



**PAUL MCCARTHY OVERTAKES PARK AVENUE ARMORY'S IMMENSE DRILL HALL  
WITH HIS LARGEST INSTALLATION TO DATE**

**Opening June 19, *WS* Interweaves Sculpture, Video, and Performance  
Into Transgressive Interpretation of Classic Fairytale**

**Monumental Installation Features Large-Scale Video Projections, Forest of Towering Trees and  
Colorful Flowers, and Replica of McCarthy's Childhood Home**



**New York, NY - May 14, 2013 -** This June, Park Avenue Armory unveils a new large-scale installation and video project by artist Paul McCarthy, considered among the most provocative and influential voices in the international art world today. Drawing inspiration from the 19<sup>th</sup>-century German fairytale Snow White and McCarthy's ongoing exploration of American myths and icons, *WS* takes over the Armory's Wade Thompson Drill Hall from June 19 through August 4, 2013, and marks the Armory's seventh major visual art installation to date. The monumental installation weaves together a fantastical forest and a three-quarter-scale house modeled after McCarthy's own childhood home with multi-channel video projections to immerse visitors in a world of fantasy and depravity. A press preview for *WS* will be held at the Armory on June 18, 2013.

*WS* is the first visual art project presented under the Armory's new Artistic Director Alex Poots and curator Hans-Ulrich Obrist in association with Tom Eccles. *WS* was created in collaboration with the artist's son, Damon McCarthy, and is a work in progress that will continue to evolve following the installation at the Armory. The exhibition includes images and themes that some visitors may find disturbing. Admission will be restricted to audiences over 17.

"Since we first began challenging visual artists to create and present epic work in our historic spaces, the Wade Thompson Drill Hall has become a fertile site for the genesis of thought-provoking and immersive artistic experiences that can only be done at the Armory," said Rebecca Robertson, President and Executive Producer of Park Avenue Armory. "We are committed to providing a platform for artists to create outside-the-box work, whether exploring concepts of play and collective identity as with our recent Ann Hamilton installation, or probing the darker side of fairytales and American icons in Paul McCarthy's monumental new work."

Said Alex Poots, Artistic Director of the Armory, "*WS* is a true Gesamtkunstwerk. It is an overwhelming creation born out of the original Brothers Grimm fairytale and the subsequent popular interpretations that became iconic American symbols in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Going far beyond the confines of the story, it explores the vast and at times distressingly dark corners of the human psyche." He added, "*WS* is the second production in this year's Armory season, which is commissioning and reimagining works from across the spectrum of the arts."

Co-curator Hans-Ulrich Obrist added, "Like the superstrings of particle physics, McCarthy's monumental new work gathers together the many dimensions of his singular practice, amplifying them in a complex dialogue with the architecture of the Park Avenue Armory. *WS* brilliantly excavates the cultural ups and downs of the American psyche to create a complete and intricate installation, combining his visionary sculptures, performances, drawings, writings, videos, pop up architectures and houses readymades."

Integrating sculpture, sets, sound and video into a "total artwork," *WS* is an evolving work in progress built upon key themes and practices recurrent in McCarthy's career and is his largest and most ambitious project to date. It features a massive forest, at once enchanted and menacing, filled with towering 30-foot tall trees and colorful, oversized flowers that extend across a raised lush landscape. A yellow ranch-style house, a three-quarter-scale exact replica of McCarthy's childhood home, sits at the center of the installation. This 8,800-square foot sculpture and house—complete with open sets of a bedroom, kitchen, basement and hallways—served as the setting for the project's video performances. The installation is littered with the detritus of the filming process, evidence of the performative nature of the work.

Surrounding the installation, large-scale video projections feature scenes from a subversive and explicit alternative fairytale in which the character Walt Paul—played by McCarthy as an amalgam of himself and the archetypes of a movie producer, artist, father and other roles—cavorts with a cast of characters including White Snow, a figure who represents both the archetypal virgin and vixen, a daughter as well as a fairytale princess. Dwarves, the Prince, and doubles for Walt Paul and White Snow are part of the action. Drawing loosely upon the classic story and interweaving references to the history of art, the performance becomes a bacchanal.

*WS* is part of the Armory's 2013 season, which launched in March with *OKTOPHONIE*, Karlheinz Stockhausen's epic electronic masterpiece ritualized in a lunar environment created by visual artist Rirkrit Tiravanija. The season will also include: *The Machine*, a play by one of Britain's fastest rising young playwrights, Matt Charman, that chronicles Garry Kasparov's 1997 chess game against IBM's Deep Blue super-computer, a contest that set man against machine; *Massive Attack V Adam Curtis*, a new kind of imaginative experience conceived by Adam Curtis and Robert Del Naja mixing music, film, politics, and moments of illusion, performed by Massive Attack and special guests; and Robert Wilson's powerful new staging of *The Life and Death of Marina Abramović*.

### **About Paul McCarthy**

American artist Paul McCarthy is known for creating challenging and visceral work that questions and critiques social norms, cultural icons, and accepted histories alike. The human figure is frequently at the center of his work, whether through sculpture, photography, painting, performance, video, or installation.

McCarthy has exhibited his work internationally, and recent solo exhibitions include *The Box*, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany (2012); *Paul McCarthy*, Kukje gallery, Seoul, South Korea (2012); *Pig Island*, Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, Milan, Italy (2010); *White Snow*, Hauser & Wirth, New York, NY (2009); *Paul McCarthy - Air Pressure*, an exhibition of inflatable sculptures at De Uithof, City of Utrecht, Netherlands (2009); *Central Symmetrical Rotation Movement - Three Installations, Two Film*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York NY (2008). McCarthy has participated in international art exhibitions and events, including the Berlin Biennial (2006); SITE Santa Fe (2004); and the Venice Biennale (1993, 1999, 2001, 2013). His work is in collections of the Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France; and Tate, London, England, among others.

Current exhibitions include the presentation of *Balloon Dog* (2013), a new 80-foot-high inflatable work on view from May 10 to May 13 at the Sculpture Park at Frieze New York 2013. Hauser & Wirth is also presenting three ambitious shows of his work: *Paul McCarthy: Life Cast* and *Paul McCarthy: Sculptures* opens to the public on May 10 at the gallery's East 69<sup>th</sup> and West 18<sup>th</sup> Street locations, respectively. In June, *Paul McCarthy and Damon McCarthy: Rebel Dabble Babble*, a vast, provocative video projection and installation work, will open at the 18<sup>th</sup> Street gallery.

Born in 1945 in Salt Lake City, Utah, McCarthy studied at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City (1968–69); earned a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute (1969) and an MFA from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles (1972); and was a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles (1984–2003). He currently lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

### 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, and the public to experience, unconventional work that could not otherwise 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 array of exuberant period rooms, the Armory invites artists to draw upon its grand scale and distinctive character to both inspire and inform their work.

Since its first production in September 2007—Aaron Young’s *Greeting Card*, a 9,216-square-foot “action” painting created by the burned-out tire marks of ten choreographed motorcycles—the Armory has organized a series of immersive performances, installations, and works of art that have drawn critical and popular attention working independently or with other cultural institutions. Among the highlights of its first five years are: Bernd Zimmermann’s harrowing *Die Soldaten*, in which the audience moved “through the music”; the unprecedented six-week residency of the Royal Shakespeare Company, in their own theater rebuilt in the drill hall; a massive digital sound and video environment by Ryoji Ikeda; a sprawling gauzy, multisensory labyrinth created by Ernesto Neto; the final performances of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company across three separate stages; and the New York Philharmonic performing Karlheinz Stockhausen’s sonic masterpiece *Gruppen* with three orchestras surrounding the audience. The ongoing *Under Construction* series features intimate performances in the Armory’s period rooms with artists presenting works in progress.

The 2013 artistic season coincides with Park Avenue Armory’s ongoing \$200-million revitalization of its historic building, named among the “100 Most Endangered Historic Sites in the World” by the World Monuments Fund in 2000. The multi-year revitalization project, designed by architects Herzog & de Meuron, reinvigorates the Armory’s original design while stabilizing, preserving, and renewing the building for future generations.

### Hours for *WS*

On view June 19 – August 4, 2013

Tuesday – Thursday: 1:00p.m. – 8:00p.m.

Friday: 1:00p.m. – 10:00p.m.

Saturday – Sunday: 12:00 p.m. – 7:00p.m.

### Location

643 Park Avenue (at 67th Street), New York City

### Admission

The exhibition includes images and themes that some visitors may find disturbing. **Admission is restricted to audiences over 17.**

\$15 General Admission

\$12 Students (with ID), Seniors (65+), Groups (8 +)

### For more information or to request images, please contact:

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