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THE ARMORY SHOW ANNOUNCES PARTICIPATING ARTISTS AND GALLERIES IN THE 2018 EDITION OF PLATFORM, TITLED *THE CONTINGENT*

A Monumental New Work by Tara Donovan Will Anchor the Fair's Pier 94 Town Square, While JR Will Unveil A New Project on the Fair's Exterior

The Armory Show today announced the participating artists in the 2018 Platform section, curated by **Jen Mergel**, Vice President of Programming for the Association of Art Museum Curators, and former senior curator of contemporary art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The Contingent features 15 site-responsive projects, including 11 new works by **The Bruce High Quality Foundation, Sarah Cain, Beth Campbell, Tara Donovan, Leonardo Drew, Jeffrey Gibson, JR, Amalia Pica, Alex Schweder** and **Ward Shelley, Berndnaut Smilde, and Wilmer Wilson IV.**

Four large-scale projects by **Elmgreen & Dragset, Sir Richard Long, Mary Sibande, and Wang Xin** will make their US debut.

Together, the works in *The Contingent* reflect on the precariousness and possibility inherent in uncertain, conditional circumstances. In each work, the overall form is an accumulation or collision of materials, moments, people or gestures, while its ultimate meaning is dependent upon factors of environment, duration, social participation, power dynamics and even the machinery of the fair itself.

"In destabilizing times, it feels essential to highlight art that thrives on contingency: on the assembly of different elements and ever-changing outcomes," Mergel explains. "For decades, a discourse has been building around art practices that hinge not on established conventions of genre or medium, but on shifting factors of location, time, materiality, and social climate. We have called these 'site-specific' or 'process driven' or 'participatory' or 'institutional critique' or, more broadly, 'context-dependent.' Today, there is new appreciation for how a work's unfixed format, unfolding development, shared authorship and multivalent meaning could actually be 'responsive'—a form of authenticity, even resistance. *The Contingent* affirms the collective over the singular, the fluid over the fixed, the active over the passive."

"*The Contingent* embodies New York's identity, the piers' massive architecture, and the fair's dynamic social activity," says **Nicole Berry**, Executive Director of The Armory Show, "Jen has organized an incredibly strong and thoughtful collection of artists whose work feels both urgent and timeless in the context of the fair and in the larger world climate. From performance to site-specific installations, the 2018 Platform section reflects the true identity of The Armory Show as a place for unparalleled creative energy, collective activity and diversity of vision."

Situated in the Town Square on Pier 94 is a new commission by **Tara Donovan**, who is known for her command of vast spaces with accumulations of a single material that triggers our perception of infinity, movement, and the relation of parts to a whole. The new monumental installation, *Untitled*, results from the artist's latest experiments with the material condition of transparency and takes the form of a pyramidal cross-section, comprised of tens of thousands of clear plastic tubes. Normally used for commercial product packaging, the tubes are cut to precise lengths along a scale from two inches to eight feet and assembled into tiered sections that come together into a luminous rippling expansion, amplifying the interplay between light and edge and spanning 33-square feet at the center of the fair.

JR and **Wilmer Wilson IV** open each Pier with works that draw on archival history to address current social issues: At the entry to Pier 94, JR updates and super-sizes an Ellis Island photograph to make facing realities of Syrian refugees impossible to ignore, while Wilson's new performance for Pier 92 symbolically republishes a 1919 letter to a Mississippi newspaper threatening to "burn the entire state" if lynching of black bodies did not cease. Both gestures refuse to let us forget unsettled, living histories.

With a nod to history as well as the power of attire, **Mary Sibande** presents her avatar Sophie in purple—reminiscent of both regal power and the dye used to mark Cape Town protesters in 1989—affirming the timely theme of women's anger boiling over. Likewise, **Jeffrey Gibson** explores how a garment can be a shield and adornment can be power, inspired by the complex legacies of Native American Ghost Dance shirts.

Installations by **Beth Campbell** and **Berndnaut Smilde** merge hyper-realistic stage sets with hints of the surreal. At Pier 92's Central Lounge, Campbell intersects the office set from the 1980 movie *9-to-5* with a 19th century telegraph switchboard, a tongue-in-cheek nod to when women controlled the message. Smilde's theatrical set on Pier 94 repeatedly generates a cloud, a floating form that blurs the barrier of the "fourth wall."

Also offering participatory social experiences are **Alex Schweder** and **Ward Shelley**'s latest work of performance architecture, a wheel-cum-room in which one's rise is the other's fall, and **Wang Xin**'s gallery, a non-stop exposure platform where artists sourced from an open call are exhibited by the hour. This critique of unceasing and impenetrable art world power structures is echoed by **Elmgreen & Dragset**'s sculpture of a domino fall of crates forever memorialized in bronze.

Rituals of mournful beginnings and celebratory endings inspire two other projects: a new salon-style hanging of hundreds of *momento mori* assembled and callously defaced by the collective **BHQF**, and a poignant performance by **Amalia Pica**, where a single performer earnestly throws confetti and then delicately gathers it piece by piece, a resilient gesture asserting resourceful hope when joy is scarce.

The latest works by **Leonardo Drew** and **Sir Richard Long** evoke nature's cyclical rhythms. Drew recycles natural, found and hand-made wooden forms into strata that expand in respond to their central site on Pier 92, while Long's river mud diptychs capture an elemental balance with fluid marks that bridge tide and time, land and sea.

Finally, marking the entrance to Pier 94 is **Sarah Cain**'s boldly colorful wall painting created on-site in the days before the fair's opening. Embracing notions of the ephemeral and the entryway as a portal, Cain's installation will serve as both a welcome and a reminder of the fair's temporality.

Participating artists and galleries:

Alex Schweder (1970, New York, NY) and **Ward Shelley** (1950, Auburn, NY), *My Turn*, 2018 | **Edward Cella Art & Architecture** (Los Angeles)

Wilmer Wilson IV (1989, Richmond, VA), *Measures Not Men*, 2017 and *FliRrEe*, 2018 | **CONNERSMITH.** (Washington, DC)
JR (1983, Paris, France), *SO CLOSE*, 2018 | Presented by **Artsy** and **Jeffrey Deitch** (New York)
Wang Xin (1983, Yichang, Hubei, China), *The Gallery*, 2014- | **de Sarthe Gallery** (Hong Kong and Beijing)
The Bruce High Quality Foundation (est. 2001), *Ways to Die*, 2018 | **Pippy Houldsworth Gallery** (London)
Elmgreen & Dragset (1961, Copenhagen, Denmark and 1969, Trondheim, Norway), *Force Majeure, Fig. 2 - 4*, 2016 | **KÖNIG GALERIE** (Berlin)
Amalia Pica (1978, Neuquén province, Argentina), *The drip*, 2018 | **KÖNIG GALERIE**, Berlin
Sarah Cain (1979, Albany, NY), *two day painting*, 2018 | **Galerie Lelong & Co.** (New York) and **Honor Fraser Gallery** (Los Angeles)
Sir Richard Long (1945, Bristol, United Kingdom), *Untitled*, 2018 | **Lisson Gallery** (London and New York)
Mary Sibande (1982, Barberton, South Africa), *Cry Havoc*, 2014 | **Gallery MOMO** (Johannesburg and Cape Town)
Beth Campbell (1971, Dwight, IL), *dah-dah-dah-dah-dit, dah dah-dah-dah, di-di-di-di-dit*, 2018 | **Anne Mosseri-Marlio Galerie** (Basel)
Tara Donovan (1969, Flushing, NY), *Untitled*, 2018 | **Pace Gallery** (New York, London, Beijing, Hong Kong, Paris, Palo Alto)
Jeffrey Gibson (1972, Colorado Springs, CO), *WITHOUT YOU I'M NOTHING*, 2018 | **Roberts Projects** (Los Angeles)
Berndnaut Smilde (1978, Groningen, The Netherlands), *Breaking the Fourth Wall*, 2018 | **Ronchini Gallery** (London)
Leonardo Drew (1961, Tallahassee, FL), *Number 123X*, 2018 | **rosenfeld porcini** (London)

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Armory Show

The Armory Show is New York City's premier art fair and a leading cultural destination for discovering and collecting the world's most important 20th- and 21st-century art. Staged on Manhattan's Piers 92 & 94, The Armory Show features presentations by leading international galleries, innovative artist commissions and dynamic public programs. Since its founding in 1994, The Armory Show has served as a nexus for the international art world, inspiring dialogue, discovery and patronage in the visual arts.

Jen Mergel

Jen Mergel is Vice President, Programming, of the Association of Art Museum Curators. Previously, as Beal Family Senior Curator and Interim Chair of Contemporary Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, she developed notable site-responsive commissions and performances with artists including Sarah Braman, Lee Mingwei, Liliana Porter, Daniela Rivera and Shinique Smith. In her prior role at the ICA Boston, she presented responsive installations including the first museum exhibitions of Tara Donovan, Nicholas Hlobo and R.H. Quaytman. Mergel is currently organizing the first citywide exhibition of fog sculptures by Fujiko Nakaya for Boston's Emerald Necklace Conservancy.

Important Information for Media

Fair Dates

VIP Preview Day (by invitation only)
Wednesday, March 7, 2018

Public Days

Thursday, March 8 – Sunday, March 11, 2018

Press Images

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