

WHITNEY

WINTER 2015 THE FUTURE WHITNEY



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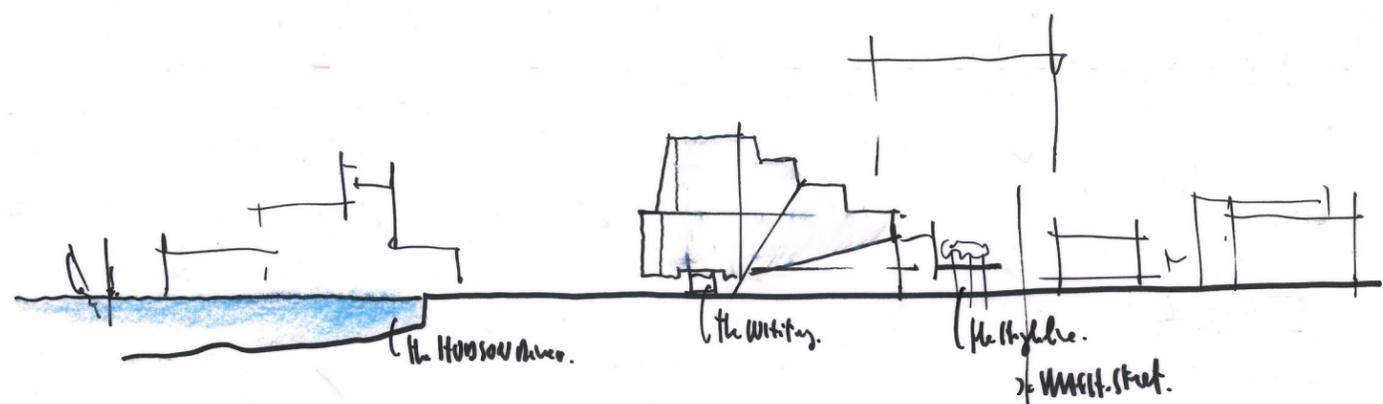
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Egg Beater No. 1, 1927. Oil on canvas, 28 3/4 x 35 3/4 in. (73 x 90.8 cm). Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.169



Courtesy Renzo Piano Building Workshop

A NEW WHITNEY, WITH A COLLECTION AT ITS CORE

Nothing proclaims “change” like a spectacular new Renzo Piano–designed museum. Yet as marvelous as our downtown building promises to be, it is only part of an even greater transformation occurring at the heart of the institution. Throughout its history, the Whitney has been renowned for its special exhibitions program and provocative Biennial. All the while, we have been steadily building a premier collection of American art, much of which has remained largely unseen. Now, after nearly a decade of strategic thinking and planning, we are able at long last to bring these strands together—a comprehensive museum experience with an extraordinary collection at its core.

“The Whitney considers its collection as a critical touchstone for all of our thinking and programming,” says Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Programs Donna De Salvo. “This strategic shift is not only about a new building but about our new capacity to explore and communicate narratives of art in the United States that were previously impossible to tell in the limited space of the Breuer building—through our collection, exhibitions, scholarship, education, public outreach, and all of our assets. With half of the exhibition spaces devoted to the permanent collection, the new building is a game changer for the Whitney. We now have the opportunity to fully integrate and build upon the legacy of all who have come before us—curators, directors, donors, and artists.”

For the past two years, staff members have been readying the permanent collection, and the Whitney, for this strategic shift from *kunsthalle* to full-fledged museum. Led by Donna De Salvo, a “Core Team” consisting of curators Carter Foster, Dana Miller, and Scott Rothkopf has been conducting an unprecedented analysis and study of the collection and archives, in consultation and debate with the full curatorial department. Similar to a think tank, the curators have hosted discussions with art scholars and experts in the field, including former MOCA chief curator Paul Schimmel, Guggenheim Museum Director Richard Armstrong, and Stanford University art historian Wanda Corn. These intensive conversations take place in a room, where thumbnail images of collection works are arranged and rearranged on panels to test out ideas. This effort is greatly facilitated by the ongoing Collection Documentation Initiative (CDI), which has provided digital images, updated cataloguing, and a thorough assessment of works in need of conservation and reframing.

To discover how to present American art in ways that are uniquely Whitney, the Core Team has traveled to institutions like the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin, Centre Pompidou

in Paris, the National Gallery of Art, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum to study their permanent collection displays. “A number of museums have a canonical ‘Minimalist room,’ with only slight variations in the artists selected,” says Curator of the Permanent Collection Dana Miller. “Our excellent holdings in this area will allow us to dig deeper and present a much more nuanced and textured presentation of the Minimalist moment, both in terms of the artists included and the objects displayed.”

The Museum’s previous second-floor exhibition series, launched with *Breaking Ground: The Whitney’s Founding Collection* and wrapped up with *I, YOU, WE* in fall 2013, was drawn exclusively from the collection and proved an invaluable laboratory for curators to explore new ways of looking at and working with the Whitney’s holdings. “What would a distinctly Whitney narrative of art history look like? How would it feel different from what you might find at other institutions or in a certain textbook?” asks Nancy and Steve Crown Family Curator and Associate Director of Programs Scott Rothkopf. “It’s been wonderful to bring out works that haven’t been seen in decades, to discover quirky things and see how we can incorporate those ideas alongside our masterworks.” Each of the second-floor shows was followed by a rigorous curatorial assessment to ensure that discoveries are brought forward into the new building. Such insights will shape the installation of the permanent collection and influence its dialogue with the temporary exhibitions program.

“We will display works of art across all media and disciplines, without designated galleries for photography or drawings, for example. This approach more fully reflects the way artists themselves work, from László Moholy-Nagy to Cory Arcangel,” says De Salvo, “and we believe it will unite our public in a more intimate way to how works of art are made and how artists think.” Curators are studying the collection’s concentrations and recurring subjects—the “building blocks” for constructing narratives about art of the United States. From the prewar works, for example, have emerged such themes as immigration and the machine aesthetic. Political themes are pervasive in the ’30s, especially through the populist medium of printmaking. The Museum is also updating the Whitney handbook with 350 selected artists (up from the 282 featured in the 2002 handbook, *American Visionaries: Selections from the Whitney Museum of American Art*).

The transformation represented by this research and new thinking is occurring at all levels of planning for the new building. Our strategic shift is also bringing a deeper understanding of the complexity and nuance of the question of what makes an artist “American,” a subject of continual debate. Collaborative archival research is under way by the curatorial and education departments to assess the Whitney’s evolving attitudes and acquisition policies throughout its history. The new building looks toward the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, east into the city, and west across the Hudson River toward the expanse



Glenn Ligon (b. 1960), *Rückenfigur*, 2009. Neon and paint, 24 x 145½ x 5 in. (61 x 369.6 x 12.7 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase with funds from the Painting and Sculpture Committee. © Glenn Ligon

of the country, a sweep of views and perspectives echoed in the works and artists in the collection. The inaugural exhibition will reflect the historical and contemporary demographics of the country. The Whitney has made the important policy change to note artists' birth- and death places on artwork labels in the new building, a first for the Museum and a significant research project in itself.

The Whitney is committed to telling the story of American art in its most complex forms. As Steven and Ann Ames Curator of Drawing Carter Foster notes, "The Whitney can be a kind of beacon of American culture, of multiracial and transnational values, in our country's most heavily international environment." The Museum is guided by this aspiration as we grow the collection. Our acquisition committees are acquiring transformative works by African-American artists, Latino and Chicano artists, and artists of Asian descent. Outside consultants have been engaged to analyze the collection, reveal its gaps, and suggest directions for possible acquisitions that will enable the Whitney to truly become the defining museum of American art—a mission that will always be a work in progress.

As De Salvo notes, "We are deeply indebted to our predecessors, who were prophetic in the works they acquired for the Whitney, especially given the Museum's limited display space. Present and future generations of curators will have an opportunity to continually reexamine the Museum's holdings in different contexts and changing times, as well as respond to the thirst around the world for aspects of art in the United States that are unknown or little seen elsewhere—like the recent Edward Hopper exhibition at the Grand Palais, which was the second-most popular show there, after Monet! This is the next level for the Whitney. We're becoming a richer and more complex museum, both to the public and, equally, to us. It is truly a transformation."

Special Exhibition Gallery Named for Trustee Neil Bluhm

Trustee and Board President Neil G. Bluhm has committed extraordinary resources and leadership to the Whitney of the Future Campaign. In response to a recent leadership 1:2 challenge by an anonymous donor, Bluhm was the first to increase his campaign gift, which in turn stimulated over \$25 million in additional Trustee upgrades to the campaign.

In recognition of Bluhm's unwavering support and commitment to contemporary art, the Museum's

fifth-floor temporary exhibition gallery will be named in honor of Bluhm and his daughters, Meredith and Leslie, and son, Andrew. Spanning 18,000 square feet, this spectacular space will be the largest column-free museum gallery in New York City. As a leading national real estate developer, having the Bluhm family name associated with the most substantial piece of "real estate" within the Renzo Piano-designed building could not be more appropriate. But it was the opportunity to ensure the Whitney would have a space without limitations that could fulfill its mission to directly encourage and support

artists of our time that motivated Bluhm's generosity.

Designed for the Whitney's renowned program of special exhibitions, the Neil Bluhm Family Galleries will provide the Museum with unprecedented opportunities to show work across all media. The space will feature maximum flexibility for a single expansive exhibition, or divide into multiple galleries for simultaneous exhibitions.

A Chicago native, Bluhm has been a Whitney Trustee since 2003 and was elected President of the Board in 2008. Formerly a CPA and

practicing attorney, Bluhm is more widely recognized as a self-made real estate and entertainment mogul and respected business leader. He is one of the founders and current President of JMB Realty Corporation.

Bluhm is a passionate collector of art and a leading supporter of contemporary art exhibitions at the Whitney and other institutions. He also sits on the boards of the Art Institute of Chicago and Northwestern University and its Memorial Hospital.

A CHAMPION FOR WHITNEY ARCHIVES IN "FLORA FUND"

Throughout nearly a century of collecting art, the Whitney has amassed a trove of unique materials—letters, photographs, artists' books, and countless pieces of ephemera—that comprise the Museum's archives. These irreplaceable resources may receive little public attention, but they form the bedrock of knowledge on the art and artists in the Whitney collection and are the touchstone for scholarship on American art.

As the permanent collection becomes more accessible to the public, the demand for access to our archives is also on the rise, both internally and by outside scholars. In response, the Whitney has launched the Flora Miller Biddle Fund to dedicate significant new support—including digitization, conservation, storage, and improved accessibility—to the Museum's archives. Named for our beloved honorary Trustee and granddaughter of the Whitney's founder, the "Flora Fund" reflects a lifetime of passionate support for art and artists—Biddle ran the Museum as president from 1977 to 1985. With a goal of \$2 million, the Flora Fund will pay fitting tribute to this extraordinary leader by investing in an essential but under-recognized component of the Whitney legacy.

The archives bring the Whitney's permanent collection vividly to life by capturing the inner workings of artists' careers and personal lives. Beyond institutional records, they contain artists' correspondence and journals, exhibition notices and checklists, notecards and sketches, film and video, and much more collected by the Museum in the process of acquiring artworks

and building relationships with artists. Maintained by Farris Wahbeh, Director of Research Resources and library staff, this material provides invaluable insights into artists' thinking as well as the Whitney's intellectual life. Through the study and presentation of primary sources, the Museum enriches every aspect of its work—from exhibitions to education, public programs to publishing.

Also contributing richly to our primary source materials is the Artist Documentation Program (ADP), one of the most dynamic conservation and research projects in the country, conducted in partnership with the Menil Collection and the Harvard Art Museums. Founded by the Whitney's Associate Director for Conservation and Research, Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, the ADP conducts interviews between conservators and artists to better understand their materials, process, and intent for their works' longevity. These exchanges are pivotal to preservation and conservation efforts and are ultimately incorporated into the Whitney archives. In an earlier era, a primary document might have taken the form of a handwritten letter from Edward Hopper to Juliana Force, the Whitney's first director; today, the ADP uses digital audio and video to record an interview with Sarah Sze or a gallery installation with Gary Simmons, among hundreds of other documented interactions that illuminate artists' aspirations and methodologies for an ever wider audience.

The Whitney archives preserve the continuum of change that is the history of the Museum, from its origins in 1914 through the present. These resources shed light on the nation's changing tastes and deepen our understanding of American culture. Flora Miller Biddle reminisces, "To meet the people who were creating the extraordinary works that the Whitney is dedicated to acquiring and preserving, that was an amazingly wonderful thing, and I'll be grateful forever for that." Likewise, generations now and to come will be grateful to the Flora Fund for ensuring the preservation of and access to the Whitney archives.

Whitney Grand Stair to Be Named for Allison and Warren Kanders, Trustee

The Grand Stair in the Whitney's new building will engage visitors in a vertical exploration of the Museum. Honoring the generous support of Trustee and Vice-Chairman Warren B. Kanders and wife Allison, the Alison and Warren Kanders Stairway will greet visitors as they enter the lobby and guide them to the education center, theater, and galleries above. The Allison and Warren Kanders Stairway is an airy network of Italian limestone treads and shifting planes that rises through

a soaring open column. This journey through the center of the building offers visitors a rich sensory experience that flows seamlessly and transparently from the lobby mezzanine to the fifth-floor Neil Bluhm Family Galleries. Just as Breuer's intimate, monastery-inspired staircase is so integral to our former home, Piano's seemingly floating staircase will create a unique experience of space and light in the downtown Whitney.

Warren and Allison Kanders have been loyal Whitney members since 1986, and Warren has served with diligence and care as Trustee for

nearly a decade. A Brown University graduate, Warren is President of Kanders & Company, Inc., and Executive Chairman of Black Diamond Capital Management. In addition to the Whitney, Warren serves on the board of directors of Choate Rosemary Hall school and the Winston Churchill Foundation. Allison, a Cornell University graduate, is Vice Chair of the Painting & Sculpture Acquisition Committee and has co-chaired several Whitney galas. The Kanders are also devoted collectors with wide-ranging interests that include the work of Ed Ruscha, Lawrence Weiner, Rachel Harrison, and Hiroshi Sugimoto, among other artists.



Alison and Warren Kanders Stairway. Photograph Timothy Schenck

CELEBRATING THE WHITNEY A YEAR IN GALAS, OPENINGS, & SPECIAL OCCASIONS



Trustee Beth Rudin DeWoody, Robert Gersh, and Linda Gersh at the 2013 Whitney Gala



Members enjoy *Balloon Dog (Yellow)*, 1994–2000 in *Jeff Koons: A Retrospective* on opening day



Matthew and Susan Blank at the Acquisition Committee Dinner



Adam D. Weinberg, Trustee Sondra Gonzalez-Falla, and Celso Gonzalez-Falla



Artist Jeff Koons and Curator Scott Rothkopf



Trustee Joanne Leonhardt Cassullo and artist Lawrence Weiner



Trustees Susan Hess, Lise Evans, and Robert J. Hurst at the Acquisition Committee Dinner



Trustee Flora Miller Biddle with Agnes Gund



Paul Arnhold, Diana Picasso, Adam D. Weinberg, and Wes Gordon



Curator Donna De Salvo and Trustee Nancy Poses



Jill Bikoff and Trustee J. Darius Bikoff



Artist Josephine Meckseper leads the Director's Council on a tour of the Parrish Art Museum



Trustee Emily Fisher Landau and 2013 Whitney Gala honoree, artist Ed Ruscha



Trustee Miyoung Lee with Curator David Keihl and Trustee Fern K. Tessier



Trustee Leonard A. Lauder at the 2013 Whitney Gala



Nancy and Steve Crown Family Curator and Associate Director of Programs Scott Rothkopf with Trustee Anne Cecile Speyer and Robert Speyer at the Acquisition Committee Dinner



Guest at the Acquisition Committee Dinner



Daniel DeVos, Trustee Pamela DeVos, and T. J. Wilcox



Curator Anthony Elms, Trustee Melva Bucksbaum, 2014 Bucksbaum award recipient Zoe Leonard and Adam D. Weinberg at the 2014 Bucksbaum Award



Curator Donna De Salvo with Benjamin Rosen and Trustee Donna Perrett Rosen



Trustee Scott Resnick and wife Kimberly attend the 2014 American Art Award



Steven Crown and Trustees Nancy Carrington Crown and Warren B. Kanders

Calendar of events

Inaugural Exhibition
May 1, 2015

When the Whitney Museum's new Renzo Piano-designed home on Gansevoort Street opens its doors on May 1, 2014, the inaugural installation will be the largest and most comprehensive display to date of the Whitney's unparalleled permanent collection of twentieth- and twenty-first-century American art.

Archibald Motley: Jazz Age Modernist
Fall 2015/Winter 2016

Frank Stella
Fall 2015/Winter 2016

The Westreich/Wagner Collection
Fall 2015/Winter 2016

MEMBERSHIP JOINING THE WHITNEY OF THE FUTURE

Next spring, the opening of the Whitney will be the hottest ticket in town. Our new building will be front-page news in the international art press, and locals will clamor to get a look inside. If you join the Whitney today as a Founding Member, you are guaranteed a front-row seat for all the festivities. Yet, beyond the opening-week excitement, joining the Museum aligns our members with a deeper cause—supporting the transformation and future of the Whitney, the “Artists’ Museum” and the premier institution of American art.

Whitney supporters are a unique and passionate community. Our members help to write the art history of tomorrow by engaging the art and artists of today. As Alice Pratt Brown Director Adam D. Weinberg affirms, “The artist’s work is the work of everyone at the Museum.” That vision is founder Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney’s legacy to the world, and an example followed by everyone in the Whitney community.

Now is the moment to help the Whitney grow! To engage as broad a community as possible in achieving this historic effort, the Museum has created flexible memberships for a wide range of interests and every budget. Founding Membership, our newest category, is a \$250, two-year commitment with a percentage of support going directly to the new building campaign. In recognition, Founding Members receive benefits like Meet & Greets organized for building site perimeter tours and special access during Opening Weekend. Founding Members who sign up for auto-renewal also receive a 10% discount on their membership, which many have donated back to the campaign.

As excitement builds for our move downtown, membership is on the rise—the current figure of 15,500 is expected to double this year. “Membership provides our baseline audience, and the new building program has been a tremendous incentive to join and give memberships as gifts,” says Joel Snyder, Manager of Member Benefits and Relations. “More than 3,000 members have joined or upgraded to a Founding Membership over the past year.”

In addition to membership, the Whitney benefits immeasurably from our long-standing patrons who support the Museum at significant levels—in return, these supporters receive insider access to all we do by participating in patron groups. The Artists Council, for example, pools its resources to help sponsor exhibitions. The group recently enjoyed a dinner with 2008 Whitney Biennial artist Ellen Harvey at her Brooklyn

loft and a day trip with artists to the Brant Foundation Art Study center, in Greenwich, Connecticut. “These patrons are learning about the art world, spending time with Whitney curators, and sitting around the table with artists,” says Michele Snyder, Senior Major Gifts Officer. “The artists enjoy it too. They get a sense of who’s paying attention and what people are collecting and why.”

Every Council has the involvement of Trustee and Curatorial liaisons. One of the most distinctive groups is the American Fellows. With curatorial liaison Barbara Haskell, these Whitney patrons are focused on art of the modern era, a period richly represented in our permanent collection. To reward their passion for the Whitney program, Barbara plans connoisseur workshops and talks by outside experts. To honor Barbara, the group established an endowment fund during the campaign to support research, scholarship, and exhibitions, and has raised close to \$7 million.

Long-term friendships have formed around a shared passion for contemporary art and collecting among members of the Director’s and Chairman’s Councils. In close contact with the Director and the Board of Trustees, these two groups provide invaluable leadership to the Museum and contribute millions of dollars to the campaign. And to involve younger patrons, the Whitney created a Future Leadership Council that is well on its way to raising a campaign goal of \$2 million.

“Our members feel a sense of ownership because they share the Whitney’s vision of supporting artists. It’s what we all stand for,” emphasizes Michele Snyder. “And we value our donors in ways that make them feel very special.” Demonstrating just how much the Museum values its core audience, Whitney members will get the first look inside the new museum in late April 2015.



View from the corners of Gansevoort and Washington Streets. Photograph Timothy Schenck

THE WHITNEY TAKES RISKS AND WINS

By Fred Wilson, Artist and Trustee*

Okay, I love the Whitney. It’s the most vibrant museum in New York. I was born in New York, so I have the right to be blunt. I watched the Whitney in awe, and sometimes in consternation, as it grew and changed as I grew and changed. At one time it was a parent and teacher, then a mentor, but now it’s a close friend and ally.

For me, and many other artists, the Whitney is a museum we can innately understand because it is like-minded. It is a risk taker. Not in a haphazard way but in a thoughtful, scholarly, and forthright way. For artists, this is the core appeal of the Museum. It has the pulse of the new while never losing sight of art’s stellar past and the Whitney’s responsibility to that history. It never avoids the bumpy road of art. It pushes forward, one eye to the road and one eye to the future. Artists appreciate its candor and consciousness.

Now that I am a Trustee, I see the process up close and personal. I can safely say the Whitney does not sit on its laurels. The Whitney Board meeting where we voted to move forward with the new building was inspiring, uplifting, even thrilling. The passion was palpable, and all present felt the historic nature of the decision. I wish all artists could have been there. It is the kind of meeting that artists would hope for, given that we artists have so much at stake in the premier museum of American art. Our collective image and ideas are in the Whitney’s hands, projected not only across the United States but also to the world.

I believe this new building acknowledges a changing world and a changing New York. The warm embrace of the downtown neighborhood is no surprise; I have lived downtown for my entire adult life. It is a community and part of the city that truly understands and appreciates what it is getting. It is a hand-in-glove love. Artists need the Whitney to expand its space for contemporary art, but they also want to be in the context of great and lasting art of earlier generations. With the decision to build, one can almost feel a collective sigh of relief from all those artists whose works are deep in storage. Having one’s art seen keeps it alive, and keeps the artist in dialogue with the present. Whether that’s reverence or rebuke, you’re still in the game.

Now that I can no longer be considered a “young” artist, I see so many artists reinventing the wheel, not knowing that the seedlings of their ideas had bloomed before. They are only vaguely aware that the struggle of creating art today mirrors the past struggles of legions of marginalized artists trying to



Trustee and artist Fred Wilson

get their work seen, understood, and remembered. This is not the fault of the young artist—you can’t know what you haven’t seen. The Whitney, like no other museum, gives us such an intimate understanding of American art of the present in the context of art of the past. No other museum consistently provides the depth of meaning in this catalytic continuum of art. This is the sustenance that inspires artists to forge ahead, break new ground, and yet stay cognizant of the shoulders on which we stand. The new museum, like the grand scale of the Piano building itself, will make everything the Whitney does exponentially better. After many hurdles and years of hope, the Whitney is bringing the promise and possibility of the Museum to a rapid reality.

*excerpted from remarks delivered February 12, 2013, at Artist Council dinner and discussion

THE CAMPAIGN AT A GLANCE

Project Has Raised \$701 Million (92% of Total)

— \$592 million through fundraising

— \$95 million through the sale of real estate assets on Madison Avenue

New Building Project Costs (\$422 million)

— With over 220,000 square feet, the Museum will increase its gallery space by 60% and triple its total space; scheduled completion: 2015.

Endowment (\$225 million)

— The budget will grow approximately 75% by the time the new building opens.

— Increasing the endowment is critical to securing the financial foundation of the Whitney's future home.

Capacity Building (\$113 million)

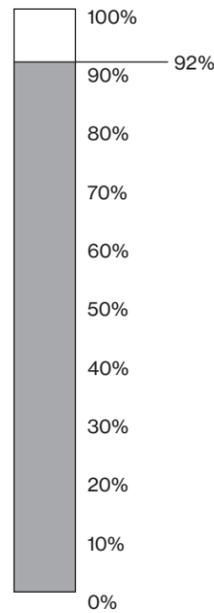
— Work to ensure dynamic artistic and educational programming is essential while building the Museum downtown.

— For the first time in Whitney history, the collection will occupy two or more floors at all times: readying the collection will be a massive effort—entailing research, rehousing, conservation, and digitization—now well under way.

— From now to opening, the Museum's operations must be gradually scaled up.

Campaign Progress
(as of November 1, 2014)

Goal \$720 Million



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The Whitney is tremendously grateful to its donors. Your support will not only ensure the successful completion of the Campaign and building project but also help maintain the vitality, renown, and success of the Whitney as the defining museum of twentieth- and twenty-first-century American art for generations to come.

For more information about the campaign and donor opportunities, please contact:

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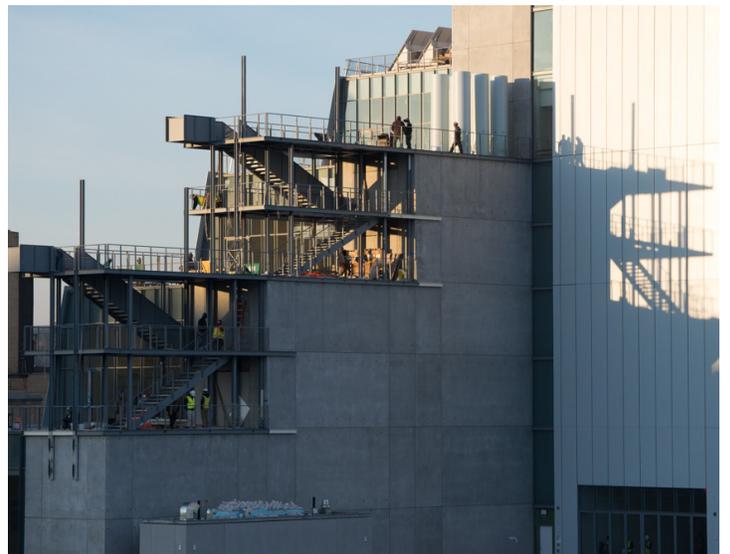
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WHITNEY ON-SITE

The site downtown has undergone an incredible transformation over the course of the last year. Staff have now moved into the building, and construction on the gallery floors is in its final stages. Currently, we are laying down the wood in the fifth-floor Neil Bluhm Family Galleries and staining the floors in our Theater Lobby. Three staircases now flow through the building, and the outdoor staircase connecting the sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-floor outdoor galleries is in the process of being installed. This outdoor stairway is a major design element, giving distinction to the building's silhouette. Each floor changes daily as we head into the final months of construction in preparation for the opening exhibition installation, scheduled for early January. We have made great progress, and we look forward to opening the building to the public this spring!



View over the High Line, December 2014

Cover

View of the new building from 12th Avenue.

Above

Glass panels for the eighth-floor Skylight Gallery have been installed, in addition to the panels separating the indoor and outdoor galleries. This floor is to be named for Robert and Soledad Hurst.

The lobby, third, and fourth floors have been turned over to the Whitney Museum, while the other floors (cellar mezzanine and floors five through eight) are still under Turner Construction Company care until completion this winter. Here you can see into the main public entrance of the building. The glass panes covered by

the white protective layer will hold our Founders Wall, naming all donors to the Campaign of \$100,000 and above.

Major headway has been made with the installation of the outdoor stairway connecting the outdoor galleries on the 6th, 7th, and 8th floors. This stairway will provide a route to see outdoor exhibitions on floors six, seven, and eight. It will also feature belvederes—lookout points with unparalleled views of the neighborhood and iconic city landmarks, like the Empire State Building, Statue of Liberty, and One World Trade Center.

This newsletter is published by the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Whitney Museum of American Art

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