

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Chrissie Iles and Philippe Vergne

In the current plethora of biennial and triennial exhibitions, art fairs, and large group shows across the United States and the rest of the world, how can the Whitney Biennial remain relevant? This was one of our first questions as curators of the 2006 Biennial exhibition. The exhibition remains a closely watched barometer of the changing tides of contemporary American art. Yet the current intense pace of the commercial and not-for-profit



At a moment when world opinion of the United States is at its lowest ebb and art students are gaining national press and gallery attention before they have even graduated, there seemed a particular urgency to make a bold curatorial statement about the current zeitgeist. To underline the importance of the exhibition as a model by which this exploration might take place, we gave the Biennial a title for the first time: Day for Night, after François Truffaut's classic 1973 film. The film's original French title, *La nuit Américaine*, refers to the cinematic technique by which nighttime is shot artificially during the day, using special filters. The curatorial lens of this Biennial aims to capture the artifice of American culture, in all its complexity. The "day for night" that it reveals suggests an impulse that could be termed premodern, or pre-Enlightenment, confirming the sociologist of science Bruno Latour's argument that we have yet to become modern. We are, in other words, in a "post-America," in which America has become more of a nation than an ideal.

It became immediately apparent that the definition of what

Sponsorship

Lead Sponsor



Major support is provided by



Significant funding for the 2006 Biennial has been provided by an endowment created by Melva Bucksbaum, Emily

art world has brought so much art into view at such speed that by the time it reaches the walls of the Whitney in a Biennial exhibition, there is very little that has not already been seen, digested, and critiqued.

constitutes “American” is in dramatic flux. Artists, and curators, are moving round the world with an ever-greater fluidity, often living or working between countries, traveling back and forth from New York, Los Angeles, Puerto Rico, and Chicago to Istanbul, Thailand, Zurich, Berlin, Milan, and London. This fluidity has created a complicated network of communication and artistic exchange that refuses to be contained by geographical borders and that creates arcs which traverse vast distances.

This situation evokes a moment at the beginning of the last century when artists moved back and forth between the axes of, among other places, Paris, Berlin, Moscow, New York, and Zurich. Perhaps Duchamp epitomizes the reciprocity between the United States and Europe most clearly, traveling constantly between New York and Paris; by the 1960s, he commented that geographical boundaries had become irrelevant as containers for cultural forms.

[Back to Top](#)

Duchamp’s geographical fluidity was matched by an osmosis between one identity or alter ego and another, creating an obfuscation that finds a strong echo in the spirit of this exhibition. In addition to the familiar Rose Sélavy, Duchamp adopted a number of other occasional alter egos, including R. Mutt, Belle Helaine, Marchand Du Sel, Archy Pen Co, Marsélavy, the wanted criminal Hooke Lyon and Cinquer, Sarah Bernhardt, a monkish ascetic, and a shaving cream-smothered satyr, all of which served to undermine the notion of fixed identity. Several artists in this exhibition have adopted similarly abstruse identities, one choosing to remain completely anonymous. Some artists appear in more than one communal grouping. Others work individually, and, in one case, the artist has chosen to make at least one work anonymous and invisible, encountered only through careful observation.

The swing of the barometer in the exhibition toward obfuscation, darkness, secrecy, and the irrational is, as always, determined by the artists. It could also be said to reflect the mood in the larger world. Running concurrently with this exhibition, for example, the Baltic Triennial of International Art in Lithuania, entitled BMW: Black Market World, takes as its theme secrecy, shadows, and the invisible; and a large historical exhibition organized by the Grand Palais in Paris and touring to Berlin at the moment the Whitney Biennial opens addresses the theme of melancholia. Day for Night, therefore, not only holds a mirror up to the current cultural moment in America but also reflects America’s international relevance as part of a larger cultural moment.

We thank Adam D. Weinberg, Alice Pratt Brown Director, for inviting us to curate the 2006 Whitney Biennial and for his steadfast support throughout the project. His trust in us at every stage gave us the freedom to make decisions that we hope have produced a Biennial that is both unique and consistent in its dedication to the new and the unexplored. Nearly half the exhibition comprises new work, indicating our commitment to the artists and to venturing into the

Fisher Landau, and Leonard A. Lauder.

Support for the 2006 Biennial Opening Events has been provided by Sotheby's.

Marketing support, Website design by



unknown.

We are indebted to our extraordinary biennial coordinator, Lindsay H. Macdonald, whose unwavering support, administrative skills, and creative energy brought the exhibition together in record time. Coordinating a hundred and one artists, two curators on the road, and a checklist of several hundred works is a daunting task, which she accomplished flawlessly. In her role as biennial coordinator, she provided creative input from start to finish, as a sounding board, support, problem solver, and friend.

We are grateful for the hard work and dedication of Jarrett Gregory, biennial assistant, who worked tirelessly on all aspects of the exhibition, especially the catalogue; and Gary Carrion-Murayari, curatorial assistant, who worked so hard on the exhibition, its installation planning, and the Wrong Gallery's exhibition within the exhibition. Henriette Huldish, assistant curator, has been an invaluable part of the Biennial team, in particular coordinating the film and video program. We also thank Elizabeth Gwinn, Biennial intern, for her commitment and hard work, as well as interns Nicholas Anderson, Simone Grant, Sarah Norell, Ellen Oh, and Berit Potter, who made important contributions to the project.

Our core Biennial team is part of a larger Whitney team whose collective expertise and dedication have made this complex exhibition possible. We are grateful to Christy Putnam, associate director for exhibitions and collections management, for her wise voice and guiding hand throughout the exhibition. Meg Calvert-Cason, exhibitions manager, provided us with invaluable advice. Carolyn Padwa, manager of touring exhibitions, generously stepped in to manage the Sturtevant installation. We thank Arianne Gelardin, research assistant, for her astute research. We are indebted to Nicholas S. Holmes, legal officer and exhibitions and collections coordinator, for his expertise and wise judgment. Larissa Gentile, administrative project coordinator, provided important advice regarding the challenges posed by artists' projects in relation to the building and its immediate environment.

The key to the success of every exhibition is its presentation, and we are fortunate to work with an exceptional team. We thank Mark Steigelman, manager of design and construction, for his patience, skill, and creative solutions to the challenging issues of space in this large group exhibition. We are grateful to Beverly Parsons, senior registrar, exhibitions, and assistant registrars Melissa Cohen and Emilie Sullivan for coordinating the complex arrangements to bring all the artwork safely into the building. We thank our superb team of art handlers, Filippo Gentile, Susan Griswold, Jan Hoogenboom, Chris Ketchie, Tom Kotik, Kelley Loftus, Graham Miles, David Miller, Matt Moom, Pablo Narvaez, Elisa Proctor, Warfield Samuels, and G. R. Smith who, under the guidance of Joshua Rosenblatt, head preparator, worked tirelessly with us to ensure that the artworks in the exhibition are

presented at their very best. We are fortunate to have a highly experienced audiovisual team, and we thank Jeffrey Bergstrom, audiovisual coordinator, and Richard Bloes, Jay Abu-Hamda, and Ronald Bronstein, projectionists, for their expertise in presenting the film program and installing the substantial film and video installation component of the exhibition.

We are particularly grateful to Elisabeth Sussman, curator, for generously allowing us to present the Wrong Gallery's exhibition *Down by Law* in the Sondra Gilman Gallery. We thank Cecilia Alemani and Jenny Moore, as well as Tina Kukielski, senior curatorial assistant, for their hard work and commitment to the project. The *Down by Law* exhibition includes the following artists (accurate at the time of printing): Dennis Adams, Matthew Antezzo, Edgar Arceneaux, Richard Barnes, Monica Bonvicini, Fernando Bryce, Chris Burden, Paul Cadmus, Paul Chan, Larry Clark, Chivas Clem, Verne Dawson, Jules de Balincourt, Jeremy Deller, Sam Durant, Marcel Dzama, Gardar Eide Einarsson and Oscar Tuazon, Kota Ezawa, Mathias Faldbakken, Leon Golub, Boris Gorelick, Gregory Greene, Karl Haendel, Barkley Hendricks, Jonathan Horowitz, Matthew Day Jackson and Dan Peyton, Sergej Jensen, Mike Kelley, Christopher Knowles, Glenn Ligon, Mark Lombardi, Nate Lowman, Louis Lozowick, Robert Mapplethorpe, Naem Mohaiemen, Vik Muniz, Henrik Olesen, Raymond Pettibon, Tim Rollins, Ed Ruscha, Dread Scott, David Shrigley, Taryn Simon, Fred Tomaselli, Kerry Tribe, Kara Walker, Andy Warhol, Weegee, David Wojnarowicz, and those who wish to remain anonymous.

We thank Donna De Salvo, associate director for programs and curator, permanent collection, for her invaluable advice and support throughout the exhibition, and Bridget Elias, chief financial officer, for her steady guidance. We also appreciate the contributions of Jan Rothschild, associate director for marketing and communications, Stephen Soba, communications officer, and Meghan Bullock, communications coordinator, who superbly promoted the exhibition to the local, national, and international press and public. We are grateful to Raina Lampkins-Fielder, associate director and Helena Rubenstein Chair of Education, Frank Smigiel, manager of adult programs, and Kathryn Potts, head of museum interpretation, for their enthusiasm and creativity in public programming and visitor education. We are also grateful to Susan Courtemanche, development consultant, Amy Roth, director of corporate partnerships, and Maggie Ress, coordinator of corporate sponsorships, for their hard work securing support for the exhibition through major sponsorship.

We would like to extend a special note of gratitude to Kathy Halbreich, director of the Walker Art Center, for her understanding and collegiality. Her support enabled us to spend extended time together researching the exhibition. Also at the Walker, we are grateful to Lynn Dierks, visual arts administrator, and Eileen Romain, assistant to the chief

curator/deputy director, for their support during a particularly demanding schedule.

The unusual format of this Biennial's catalogue, a "book within a book," was the inspiration of Conny Purtill, of Purtill Family Business, whose vision has produced a uniquely designed publication in which the artists' voices, in the section entitled Draw Me a Sheep, play a major role. The book has been designed and bound so that it can be pulled apart to create ninety-nine posters designed by the Biennial artists. We are grateful to all the artists for their superb contributions and for responding to our challenge so enthusiastically and under short deadlines.

Our heartfelt thanks go to the writers who have made such strong contributions to the book. The insightful texts by Toni Burlap, Johanna Burton, Bradley Eros, Lia Gangitano, Bruce Hainley, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Molly Nesbit, Siva Vaidhyanathan, and Neville Wakefield form a critical backdrop for the exhibition, of which the book is a significant part. We also thank writers Max Andrews, Johanna Burton, Gary Carrion-Murayari, Suzanne Hudson, Henriette Huldish, Nathan Lee, Emily Speers Mears, Jenny Moore, and Lisa Pasquariello for producing the many informative artist entries and extended wall labels.

We are thankful to Rachel de W. Wixom, head of publications and new media, for shepherding the book into being. Such a complex publication is challenging to produce in the short time span of the Biennial, and we are deeply grateful to Mary DelMonico for her skilled supervision as project director. Her energy, professionalism, and unerring eye have been crucial to the book's success at every stage. We are also grateful to Michelle Piranio, editor, for her superb editing skills. And we thank Basem D. Aly, Joe Avery, Shapco Printing, Inc., Kathleen Drummy, Anita Duquette, Richard G. Gallin, Joann Harrah, Karen Hernandez, Thea Hetzner, Anna Knoell, Vickie Leung, Jennifer MacNair, Sheila Schwartz, Lynn Scrabis, and Makiko Ushiba for their hard work and commitment to the publication and exhibition under tight deadlines.

We are proud to celebrate another Biennial partnership with the Public Art Fund. This is our third joint project with the Public Art Fund and Tom Eccles, who first brought the Pierre Huyghe video installation to the table and left the Public Art Fund in the summer of 2005 to become director of the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College. We thank him and our current partners at the Public Art Fund, especially Susan K. Freedman, president, Richard Griggs, deputy director, Anne Wehr, communications director, and Yayoi Sakurai, installation coordinator, for their extraordinary commitment and hard work in bringing a complex project to fruition, as both a large-scale performance in the Central Park Wollman Rink and in its final installation form at the Whitney.

We extend our deep gratitude to all the lenders to the

exhibition, for their generous support in making works available to us: Artangel; Valerie Cassel; Castello di Rivoli, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea; China Art Objects; Alberto and Maria de la Cruz; Chris Erck; Pete Franciosa; Estate of Steven Parrino; Estate of Ed Paschke; Danielle and David Ganek; Hort Family Collection; Jedermann Collection, N.A.; Rita Krauss; Judy Ledgerwood and Tony Tasset; Adam Lindemann; Michael and Ninah Lynne; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection; Linda Pace; César and Mima Reyes; Ringier Collection; Saatchi Gallery; Sadie Coles, HQ; Pamela and Arthur Sanders; Nancy and Stanley Singer; Dirk Skreber; Lorelei Stewart and Andreas Fischer; David Teiger; Madalyn and Stephen Tobias; Dean Valentine and Amy Adelson; Walker Art Center; Paul F. Walter; Michael Young; and those lenders who wish to remain anonymous. Without the support and generosity of the following lenders, the Wrong Gallery's exhibition, Down by Law, could not have been realized: Galerie Daniel Buchholz; Chris Burden studio; Feigen Contemporary; Zach Feuer Gallery; Galleria Emi Fontana; Eivind Furnesvik, Standard Gallery; Gavin Brown's enterprise; Greene Naftali Gallery; Haines Gallery; Anna Helwing Gallery; Hosfelt Gallery; Erling Kagge Collection; Fawad Kahn; Galerie Kamm; Anton Kern Gallery; Galerie Klosterfelde; maccarone inc.; Andrew McKuin; Murray Guy; Todd Norsten; Morris and Patricia Orden; P.P.O.W.; Rubell Family Collection; Sikkema Jenkins & Co.; Steve Shane; Team Gallery; Galerie Barbara Thumm; Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects; Estate of David Wojnarowicz; and David Zwirner Gallery. An exhibition of the size and complexity of the Biennial requires the support and generosity of many galleries. We particularly acknowledge and thank the following: 303 Gallery; Baldwin Gallery; Jean Bernier Gallery; Blum & Poe; Galerie Daniel Buchholz; Canada Gallery; Casey Kaplan Gallery; China Art Objects; Clementine Gallery; Cohan and Leslie; Sadie Coles HQ; Galería Comercial; Contemporary Fine Arts; Paula Cooper Gallery; Galerie Chantal Crousel; Elizabeth Dee; Deitch Projects; Thomas Erben Gallery; Zach Feuer Gallery; David Floria Gallery; MARC FOXX Gallery; Gagosian Gallery; Gavin Brown's enterprise; Marian Goodman Gallery; Greene Naftali Gallery; Jack Hanley Gallery; Hasswellediger & Co.; HOTEL gallery; Inman Gallery; Anton Kern Gallery; Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery; Johann König Gallery; Harris Lieberman Gallery; Lisson Gallery; maccarone inc.; Marvelli Gallery; Matthew Marks Gallery; Metro Pictures; Galerie Meyer Kainer; Victoria Miro; Modern Art, Inc; Peres Projects; Friedrich Petzel Gallery; Postmasters Gallery; Galerie Eva Presenhuber; The Project; Regen Projects; Rivington Arms; Perry Rubenstein Gallery; Salon 94; Jack Shainman Gallery; Sikkema Jenkins & Co.; Team Gallery; Richard Telles Fine Art; Michael Werner Gallery; White Columns; Galerie Barbara Wien; Donald Young Gallery; and David Zwirner Gallery.

We are also grateful to the following individuals for all their kind help and generous support: Cecilia Alemani;

Sandra Antelo-Suarez, TRANS>; Jean Bernier, Jean Bernier Gallery; Tim Blum and Jeff Poe, Blum & Poe; Jim Browne; Gavin Brown, Corinna Durland, and Laura Mitterand, Gavin Brown's enterprise; Bianca Cabrera; Claudia Carson, Robert Gober Studio; Walter Cassidy; Leslie Cohan and Andrew Leslie, Cohan and Leslie; Sadie Coles; Paula Cooper and Steve Henry, Paula Cooper Gallery; Luca Corbetta; Karina Daskalov, Dan Graham Studio; Elizabeth Dee; Melissa Dubbin; Rebecca Fasman; Frances Garret; Haidy Geismer, New York University; Leo Goldsmith, White Mountain Films; Ed Greer; Loren Guinnebaylt; Jack Frank and family; Jose Freire, Team Gallery; Darren Flook, HOTEL gallery; Marian Goodman and Rose Lord, Marian Goodman Gallery; Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn, Salon 94; Jack Hanley; Bob Holman and Matthew Lydon, Bowery Poetry Club; Ali Hossaini, Voom; Aaron Iglar; Dick Johnston; Anton Kern and Christoph Gerozissis, Anton Kern Gallery; Wynne Kettell; Nicole Klagsbrun; Elizabeth Linden; Matthew Marks; Trina McKeever and Clara Weyergraf, Richard Serra Studio; Ivana Mestrovic and all the staff at Spacetime C. C.; Jenny Moore; Cullen Murphy and Bessmarie Moll, The Atlantic Monthly; Will Murphy, Random House; Tim Nye; Balasz and Francine Nyeri and all the staff at Cineric, Inc.; Ana Otero; Tony Oursler Studio; Marc Paschke; Jenelle Porter; Eva Presenhuber; Katherine Pugh; Roberto Rabin, Fuerte Conde de Mirasol; Shaun Caley Regen and Lisa Overduin, Regen Projects; Francisco Rovira Rullán, Galería Comercial; Perry Rubenstein, Sylvia Chivaratonond, Branden Koch, and Amy Davila, Perry Rubenstein Gallery; Brent Sikkema, Michael Jenkins, and Teka Selman, Sikkema Jenkins & Co.; Debra Singer, The Kitchen; Larry Gagosian and Robert Shapazian, Gagosian Gallery; Gavin Smith, Walter Reade Theater; Will Swofford; Blanche Tannery, Director of Visual Arts and Architecture, Cultural Services of the French Embassy; Richard Telles and Deborah Hede, Richard Telles Fine Art; Tabatha Tucker, Weiss Studio; Will Washburn; Michael Werner and Gordon VeneKlasen, Michael Werner Gallery; Donald Young and Tiffany Stover, Donald Young Gallery; and David Zwirner, Angela Choon, Bellatrix Cochran-Huber, and Amy Bauman, David Zwirner Gallery. We would also like to thank all those involved in the complex Don't Trust Anyone Over Thirty project, including all the team and coproducers listed on page 243; David Alexander, Valentin Essrich, and Francesca von Hapsburg should be singled out here.

We are grateful to the many colleagues who offered suggestions, advice, and hospitality during our research for this exhibition. We particularly acknowledge Thomas Bartscherer, doctoral candidate in the Committee on Social Thought, University of Chicago; Ariella Ben-Dov, director, Madcat International Women's Film Festival; Andrea Bowers; Canyon Cinema, San Francisco; Maurizio Cattelan, Massimiliano Gioni, and Ali Subotnick; Amada Cruz, Bridget Murphy, and Christopher Vroom, Artadia; Sam Durant; Electronic Arts Intermix, New York; Okwui Enwezor, dean, San Francisco Art Institute; Marcos Ramirez Erre, director, Gallery Estacion, Tijuana; Sylvie Fortin, Art Papers; Patrick Friel, Chicago Filmmakers;

Alison de Lima Greene, curator, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Eungie Joo, director and curator, Gallery at REDCAT, Los Angeles; Mary Leclère, director of the Core Residency Program, Glassell School of Art, Houston; Rick Lowe, director, Project Row Houses, Houston; Paula Marincola, director, Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative; Michael Newman, associate professor in art history, theory, and criticism, School of the Art Institute of Chicago; Madeline M. Nusser, art editor, Time Out Chicago; Glenn Phillips, research associate and consulting curator, Getty Research Institute; Scott and Tyson Reeder, General Store, Milwaukee; César and Mima Reyes; James Rondeau, Frances and Thomas Dittmer Curator of Contemporary Art, The Art Institute of Chicago; Ralph Rugoff, director, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco; MM Serra, director, Filmmakers' Cooperative, New York; Stephanie Snyder, director, Cooley Art Gallery, Reed College, Portland, Oregon; Fabrice Stroun, Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva; Hamza Walker, education director, Renaissance Society, Chicago; Suzanne Weaver, associate curator of contemporary art, Dallas Museum of Art; Mark Webber, London-based independent curator; and the folks at Video Databank, Chicago. We would also like to thank all of the artists whom we visited during the course of our research for the exhibition. Studio visits are intimate experiences, not undertaken lightly, and we appreciate the generosity with which the artists opened their studios, and often their private homes, to us. We learned a tremendous amount from the dialogues and exchanges we had with every one of them.

Finally, we thank the Biennial artists. Their talent, energy, enthusiasm, and support have been the inspiration for, and the driving force of, this exhibition..

[Back to Top](#)