

MEDIA RELEASE

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**STUDIO
MUSEUM
HARLEM**

Leslie Hewitt awarded 2010 Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize



Leslie Hewitt, *A Series of Projections* (Installation view: On Beauty, Objects and Dissonance, The Kitchen, NY), 2010. Photo: Adam Reich

NEW YORK, NY, October 19, 2010—Yesterday evening, The Studio Museum in Harlem awarded the fifth annual Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize to Leslie Hewitt. Director and Chief Curator Thelma Golden announced the award to over 700 supporters and friends, including honoree George Wein, at the Museum's Gala 2010.

Jazz impresario, musician and philanthropist George Wein established the Prize in 2006 to honor his late wife Joyce Alexander Wein, a woman whose life embodied a commitment to the power and possibilities of art and culture. Joyce was a dedicated Trustee of The Studio Museum in Harlem and was deeply involved with philanthropy and the arts throughout her life. Inspired by Joyce's lifelong support of living artists and envisioned as an extension of the Studio Museum's mission to support experimentation and excellence in contemporary art, the Wein Prize recognizes and honors the artistic achievements of an African-American artist who demonstrates great innovation, promise and creativity, and includes an unrestricted monetary award of \$50,000. Previous recipients include Glenn Ligon (2009) Nadine Robinson (2008), Trenton Doyle Hancock (2007) and Lorna Simpson (2006).

"My selection for the 2010 Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize is truly a surprise. I feel extremely honored to receive such a prestigious prize," said Hewitt. "This generous award will contribute greatly to the development of new film-based work. I am very thankful and humbled by this news!"

Leslie Hewitt is a New York-based artist working in photography, sculpture, site-specific installation and film. Influenced and inspired by a variety of sources and practices, including Dutch still life, twentieth-century protest literature, the history and study of optics as it relates to the camera and Third Cinema, Hewitt's work addresses notions of time, space, memory and how perception is altered through technology. She uses the camera as a tool not only to capture a specific moment, but also to reposition one's point of view, subtly challenging the potentials, limitations and expectations of a photographic document.

Hewitt utilizes everyday objects, such as amateur photographs, snapshots, newspapers, magazines, used books and other ephemera to reveal the socioeconomic and political frameworks of contemporary society. She meticulously arranges the materials into still-life compositions that she recomposes and photographs over time, capturing subtle shifts in light, movement and space. In her site-specific installations, Hewitt places the photographs on both the walls and floors, sometimes raising them on wooden planks or juxtaposing the works with the actual objects in the photographs. By treating her photographs as installations, Hewitt positions viewers in very intentional and specific ways, further challenging perceptions of space and the traditional roles of photography. Her treatment of shape, color and landscape results in works that are, at times, rich and elaborate, and at other times show her engagement with a Minimalist practice.

Expanding on her interest in site-specificity, Hewitt has most recently collaborated on a film project with cinematographer Bradford Young that references Claude Brown's (1937–2002) seminal 1965 autobiographical work, *Manchild in the Promised Land*. The film, *Untitled (Level)* (2010), is both a coming-of-age story and a portrait of a city. A silent combination of still and moving images of a man walking through Harlem, the work explores the personal, political and psychological aspects of moving from one place to another, exemplifying Hewitt's interests in nonlinear perspective and, as the artist has stated, "the everyday and the transformative power of circumstance or situation." *Untitled (Level)* will be on view at the Studio Museum November 11, 2010—January 2, 2011.

Born in St. Albans, New York, in 1977, Hewitt studied at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, New York University and Yale University Art School, where she received her MFA in 2004. She was the recipient of the 2008 Art Matters research grant to the Netherlands and was a 2007-08 artist in residence at the Studio Museum. She has had a solo exhibition at The Kitchen in New York (2010), was included in the Whitney Biennial (2008), and was part of *New Photography 2009* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Her work has been exhibited in a number of group shows, both nationally and internationally, and is represented in the public collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University; the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and The Studio Museum in Harlem.

About The Studio Museum in Harlem

Founded in 1968, The Studio Museum in Harlem is a contemporary art museum that focuses on the work of artists of African descent locally, nationally and globally, as well as work that has been inspired and influenced by African-American culture. The Museum is committed to serving as a unique resource in the local community, and in national and international arenas, by making artworks and exhibitions concrete and personal for each viewer.

Hours and Admission

The Studio Museum is open Thursday and Friday, noon-9pm; Saturday, 10am-6pm; Sunday, noon-6pm. The museum is closed to the public on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Museum admission is by suggested donation: \$7 for adults, \$3 for students (with valid id) and seniors. Free for children 12 and under. Sundays are free at the Studio Museum, thanks to generous support from Target.

The Studio Museum in Harlem is supported, in part, with public funds provided by the following government agencies and elected representatives: The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation; Assemblyman Keith L. T. Wright, 70th A.D.; New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; Institute of Museum and Library Services; the National Endowment for the Arts; Council Member Inez E. Dickens, 9th C.D. and Speaker Christine Quinn and the New York City Council.