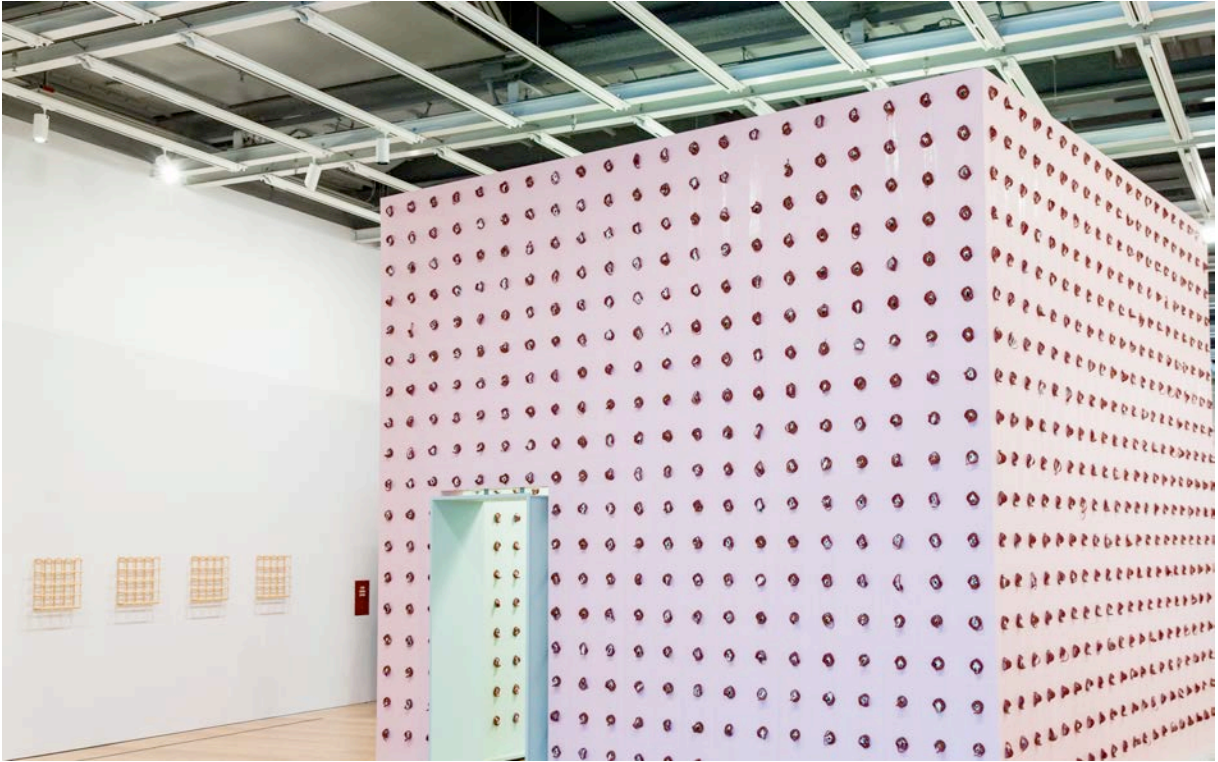


Creators



9 Artists You Should Give a F*ck About at the 2017 Whitney Biennial

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We scoured the sprawling exhibition for the pieces you won't want to miss.

For the Whitney Museum of American Art's first Biennial in its new home in the Meatpacking district, its curators chose quintessentially 2017 key themes: the formation of self and the individual's place in a turbulent society. As you might expect, traces of American political turmoil tinge much of the art.

Getting off the elevators on the Whitney's fifth floor, Occupy Museums' *Debtfair* infographic offers visitors a primer on the debt economy and its effect on the art market. Embedded in gallery walls, Puppies Puppies' disembodied triggers clock the prevalence of gun violence in America. The euphemistic slogan the current administration uses to justify its discriminatory rhetoric—"Make America Great Again"—makes an appearance too, in Celeste Dupuy-Spencer's *Trump Rally (And some of them I assume are good people)*. In a nod to many

Americans' Orwellian, *Black Mirror*-fueled anxieties, many artists tapped emerging technologies, as in Jon Kessler's sculpture of beachgoing mannequin-androids strapped into VR headsets.

The entire vibe is more than a bit dystopian, but, by and large, our favorite pieces were those that leveraged digital tools in unexpected ways, such as Anicka Yi's masterful use of 3D filmmaking to tell a tale of bio-hacking, or reclaimed traditional mediums to reflect the lives of modern Americans, as in Aliza Nisenbaum's oil paintings of undocumented immigrants. In an era in which truth feels elusive, these artists hold the reality of the American experience squarely in their gaze.

Leigh Ledare

His 16mm projections are far from the most imposing works on view, but the quietude of Leigh Ledare's Moscow street scenes belie the film's grim observations on human nature. Capturing interactions between people outside three adjacent train stations, *Vokzal* links the actions of individuals to signs of social breakdown. The whole thing is synchronized with a slowed-down revision of a Neu! track from 1973.

Pope.L, a.k.a., William Pope.L

Not going to lie: Pope.L's cube covered in 2,755 slices of bologna (top image) made us queasy. The curling, dripping slices of deli meat arranged in a grid and each affixed with a black-and-white photo of a person are impressive for their precision but also smell revolting. What strikes us about the work, though, is the text mounted inside the meat-covered cube. Its manipulation of language, facts, and data is mesmerizing. Pro tip: snap a photo of the text on your phone so you can read it far, far away from the bologna aroma.