

OUT

American Realness

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BY JERRY PORTWOOD



Wu Tsang gives new meaning to social media.

Everyone knows there's an art to hosting a party, but few realize that a party can be art. When Wu Tsang throws a bash, he acts as both host and creator. The Los Angeles-based artist's work -- which often incorporates DJs and references to drag culture -- will be featured in both this year's **Whitney Biennial** and **The Ungovernables**, the New Museum's triennial of emerging young artists. The fact that a trans-identified, multiracial performance artist is being recognized

at such prominent institutions means Tsang's message of art-based activism will be heard by the privileged masses he critiques.

"I've been looking at the idea of hosting and hospitality, the social practice, but also the metaphor—channeling the voice like a medium would," Tsang says.

For four years, Tsang hosted a party called **WILDNESS** that attracted a fashionable set to an L.A. bar that was previously a refuge for the Latina transgender immigrant community. "I wanted WILDNESS to be this living room," he says. "I wanted people to jump up on stage, so that this performance community could grow." Tsang documented the convergence of cultures, resulting in a feature-length art film, also titled **WILDNESS**, which will screen in May at the Whitney Museum.

In **Full Body Quotation**, a video piece at the New Museum, a pile of young performers recite lines -- "I have the right to show my color, darling"; "I want my name to be a household product" -- in a choral collage that channels the 1990 documentary **Paris Is Burning**. "Wu has a special sensitivity for looking at and revisiting something that became cliché—like 'The personal is political'—and bringing it back to the table," explains **Eungie Joo**, the New Museum curator who has mentored Tsang.

Though the art world may be familiar with Tsang's work, consider this your personal invitation.

*The **Whitney Biennial** is open March 1–May 27, and **The Ungovernables** is open and Feb. 15–April 22 at the **New Museum**, both in Manhattan.*