

WHITNEY

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PRESS RELEASE



Eckhaus Latta, *Untitled (Preparatory drawing for Possessed)*, 2018. Colored pencil on paper. Image courtesy the artists

The Whitney to Present *Eckhaus Latta: Possessed*

NEW YORK, NY, May 29, 2018— This summer, the Whitney Museum of American Art will present the first museum solo exhibition of Eckhaus Latta, the New York-and Los Angeles-based fashion label, founded in 2011 by Mike Eckhaus and Zoe Latta. *Eckhaus Latta: Possessed* highlights the work of this compelling young design team who belong to a new generation of designers operating at the intersection of fashion and contemporary art. The exhibition, part of the Museum's emerging artist series, will be on view in the first-floor John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation Gallery from August 3 through October 8, 2018. Access to the gallery is free of charge.

Mike Eckhaus (b. 1987, New York, NY) and **Zoe Latta** (b. 1987, Santa Cruz, CA) met as students at the Rhode Island School of Design, while studying sculpture and textiles, respectively. They are known for using unexpected materials, emphasizing texture and tactility in their designs, and for incorporating writing, performance, and video into their practice. Through their emphasis on collaboration—with artists, musicians, and others—and an approach that plays with, and against, industry conventions, Eckhaus Latta addresses the crosscurrents of desire, consumption, and social relations. Their work has been featured in *Greater New York 2015* at MoMA PS1 and *Made in L.A.* (2016) at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles.

"As part of the Whitney's emerging artist program, we sometimes showcase creative figures outside of the visual arts," said Christopher Y. Lew, Nancy and Fred Poses Associate Curator, co-organizer of *Eckhaus Latta: Possessed* with Lauri London Freedman, the Museum's head of product development. "These figures from fields such as fashion, music, architecture, design, and food approach their disciplines in ways that are akin to visual

artists, often questioning the systems and parameters that define what they do, speaking to the broader cultural moment, and blurring the boundaries between disciplines.”

“Working with Mike and Zoe has challenged us to consider the roles that our Museum spaces play and the objects that are presented. They pushed us to ask broader questions such as ‘How can we reexamine the format of an exhibition?’ and ‘What is the best way to exhibit an artist’s work?’ said Freedman.

For their Whitney exhibition, Eckhaus Latta will create a new three-part installation that embraces and brings into conversation various aspects of the fashion industry, from advertising and the consumer experience to voyeurism. At the entrance to the gallery will be a sequence of photographs that play on the tropes of iconic photoshoots found in fashion advertisements and magazines. These photographs explore how Eckhaus Latta’s unique aesthetic functions in relation to the highly polished look of the industry’s media. The core of their installation will be an operational retail environment in which visitors are welcome to touch, try on, and purchase clothing and accessories designed specifically for the show. This space is made in collaboration with more than a dozen artists whom Eckhaus Latta has been in dialogue with over the years who have created functional elements such as clothing racks, display shelves, and a dressing room. The exhibition concludes with a darkened room, evocative of a security office, which features a bank of screens depicting surveillance footage. Visitors will have a voyeuristic view of not only the rest of the installation, but a glimpse of the tracking and surveillance that so often accompanies the experience of shopping.

Eckhaus Latta’s fashion designs—for which they are currently finalists for the 2018 LVMH Prize for Young Fashion Designers—explore, in part, identity and reflect the fluid nature of gender and sexuality. While they fully participate in the fashion system, Latta and Eckhaus remain self-aware of their roles in consumer society. Their recognizable designs have featured experimental knitwear; a wide range of materials including lace, rust, and recycled fabrics; and a general approach that supersedes gender binaries. At times, models are sent down the runway wearing clothes that challenge traditional definitions of male and female. Vanessa Friedman, fashion director and chief fashion critic at the *New York Times*, wrote that their clothes “are a kind of petri dish of associative splicing,” and that they “grapple honestly with what is on the designers’ minds: questions of gender and difference and the details of fallible beauty...”

The featured collaborators are **Susan Cianciolo** (b. 1969, Providence, RI; lives and works in Brooklyn, NY), **Lauren Davis Fisher** (b. 1984, Cambridge, MA; lives and works in Los Angeles, CA), **Avena Venus Gallagher** (b. 1973, Seattle, WA; lives and works in New York, NY), **Jeffrey Joyal** (b. 1988, Boston, MA; lives and works in New York, NY), **Alexa Karolinski** (b. 1984, Berlin, Germany; lives and works in Los Angeles), **Valerie Keane** (b. 1989, Passaic, NJ; lives and works in New York, NY), **Jay Latta** (b. 1951, Santa Cruz, CA; lives in works in Santa Cruz, CA), **Matthew Lutz-Kinoy** (b. 1984, New York, NY; lives and works between Los Angeles, CA and Paris, France), **Annabeth Marks** (b. 1986, Rochester, NY; lives and works in New York, NY), **Riley O’Neill** (b. 1992, Los Angeles, CA; lives and works in Los Angeles, CA), **Emma T. Price** (b. 1987, Santa Cruz, CA; lives and works in Los Angeles, CA), **Jessi Reaves** (b. 1986, Portland, OR; lives and works in New York, NY), **Régime des Fleurs** (founded 2014; Los Angeles, CA), **Erica Sarlo** (b. 1988, Briarcliff Manor, NY; lives and works in Brooklyn, NY), **Nora Jane Slade** (b. 1986, Washington, D.C.; lives and works in Los Angeles, CA), **Sophie Stone** (b. 1987, Boston, MA; lives and works in New York, NY), **Martine Syms** (b. 1988, Los Angeles, CA; lives and works in Los Angeles, CA), **Torey Thornton** (b. 1990, Macon, GA; lives and works in Brooklyn, NY), **Charlotte Wales** (b. 1986, Farnborough, UK; lives and works in London, UK), **Eric Wrenn** (b. 1985, Southfield, MI; lives and works in New York, NY), and **Amy Yao** (b. 1977, Los Angeles, CA; lives and works in Long Beach, CA and New York, NY).

This will be the first exhibition related to fashion at the Museum in 21 years, since *The Warhol Look: Glamour, Style, Fashion* (1997).

Curatorial Credit

Eckhaus Latta: Possessed is organized by Christopher Y. Lew, Nancy and Fred Poses Associate Curator, and Lauri London Freedman, head of product development.

Exhibition Support

Major support for *Eckhaus Latta: Possessed* is provided by the John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation.

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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.

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art

Mary Corse	June 8 – November 25, 2018
Pacha, Llaqta, Wasichay: Indigenous Space, Modern Architecture, New Art	July 13 – September 30, 2018
David Wojnarowicz: History Keeps Me Awake at Night	July 13 – September 30, 2018
Andy Warhol – From A to B and Back Again	November 12, 2018 – March 31, 2019
Kevin Beasley	Opens December 2018
Juan Antonio Olivares: Moléculas	Until June 10, 2018
Zoe Leonard: Survey	Until June 10, 2018
Grant Wood: American Gothic and Other Fables	Until June 10, 2018
Between the Waters	Until July 22, 2018
An Incomplete History of Protest:	Until August 27, 2018
Selections from the Whitney's Collection, 1940–2017	
Where We Are: Selections from the Whitney's Collection 1900–1960	Ongoing
Christine Sun Kim: Too Much Future	Ongoing
Flash: Photographs by Harold Edgerton from the Whitney's Collection	Ongoing

The Whitney Museum of American Art is located at 99 Gansevoort Street between Washington and West Streets, New York City. Museum hours are: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday from 10:30 am to 6 pm; Friday and Saturday from 10:30 am to 10 pm. Closed Tuesday. Adults: \$25. Full-time students and visitors 65 & over: \$18. Visitors 18 years & under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 7–10 pm. For general information, please call (212) 570-3600 or visit whitney.org.

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