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FOREWORD

In the year of the seventy-first Whitney Biennial, America has suffered a tragic loss at the hands of those whose creed is violently antagonistic to our ideal of free expression. These embattled times make the Whitney's importance as an arbiter and advocate of contemporary art clearer than ever. The global village Marshall McLuhan predicted has not been realized; instead, warring factions and sharpened divisions among nations threaten democratic ideals around the world. A museum devoted to understanding the achievements of artists who work in the United States offers a welcome forum, freed from the superficialities of ostensibly global surveys that provide highlights, rather than a substantial review of any country's contributions.

The Whitney's Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Curator of Contemporary Art, Lawrence R. Rinder, provides in this catalogue an eloquent introduction affirming the power of art in this age of uncertainty. His leadership of the 2002 Biennial has been exemplary throughout. With a dogged determination to give every corner of the United States its due, he has logged tens of thousands of miles of travel in search of an illuminating picture of American art today. We all owe him our thanks for this earnest and thoughtful odyssey.

Larry Rinder assembled a stellar team from the Whitney including Chrissie Iles, curator of film and video; Christiane Paul, adjunct curator of new media arts; Debra Singer, associate curator of contemporary art; Kirstin Bach, Biennial coordinator; Elizabeth Fleming, Biennial assistant; Evelyn Hankins, curatorial assistant; Henriette Huldisch, curatorial coordinator, film and video; Tanya Leighton, curatorial assistant; Chris Perez, curatorial assistant; Ilaria Bonacossa, Kirstin Butler, Elizabeth Fisher, and Frank Motz, Biennial researchers; and Silvia Carmen Cubiña, Biennial consultant. Essential assistance was also provided by Lisa Berthoud, Tracey Fugami, Liz Glynn, Marit Knollmueller, Laura Mott, Glenn Phillips, Jose Roca, and Naseem Wahlah.

The Whitney's chairman, Leonard A. Lauder, and president, Joel S. Ehrenkranz, continue to provide leadership for a dedicated Board. The museum's entire staff is involved with each Biennial, and it is only possible to single out those with primary responsibilities: Barbara Bantivoglio, associate director for external affairs; Keith Crippen, exhibition designer; Mary Haus, director of communications; Raina Lampkins-Fielder, acting Helena Rubinstein Chair of Education; Christy Putnam, associate director for exhibitions and collections

management; Suzanne Quigley, head registrar, collections and exhibitions; Debbie Rowe, manager of information technology; and the Publications and New Media Department, led by its director, Garrett White.

In planning the exhibition, the curators convened an extraordinary group of advisors: Bonnie Clearwater, director and chief curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami; Steve Dietz, curator of new media, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; James Elaine, curator, Hammer Projects, UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Peter Taub, director of performance, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and Hamza Walker, education director, The Renaissance Society at The University of Chicago. In addition, Mark McElhatten, an independent curator in New York City, gave us invaluable advice throughout the research process.

The catalogue was a collaborative effort of designers J. Abbott Miller and Roy Brooks, Pentagram; Kate Norment, project manager; and David E. Brown, editor. In addition to the curators' texts, catalogue contributions were made by curatorial assistants Evelyn Hankins, Tanya Leighton, and Chris Perez, and grantswriter Alexander Villari.

The Public Art Fund, under the guidance of Susan K. Freedman, president, and Tom Eccles, director, collaborated with the Whitney on a first-ever presentation of Biennial works in Central Park, which is sponsored by Bloomberg. We are very grateful to Richard Griggs and Anne Wehr, project director and communications manager of the Public Art Fund, respectively. We would also like to thank Creative Time and its executive director, Anne Pasternak, for their cooperation in the presentation of Biennial work.

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The artists in the Biennial are due our special thanks. This exhibition is theirs.