

WHITNEY

Whitney Museum
of American Art
Press Office

99 Gansevoort Street
New York City, NY 10014

pressoffice@whitney.org
(212) 570-3633

MEDIA ALERT



Julia Wachtel (b. 1956), *Membership*, 1984. Oil on canvas, 66 × 81 in. (167.6 × 205.7 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase, with funds from the Painting and Sculpture Committee 2016.114 © Julia Wachtel; courtesy the artist and Elizabeth Dee New York. Digital Image © Whitney Museum, N.Y.

FAST FORWARD: PAINTING FROM THE 1980s

An exhibition presenting the work of more than forty artists including Carlos Alfonzo, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Ross Bleckner, Peter Cain, Louisa Chase, Robert Colescott, Moira Dryer, Eric Fischl, Leon Golub, Keith Haring, Sherrie Levine, Joyce Pensato, Susan Rothenberg, David Salle, Kenny Scharf, Julian Schnabel, Julia Wachtel, Terry Winters, Martin Wong, among others.

NEW YORK, December 16, 2016—In the 1980s, painting recaptured the imagination of the contemporary art world against a backdrop of expansive change. During this explosive period, an unprecedented number of galleries appeared on the scene, particularly in downtown New York. New media, such as video and installation art, was on the rise and both museums and galleries presented an array of ambitious and provocative exhibitions. Yet, despite other mediums such as photography and video gaining traction, many artists actively embraced the medium of painting, exploring its bold physicality and unique capacity for expression and innovation.

Fast Forward: Painting from the 1980s offers a focused look at painting from this decade with works drawn entirely from the Museum's collection. The exhibition will be on view in the Museum's eighth-floor Hurst Family Galleries from January 27 to May 14, 2017.

The exhibition features work by artists often identified with the 1980s—Jean-Michel Basquiat, Sherrie Levine, David Salle, and Julian Schnabel—as well as by a significant number of less celebrated painters. Often through exuberant work that engaged with the heroic gesture or pop imagery, these artists explored the traditions of figuration and history painting, and offered new interpretations of abstraction. Many addressed fundamental questions about art-making in their work, while others took on political

issues including AIDS, feminism, gentrification, and war. Far from dead, artists renegotiated their commitment to painting in the 1980s, and in the face of a media-saturated environment. The medium suddenly came to represent an important intersection between new ways of seeing and a seemingly traditional way of making art—one full of possibility and thriving as many artists actively re-imagined what painting could be.

Fast Forward: Painting from the 1980s is organized by Jane Panetta, associate curator, with Melinda Lang, curatorial assistant.

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 most innovative 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.

###