed 35mm slides map and demarcate space according to the artist's routes.

David Rosenboom: *Propositional Music* (Presented in collaboration with Issue Project Room) May 22-24

A three-day concert series celebrating fifty years of David Rosenboom's significant contributions to the world of experimental music. From *Continental Divide* (1964) to *Ringing Minds* (2014), this program explores many of Rosenboom's major works utilizing a musical method he terms "propositional music," which is genuinely multidisciplinary and progressive in its application of idea to musical form.

Matana Roberts Summer (dates TBD)

A Chicago-born artist, experimental composer, and saxophonist, Matana Roberts will engage in a multi-part residency, creating a project in direct response to the inaugural exhibition. Her practice crosses many artistic forms including oration, graphic scoring, video, and improvisation, through which she cultivates work around historical narratives and political expression.

Conlon Nancarrow June 17–28

The music of U.S.-Mexican composer Conlon Nancarrow, in the eighteen years since his death, has steadily grown in influence and infamy. This maverick American composer created staggeringly complex pieces whose rhythmical structures borrowed from boogie-woogie and the atonal avant-garde, and later forged his own unique language. Co-curated by U.K. Nancarrow specialist Dominic Murcott, this unprecedented series will include musicians and artists presenting Nancarrow's works, nearly all of which were composed for the player piano. Lectures, discussions, and performances by musicians for whom Nancarrow was a chief inspiration will explore the structurally exquisite ideas behind the music.

DANCENOISE July (dates TBD)

DANCENOISE is Anne lobst and Lucy Sexton. They began making dance-based performance art in 1983, performing in many New York nightclubs and theaters including WOW Café, the Pyramid, 8BC, Performance Space 122, Franklin Furnace, and the Kitchen. Initially emerging at the crossroads of no wave, punk, performance art, modern dance, and Manhattan's East Village nightclub scene, their legendary stage shows were built on manic choreography and comedy, senseless violence, biting and up-to-the-minute social commentary, and precision timing.

Other upcoming performances include Takehisa Kosugi (September); and New Theater (October), and more to be announced.

Education Programs *99 Objects*

Daily at 3pm

A series of in-gallery programs, each of which is focused on a single artwork from the Whitney's collection on view in *America Is Hard to See*. In honor of our new address, 99 Gansevoort Street, 99 *Objects* invites an interdisciplinary group of artists, writers, and scholars to engage with individual objects and reflect on their significance. This collective approach will create a constellation of perspectives on the meaning and relevance of the Whitney's collection. Free with Museum admission. Check whitney.org for detailed schedule information.

Andrea Geyer: Time Tenderness

May 13–19, 2015

In *Time Tenderness*, a program of performances that takes place at various times in the Museum's galleries over the course of the week from May 13 to 19, artist Andrea Geyer works with performers Omagbitse Omagbemi, Lily Gold, and Jess Barbagallo to reanimate the continuously forgotten history of women's roles in American culture. On the occasion of the inauguration of the Whitney's new building, Geyer's project seeks to materialize Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney's visionary belief that any country needs culture and art to recognize and foster its own identity. Geyer has researched various sources, including the writings of Mrs. Whitney, to create a work in which the performers use movement, text, and song to engage with individual works in the exhibition *America Is Hard to See*.

Film Screening: Eva Hesse

May 17, 2015 at 2pm

Eva Hesse (Directed by Marcie Begleiter, 102 minutes, 2015): A documentary portrait of Eva Hesse rendered through archival footage, recently uncovered still imagery, and intimate shots of Hesse's extraordinary art. The film explores Hesse's art and life through her journals and correspondence and through interviews with her family, friends, and noted experts on her work, including Helen Hesse Charash, Richard Serra, Robert Mangold and Sylvia Plimack Mangold, Dan Graham, and Carl Andre, as well as Whitney curator Elisabeth Sussman and Nicholas Serota, Director of the Tate. Director Marcie Begleiter and producer Karen Shapiro will introduce the screening, which will be followed by a panel discussion with Elisabeth Sussman, Sondra Gilman Curator of Photography at the Whitney; Kelly C. Baum, Haskell Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Princeton University Art Museum; and the artist Sam Lewitt.

Symposium: America Is Hard to See

September 25–26, 2015

Since its founding in 1930, the Whitney Museum of American Art has taken an elastic and idiosyncratic approach to questions of culture and citizenship. On the occasion of the opening of the Whitney's new building and taking the inaugural exhibition of the collection *America Is Hard to See* as a point of departure, this symposium will bring together an international group of scholars working in the field of American art history to consider the relationship between national identity and artistic production in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. See whitney.org for more details.

The Online Collection

For the first time in the Museum's history, the entirety of the Whitney's holdings of twentieth-century and contemporary American art have been made accessible to the public. The relaunched online collection, whitney.org/Collection, has grown from approximately 700 works of art to nearly 22,000, spanning all mediums—painting, sculpture, film, video, photography, works on paper, installation, and new media. Along with images of most of the works, this searchable database also includes written text, as well as audio and video files, providing deeper insight into selected pieces. Visitors to the site can fully explore the breadth and depth of a collection that has helped define what is innovative and influential in American art since the beginning of the twentieth century.

Handbook of the Collection

Highlighting the Museum's extraordinary holdings of works in all mediums—painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, photography, film, video, installation, and new media—this new volume, *Whitney Museum of American Art: Handbook of the Collection*, includes entries by the Whitney's curators and other scholars illuminating works by 350 artists, drawn from the collection of 22,000 works by more than 3,000 artists. The Museum's history and the evolution of its collection, including its distinction as one of the few American museums founded by an artist, and the notion of "American" in relation to the collection, are explored in insightful essays by Adam D. Weinberg, Alice Pratt Brown Director, and Dana Miller, Curator of the Permanent Collection, who also edited the book. Published by the Whitney Museum of American Art and distributed by Yale University Press.

About the Building

Designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Renzo Piano, the building affirms the Whitney's role as the leading museum of modern and contemporary art of the United States. The new building will approximately double the Whitney's exhibition space and provide extraordinary possibilities for artists, curators, and audiences. For the first time, the Whitney will be able to present all of its exhibitions in the context of the most expansive installation of its unsurpassed collection of twentieth- and twenty-first-century American art. The building includes an education center with dedicated space for state-of-the-art classrooms; a theater; a black box space for film, video, and performance; and a Works on Paper Study Center, Conservation Lab, and Library Reading Room. The classrooms, theater, and study center are all firsts for the Whitney.

Artschwager Elevators

One of the most striking features of the Whitney's new home will be its four distinctive elevators. Bringing visitors into contact with art as soon as they enter, the four elevator interiors comprise an artwork by the late Richard Artschwager (1923–2013). *Six in Four*, the title Artschwager gave to the project, is the last major artwork he created before his death in February 2013. Employing materials such as plastic laminate, glass, and etched stainless steel, the elevators are the culmination of a body of work based on six subjects that occupied Artschwager's imagination for decades: door, window, table, basket, mirror, and rug. Each elevator is designed as an immersive installation featuring one or more of these themes; visitors entering an elevator will have the extraordinary and perhaps somewhat surprising experience of standing under a table; being on a rug in front of a mirror; finding oneself opposite an unexpected door and next to a window; or contained in a giant floating woven basket. Throughout the day the four elevators will be used by the Museum's visitors; the largest, nearly fifteen feet wide, will also be used to transport art. Each night the elevators will come down to the Lobby where they will remain open and visible in repose, all at the same time, from outside the building.

Press Preview

The Museum will host a special viewing opportunity for members of the press to experience the new building and preview the inaugural exhibition on **Thursday, April 23, 2015 from 10am to 3pm**. For information and to register for the press preview, visit: <http://whitney.org/Press>. For additional information, please call (212) 715-1643 or email whitney@polskinarts.com.

Sponsorship

America Is Hard to See is sponsored by



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Early Viewing Opportunities for Members

At the end of April, the Museum will offer special viewing opportunities for Whitney members to experience the new building and preview the inaugural exhibition in advance of the general public. For information about membership, please call (212) 570-3641 or email memberinfo@whitney.org.

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 best 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

America Is Hard to See

Archibald Motley: Jazz Age Modernist

Frank Stella

The Westreich/Wagner Collection

Laura Poitras

David Wojnarowicz

May 1–Sept 27, 2015

Oct 2, 2015–Jan 17, 2016

Oct 30, 2015–Feb 7, 2016

Nov 20, 2015–Mar 6, 2016

Feb 5–May 15, 2016

Fall 2016/Winter 2017

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