



# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**HIGH LINE ART PRESENTS**

## **READINGS AND PERFORMANCES IN RESPONSE TO ZOE LEONARD'S *I WANT A PRESIDENT***

**FEATURING EILEEN MYLES, JUSTIN VIVIAN BOND, SHARON HAYES, PAMELA SNEED, WU TSANG, AND MORE**

**NOVEMBER 6, 2016, 1:00 – 3:30 PM**

**CHELSEA MARKET PASSAGE, ON THE HIGH LINE AT WEST 16TH STREET**

**New York, NY (October 27, 2016)** – Presented by Friends of the High Line, High Line Art is pleased to announce an afternoon of readings and performances in response to Zoe Leonard's *I want a president* (1992), which is currently on view on the western pillar of The Standard, High Line, through November 17, 2016. Participants include **Morgan Bassichis, Justin Vivian Bond, Mel Elberg, Malik Gaines and Alexandro Segade, Sharon Hayes, Layli Long Soldier, Fred Moten, Eileen Myles, Pamela Sneed, and Wu Tsang.**

The event is free with RSVP and open to the public. RSVP available [here](#).

Installed on the occasion of the upcoming 2016 U.S. presidential election, *I want a president* renders a poignant portrait of the cultural and political climate in the early 1990s in New York City with words that still resonate today. The text, which Leonard originally wrote in 1992, the year that poet Eileen Myles ran for president as an independent candidate alongside George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and Ross Perot, has been read, translated, and reimagined by various groups in the context of numerous political elections in the U.S. and abroad. While Leonard says that *I want a president* is not the text that she would write today, she is interested in the ways in which it asks: What is different today, and what remains the same?





"I am interested in the space this text opens up for us to imagine and voice what we want in our leaders, and even beyond that, what we can envision for the future of our society," says Leonard. "I still think that speaking up is itself a vital and powerful political act." Read more about *I want a president* [here](#).

#### ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

**Morgan Bassichis** performs live comedic stories that explore history, mysticism, and just, like, being alive. Morgan has performed at Artists Space, New Museum, PARTICIPANT INC, Poetry Project, Whitney Museum of American Art, and as part of the 2015 Greater New York exhibition at MoMA PS1. Bassichis's essays have appeared in the *Radical History Review*, *Captive Genders*, and other edited volumes. Bassichis's shows have been described as "out there" (by Bassichis's mother) and "super intense" (by Bassichis).

**Mx Justin Vivian Bond** is a trans-genre artist living in New York City. As a performer both on and Off-Broadway, Mx Bond has received numerous accolades winning an Obie (2001), a Bessie (2004), a Tony nomination (2007), the Ethyl Eichelberger Award (2007), The Peter Reed Foundaton Grant, and a New York Foundation for the Arts Grant for Artists. V authored the Lambda Literary Award winning memoir *TANGO: My Childhood, Backwards and in High Heels* (The Feminist Press, 2011).

**Mel Elberg** believes in the existence and value of many different kinds of thinking and interaction, in a world in which how close you can appear to a certain one of them determines whether you're seen as a Real Person, or an adult, or an intelligent person, and in a world in which these determine whether you have any rights.

**Malik Gaines** and **Alexandro Segade** are artists based in New York. Since 2000, they have performed and exhibited extensively with their collective My Barbarian, whose show *The Audience is Always Right*, is currently on view at the New Museum. They make solo and duo projects, as well. Gaines is assistant professor of Performance Studies at NYU and Segade is co-chair of MFA Film/Video at Bard College.

**Sharon Hayes** lives and works in New York City. Hayes is engaged in an art practice that uses multiple mediums—video, performance, and installation—in ongoing investigation into various intersections between history, politics and speech. Hayes's work has been presented internationally at institutions including Baltimore Museum of Art (2015), Stedelijk Museum (2013), Whitney Museum of Art (2012), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (2012), Museum of Modern art (2012), SF MOMA (2011), ICA, Philadelphia (2010), and Tate Modern (2007).

**Layli Long Soldier** is a poet-architect in the arena of witness and longing. Her poems have appeared in *The American Poet*, *The American Reader*, *The Kenyon Review Online*, and other publications. She is the recipient of the 2015 NACF National Artist Fellowship, a 2015 Lannan Literary Fellowship and a 2016 Whiting Award. Her work of poetry, *WHEREAS*, will be published by Graywolf Press in 2017. Soldier resides in Santa Fe, NM.

**Fred Moten** is author of *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*, *Hughson's Tavern*, *B. Jenkins*, *The Feel Trio*, *The Little Edges*, and *The Service Porch*; co-author, with Stefano Harney, of *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*; and, with Wu Tsang, co-author of *Who touched me?*. He lives in Los Angeles and teaches at the University of California, Riverside.

**Eileen Myles** is a poet whose books include *Chelsea Girls*, *I Must Be Living Twice: New and Selected Poems* and *The Importance of Being Iceland/Travel Essays in Art*. Myles conducted an openly female write-in campaign for president of the United States in 1992. They have received grants and awards from the Guggenheim Foundation, Creative Capital, the Foundation for Contemporary Art, and in 2016 was awarded the Clark Prize. Myles's poems have appeared in seasons 2 and 3 of the Emmy-winning TV show *Transparent*. They live in New York and Marfa, TX.

**Pamela Sneed** is a New York-based poet, writer, and actress. She is the author of *Imagine Being More Afraid of Freedom Than Slavery*, *KONG & other works*, and the chapbook *Lincoln*. She has performed at Lincoln Center, P.S. 122, Ex-Teresa Mexico City, ICA London, CCA Glasgow, BAM Cafe, Joe's Pub, The Public Theater, Central Park Summer Stage, Bronx Summer Stage, and the Whitney Museum. She is completing a collection of short stories, *Anna Mae/For Black Women Survivors*, and has a forthcoming chapbook, *Sweet Dreams*.

**Wu Tsang** is a filmmaker, artist, and performer based in Los Angeles. Her work is concerned with queer and trans communities and community-practices, and her films, installations, performances, and sculptures move fluidly between documentary, activism, and fiction. Her projects have been presented at museums and film festivals internationally, including MoMA (New York), Tate Modern (London), Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), MCA





(Chicago), MOCA (Los Angeles), Berlinale Film Festival (Berlin), SANFIC (Santiago), Hot Docs Festival (Toronto), and South by Southwest Film Festival (Austin).

#### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Zoe Leonard (b. 1961, Liberty, NY) lives and works in New York City. Recent exhibitions have been presented at major institutions including MoMA, New York (2015); Chinati Foundation, Marfa, TX (2013); Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung, Vienna (2009); Dia, Beacon (2008); and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2008). She has been included in group exhibitions at institutions including Art Institute of Chicago (2016); The Kitchen, New York (2016); MoMA PS1, Long Island City (2015); Tate Liverpool (2015); and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2014). Her work has been presented in major international exhibitions including the Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1993, 1997, and 2014), Documenta IX (1992), and Documenta XII (2007). Publications include *Analogue* (2007), *Zoe Leonard: Photographs* (2008), *You see I am here after all* (2010), and *Available Light* (2014).

#### **ABOUT HIGH LINE ART**

Presented by Friends of the High Line, High Line Art commissions and produces public art projects on and around the High Line. Founded in 2009, High Line Art presents a wide array of artwork including site-specific commissions, exhibitions, performances, video programs, and a series of billboard interventions. Curated by Cecilia Alemani, the Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director & Chief Curator of High Line Art, and produced by Friends of the High Line, High Line Art invites artists to think of creative ways to engage with the uniqueness of the architecture, history, and design of the High Line and to foster a productive dialogue with the surrounding neighborhood and urban landscape.

Zoe Leonard, *I want a president*, is presented by High Line Art and [The Standard, High Line](#).

Major support for High Line Art comes from Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Additional funding is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and Dorothy Lichtenstein. High Line Art is supported, in part, with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the New York City Council and from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

For further information on High Line Art, please visit [art.thehighline.org](http://art.thehighline.org).

#### **ABOUT FRIENDS OF THE HIGH LINE**

Friends of the High Line raises 98% of the High Line's annual budget. Owned by the City of New York, the High Line is a public park maintained, operated, and programmed by Friends of the High Line, in partnership with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation.

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA INFORMATION**

@HighLineArtNYC #ZoeLeonard #Iwantapresident

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#### **MEDIA CONTACT**

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