

## MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY

For immediate release

### DOWNBEAT

**Denniston Hill at Marian Goodman Gallery, curated by Guillermo Rodríguez**

13 July – 18 August 2023

Opening reception: Thursday, 13 July 2023, 6-8 pm

Marian Goodman Gallery is pleased to announce *Downbeat*, an exhibition about Denniston Hill, the artist residency founded by artists Julie Mehretu and Paul Pfeiffer and architect Lawrence Chua. *Downbeat* features alumni and collaborators of Denniston Hill's residency program, including Rosa Barba, Pelenakeke Brown, Renee Gladman, Autumn Knight, Zoe Leonard, Joseph Liatela, Emma McNally, Maia Cruz Palileo, Sojourner Truth Parsons, Carlos Reyes, and Apichatpong Weerasethakul.

The exhibition takes its title from Denniston Hill's concept of the "downbeat": a rhythmic kind of time stretched out to make space for rest, reflection, research, and rejuvenation—essential components of the creative process. Artists exist under a constant pressure to produce. Artist studios are expected to operate like factories, many without the benefit of staff or distribution systems. The Denniston Hill "downbeat" is a counterbalance to this energy. It recognizes artists as whole human beings and nourishes all aspects of artistic production.

*Downbeat* brings together artworks that resonate with this particular temporality and demands for artist care by addressing alternative modes of being and perception, slowing down the perceived passage of time to intensify experience.

Three large-scale installations by Autumn Knight, Joseph Liatela, and Carlos Reyes offer a physical experience of the pendulum that swings between rest, pleasure, and labor. Liatela's *Heaven's Gate* (2021) holds us in a liminal emotional state. While standing inside the work's immersive room of blissful sounds and scents, we see through its PVC "walls" to another, harsher reality: the world we just left. Knight's *Lottery Tickets* (2022) tasks viewers with scratching the surface of a series of drawings to reveal the compositions hidden underneath. In a reversal of roles, a normally passive audience suddenly takes on the "work" of mark making so that the artist might be allowed to rest. Reyes' *7129619 (I)* (2018) drapes an awning from a defunct men's bath house across the floor. No longer a shelter from the sun or an enticement for entry, the awning becomes a timekeeper. It simultaneously transports our fantasies to the glory days of this bath house, while its wornness reminds us that we are all proceeding forward towards our own eventual mortality.

The agency of being on one's own time is an essential aspect of the downbeat. Pelenakeke Brown's *Crossings* (2018) series simultaneously untethers and reunites language into new cosmologic

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patterns to explore “crip time”: a term the artist uses to describe a pace liberated from a Capitalist, able-bodied clock. Renee Gladman’s *Slowly We Have the Feeling: Scores* (2019 - 2022) presents words and equations as vibrational partners dancing with one another on paper. By musically accentuating the rhythmic components of drawing and writing, Gladman’s scores generate a space/time relationship that relies on interpretation and sensation. Emma McNally’s *Sisters* (2022) series evokes the always emerging time of quantum physics. McNally, like Gladman, is particularly interested in the vibrational qualities that bond elements together. Her artist statement quotes Karen Barad’s theories on the entangled nature of existence and infers a familial relationship between space and time. Rosa Barba’s *Color Studies* (2013) is a filmic meditation on color, time, and perception. In it, two 16mm projectors face each other and share a single screen between them anchored by a music stand. Their overlapping images thus become a musical score, as a chromatic rhythm emerges from the combination of colors like notation sheets.

Through works by Zoe Leonard, Maia Cruz Palileo, Sojourner Truth Parsons, Carlos Reyes, and Apichatpong Weerasethakul, we understand how the downbeat is a rhythm more closely aligned with the ebbs and flows of the natural environment. The intentional slowing of time allows a stripping back of the bureaucratic layers that keep us separated from our most organic selves. Parsons’ paintings are coded compositions that suggest multiple modes of *beingness* in the world. Leonard’s four gelatin silver prints of birds flying above rooftops in Brooklyn propose a listening to the environment that is “relaxed, but not passive.” More actively, Palileo’s paintings and sculpture intentionally scramble the historical “accuracy” of the relationship between time, people, and nature in order to liberate visual artifacts from the “exploitative gaze of the ethnographic image.” Reyes’ *Night Club* (2016), is a series of hand-blown glass sculptures rhythmically encapsulating the artist’s breathing patterns. In Weerasethakul’s short film, *Vapour* (2015), a mysterious cloud—the breath of a landscape—completely engulfs a mountain village in Northern Thailand for one day. The resulting melee is a metaphor for the dangerous ways that inharmonious ecosystems can swallow each other.

The exhibition welcomes viewers into a gathering space akin to Denniston Hill’s campus, where a multi-voiced chorus of artists is held together by an atmospheric ethos of “creleisure,” as Hélio Oiticica termed “creative leisure time.” By syncopating socially conditioned notions of time with the more fluid and individualized (or entangled) pace required by creativity, the works presented share notions of rest and deceleration as essential components of artmaking.

*Downbeat* is curated by Guillermo Rodríguez, a 2022 Curatorial Research Fellow at Independent Curators International (ICI). Rodríguez’s fellowship centered on research for *El Contrato Natural*, an exhibition-as-ecosystem contrasting the University of Puerto Rico’s botanical gardens with artworks that operate in symbiosis with the natural environment that hosts them.

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For further information, please visit our website [mariangoodman.com](http://mariangoodman.com), or please contact Marian Goodman Gallery New York at: 212 977 7160. For information on Denniston Hill please contact Megan Steinman, Executive Director, [megan@dennistonhill.org](mailto:megan@dennistonhill.org), 845-434-2312.

### About Denniston Hill

Denniston Hill is a residency for artists and creative visionaries nestled inside 220 acres of land traditionally tended by the Esopus people of the Lenapehoking, now known as the southern Catskill mountains in Sullivan County, New York. Since 2004, our residencies have provided free room and board, private studios, a shared wood shop, a community garden, connections to local artists and farmers, and tools for communal living to over 200 artists from around the world. We pay residents a small stipend to help cover the costs of everyday life, and we cover roundtrip travel to our campus. Most importantly, Denniston Hill provides a sanctuary where artists can reconnect with nature, commune with each other, breathe deeply, and just BE.

### About the Independent Curators International (ICI) Curatorial Fellowship

ICI's Curatorial Research Fellowships reflect the organization's commitment to the advancement of new knowledge and practices. The program supports curators' research, travel, and the development of their professional networks, promoting experimentation, collaboration, and international engagement in the field. Expanded in 2021 with the support of the Marian Goodman Gallery Initiative in honor of the late Okwui Enwezor, the program aims to strengthen and expand educational and research opportunities for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) curators, empowering and sustaining a more diverse generation of creative professionals and forging international collaborative networks.