

WHITNEY

Whitney Museum
of American Art
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MEDIA ALERT



MPA (b. 1980). *Orbit*, 2016. Digital collage. Courtesy of the artist.

MPA'S WHITNEY EXHIBITION TO CONCLUDE WITH A TEN-DAY PERFORMANCE FROM FEBRUARY 9 THROUGH 19

NEW YORK, January 27, 2017—Beginning on February 9, artists MPA, Elizabeth Marcus-Sonenberg, and Amapola Prada enter *Orbit*, a continuous ten-day performance staged in the narrow space between the windowpanes of the Whitney's Susan and John Hess Family Theater, overlooking the Hudson River.

The enclosed environment—which includes a composting toilet, plants, a ten-day supply of food and water, basic bedding, a treadmill, instruments, and a three-camera video surveillance system—is inspired by the simulation projects conducted by universities and space agencies to test human life on spacecrafts and on Mars. The participants' conditions partially emulate those of astronauts orbiting Earth: sleeping in scheduled rotations, receiving messages on a delay, exercising daily, and tracking their energy usage. They embark on *Orbit* without rehearsal, each with their own assignments, objectives, and visions of the future and survival. They transmit messages across the glass "to beings both present and unseen." The endeavor is, in MPA's words, "real theater."

Orbit is live twenty-four hours a day for ten days, from February 9 through 19, 2017, and is viewable from inside the theater during regular Museum hours, and continuously from the corner of West and Gansevoort Streets. A series of theatrical climaxes will occur each day. Entry to the theater is free with Museum admission. For additional details and schedule updates for MPA's *Orbit*, please visit whitney.org.

FINALE ASSEMBLY

February 19: 8 pm

Floor Three, Susan and John Hess Family Theater

Assembly marks the dramatic finale of *Orbit*. Ending on a dissonant chord, this theatrical event marks the Orbiters' exit, and orchestrates a culminating series of actions within a live environment by M. Cay Castagnetto (sound) and Maria Shaplin (lighting).

For ticket information, additional details, and schedule updates for MPA's *Assembly*, please visit whitney.org.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Since relocating to California's Mojave Desert in 2013, artist MPA (b. 1980; Redding, CA) has been immersed in a broad inquiry into the potential colonization of Mars, often known as the red planet. In this multipart exhibition, the artist looks at Mars as a place for settlement and a resource for our own planet, as well as a site of possible human origin. MPA's research considers unconventional sources such as mythology, psychic accounts, and personal narratives as credible authorities. By reflecting more generally on histories of colonization, RED IN VIEW raises questions of militarism and patriarchy, prompting us to examine our own, often subconscious, colonizing behaviors. *Orbit* and *Assembly* are the final movements of RED IN VIEW.

The exhibition is organized by Jay Sanders, Engell Speyer Family Curator and Curator of Performance, and Greta Hartenstein, senior curatorial assistant, with Allie Tepper, curatorial project assistant.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

MPA invited **Amapola Prada** and **Malin Arnell** to join *Orbit* in the summer of 2016. They engaged in frequent long-distance calls between California, Peru, Sweden, and Germany from September 2016 to February 4, 2017. **Elizabeth Marcus-Sonenberg** was invited on February 6 to join MPA and Prada after Arnell withdrew from entering *Orbit*. MPA and Prada met in Oaxaca, Mexico, as part of La Pocha Nostra's workshop and performance gathering in July 2006 and traveled together in Peru and Mexico shortly thereafter. In September 2015, Prada began a long sensory and intuitively focused work in Cusco, Peru, of which the structure of *Orbit* will be the second stage. She will continue this work in Mexico, after exiting *Orbit*, in March 2017. In 2011, MPA made two live works in New York with Prada: *Revolution. Two Marks in Rotation* at Leo Koenig Projekte and *Explosion* at AC Institute. Marcus-Sonenberg arrives from Los Angeles, where she and MPA met in 2013 in a vibrant performative community. As a performance artist, writer, body worker, and somatic researcher, Marcus-Sonenberg describes herself as being "committed to investigating nonlocal communication, the persuasive power of personal cosmologies, and healing". *Orbit* is the first time that Marcus-Sonenberg and Prada have met in person.

COLLABORATORS

Amapola Prada, MPA (Orbiters); Lydia Okrent and Mariana Valencia (Moons); M. Cay Castagnetto (Sound Environment); Maria Shaplin (Lighting Design); Jason Hughes (Scenic Design); General Sisters: Dana Bishop-Root and Ginger Brooks-Takahashi (Food and Nourishment); Allie Tepper, Greta Hartenstein, and Jay Sanders (Ground Control); Malin Arnell (Former Orbiter); Allie Tepper (Dramaturge); Nance Khelm (Compost Consultant)

EXHIBITION SUPPORT

Major support is provided by John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation.

Significant support for the Whitney's Performance Program is provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Generous support is also provided by the Performance Committee of the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Selected works on view in the John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation Gallery were commissioned by the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston for the exhibition *THE INTERVIEW: Red, Red Future*, organized by Dean Daderko, curator.

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.

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