

The Academic Body

Curated by Mark Robbins and Peter Benson Miller

Opening: Wednesday, May 22, 2019 from 7:00 to 9:00pm

May 23–July 13, 2019

American Academy in Rome

Via Angelo Masina 5, Rome

Sanford Biggers (2018 Fellow), Patricia Cronin (2007 Fellow), Daniel Chester French, Stephen Greene (1954 Fellow), Ann Hamilton (2017 Resident), Lyle Ashton Harris (2001 Fellow), Tom Johnson/Adrienne Kennedy, Sally Mann, Paul Manship (1912 Fellow), Jessie Marino (2019 Fellow), Beverly Mclver (2018 Fellow), Ana Mendieta (1984 Fellow), Wangechi Mutu (2019 Resident), Catherine Opie, Stefan Sagmeister (2019 Resident), David Schutter (2016 Fellow), Sissi (2007 Italian Fellow), Giuseppe Stampone (2014 Italian Fellow), Catherine Wagner (2014 Fellow), Deborah Willis (2019 Resident)

The American Academy in Rome presents *The Academic Body*, an exhibition that spans over a century to tell the changes in the representation of the body in art and society.

Since the origins of representation, the human body has been a vehicle for a variety of approaches to artistic expression. As a way of imagining the divine, as a site of ideal beauty and ruminations on mortality, or as the contested ground between nature and culture, bodies—and representations of bodies—index a culture’s ideas about itself and mark the locus for the questioning and contestation of the human form.

Recently, the body has re-emerged as a work in progress, a canvas to be altered, conforming to changing canons of beauty or constantly evolving constructed gender roles. In this capacity, the body as a malleable form has once again taken center stage in cultural debate and artistic expression. As lightning rods for contemporary social issues—including the violence committed against the marginalized, the recognition of transgender individuals, and the replacement of workers by robotics, to name only a few examples—bodies have assumed unprecedented visibility in political discourse.

Mindful of these issues, this exhibition tracks the ways in which the body has been interrogated and transformed in contemporary art from 1894 to the present. As it has evolved from a stalwart of Academic artistic practice to a laboratory for cutting-edge dialogue between critical theory and creative endeavor, the American Academy in Rome (AAR) is uniquely qualified to host an exhibition tracking the changing representations of the body in art and society.

In so doing, the institution reflects critically on its own trajectory and enduring relevance. *The Academic Body* features work by artists affiliated with AAR (Fellows and Residents) whose work has explored the above themes in provocative ways, as well as artists whose trajectories have intersected meaningfully and critically with Italy and the Academic tradition.

The exhibition is curated by **Mark Robbins**, President and CEO of the American Academy in Rome, and **Peter Benson Miller**, Andrew Heiskell Arts Director.

AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME

A fully illustrated catalogue accompanying the exhibition includes essay contributions from **Mary Beard** (2019 Resident), **Leslie Cozzi** (2018 Fellow), and **Deborah Willis** (2019 Resident), as well as by Robbins and Miller.

The Academic Body

May 23–July 13, 2019

Hours: Thursday–Saturday from 4:00 to 7:00pm

American Academy in Rome

Via Angelo Masina 5, Rome

COLLATERAL EVENTS

Performance

Life Clings Closest Where Most Hated

A performance by Tom Johnson based on Adrienne Kennedy's notes on *Frankenstein*

Tuesday, May 14, 2019 at 6:00pm

American Academy in Rome – Cryptoporticus

The American Academy in Rome is proud to present the international debut of this collaboration between the celebrated playwright **Adrienne Kennedy** and the Turin-based American artist **Tom Johnson**. Inspired by Kennedy's reading of Mary Shelley's 1818 novel *Frankenstein*—a landmark in the development of modern notions about the body, difference, and social alienation—Johnson has created an installation and performance expressly for *The Academic Body*. A video of the performance will be on show for the exhibition.

Conversation

Mark Robbins, Patricia Cronin, and Stefan Sagmeister – *Visible Body*

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 at 6:00 PM

American Academy in Rome – Lecture Room

Immediately preceding the opening of the exhibition *The Academic Body*, **Mark Robbins** will speak with two of the artists in the exhibition, **Patricia Cronin** (2007 Fellow) and **Stefan Sagmeister**, current Henry Wolf Graphic Designer in Residence at the Academy.

These events are part of the series *New Work in the Arts & Humanities: The Body*. They are made possible by the Roy Lichtenstein Artist in Residence Fund, the Robert Mapplethorpe Photographer in Residence Fund, and the Terra Foundation for American Art.

CONTACTS

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