

The 2017 Whitney Biennial Will Feature Edgy, Trending Artists in ‘Turbulent’ Times

The 63 participating artists look for their place in an unstable society.

[Alyssa Buffenstein](#), November 18, 2016



The Whitney Museum of American Art. Photo by Ed Lederman, courtesy the Whitney Museum.

The Whitney Museum has announced the list of 63 artists, duos, and collectives that will comprise next year's Whitney Biennial. The first to be staged in the new Meatpacking District building, the Biennial's artists will present work dealing with, according to the Whitney's official announcement, "[t]he formation of self and the individual's place in a turbulent society."

A continued focus on emerging artists brings edgy,

trending names like GCC and Puppies Puppies, balanced with fresh yet established artists like Jordan Wolfson, Frances Stark, and Anicka Yi, who recently won the Hugo Boss prize and will open a solo show at the Guggenheim in April 2017.

The biennial is curated by Christopher Y. Lew, associate curator at the Whitney, and independent curator Mia Locks, who visited 40 cities to finalize their selections. The 63 artists are a fair mix of men and women. 11 of the selections hail from outside the US, while 7 currently work outside it (with two—Chemi Rosado-Seijo and Beatriz Santiago Muñoz—from Puerto Rico). Of the 56 stateside artists, 41 are currently based in New York or California.



Christopher Y. Lew and Mia Locks share a common past at MoMA PS1. Photo: Whitney Museum of American Art via The Wall Street Journal

The last Whitney Biennial was in 2014. The museum's move downtown delayed this edition one year, pushing the selection of the artists, by chance, to coincide with the surreal 2016 US election, making a dialogue with politics unavoidable. With the president-elect to be inaugurated on January 20, 2017, the [March 2017 opening of the biennial](#) will likely be informed by politics.

On one hand, much of the art world is shaken from the Brexit decision, as well as the results of the US election. But on the other hand, among the upper financial echelons, [some feel optimistic](#) about the art market under Trump. This disparity will be center stage, with some artists' work speaking directly to it.

Activist artist collective Occupy Museums, for example, will present its ongoing project, "Debtfair." An open call seeks artists in financial debt to answer a questionnaire on age, race, education, means of financial subsistence, and how their financial situation affects their art practice, an attempt, they say, "to expose the relationship between economic inequality in the art market and artists' growing debt burdens."

Or, there's the collective Postcommodity, which built the opposite of Trump's proposed wall in 2015—a two-mile string of balloons bisecting the US-Mexico border—and will show a related video installation.

But in all, the biennial is set to reflect more about society than just presidential politics (and hopefully it will make the best possible use of the museum's prized 18,200 square foot, column-less exhibition space). It runs from March 17 – June 11, 2017.

See the full list of artists below:

Zarouhie Abdalian

Born 1982 in New Orleans, LA
Lives in New Orleans, LA

Basma Alsharif

Born 1983 in Kuwait City, Kuwait
Lives in Los Angeles, CA

Jo Baer

Born 1929 in Seattle, WA
Lives in Amsterdam, Netherlands

Eric Baudelaire

Born 1973 in Salt Lake City, UT
Lives in Paris, France

Robert Beavers

Born 1949 in Brookline, MA
Lives in Berlin, Germany and
Falmouth, MA

Larry Bell

Born 1939 in Chicago, IL
Lives in Taos, NM and Los
Angeles, CA

Matt Browning

Born 1984 in Redmond, WA
Lives in Seattle, WA

Susan Cianciolo

Born 1969 in Providence, RI
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Mary Helena Clark

Born 1983 in Santee, SC
Lives in Hamilton, NY

John Divola

Born 1949 in Santa Monica, CA
Lives in Riverside, CA

Celeste Dupuy-Spencer

Born 1979 in New York, NY
Lives in Los Angeles, CA

Rafa Esparza

Born 1981 in Los Angeles, CA
Lives in Los Angeles, CA

Kevin Jerome Everson

Born 1965 in Mansfield, OH
Lives in Charlottesville, VA

GCC

(Nanu Al-Hamad, Abdullah Al-
Mutairi, Aziz Alqatami, Barrak
Alzaid, Khalid al Gharaballi, Amal
Khalaf, Fatima Al Qadiri, Monira
Al Qadiri)
Founded 2013

Oto Gillen

Born 1984 in New York, NY
Lives in New York, NY

Samara Golden

Born 1973 in Ann Arbor, MI
Lives in Los Angeles, CA

Casey Gollan and Victoria Sobel

Born 1991 in Los Angeles, CA;
born 1990 in Washington, DC
Lives in New York, NY; lives in
New York, NY

Irena Haiduk

Biographical information not given

Lyle Ashton Harris

Born 1965 in Bronx, NY
Lives in New York, NY

Tommy Hartung

Born 1979 in Akron, OH
Lives in Queens, NY

Porpentine Charity Heartscape

Born 1987, location not given
Lives in Oakland, CA

Sky Hopinka

Born 1984 in Bellingham, WA
Lives in Milwaukee, WI

Shara Hughes

Born 1981 in Atlanta, GA
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Aaron Flint Jamison

Born 1979 in Billings, MT
Lives in Portland, OR and Seattle,
WA

KAYA

(Kerstin Brätsch and Debo Eilers)
Founded 2010

Jon Kessler

Born 1957 in Yonkers, NY
Lives in New York, NY

James N. Kienitz Wilkins

Born in 1983 in Boston, MA
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Ajay Kurian

Born 1984 in Baltimore, MD
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Deana Lawson

Born 1979 in Rochester, NY
Lives Brooklyn, NY

An-My Lê

Born 1960 in Ho Chi Minh City,
Vietnam
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Leigh Ledare

Born 1976 in Seattle, WA
Lives in New York, NY

Dani Leventhal

Born 1972 in Columbus, OH
Lives in Columbus, OH

Tala Madani

Born 1981 in Tehran, Iran
Lives in Los Angeles, CA

Park McArthur

Born 1984 in Raleigh, NC
Lives in New York, NY

Harold Mendez

Born 1977 in Chicago, IL
Lives in Chicago, IL and Los
Angeles, CA

Carrie Moyer

Born 1960 in Detroit, MI
Lives in New York, NY

Ulrike Müller

Born 1971 in Brixlegg, Austria
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Julien Nguyen

Born 1990 in Washington, DC
Lives in Los Angeles, CA

Tuan Andrew Nguyen
Born 1976 in Saigon, Vietnam
Lives in Ho Chi Minh City,
Vietnam

Raúl de Nieves
Born 1983 in Morelia, Mexico
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Aliza Nisenbaum
Born 1977 in Mexico City, Mexico
Lives in New York, NY

Occupy Museums
(Arthur Polendo, Imani Jacqueline
Brown, Kenneth Pietrobono, Noah
Fischer, and Tal Beery)
Founded 2011

Pope.L aka William Pope.L
Born 1955 in Newark, NJ
Lives in Chicago, IL

Postcommodity
(Raven Chacon, Cristóbal
Martínez, Kade L. Twist)
Founded 2007

Puppies Puppies
Born 1989 in Dallas, TX
Lives in Roswell, NM

Asad Raza
Born 1974 in Buffalo, NY
Lives in New York, NY

Jessi Reaves
Born 1986 in Portland, OR
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

John Riepenhoff
Born 1982 in Milwaukee, WI
Lives in Milwaukee, WI

Chemi Rosado-Seijo
Born 1973 in Vega Alta, PR
Lives in San Juan and Naranjito,
PR

Cameron Rowland
Born 1988 in Philadelphia, PA
Lives in Queens, NY

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz
Born 1972 in San Juan, PR
Lives in San Juan, PR

Dana Schutz
Born 1976 in Livonia, MI
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Cauleen Smith
Born 1967 in Riverside, CA
Lives in Chicago, IL

Frances Stark
Born 1967 in Newport Beach, CA
Lives in Los Angeles, CA

Maya Stovall
Born 1982 in Detroit, MI
Lives in Detroit, MI

Henry Taylor
Born 1958 in Oxnard, CA
Lives in Los Angeles, CA

Torey Thornton
Born 1990 in Macon, GA
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

**Leslie Thornton and James
Richards**
Born 1951 in Knoxville, TN; born
1983 in Cardiff, United Kingdom
Lives in Brooklyn, NY; lives in
Berlin, Germany and London,
United Kingdom

Kaari Upson
Born 1972 in San Bernardino, CA
Lives in Los Angeles, CA

Kamasi Washington
Born 1981 in Los Angeles, CA
Lives in Los Angeles, CA

Leilah Weinraub
Born 1979 in Los Angeles, CA
Lives in Los Angeles, CA and New
York, NY

Jordan Wolfson
Born 1980 in New York, NY
Lives in New York, NY

Anicka Yi
Born 1971 in Seoul, South Korea
Lives in Queens, NY