

A JAM Artist Party

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Thu, Nov 3, 2022

Schedule

7:00–9:30 p.m.

Just Above Midtown: Changing Spaces, Floor 3

“Make of It Anything You Want,” with Janet Olivia Henry, in Heyman Lobby, Floor 1

“Oh-Wow-Flow,” by Sydney Blum, in Gund Lobby, Floor 1

“Free, White, and 21,” by Howardena Pindell, in the Hess Lounge, Floor 1

Music with DJ Sarah Von-H

7:00–9:00

“Tony Whitfield’s Lessons Learned, A Record of the Moment,” in the Creativity Lab, Floor 2

7:30

“Revolution into Evolution,” by Randy Williams, in the Gund Lobby, Floor 1

7:40

An Introduction to “Oh Wow-Flow,” with Sydney Blum, in the Gund Lobby, Floor 1

7:50

Performance by Maren Hassinger in the Gund Lobby, Floor 1

8:30

An Introduction to “Tony Whitfield’s Lessons Learned, A Record of the Moment,” by Tony Whitfield, in the Creativity Lab, Floor 2

9:00

“Looking for Laure,” by Ishmael Houston-Jones, in the Creativity Lab, Floor 2

About the artists

Sydney Blum was born and grew up in rural central New York State. She spent a year in Norway at age 10 and a year in Israel at age 17; both of these years profoundly shaped her creativity and aesthetic choices. She is self-taught as an artist. After entering a doctoral program in ed-psych at the University of Wisconsin and finding herself bored, she decided to take her artwork to the art department. She was admitted on the spot into their MFA program. She “lost” her voice, i.e. froze, during her final orals, and dropped out of the program. She moved to NYC in 1976, still making art and trying to unlearn everything she had been exposed to in graduate school. It was then that she met Linda Bryant at JAM, found her voice, and had her first of two solo shows at JAM. Blum called the art department at

University of Wisconsin/Madison and asked how long her MFA credits were good for and was told that they were about to expire. So, she asked if she could bring her NYC solo show to Madison as her final MFA show to complete her degree, and did so. She has done computer wiring, studied pattern making, designed clothes, furniture, and houses, taught sculpture and drawing at Parson School of Fine Arts, delivered sandwiches, been in control groups of medical experiments, and got a clinical MSW from NYU. She is currently living and working in Nova Scotia, Canada, and is represented by Galerie Robertson Ares in Montreal and Studio 21 Fine Art in Halifax. She received two Creation Grants through Arts Nova Scotia. She taught at the New School/Parsons for 16 years and practiced as a psychotherapist for more than 30 years.

Maren Hassinger has built an expansive practice that articulates the relationship between nature and humanity. Carefully choosing materials for their innate characteristics, Hassinger has explored the subjects of movement, family, love, nature, environment, consumerism, identity, and race. Wire rope has played a prominent role in Hassinger's artistic practice since the early 1970s, when, as a sculptor placed in the Fiber Arts program at UCLA, Hassinger used the material to bridge the gap between the two disciplines. The artist often takes a biomimetic approach to her material, whether bundling it to resemble a monolithic sheaf of wheat or planting it in cement to create an industrial garden. Hassinger is the recipient of numerous honors, including a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Women's Caucus for the Arts. Within the past five years she has been commissioned to make work for Sculpture Milwaukee (curated by Ugo Rondinone), Dia Bridgehampton, Socrates Sculpture Park, the Smithsonian Museum, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Aspen Art Museum. Her work is included in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, Baltimore Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, NYC, the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among others.

Janet Olivia Henry grew up in East Harlem and then in Jamaica, Queens, where she still resides. She was educated at the High School of Art and Design, Haryou-Act Graphics and Plastics Workshop, the School of Visual Arts, and the Fashion Institute of Technology, and received a fellowship in museum education from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Over the years, Henry's artwork has been exhibited in scores of solo and group shows at such venues as Artists Space, Asheville Art Museum, AIR Gallery, Brooklyn Museum, Five Myles, Hallwalls, Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning, Just Above Midtown, PPOW Gallery, Queens Museum, Studio Museum in Harlem, and Newark Museum. As a funder and educator, Henry has worked at Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning, Just Above Midtown, Lower Eastside Girls Club, the New York State Council on the Arts, Studio in a School, Studio Museum in Harlem, and WHEDCO. After 21-plus years, she recently retired as an art teacher at Brooklyn Heights Montessori School.

Ishmael Houston-Jones is choreographer, author, performer, teacher, and curator. His improvised dance and text work has been performed worldwide. He has received three New York Dance and Performance “Bessie” Awards for collaborations with writer Dennis Cooper, choreographers Miguel Gutierrez and Fred Holland, and composers Chris Cochran and Nick Hallett, and a fourth Bessie for contributions to the field of dance. Houston-Jones curated *Platform 2012: Parallels*, which concentrated on choreographers from the African diaspora and postmodernism, and co-curated, with Will Rawls, *Platform 2016: Lost & Found, Dance, New York, HIV/AIDS, Then and Now*. Houston-Jones’s essays, fiction, interviews, and performance texts have been published in several anthologies. His first book, *FAT and other stories*, was published in 2018. Houston-Jones is a 2022 recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship. His work has been supported by the Herb Alpert Foundation, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, and the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation.

Howardena Pindell was born in Philadelphia in 1943 and studied painting at Boston University and Yale University School of Art and Architecture. After graduating, she accepted a position at The Museum of Modern Art, where she worked from 1967 to 1979. In 1979, she began teaching at the State University of New York, Stony Brook, where she is now a Distinguished Professor of Art. Her work has been featured in many landmark museum exhibitions, including *Contemporary Black Artists in America* (1971) and *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power* (2017–19). In 2020, she was the subject of the solo exhibition *Howardena Pindell: Rope/Fire/Water* at the Shed, New York. Pindell’s first major, one-person exhibition in Europe, *Howardena Pindell: A New Language*, opened at the Fruitmarket, Edinburgh, in 2021, and traveled to Kettle’s Yard, Cambridge, in 2022.

Tony Whitfield is an artist, designer, and writer currently based in Detroit. His work has been presented by La MaMa, ETC, in solo exhibitions at HOWL! Happening in NYC, the Instituto Cultural Peruano Norteamericano in Lima, Peru, Centre LGBTQ and NUIT BLANCHE 2017 in Paris, and in group exhibitions in galleries and museums including NYC’s Museum of Art and Design, Leslie Lohman Museum, and the Pop-Up Museum of Queer History. The recipient of grants from the Jerome Foundation and the Camargo Foundation, he has been an emeritus professor at the New School University since 2020, where he began teaching in 1993 at Parsons School of Design and, over 27 years, served in leadership roles including director of the Furniture Program, chair of the Product Design Department, and associate dean for Civic Engagement and Social Justice Issues. Whitfield has held influential positions in the public and nonprofit sectors in NYC’s arts community, including Senior Policy Analyst for Cultural Affairs in the Office of Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger, associate director of Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, where he produced over 100 presentations annually, America’s first Black Performance Curator at Just Above Midtown Inc., and executive director of Printed Matter Inc.

Randy Williams was born in New York City in 1947. A professor of studio and art education at Manhattanville College, Williams was also an instructor and educational consultant to the Metropolitan Museum of Art for 50 years. He was artistic director of the New York State Summer School of the Visual Arts from 1992 to 2016, and was a master teacher in the program for 39 years. Williams holds a bachelor of science in art education from New York University and a master's degree in art education from Sir George Williams University in Montreal. He has won numerous prizes and awards, including a 1982 fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts to the American Academy in Rome. He also has been recognized by the New York State Council on the Arts, Visual Arts Division, and the New York Foundation of the Arts with a fellowship in sculpture. He received the Manhattanville College Excellence Award in 1995 and 2007. Randy Williams's work has been the subject of more than 40 national and international solo exhibitions. He has had scores of special projects and has exhibited in over 100 group exhibitions. His artwork is in several private art collections.