



Hito Steyerl Activates Armory’s Drill Hall and Historic Interiors with Most Extensive Exhibition of Her Work to Date in the U.S.

**On View June 20 through July 21, 2019, *Drill* Features New Commissions
and Recent Work Re-envisioned for Armory’s Historic Spaces**

New York, NY – June 18, 2019 – Known for her visually compelling and politically incisive video installations, Berlin-based artist and theorist Hito Steyerl comes to Park Avenue Armory this summer with the most extensive United States presentation of her work to date. On view from June 20 through July 21, 2019, *Drill* brings together a major, site-specific commission for the Armory’s Wade Thompson Drill Hall with new and existing works re-envisioned for the Armory’s historic period rooms. Activating the Armory’s entire ground floor, *Drill* has been conceived as a response to current socio-political issues, including gun violence, food sovereignty, the international art market and the impact of artificial intelligence and other technologies on everyday realities.

“Through expertly crafted visual language and her gift for weaving stories, Hito Steyerl examines the underlying systems of power that govern contemporary society, offering a phantasmagorical journey that is complex, engaging and thought-provoking.” said **Rebecca Robertson**, President and Executive Director of Park Avenue Armory.

Added **Pierre Audi**, the Armory’s Artistic Director, “Intermixing fact and fiction, Steyerl harnesses the barrage of images and information that occupy our daily lives. Through archival research, documentary footage, and digital imagery, she challenges political realities and social inequities at the global scale, while also calling attention to the dynamics that shape our own communities.”

The centerpiece of the exhibition is a new large-scale video installation, titled *Drill*, created for the Armory’s Drill Hall. Building upon Steyerl’s signature technique of documentary-style storytelling, the video traverses the Armory spatially and temporally, juxtaposing different eras and characters to narrate a complex history of increasing gun violence and militarization in the United States. In this haunting work, Steyerl weaves together footage of the Armory’s historic interiors, *in situ* performances by the Yale University Precision Marching Band—based upon datasets relating to gun violence and weapons sales in the United States—and personal interviews with individuals impacted by recent shootings.

Additional commissions include *Freeplots*—created in collaboration with the El Catano Community Garden in East Harlem—which references both tax-free “freeports” and the possibility for crop production that does not require land ownership. A third work, *Broken Windows*, unites video, sound, and installation with a site-specific intervention by artist Chris Toepfer to explore the impact of artificial intelligence on the urban environment and on our own perceptions of reality. These works, all of which are making their U.S. debut, accompany other recent installations by Steyerl—including *Is the Museum a Battlefield?* (2013), *Duty Free Art* (2015), *The Tower* (2016), *ExtraSpaceCraft* (2016), *HellYeahWeFuckDie* (2016), *Robots Today* (2016), and *Prototype 1.0 and 1.1* (2017)—that offer compelling images of a current or future dystopia.

Added exhibition curator **Tom Eccles**, “Steyerl has a singular ability to bring seemingly disparate events, actors, and forces into critical focus. For the Armory, she has created a provocative installation of new and recent work that captures the turbulence of our current socio-political climate and of the digital age, providing a uniquely compelling vision of our contemporary moment.”

In conjunction with *Drill*, the Armory and Steyerl are presenting a series of innovative education programs in dialogue with the exhibition. As part of this programming, Steyerl has commissioned artists Vanessa Gravenor and Anton Vidokle, in collaboration with Adam Khalil and Bayley Sweitzer, to respond to *Drill* and its themes.

ABOUT HITO STEYERL

Hito Steyerl (b. 1966, Munich) is a German filmmaker, visual artist, and writer, whose practice occupies a highly discursive position between the fields of art, philosophy, and politics, exploring late capitalism's social, cultural, and financial imaginaries. Her films and lectures have increasingly addressed the presentational context of art, while her writing has circulated widely through publication in both academic and art journals, often online.

Recent and upcoming exhibitions include *Hito Steyerl: Actual Reality OS* at the Serpentine Galleries (April 2019 – January 2020), and the Biennale Arte 2019 *May You Live In Interesting Times* (May – November 2019). Past solo exhibitions have been held at Kunstmuseum, Basel (2018); The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2017); the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2016); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain (2015); and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (2013). She has participated in numerous group exhibitions including the German Pavilion, 56th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy; the Taipei Biennial; Gwangju Biennial (2010); documenta 12, Kassel (2007) and Manifesta 5. Steyerl is represented by Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York, and Esther Schipper, Berlin.

INSTALLATION DATES AND SCHEDULE

Drill is on view at Park Avenue Armory June 20 through July 21, 2019.

Monday – Thursday: 12:00pm – 8:00pm
Friday: 12:00pm – 10:00pm
Saturday – Sunday: 12:00pm – 7:00pm

Tickets for *Drill* are \$20; free for Park Avenue Armory members.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Artist Talk with Hito Steyerl, Anton Vidokle, and Ayham Ghraawi

Thursday, June 20, 2019 at 6:00pm

Tickets: \$15

Hito Steyerl joins Anton Vidokle, artist and founder of e-flux, and Ayham Ghraawi, Producer and Assistant Director of *Drill*, in conversation moderated by exhibition curator Tom Eccles about the inspirations, ideas, and creative development of her ongoing practice.

***The Dead Walk Into a Bar*: Performance lecture by Anton Vidokle, Adam Khalil, and Bayley Sweitzer**

Saturday, July 20, 2019 at 3:00pm & 5:00pm

Tickets: \$10

The distant future. An orbital facility of unknown origin. Here, the debt of taking a life will finally be repaid...through resurrection. The victims of military violence across time are systematically brought back to life and guided through the all-to-familiar facility. As a staff of identical ushers draws back layers of confusion and pain, the freshly resurrected gradually become aware of the reality of their corporeal reinsertion: perhaps the world of the living is not a world at all; to be alive in this place may merely be an exhibit. We, the resurrected, overwhelmed by a literal second life, will of course discover our one inevitable destination: a place to sit, have a drink, and talk it out.

***Learning/Unlearning of Violence*: Performance Lecture by Vanessa Gravenor**

Saturday, June 29, 2019 at 3:00pm

Tickets: \$10

What remnants remain from the US-Pakistani-Saudi proxy war in 1980s Afghanistan—those that continue to write themselves on bodies involved in terrorism and in the War on Terror? This performance lecture by artist Vanessa Gravenor critically approaches political language coming from the upper echelons of the American government through its inverse: language inserted from below in pedagogy books funded by USAID and other American backers trying to defeat the Soviets and distributed among the Afghani refugees along the Afghan-Pakistani border. Linguistic “lines of fire” are reversed in order to understand present-day feedback loops. The artist will analyze a biographical vocabulary list used when undergoing PTSD therapy, following her injury in the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris.

EXHIBITION CREDITS

Drill is commissioned by Park Avenue Armory and curated by Tom Eccles.

SPONSORSHIP

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Support for Park Avenue Armory’s programming is generously provided by the Charina Endowment Fund, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, the Howard Gilman Foundation, the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, The Emma and Georgina Bloomberg Foundation, the Marc Haas Foundation, the Juliet Lea Hillman Simonds Foundation, the Leon Levy Foundation, the May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation, the Richenthal Foundation, and the Isak and Rose Weinman Foundation. Additional support has been provided by the Armory’s Artistic Council.

Drill has been made possible in part by the Yanghyun Foundation and by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, with generous support from Ken Kuchin and Tyler Morgan.

ABOUT PARK AVENUE ARMORY

Part palace, part industrial shed, Park Avenue Armory fills a critical void in the cultural ecology of New York by enabling artists to create, students to explore, and audiences to experience unconventional work that cannot be mounted in traditional performance halls and museums. With its soaring 55,000-square-foot Wade Thompson Drill Hall—reminiscent of 19th-century European train stations—and an array of exuberant period rooms, the Armory offers a platform for creativity across all art forms. Together, these and other spaces within the historic building utilized for arts programming comprise the Thompson Arts Center, named in recognition of the Thompson family’s ongoing support of the institution.

Since its first production in September 2007, the Armory has organized and commissioned immersive performances, installations, and cross-disciplinary collaborations in its vast drill hall that defy traditional categorization and challenge artists to push the boundaries of their practice. In its historic period rooms, the Armory presents small-scale performances and programs, including its acclaimed Recital Series, which showcases musical talent from across the globe within the intimate salon setting of the Board of Officers Room; and the new Artists Studio series in the newly restored Veterans Room, which features innovative artists and artistic pairings that harken back to the imaginative collaboration and improvisation of the original group of designers who conceived the space. The Armory also offers robust arts education programs at no cost to underserved New York City public school students, engaging them with the institution’s artistic programming and the building’s history and architecture.

Programmatic highlights from the Armory’s first 10 years include Bernd Alois Zimmermann’s harrowing *Die Soldaten*, in which the audience moved “through the music”; *the event of a thread*, a site-specific installation by Ann Hamilton; the final performances of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company across three separate stages; *WS* by Paul McCarthy, a monumental installation of fantasy, excess, and dystopia; an immersive *Macbeth* set in a Scottish heath and henge by Rob Ashford and Kenneth Branagh; a profound and radically inclusive staging of Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* staged by Peter Sellars and performed by Sir Simon Rattle and the Berliner Philharmoniker; Louis Andriessen’s *De Materie* in a highly imaginative staging by director Heiner Goebbels that included floating zeppelins and a flock of 100 sheep; *Circle Map*, two evenings of immersive spatial works by

internationally acclaimed composer Kaija Saariaho performed by the New York Philharmonic with mise-en-espace by Armory Artistic Director Pierre Audi; eight-time Drama Desk-nominated play *The Hairy Ape*, directed by Richard Jones and starring Bobby Cannavale; Pierre Boulez's masterwork *Répons*, performed twice each evening by Ensemble intercontemporain and IRCAM under the baton of Matthias Pintscher with the audience changing seats in between to get a new sonic perspective; Simon Stone's award-winning *Yerma*, starring Billie Piper in a devastating and modern exploration of Federico Garcia Lorca's tale of a woman's desire to have a child; and Nick Cave's *The Let Go*, a complete transformation of the Wade Thompson Drill Hall into an immersive, multi-sensory dance-based town hall; and Ivo van Hove's adaptation of Luchino Visconti's screenplay of *The Damned*, starring Comedie-Française in a chilling and topical rumination on political depravity.

Concurrent with its artistic program, the Armory has undertaken an ongoing \$215-million revitalization of its historic building, designed by architects Herzog & de Meuron. www.armoryonpark.org.

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