

WHITNEY

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PRESS RELEASE

NIKITA GALE RECEIVES THE WHITNEY'S 2024 BUCKSBAUM AWARD



*Nikita Gale's TEMPO RUBATO (STOLEN TIME) remains on view in Whitney Biennial 2024:
Even Better Than the Real Thing through September 29.*

New York, NY, September 20, 2024 — The Whitney Museum of American Art announces that Nikita Gale is the recipient of the 2024 Bucksbaum Award. Gale was selected from the 71 intergenerational artists and collectives working across disciplines and mediums in [Whitney Biennial 2024: Even Better Than the Real Thing](#).

An interdisciplinary artist, Nikita Gale takes an expansive approach to installation and performance, commanding and directing our attention to the social functions of industrial materials and mechanisms. Currently on view in the Museum's sixth-floor galleries, Gale's *TEMPO RUBATO (STOLEN TIME)*, 2023–24, features a modified player piano that has been programmed to silently play a series of performances by various pop musicians, exploring the

space between a score and its performance. In this installation, Gale underscores the uncanny absence of the body by silencing the instrument's musical functions and leaving only the sound and image of its mechanisms, which have been amplified through a custom-built sound and lighting system. The work examines how labor, performance, authorship, legibility, and sensing are beholden to their technological contexts.

"Nikita Gale has an incredible knack for making work that is both conceptually rigorous and full of emotion, somehow disciplined and mysterious at the same time," said Scott Rothkopf, the Alice Pratt Brown Director of the Whitney. "By honoring Gale with the Bucksbaum Award, we continue the Whitney's longstanding tradition of celebrating artists who demonstrate great achievement and promise for the future."

"I am profoundly grateful to receive this award. It is a meaningful recognition of my work, and I appreciate the support and encouragement from everyone who has been a part of my journey," Gale said. "Thank you to the award jury, to the entire Whitney Museum team, and to the Bucksbaum family for this incredible honor."

The six-member Bucksbaum jury included Rothkopf; 2024 Whitney Biennial co-curators Chrissie Iles, Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Curator at the Whitney, and Meg Onli, Curator-at-Large at the Whitney; Erin Christovale, Curator at the Hammer Museum; David Getsy, Eleanor Shea Professor of Art History at the University of Virginia; and Stamatina Gregory, Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions and Collections at the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art.

Melva Bucksbaum (1933–2015), a patron of the arts, collector, and Whitney trustee from 1996 until her death, launched the Bucksbaum Award in 2000. The award is given in each Biennial year in recognition of an artist featured in the Biennial whose work demonstrates a singular combination of talent and imagination. The selected artist is considered by the jurors to have the potential to make a lasting impact on the history of American art, based on the excellence of their past work, as well as of their present work in the Biennial. The award is accompanied by a check for \$100,000. Gale is the 12th Bucksbaum laureate to be named since the award was introduced.

The previous Bucksbaum recipients are Paul Pfeiffer (2000), Irit Batsry (2002), Raymond Pettibon (2004), Mark Bradford (2006), Omer Fast (2008), Michael Asher (2010), Sarah Michelson (2012), Zoe Leonard (2014), Pope.L (2017), Tiona Nekkia McClodden (2019), and Ralph Lemon (2022).

Gale will participate in a special project at the Museum that will take place in the coming months. More information will be [available on the Museum's website](#) as details are confirmed.

Funding for the Bucksbaum Award is provided by an endowment from the Martin Bucksbaum Family Foundation.



About Nikita Gale

Nikita Gale is an artist living and working in Los Angeles, California. Gale's work explores the relationship between materials, power, and attention. A key tenet of the artist's practice is that the structures that shape attention determine who or what is seen, heard, recorded, remembered, and believed.

Gale's practice examines the ways in which silence, noise, and visibility function as political positions and conditions. Gale's broad-ranging installations—often comprising concrete, barricades, video, and automated sound and lighting—blur formal and disciplinary boundaries, engaging with concerns of mediation and automation in contemporary performance. By approaching reproduction as a mechanism that connects humans to a desire for extension and amplification through both biological and industrial processes, the artist's work points to the ways that technology not only functions as an extension and amplification of the body but also as a means by which labor and violence are displaced and concentrated.

The artist's work has recently been exhibited in the 2024 Whitney Biennial, New York; Chisenhale Gallery, London; The Brick (formerly LAXART), Los Angeles; 52 Walker, New York; MoMA PS1, New York; Kunstraum Kreuzberg, Berlin; Swiss Institute, New York; California African American Museum, Los Angeles; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; and in *Made in L.A. 2018* at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

Gale is a contributing editor at *Triple Canopy*, a magazine and publishing platform based in New York. Currently, Gale serves on the Artist Advisory Councils of the Hammer Museum and the Institute of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles and is a member of The Salmon Creek Farm Community Council. The artist holds a BA in anthropology with an emphasis in archaeological studies from Yale University and an MFA in new genres from UCLA.

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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 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 ninety 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, 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.

Whitney Museum Land Acknowledgment

The Whitney is located in Lenapehoking, the ancestral homeland of the Lenape. The name Manhattan comes from their word Mannahatta, meaning “island of many hills.” The Museum’s current site is close to land that was a Lenape fishing and planting site called Sapponckanikan (“tobacco field”). The Whitney acknowledges the displacement of this region’s original inhabitants and the Lenape diaspora that exists today.

As a museum of American art in a city with vital and diverse communities of Indigenous people, the Whitney recognizes the historical exclusion of Indigenous artists from its collection and program. The Museum is committed to addressing these erasures and honoring the

perspectives of Indigenous artists and communities as we work for a more equitable future. To read more about the Museum's Land Acknowledgment, [visit the Museum's website](#).

VISITOR INFORMATION

The Whitney Museum of American Art is located at 99 Gansevoort Street between Washington and West Streets, New York City. Public hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10:30 am–6 pm; Friday, 10:30 am–10 pm; and Saturday and Sunday, 10:30 am–6 pm. Closed Tuesday. Visitors eighteen years and under and Whitney members: FREE. The Museum offers FREE admission and special programming for visitors of all ages every Friday evening from 5–10 pm and on the second Sunday of every month.

Image credit:

Installation view of *Whitney Biennial 2024: Even Better Than the Real Thing* (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, March 20–August 11, 2024). Nikita Gale, *TEMPO RUBATO (STOLEN TIME)*, 2023–24. Photograph by Ron Amstutz

Installation view of *Whitney Biennial 2024: Even Better Than the Real Thing* (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, March 20–August 11, 2024). Nikita Gale, *TEMPO RUBATO (STOLEN TIME)*, 2023–24. Photograph by Ryan Lowry

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