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ALL ARTS' First Artist in Residence Taylor Mac Presents, *Whitman in the Woods.*, Premiering Sunday, May 2 at 10 p.m.

Film exploration of Walt Whitman spotlights his queer identity, through a fantastical drag performance of his poetry in nature by Mac

As the first **ALL ARTS** Artist in Residence, Taylor Mac (who uses “judy”—lowercase sic—as a gender pronoun) turned to a personal source of inspiration for judy’s first project for the New York Emmy-winning arts and culture hub: 19th century American poet and queer icon Walt Whitman. **ALL ARTS** tasked the veteran theater artist with creating video content for its platforms, but no other content parameters to encourage full creative freedom of expression. The result is ***Whitman in the Woods.***, premiering nationwide Sunday, May 2 at 10 p.m. on the free [ALL ARTS app](#) and allarts.org and in the New York metro area on the ALL ARTS TV channel ([channel lineup](#)). In the film, Mac performs favorite poems by Whitman in glamorous drag costume and makeup outside in nature. The performance brings a lighter, more comedic and directly queer lens to the poet’s work than is often seen.

“Like many others, my introduction to Whitman happened indoors and through an academic, humorless and heterosexual lens,” expresses Mac. “Whitman was so clearly in love with the outside world and with men, and he had a unique sense of humor. This is our way of finding the fairy in Whitman, by which I mean, the queer and the wood spirit. I sing America indeed.”

To realize Mac’s vision, the artist collaborated with director and cinematographer Noah Greenberg, who makes his directorial debut with ***Whitman in the Woods.*** “It was important to find a way to let both Whitman and Taylor breathe,” notes Greenberg. “I wanted to develop a visual language that complemented and unified Whitman’s words and Taylor’s unique and brilliant performance. I had a careful plan for how to film each poem, and a loose idea of how they would all fit together in a larger film, but mostly, I wanted to give Taylor room to improvise and play – to make room for both of us to discover something new together,” notes Greenberg.

Produced with Pomegranate Arts, ***Whitman in the Woods.*** was filmed in Clarence Fahnestock State Park, Glynwood Center for Regional Food and Farming and Saunders Farm in New York’s Hudson Valley in July 2020 and features Whitman’s “Native Moments” (interpreted three ways), “When I Heard

at the Close of the Day,” “To A Stranger” and section XXIV of “Song of Myself.” Mac’s drag wardrobe and makeup are inspired by the woodland surroundings of the Lower Hudson Valley, costume designer Machine Dazzle and makeup designer Anastasia Durasova incorporated local ferns, pinecones, snake skins and other natural elements found on set.

Notes Diane Masciale, Co-Executive in Charge of ALL ARTS, “We were excited to see what would spring forth from Taylor’s brilliant creative mind, and we couldn’t be more thrilled with ***Whitman in the Woods***. As the first ALL ARTS Artist in Residence, Taylor has set an impressive precedent for the program. Future Artists in Residence, which we’ll be announcing soon, will be given similar creative freedom.”

Whitman in the Woods. is conceived and performed by Taylor Mac. Pomegranate Arts is Creative Producer: Linda Brumbach is Executive Producer and Alisa E. Regas is Producer. Noah Greenberg is Director, Cinematographer and Producer. Luis Moreno is Editor. Machine Dazzle is Costume Designer. Anastasia Durasova is Makeup Artist. For ALL ARTS, Kristy Geslain is Senior Producer. Joe Harrell is Senior Director. Jörn Weisbrodt is Artistic Director (2018-2020). James King is Artistic Director (present). Diane Masciale and Neal Shapiro are Executives in Charge.

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About ALL ARTS

ALL ARTS is breaking new ground as the premier destination for inspiration, creativity and art of all forms. This New York Emmy-winning arts and culture hub is created by The WNET Group, the parent company of New York’s PBS stations. With the aim of being accessible to viewers everywhere, ALL ARTS’ Webby-nominated programming – from digital shorts to feature films – is available online nationwide through allarts.org, the free ALL ARTS app on all major streaming platforms, and @AllArtsTV on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com), and [Twitter](https://www.twitter.com). New York area TV viewers can also watch the 24/7 broadcast channel. For all the ways to watch, visit allarts.org/everywhere.

About The WNET Group

[The WNET Group](http://www.wnet.org) creates inspiring media content and meaningful experiences for diverse audiences nationwide. It is the nonprofit parent company of New York’s [THIRTEEN](https://www.thirteen.org) – America’s flagship PBS station – [WLIW21](https://www.wliw21.org), THIRTEEN PBSKids, WLIW World and Create; Long Island’s only NPR station WLIW-FM; and [ALL ARTS](http://allarts.org), the arts and culture media provider. The WNET Group also operates [NJ PBS](https://www.njpbs.org), New Jersey’s statewide public television network, and newsroom [NJ Spotlight News](https://www.njspotlightnews.com). Through these channels and streaming platforms, The WNET Group brings arts, culture, education, news, documentary, entertainment and DIY programming to more than five million viewers each month. The WNET Group’s award-winning productions include signature PBS series ***Nature***, ***Great Performances***, ***American Masters***, ***PBS NewsHour Weekend*** and ***Amanpour and Company*** and trusted local news programs ***MetroFocus*** and ***NJ Spotlight News with Briana Vannozi***. Inspiring curiosity and nurturing dreams, The WNET Group’s award-winning Kids’ Media and Education team produces the PBS KIDS series ***Cyberchase***, interactive ***Mission US*** history games, and resources for families, teachers and caregivers. A leading public media producer for nearly 60 years, The WNET Group presents and distributes content that fosters lifelong learning, including multi-platform initiatives addressing poverty, jobs, economic opportunity, social justice, understanding

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