

MICA



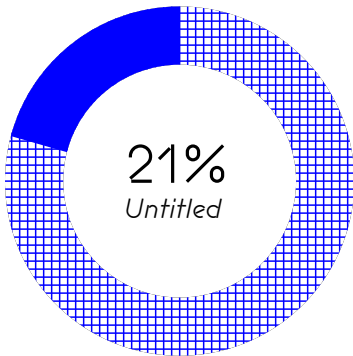
Museum of
Contemporary Art
Chicago

Members' Magazine
Winter/Spring 2016

FACTS AND FIGURES

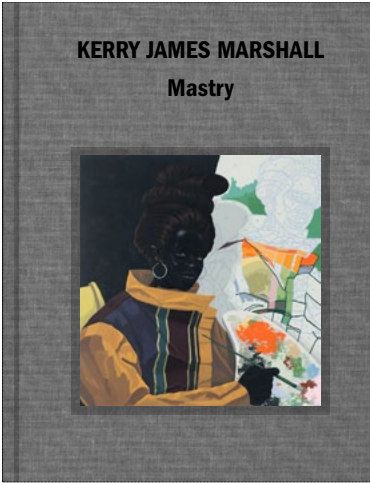
The MCA’s newly redesigned website has many new features, including a series of graphs that use numbers to tell the story of our exhibitions, programs, events, and community. Steve Johnson, of the *Chicago Tribune*, was particularly taken with one of the charts, which we’ve reproduced here. Describing it as “a delight among delights, the key lime of pie charts,” he went on to write that viewers who stumble upon it at the bottom of our new website are in for a treat: “What began as an informational transaction, a search, say, for current exhibitions, has turned into one of discovery. That’s a pretty tough thing to criticize in a website.”

Many more graphs can be seen at:
mcachicago.org /About/Facts-And-Figures.



WORKS THAT ARE TITLED *UNTITLED*
Lack of a title shouldn't be seen as a failure of creativity on the part of an artist: many artists title their works Untitled to encourage viewers to draw their own conclusions.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE



The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is honored to present a major survey of one of America’s greatest living painters: Kerry James Marshall. Marshall recognized early in his life that the history of Western art is, with few exceptions, a history of white artists and white subjects. And, for the last four decades, he has been challenging this biased view of history by presenting an alternate version in which black artists are credited and black subjects are honored.

Copublished by Skira Rizzoli

Available at the MCA Store in March
mcachicagostore.org

KERRY JAMES MARSHALL
MASTRY

Opens Apr 23, 2016

WINTER/ SPRING 2016

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MCA
CHIC
AGO

Museum Hours
Mon Closed
Tue 10 am–8 pm
Wed–Sun 10 am–5 pm

Admission is free
for Illinois residents
every Tuesday.

Information 312–280–2660
Box Office 312–397–4010
Member Services 312–397–4040

MCA Chicago is a triannual publication produced for MCA Members and donors of the MCA by the Design, Publishing, and New Media department, with the assistance of the Rights and Images, Membership, and Development teams.

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The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The museum is generously supported by its Board of Trustees; individual and corporate members; private and corporate foundations, including the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; and government agencies. Programming is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency. Museum capital improvements are supported by a Public Museum Capital Grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The MCA is a proud member of Museums in the Park and receives major support from the Chicago Park District.

Cover image: Kerry James Marshall, *Portrait of a Curator (In Memory of Beryl Wright)*, 2009. Acrylic on PVC panel; 30 7/8 x 24 7/8 x 1 7/8 in. (78.4 x 63.1 x 4.76 cm). Penny Pritzker and Bryan Traubert Collection. Image courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York. © Kerry James Marshall.

THE MCA BY THE NUMBERS



Madeleine Grynsztejn

The value of art is impossible to quantify or measure. And yet, as a museum director, I must be able to evaluate the impact our exhibitions and programs have on our audiences. I must, for example, track our membership renewal rate, the number of free tours we provide to Chicago public school students, the rave reviews we receive from visitors, and the complaints as well. In short, I need to use numbers to determine what we are doing right and where we could improve.

Fortunately, since I accepted my position as Pritzker Director in 2008, I have had the pleasure of watching our standards of success rise steadily. And I have come to appreciate the beauty and clarity of numbers—the way they demystify the work that goes into sharing art with the world and help us maintain transparency and accountability throughout the museum.

In this spirit, I am delighted to announce that this issue of our members’ magazine will be dedicated to numbers. Within these pages, you will see articles that address the theme quite literally, through top ten lists and facts and figures. You will also see features that explore the topic more tangentially, say, by examining Kerry James Marshall’s interest in reimagining the paint-by-number kits popularized in the 1950s. And I couldn’t resist sharing a few of this season’s highlights in the form of a numerical index:

118,220	weight, in pounds, of Alexandre da Cunha’s 35-foot-tall cement sculpture, <i>Figurehead</i>
2,191	collection pages on the MCA’s new website the day it launched
400	online bids made over the course of our 2015 Benefit Art Auction
156	days <i>Kerry James Marshall: Mastry</i> will be on view at the MCA
100	the number of damaged luxury cars former MCA curator Beryl Wright helped secure for a work in her 1993 exhibition <i>Art at the Armory: Occupied Territory</i> —Wright was posthumously immortalized by artist Kerry James Marshall in the portrait on the cover of this magazine
7	years we have held our annual Dialogue, presenting speakers like W. Kamau Bell
6	ensemble members in eighth blackbird, the MCA’s 2015–16 artists in residence
6	duration, in hours, of <i>Speak Bitterness</i> , a performance presented at the Edlis Neeson Theater on February 20
1	ranking of <i>The Freedom Principle: Experiments in Art and Music, 1965 to Now</i> in the <i>Guardian’s</i> review of best American art exhibitions of 2015

I hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as our contributors enjoyed creating it and watch the quality of our exhibitions and programs continue to improve from year to year.


Madeleine Grynsztejn
Pritzker Director

CURRENT
AND
FUTURE
EXHIBITONS



Johnston Marklee: *Grid Is a Grid Is a Grid Is a Grid Is a Grid*



Pop Art Design

CLOSING SOON

MCA Screen: Jos de Gruyter and Harald Thys Closes Jan 17
Im Reich der Sonnenfinsternis, an installation by Belgian artists Jos de Gruyter and Harald Thys, comprises two-hundred-plus paintings and a twenty-five-minute video.

BMO Harris Bank Chicago Works: Ania Jaworska Closes Jan 31

Trained architect Ania Jaworska explores the history of architecture through prints, drawings, scale models, and functional objects. Jaworska’s approach is marked by humor and a use of bold, minimalist forms.

ON VIEW NOW

Johnston Marklee: *Grid Is a Grid Is a Grid Is a Grid Is a Grid*

To coincide with the inaugural Chicago Architecture Biennial, Johnston Marklee has intervened in the museum’s current café space to create an installation that refers to the predominant grid of the building’s original architect, Josef Paul Kleihues, and hints at



The Street, the Store, and the Silver Screen: Pop Art from the MCA Collection



Kathryn Andrews: *Run for President*

some ideas being considered for renovations to come.

MCA DNA: Rafael Ferrer Through Mar 6
Puerto Rican-born artist Rafael Ferrer fashions charming and compelling objects out of ordinary materials to explore his heritage and personal experiences.

Pop Art Design Through Mar 27
The spirit of pop art manifested itself as much in design and architecture as it did in the works of artists like Andy Warhol. *Pop Art Design*, an exhibition organized by the Vitra Design Museum, Germany, pairs iconic design objects with artworks from this celebrated era.

The Street, the Store, and the Silver Screen: Pop Art from the MCA Collection Through Mar 27
Conceived as a complement to *Pop Art Design*, this exhibition celebrates the MCA’s holdings of iconic pop art. During the 1960s and 1970s, many artists gravitated toward the brash colors, simplified designs, and direct salesmanship of the burgeoning commercial world and incorporated these strategies into their fine art practices.

Kathryn Andrews: *Run for President* Through May 8
Kathryn Andrews turns a mirror on American culture to investigate political, economic, social, and cultural capital. This exhibition—her first solo presentation in the United States—features sculptures, installations, and works on paper situated against the conceptual and pictorial backdrop of an election.

Surrealism: *The Conjured Life* Through Jun 5
This exhibition presents more than one hundred paintings, sculptures, drawings, and



Surrealism: *The Conjured Life*



MCA Plaza Project: Alexandre da Cunha



Kerry James Marshall: *Mastry*



The Propeller Group

photographs that demonstrate the enduring influence of surrealism since its emergence in the first half of the twentieth century. A global movement that encompassed a variety of art forms, surrealism continues to enthrall artists and audiences to this day.

MCA Plaza Project: Alexandre da Cunha
Brazilian artist Alexandre da Cunha is a poet of found materials. He presents several large-scale works that reveal the inherent form, beauty, and mystery of often-overlooked objects for the museum’s fifth *MCA Chicago Plaza Project*.

ON VIEW NEXT

Kerry James Marshall: *Mastry* Apr 23–Sep 25
One of America’s greatest living artists, Kerry James Marshall interrogates the prevailing art historical canon to present a new history in which black artists are visible, black subjects are honored. The MCA is proud to present a major museum survey that showcases many of Marshall’s most iconic paintings, along with recent works and selections from his *Rythm Mastr* comic series.

The Propeller Group Jun 4–Oct 23
Helmed by artists Phunam, Matt Lucero, and Tuan Andrew Nguyen, The Propeller Group creates energetic multimedia works that bridge that gap between fine art and popular culture. The collective is headquartered in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and works in both Western and Asian contexts.

MCA Screen: Phil Collins Jan 30–Aug 21
The MCA will screen one of video artist Phil Collins’

poignant works: *el mundo no escuchará* (2014). The video, which was filmed in Bogotá, features several teens crooning to The Smiths.

BMO Harris Bank Chicago Works: Diane Simpson Feb 16–Jul 3
Chicago artist Diane Simpson presents four large-scale, fashion-inspired sculptures set against a backdrop that incorporates the geometric patterns of the Art Deco period.

Installation view, *Johnston Marklee: Grid Is a Grid Is a Grid Is a Grid Is a Grid*, MCA Chicago Oct 1, 2015–Jan 2, 2016

Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, *Las Vegas Study*, 1968–71. Photographs taken within the framework of the “Las Vegas Study.” Courtesy of Museum im Bellpark Kriens from the “Las Vegas Studio” project. © Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Inc., Philadelphia. Photo: Denise Scott Brown.

Mel Ramos, *Zebra*, 1970. Oil on canvas; 80 × 70 in. (203.2 × 177.8 cm). Collection Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, gift of Beatrice Cummings Mayer, 1991.88.

Installation view, *Kathryn Andrews: Run for President*, MCA Chicago.

Enrico Baj, *Punching General*, 1969. Vinyl, metal, cloth, ribbon, foam, cord, wood, Bristol board, medals, coil, curtain hooks, spring, and acrylic; 69 7/8 × 42 3/4 × 19 15/16 in. (177.5 × 108.6 × 50.6 cm). Collection Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, gift of Joseph and Jory Shapiro, 1992.49.

Installation view, *MCA Chicago Plaza Project: Alexandre da Cunha*, MCA Chicago.

Kerry James Marshall, *Scout (Boy)*, 1995. Acrylic, collage, and mixed media on board; 36 × 36 in. (91.4 × 91.4 cm). Collection Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, gift of the Susan and Lewis Manilow Collection of Chicago Artists, 2003.28.

The Propeller Group, *The Living Need Light and the Dead Need Music*, video still, 2014. © The Propeller Group, Courtesy of James Cohan, New York.

THREE IS A MAGIC NUMBER

Naomi Beckwith
Marilyn and Larry Fields Curator

Since its founding in 2006, the Ho Chi Minh City-based collective The Propeller Group has worked on several projects that track the growing commercialization of culture and politics—using a healthy dose of humor and fantasy. The Propeller Group members coalesce their skills to produce multimedia projects that combine sculpture, video, and new media installations. Their work has been featured in several international biennials and major museum collections, including the Guggenheim and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, but they have yet to present the breadth of their practice in one exhibition. In early June, the MCA will present the first extensive showing of the work they’ve made over the past ten years and their first monographic publication. In anticipation of their arrival in Chicago, here are three things that are essential to know about The Propeller Group.



The Living Need Light and the Dead Need Music, video still, 2014. © The Propeller Group, Courtesy of James Cohan, New York.



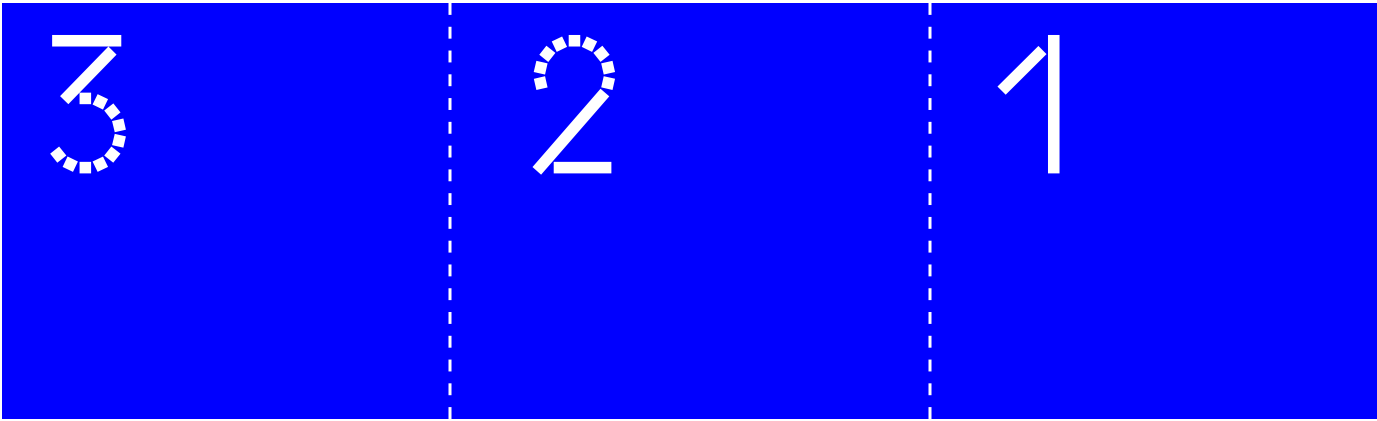
The Living Need Light and the Dead Need Music, video still, 2014. © The Propeller Group, Courtesy of James Cohan, New York.



The Living Need Light and the Dead Need Music, video still, 2014. © The Propeller Group, Courtesy of James Cohan, New York.



The AK-47 vs the M16: Gel Block 21 of 21, 2015. Fragments of AK-47 and M16 projectiles encased in ballistics gel. © The Propeller Group, Courtesy of James Cohan, New York.



They are three: The Propeller Group consists of three artists—Tuan Andrew Nguyen, Phunam, and Matt Lucero—each born in the mid-1970s and each educated in fine art and media culture. Nguyen and Lucero met while pursuing MFAs at the esteemed California Institute of the Arts, in Los Angeles, while Phunam was trained in sculpture and, informally, in photography in Bangkok and Hanoi. Nguyen and Phunam founded The Propeller Group in 2006 and Lucero joined in 2009.

The Propeller Group is presented in the second-floor Bergman Family Gallery, Lindy and Edwin A. Bergman

They are all trained filmmakers: While each artist has produced work singularly in several subjects, all three share a love of and skill in making films. In fact, for the majority of their projects, they make a film either as a component of their final presentation or as a way of documenting their process. Their documentary films often explore the legacy of the Vietnam wars and how traumatic landscapes have since become tourist venues, while their fictional projects portray the rich and spectacular mourning rituals in Vietnam or construct a future utopian world full of plenty and free of commerce. The artists, for instance, invoke Hollywood films to expose subconscious notions and ideas we hold about different cultural groups.

They are two groups in one: The Propeller Group exists as an art collective and a media production company called TPG. When Vietnam liberalized its economy in the 1980s (similar to the way China welcomed free markets in the 1970s), marketing and advertising were new to most of the country’s citizens. As such, public advertising in Ho Chi Minh City—so important to the American pop art movement—was almost entirely nonexistent. The members of The Propeller Group were interested in a culture of public images, especially graffiti and the visual styles of hip-hop. The group set out to find a way to create visual work that could exist in the public sphere just as Vietnam was discovering public advertising. Thus, they incorporated as a PR company; in fact, the word *propeller* comes from the letters “p-r.” TPG has produced music videos and television commercials and has even launched a rebranding campaign for Vietnam. TPG also produces work for other fine artists such as Danish collective Superflex, Vietnamese artist Dinh Q. Lê, and—of course—The Propeller Group!

MAKING OUR MESSAGING COUNT

Communications and Community Engagement Team

Our communications team works together to shape the stories we tell about the MCA and ensure that visitors have a top-notch experience while they are here.

Because new exhibitions, performances, and programs are always opening at the MCA we have to think smart and move fast to keep our audiences informed.



To reach a diverse audience we often advertise in local newspapers, like *Newcity*.

Our messaging is focused on three general areas: advertising, editorial, and social media. We pay for ads on the

HERE, WE SHARE SOME OF OUR ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS FROM THE PAST YEAR ALONG WITH SOME FACTS AND FIGURES, WHICH WE HOPE WILL DEMYSTIFY THE ART OF MARKETING.

web, in magazines, on bus shelters, and on billboards. We also work with journalists and other members of the press, pitching stories to writers, who in turn provide editorial coverage—from an article in the *Wall Street Journal* to a review in *Artforum*. And we promote our own website, blog, and social media channels to tell audiences about our offerings.

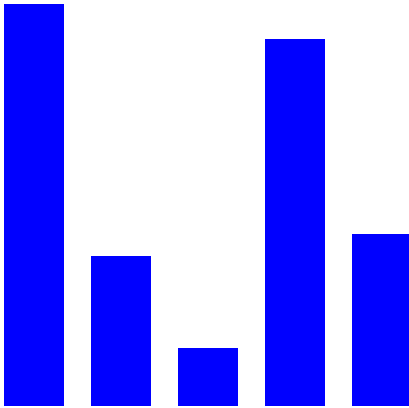
Once we get audiences to come in, our visitor services team takes over and offers them a comfortable environment to experience art that is thought-provoking and boundary-pushing.

We monitor this audience-focused approach by collecting data throughout the year. We then use the data to chart a clear path to success, ensuring that our visitors continue to feel inspired and informed by our exhibitions and programs.

ON AVERAGE WE TWEET MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED MESSAGES TO OUR FOLLOWERS EACH MONTH FROM @MCACHICAGO.

270

OUR VISITORS TRAVEL NEAR AND FAR TO VISIT THE MCA.



% OF VISITORS FROM

35% CHICAGO
13% CHICAGO SUBURBS
5% THE REST OF ILLINOIS
32% OTHER US STATES
15% OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES



Approximately 11,560 people see our giant billboard at the Ohio Street overpass as they drive to work in the morning.

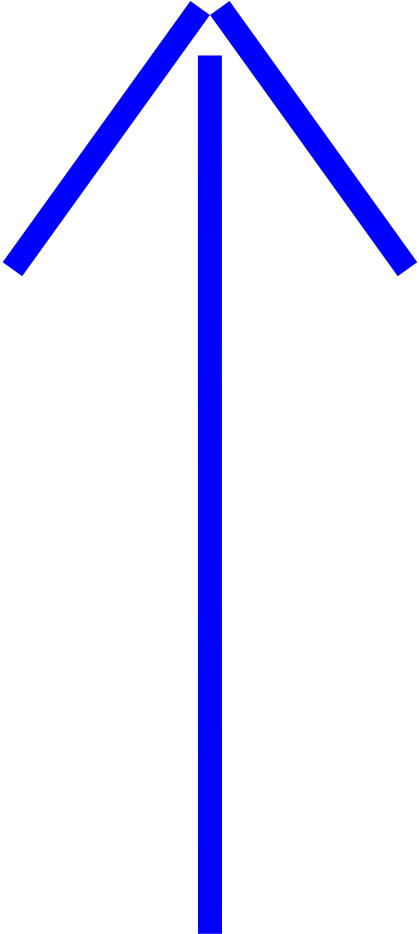


Our 2015–16 MCA Stage wall merges the playful visual and linguistic aspects of our new identity.



Thirty-two flags line our neighboring streets, showing off our new identity.

EDITORIALS IN MAJOR NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES OFTEN DRIVE VISITORS TO OUR WEBSITE.



1,015 VISITS TRACKED FOLLOWING A *NEW YORK TIMES* ARTICLE

A DECADE OF FORCED ENTERTAINMENT

Peter Taub
Director of Performance Programs

For more than thirty years Forced Entertainment has made formative works of theater, performance, installation, and other media expressions that search for identity in a fractured, uncertain world. This February we present a mini-festival that offers Chicago audiences a rare chance to experience the dark humor of their works.



Forced Entertainment, *Speak Bitterness*. Photo: Hugo Glendinning.



Forced Entertainment, *The Notebook*. Photo: Hugo Glendinning.

Based in Sheffield, England, the collective is at once poetic and political. According to artistic director Tim Etchells the members work the “territory between the real and phantasmic, between the actual landscape and the media one, between the body and imagination . . . the themes we have returned to are love and fragmentation, the search for identity, the edges of sexuality, the need to confess. There’s been a long commitment not to specific formal strategies but simply to challenging and provocative art—to work that asks questions and fuels dreams.”

One of the group’s anchor projects at the MCA is *Speak Bitterness*, a six-hour-long work in which a line of people take turns reading confessions. First presented in 1994, *Speak Bitterness* is an exhaustive performance that Etchells and the other members of Forced Entertainment continue adding to. The text draws on the diverse cultures of confession in, for example, contemporary talk shows, churches, and show trials. The litany of wrongdoing to which they confess ranges from big-time crimes like forgery, murder, or genocide to nasty little ones, such as reading each other’s

Lead support for the 2015–16 season of MCA Stage is provided by Elizabeth A. Liebman. Generous support for MCA Dance is provided by David Herro and Jay Franke. Additional generous support is provided by Caryn and King Harris and Lois and Steve Eisen and the Eisen Family Foundation. The MCA Stage foundation season sponsor is Alphawood Foundation Chicago, and its preferred hotel partner is Residence Inn. MCA Stage is a proud partner of the National Performance Network. MCA Chicago is a proud member of Museums in the Park and receives major support from the Chicago Park District.

All MCA Stage performances are presented in the first-floor Edlis Neeson Theater.

diaries, or refusing to take the dog out for a walk. Dressed in suits, the performers compete to confess the most horrific, amusing, or convincing things: “We’re guilty of homemade bombs and homemade wine. We’re guilty of coldness and spite. We never laughed and we never found the time . . .”

In this work and others, Etchells and Forced Entertainment ask us to act as witnesses to an event, rather than passive viewers of a spectacle: “To witness an event is to be present at it in some fundamentally ethical way, to feel the weight of things and one’s place in them.” Occupying a brightly lit space with lights on the audience, *Speak Bitterness* makes eye contact possible, “so the two-way nature of every line was emphasized—something spoken, something heard—eye contact made and then broken again, eye contact offered, rejected, then offered again—a series of complex negotiations about complicity, about who has done what or who is implicated in what.”

“THERE ARE PLAYS THAT STAY WITH YOU OVER THE YEARS AND THEN THERE’S FORCED ENTERTAINMENT”

— *The Guardian*

1	THU FEB 18– FRI FEB 19 7:30 PM	<i>The Notebook</i> Forced Entertainment’s only play incorporating an existing text: the award-winning novel by Ágota Kristóf, set during World War II
2	SAT FEB 20 4 PM	<i>Speak Bitterness</i> A six-hour durational piece; the audience may come and go throughout
3	MON FEB 22 6 PM	<i>Tim Etchells Writing Workshop</i> Copresented with League of Chicago Theatres; see their website for ticket info
4	TUE FEB 23 6 PM	<i>Institute of Failure</i> A free, live event—part of an ongoing web project by Tim Etchells and Matthew Goulish of Chicago’s Every house has a door. Copresented with DCASE at the Chicago Cultural Center
5	THU FEB 25– SAT FEB 27 7:30 PM	<i>(In) Complete Works: Table Top Shakespeare</i> Solo performers create condensed versions of Shakespeare’s plays, comically and intimately retelling them using a collection of everyday objects. Copresented with Chicago Shakespeare Theater

MCA
CHICAGO.
ORG

Susan Chun
Chief Content Officer

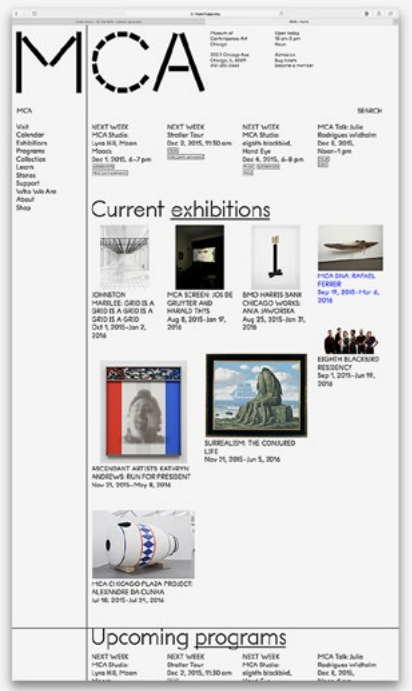
At 11:11 am on November 11, the MCA debuted a newly redesigned website. A rich online resource with global reach on par with our exceptional onsite work, the new site serves as a comprehensive guide to our exhibitions, programs, publications, and collection. It reflects the MCA’s personality—curious, welcoming, generous, and provocative—as well as our philosophy of integrating our exhibitions and collections, programs and educational activities.

Building the site has been a massive endeavor, and we’re immensely proud of it. We’d like to share some of the changes with you.

A SMARTER WEBSITE
FOR A SMARTER MUSEUM

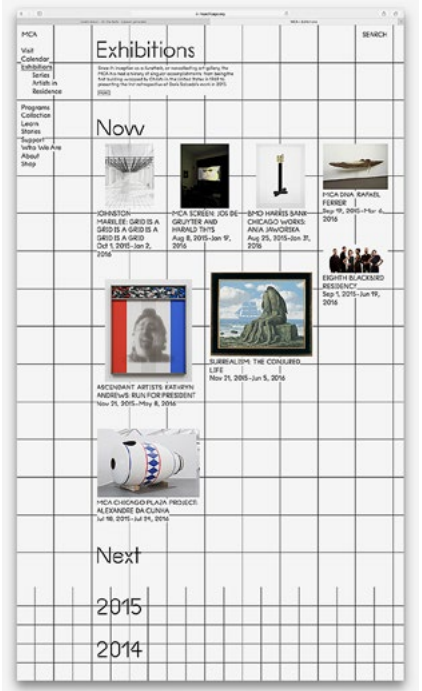
The MCA website is made possible in part by the Kovler Web Fund.

HOME



It was important to us to reimagine our homepage since it’s where most visitors meet us first. The new page features a scrolling banner that allows us to message visitors in real time, announcing—for instance—a free admission day for the Illinois community, the sale date for tickets to a major event, or a closing due to extreme weather. At the upper left corner of the homepage, the main navigation calls out key sections of the site.

EXHIBITIONS



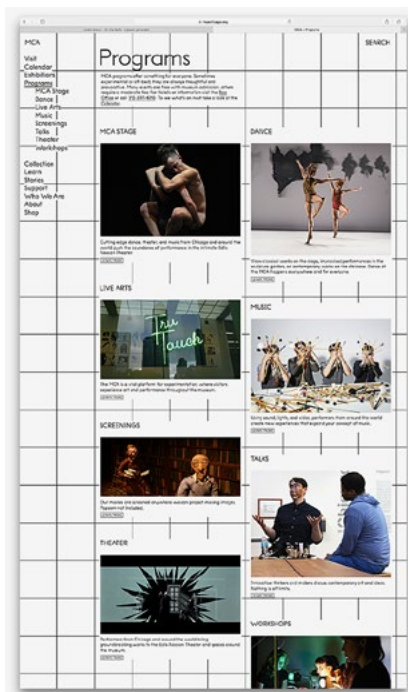
Our exhibitions section now achieves something quite remarkable for a museum website. In addition to featuring current and future exhibitions, it presents a complete history of MCA exhibitions, going back all the way to our founding in 1967. And each exhibition page now includes links to print and digital publications, programs, collections, and reviews, as well as label copy.



Tim Etchells/Forced Entertainment is presented as part of IN>TIME Festival. Support for this project is generously provided by the British Council.

THE NEW SITE RECOGNIZES THAT OUR VISITORS ARE LOOKING FOR MORE THAN INFORMATION ABOUT OUR CURRENT PROGRAMS. THEY ALSO WANT TO LEARN ABOUT OUR STORY, OUR HISTORY, AND THE ART HISTORY THAT IS MADE HERE.

PROGRAMS



Our performances and events now appear on the same page to highlight our multi-faceted, multidisciplinary offerings. Visitors can filter events according to their preferences: for example, they can focus on dance programs, lectures, programs that provide accommodations for accessibility, member events—or any combination of those.

COLLECTION



One of the elements we're most excited about is the collection section of the site, which—for the first time in our history—provides access to the MCA's entire permanent collection. We also highlight recent acquisitions and the favorite works of our curators, staff members, and visitors. And we're currently developing a special page for every artist in our collection, showcasing the rich and vital relationships that we have with the artists whose work we collect.

TOP TEN REASONS TO CARRY YOUR MCA MEMBER CARD

Patricia Fraser
Director of Visitor Experience

Michelle Clairmont
Manager of Annual Fund and Membership

Thank you for being a member! When you carry your card with you, it makes it easier for us to show our gratitude and appreciation. It also helps us grant you special (and speedy) access to events and exhibitions. When members flash their cards, for example, they receive free admission to the museum and faster check-ins at events.

Ten more reasons to carry your card can be found on the next page.

10 STORE DISCOUNTS

7 FREE LAWN CHAIRS AT EVERY TUESDAYS ON THE TERRACE EVENT NEXT SUMMER

4 DELICIOUS DEALS AT THE MCA CAFÉ

9 LESS TIME IN LINE, MORE TIME FOR ART

6 EXPRESS ENTRY TO EVENTS LIKE PRIME TIME ON FEBRUARY 5, 2016 (THROUGH THE MCA STORE)

3 SPECIAL OFFERS THAT SPRING UP ALL THE TIME

8 FREE ADMISSION TO MEMBERS' PREVIEW

5 DISCOUNTED TICKETS AT THE BOX OFFICE

2 YOUR CARD DOUBLES AS A BOOKMARK FOR THIS FABULOUS MEMBERS' MAGAZINE

1

WHEN YOU OPEN YOUR WALLET AND SEE YOUR CARD, YOU'LL KNOW YOU'RE SUPPORTING CONTEMPORARY ART IN CHICAGO

And, in case you need another good reason: our Premier-level members can visit more than 140 national partners for free. So don't leave home without your MCA Member card!

MCA
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Jan 30–
Aug 21

MCA SCREEN:
PHIL COLLINS

Joey Orr
Andrew W. Mellon
Postdoctoral
Curatorial Fellow



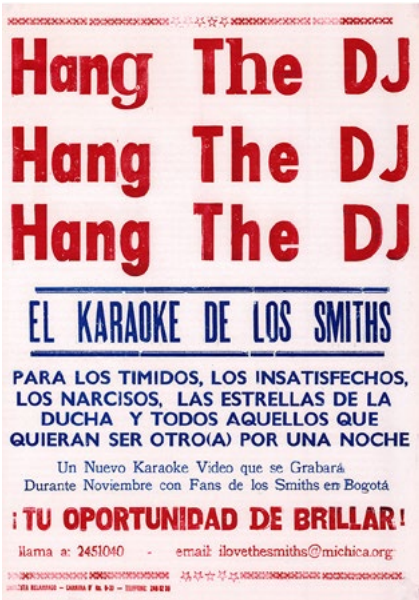
Above video stills: *el mundo no escuchará*, 2004. Video installation; colour, sound; 56 min. Courtesy Shady Lane Productions, Berlin and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York. Collection Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Gift of Mary and Earle Ludgin by exchange, 2014.1.

Let’s talk about firsts. Artist Phil Collins’s *el mundo no escuchará* (2004) is the first video in a trilogy and the first of his works to enter the MCA’s permanent collection. And on January 30, the MCA will screen it for the first time since its recent acquisition.

The title of the trilogy, which translates to *the world won’t listen*, is taken from a 1987 compilation album by the English rock band The Smiths, who have provided the soundtrack for many angsty teens. Sites for each contribution to the trilogy were chosen because of Collins’s interest in spots of political unrest. While in Bogotá, Colombia, Collins worked with local musicians to re-create the album, note-for-note, on a karaoke machine. Then he invited devoted Smiths fans to perform the songs while he filmed them. More specifically, he recruited “the shy, the dissatisfied, narcissists, and anyone who’s ever wished they could be someone else for a night.” Instead of underscoring the political contexts of his



subjects’ environment, however, he focuses on the feelings of isolation common to youth, so effectively embodied by The Smiths.



el mundo no escuchará, 2004. Woodblock print on paper; 50 × 70 cm. Courtesy Shady Lane Productions, Berlin and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York.

The video captures a little swagger along with healthy doses of human vulnerability and absurdity, or as the artist describes it: “the sweet agony of self-fulfillment and self-limitation.” Exploring the global infiltration of popular youth culture into dispersed geopolitical sites, the two subsequent installations of the trilogy were filmed—respectively—in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2005 (as part of the ninth International Istanbul Biennial) and in Jakarta and Bandung, Indonesia, in 2007.

All MCA Screen works are presented in the fourth-floor Turner Gallery.

Apr 23 –
Sep 25

Karsten Lund
Curatorial Assistant

KERRY
JAMES
MARSHALL

PAINTING
BY THE
NUMBERS

Since the early 1990s, Kerry James Marshall has steadily gained renown as an artist working in a wide range of media. His upcoming survey at the MCA, however, focuses on his importance as a painter making major contributions to the history of art. Aware of the complexities of this role, between 2008 and 2010 Marshall made a series of portraits of African American painters. These images also contain a subtle provocation: the paintings the artists are working on are all paint-by-number exercises. What does it mean for them to be painting by number?



Kerry James Marshall, *Untitled (Painter)*, 2009. Acrylic on PVC panel; 44 5/8 x 43 1/8 x 3 7/8 in. (113.4 x 109.5 x 9.8 cm). Collection Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, gift of Katherine S. Schamberg by exchange, 2009.15. © 2009 Kerry James Marshall.

idealized figures—people who didn't necessarily exist but should have—Marshall redresses their historical absence or exclusion.

It's notable that all of Marshall's painters are turning away from their figurative compositions. Several hold up their paint-covered palettes, which look like passages of abstract painting within the figurative tableau, perhaps acknowledging the belief that abstraction can be a means of creative freedom, a way to avoid being confined by one's presumptive identity. Ironically, paint by numbers is also a form of abstraction. To generate this kind of numbered composition, a subject is first broken down into smaller shapes, which are assigned generic color values. This anodyne process becomes charged in the case of skin color, when it requires analyzing the subtle gradations of skin and reimagining them as discrete chromatic values. For his part, Marshall echoes the reductive gesture of paint by numbers in his ongoing practice of always painting the skin of his subjects a dark black (in these works and others), as if taking literally the description of African Americans as black, (a common verbal shorthand that belies the wide, nuanced spectrum of brown skin







Kerry James Marshall, *Untitled (Painter)*, 2010. Acrylic on PVC panel; 47 1/2 x 43 in. (120.65 x 109.22 cm). Susan and Lew Manilow. © Kerry James Marshall. Image courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

tones that actually exist). In doing so, he exposes another pervasive, and hardly innocuous, form of abstraction at work in our culture.

The question of who is seen, and how, is at the heart of these portraits. As if to underline this further, in each of these works Marshall paints a section of the background black as well, often just behind or beside, the figure. This dark area, perhaps the wall or a shadow, is often the only other instance of black in the painting. Given its similarity to the figure's skin, this part of the background suggests the possibility that the painter might blend in, might disappear, might, in effect, become invisible.

Visibility and invisibility are longstanding concerns in Marshall's work. In the foundational narratives of Western art history, African American artists are sorely under-represented and even unacknowledged. The subjects of paintings found in museums over time have also been overwhelmingly white, outnumbering black subjects to the point of near exclusion, especially before the late twentieth century. Facing this profound historical absence, Marshall populates

his paintings—not just his portraits but works in nearly every genre—almost exclusively with black figures. Work after work, painting after painting, he is making the numbers rise. A single painting alone, no matter how masterful, could hardly tilt the scale.

In this respect, it's significant that Marshall painted a *series* of portraits of painters. Marshall's painters aren't modeled after specific people but they are all individualized. Their varied presences reinforce each other. The numbers matter. Even as his paintings of painters make black artists commandingly visible, they are also, just as crucially, part of his larger body of work. These painters are part of Marshall's evolving pantheon of African American subjects. These black artists show up in numbers, alongside the protagonists of Marshall's other works, not just as myths or ideas but as something very real.

OPPOSITE PAGE AND PREVIOUS SPREAD

Kerry James Marshall, *Past Times*, 1997. Acrylic and collage on canvas; 114 x 156 in. (289.6 x 396.2 cm). Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority, McCormick Place Art Collection.

Kerry James Marshall, *Untitled*, 2008. Acrylic on fiberglass; 79 1/8 x 115 15/16 in. (201 x 294.5 cm). Private collection, courtesy Segalot, New York. © Kerry James Marshall. Image courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

Lead support for *Kerry James Marshall: Mastry* is provided by the Harris Family Foundation in memory of Bette and Neison Harris: Caryn and King Harris, Katherine Harris, Toni and Ron Paul, Pam and Joe Szokol, Linda and Bill Friend, and Stephanie and John Harris; R. H. Defares; Melody Hobson and George Lucas; Liz and Eric Lefkofsky; Helen and Sam Zell; and Nancy and Steve Crown. Major support is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; The Bluhm Family Foundation; David Zwirner, New York; the Ford Foundation; the Joyce Foundation; the National Endowment for the Arts; and Phillips.

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PHILLIPS

Additional generous support is provided by Dr. Anita Blanchard and Martin H. Nesbitt, Stefan Edlis and Gael Neeson, Jack and Sandra Guthman, David Herro and Jay Franke, Jack Shainman Gallery, Gretchen and Jay Jordan, Anne Kaplan, Allison S. Davis and Susan O'Connor Davis, Robert Rennie and Carey Fouks, Marilyn and Larry Fields, Cari and Michael Sacks, Lois and Steve Eisen and the Eisen Family Foundation, the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation, Agnes Gund, Ashlee Jacob, the North Shore Affiliate of the MCA, the Robert Lehman Foundation, Ambassador and Mrs. Louis B. Susman, Lynn and Allen Turner, Dick and Gloria Anderson, Dr. Daniel S. Berger, Helyn D. Goldenberg and Michael Alper, Nickol and Darrel Hackett, Mary E. Ittelson, James W. Kenyon, Nancy Lerner Frej and David Frej, the Martin and Rebecca Eisenberg Foundation, Eric McKissack and Cheryl Mayberry McKissack, and Sylvia Neil and Daniel Fischel.

Kerry James Marshall: Mastry is presented in the fourth-floor Griffin Galleries of Contemporary Art.

Apr 28 –
May 1

KYLE ABRAHAM
+ ABRAHAM.IN.
MOTION =
BIG NUMBERS

Pittsburg native Kyle Abraham makes dance that ventures ever further into the future by reimagining important moments of black history. His newest project, *When the Wolves Came In*, is an evocative take on racism and the legacy of the civil rights movement, with its birthing in antebellum America and elsewhere.

dancers from beehive-clad women and men into painted hunting dogs. This abstracted visual is meant both to neutralize and exaggerate the human condition, says Abraham, “a recognition of when people are confronted with adversity, we unleash an inner animal.” The unbuttoned joyful choral work “A Good Understanding” by classical and indie-rock musician Nico Muhly mingles with the emotionally charged music of composer and software designer Christopher Tignor.

Abraham conceived the evening-length performance from a singular idea: a historical homage marking the 150-year anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and the twenty-year anniversary of the abolishment of apartheid in South Africa. His inspiration is *We Insist: Max Roach’s Freedom Now Suite*, the composer and drummer’s 1960 album with lyricist Oscar Brown Jr. Their music shone a light on civil rights protests emerging in South Africa and enthralled a generation of Americans, including Abraham’s parents, who were avid music listeners.

Abraham performs the finale solo, *Hallowed*, to a stunning structure by Ligon that incorporates film and light sculpture. With floor-skimming speed he spars with modern dance, ranking street dance and the highly stylized voguing of the early Harlem ballroom scene.

Yolanda Cesta Cursach
Associate Director of
Performance Programs

The themes evoked by these historical milestones run deep in Abraham’s choreography and in visual artist Glenn Ligon’s set design. Ligon’s muted hues hint at secret histories and submerged meanings.



Above: Kyle Abraham/Abraham.In.Motion *When the Wolves Came In*, Sam Pratt, Catherine Ellis Kirk. Photo: Tim Barden.

The Gettin’, which begins the work, is a movement in five sections replete with kinetic references taken from Abraham’s love of social dancing and his self-described “postmodern gumbo” of movement exploration rooted in the 1960s freedom marches. For this, the Houston jazz and R&B artist Robert Glasper, who won a Grammy in 2013 for *Black Radio*, restructured the Roach score *We Insist*.

Opposite: Kyle Abraham/Abraham.In.Motion, *The Gettin’*. Photo: Tim Barden.

Abraham made his MCA debut in 2013 with *Radio Show*, for which he received a prestigious Bessie Award for Outstanding Performance in Dance. A Princess Grace Awardee for Choreography, his work has been performed by New York City Principal Wendy Whelan and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. Abraham is a 2013 MacArthur Fellow.

The arresting middle section, *When the Wolves Came In*, forces viewers to consider the dual notions of freedom and the mentality of prosecution. Abraham transforms his eight

Generous support for MCA Dance is provided by David Herro and Jay Franke. Support for *When the Wolves Came In* is provided by Lois and Steve Eisen and the Eisen Family Foundation. All MCA Stage performances are presented in the first-floor Edlis Neeson Theater.

We're delighted to report that our beloved koi fish have found a happy new home at the Garfield Park Conservatory. The fish were transported from the museum to the conservatory on October 20. Here are some fast facts about their journey and their new home:

- 1 The fish have taken up residence in the conservatory's Fern Room, which was designed by famed landscape architect Jens Jensen in 1906.
- 2 The fish live in a large pond within the Fern Room that imitates their natural habitat.
- 3 A nearby lagoon features sixteen glass lily pads constructed by popular glass artist Dale Chihuly.
- 4 The two oldest plants in the Fern Room, a male and a female, are about 250 years old; some koi experts claim that the fish can also live to be nearly that old.
- 5 The koi travelled 5.3 miles from the museum to the conservatory to reach their new home.
- 6 The conservatory is open every day and offers free admission. It is located at 300 N Central Park Ave.

garfieldconservatory.org

Nov 21, 2015–
Jun 5, 2016

Lynne Warren
Curator

Dreamlike Imagery, Strange Juxtapositions

Surrealism: The Conjured Life



Garfield Park Conservatory Fern Room.
Photos: Ryan Kilpatrick, John W. Iwanski,
Jay Kleeman.



Although Surrealism has never entirely gone out of favor, recent months have seen a new cycle of interest in the historic movement and its legacy. Here at the MCA, Surrealism is a formidable strength of our collection, one that fuels the major exhibition *Surrealism: The Conjured Life*. Born in Europe during the turbulent time of cultural, social, and political change following World War I, Surrealism was officially announced in a manifesto penned by Paris-based poet André Breton in 1924. “Surrealism, such as I conceive of it, asserts our complete nonconformism.” Breton exhorted his fellow writers to surrender themselves to such activities as automatic writing (seen as the result of spiritual, occult, or subconscious forces), and the use of stimulants and intoxicants to access alternate worlds. In its early years, the movement was largely a literary one, but by the 1930s visual artists from all over Europe joined forces to produce works that were revolutionary in their bizarre, even shocking imagery.

Given its Midwestern pragmatism, blue-collar roots, and renowned modern architecture, Chicago may not seem a likely place for Surrealism to take root. Yet the “art of the irrational” has enjoyed great popularity here since collectors and gallerists brought masterworks by René Magritte, Max Ernst, Matta, Yves Tanguy, and others to this city in the late 1940s. Chicago’s artists historically have supported figuration and representation. Accordingly, local artists were inspired by surrealist ideas—like the “twilight states” described by Breton—expressed in imagery featuring landscapes and cityscapes, fantastical creatures, and human-animal hybrids. The tiny, mysterious paintings of Gertrude Abercrombie, who enjoyed a large circle of artist friends, led the way in the 1940s. In the 1950s, a group dubbed The Monster Roster frequently dealt with themes of decay and death, a favorite subject matter of the surrealists. The best-known of this group, Leon Golub, probed this subject in a series of seemingly flayed and fragmented heads. These works of haunting beauty counterbalance the more down-to-earth sculpture produced by Golub’s colleague, H. C. Westermann. A true original, Westermann was nonetheless touched by

the surrealist emphasis on exploring one’s inner life and psychology. A more “pop” sensibility and color palette infused the work of the next Chicago generation, generally known as the Imagists, who rose to prominence in the 1960s. Yet their dreamlike imagery, strange juxtapositions, and representational painting styles linked them to European Surrealism.

Many of the works in the exhibition were graciously donated to the MCA by the pioneering Chicago collectors who initially brought Surrealism to their hometown. Joseph and Jory Shapiro and Edwin and Lindy Bergman traveled to Europe, where they met members of the surrealist group and purchased works from their galleries and studios. Mary and Earle Ludgin collected in depth the works of eccentric American painter Forrest Bess. Ruth Horwich and her husband Leonard patronized Alexander Calder, who was associated with the Surrealists in 1930s Paris, and supported succeeding generations of Chicago artists, including the Hyde Park Art Center’s Don Baum. These arts patrons were among the founders of the MCA, and when the museum began collecting in the mid-1970 they donated major works. It is particularly wonderful that these works, so influential on the development of art in Chicago, remain in our city for all to enjoy.

87	number of artists in <i>Surrealism: The Conjured Life</i>
110	number of artworks in the show
24	number of collectors represented in the exhibition who gifted works to the MCA
21	gifts from Joseph and Jory Shapiro, MCA Founding President and his wife, in the exhibition
9	number of gifts from artists or their estates

OPPOSITE PAGE

Installation view, *Surrealism: The Conjured Life*, MCA Chicago.

Support for *Surrealism: The Conjured Life* is generously provided by The Pritzker Traubert Collection Exhibition Fund, Helen and Sam Zell, Carol and Douglas Cohen, Carolyn S. Bucksbaum, Anonymous, Betsy and Andrew Rosenfield, Richard and Ellen Sandor Family, and Mary E. Ittelson.

Surrealism: The Conjured Life is presented in the second-floor Sylvia Neil and Daniel Fischel Galleries.



Omar, who was the Curator at the Whitechapel Gallery in London prior to joining the MCA, has organized more than a hundred exhibitions and projects internationally. Truly a global citizen, he called five different countries home before the age of eighteen, and he has roots in Russia, Turkey, and Egypt.

Omar also brings a global sensibility to his curatorial work. He believes that curators ought to work collaboratively with artists and professionals to share art with the world at large, to bring “the most urgent artistic voices to new audiences both locally and globally.”

In addition to being a boundary-pushing curator, Omar is also an active writer, editor, and teacher. His written work has appeared in the *Guardian*, *Art Monthly*, *Wired*, *Frieze*, *Mousse*, and *Artforum International*, and he has authored more than a dozen books, including *You Are Here: Art After the Internet* (2014), *Jeddah Childhood circa 1994* (2014), and *Moving Image* (2015). And—when he isn’t working at the MCA or writing for various publications—he teaches classes at the University of Chicago, where he has been appointed a Lecturer in the Division of the Humanities, in the Department of Visual Arts and the Department of Art History. Omar is also on the board of no.w.here in London and the editorial board of Documents of Contemporary Art for MIT Press (in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Whitechapel Gallery, London).

We are thrilled to be working with someone whose expertise and enthusiasm are so well suited to our museum, and we look forward to sharing his future exhibitions and programming ideas with you.

After a thorough search for a new Manilow senior curator, we are pleased to announce that we have added an important member to our curatorial team: Omar Kholeif.



Installation view, *Surrealism: The Conjured Life*, MCA Chicago.



Installation view, *Surrealism: The Conjured Life*, MCA Chicago. Work shown: Marcos Raya, excerpt from *Night Nurse*, 1993/1996. Acrylic on canvas, cabinet, surgical instruments, mannequin, and found objects; Overall: 94 x 180 x 48 in. (238.7 x 457.2 x 121.9 cm). Collection Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, restricted gift of Roy and Mary Cullen, 1997.81.

Apr 12–
Apr 16

THIRTY YEARS
IN THREE ACTS

Peter Taub
Director of Performance
Programs



TAYLOR MAC. PHOTO: VES PITTS

“FABULOUSNESS CAN COME
IN MANY FORMS, AND TAYLOR
MAC SEEMS INTENT ON
ASSUMING EVERY ONE OF
THEM.”

—THE NEW YORK TIMES

Taylor Mac dreams large—making theater that reconceives our common past and current conditions, often at an inspiringly epic scale. The Obie Award-winning *The Lily’s Revenge*, for instance, is a five-act, five-hour play with a cast of forty. Taylor created this multidisciplinary extravaganza—part Noh play, part verse play, part dance, part film, part installation—as a highly imaginative response to anti-gay marriage agendas. Bringing together a community of artists and fostering bonds between artists and audience members, Mac believes that “theater is community action, and as a playwright I am a community organizer.

A prolific playwright, actor, singer-songwriter, cabaret performer, performance artist, director, and producer, Taylor Mac has engaged audiences in the circus, strip club, regional theater circuit, street, museum, opera house, and basement bar/sex club.

Taylor re-imagines our shared history and culture in a grand new work, *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music*. Each of the twenty-four decades gets its own thematic concert, from our nation’s founding in 1776 to today. The culminating work stitches them all together in a twenty-four-hour-long pageant performed by Taylor Mac with varied musicians, dancing beauties, and special guests. As Hilton Als writes in *The New Yorker*, “Mac’s musical survey of the country that made him and others like him is offered in the spirit Whitman had in mind when he said that he heard America singing.”

MCA Stage first introduced this project to Chicago audiences two years ago by presenting Taylor’s uncanny and hilarious romp through a history of political music. Now Taylor is building toward a climactic finale by creating and

“Within this swirl of pleasure and entertainment, there is also something quite serious at stake, something that we might hazard to call the politics of historical knowledge.”

— The Helix Queer
Performance Network

performing three hour-long sections, or three-decade acts. At the April 2016 MCA performances we can experience a singular take on the decisive years of 1956–86.

Taylor’s theme for 1956–66 features *Songs Popular In the Bayard Rustin Planning Room*. Rustin is the activist and civil rights lawyer who organized the 1963 March on Washington, one of the largest nonviolent protests ever held in the United States—though he is also overshadowed in the history of the civil rights movement because he was gay and had been involved in socialist causes. For 1966–76, Taylor channels *Songs Popular on the Stonewall Jukebox* and dives into the uprising at the Stonewall Inn in New York—widely seen as a turning point for the gay liberation movement and the fight for gay and lesbian rights in the United States. And 1976–86 takes us into *Songs Popular in the Backroom* to resurrect disco, funk, and 1980s grooves.

A 24-Decade History of Popular Music is supported in part by the MCA Stage New Works Initiative. All MCA Stage performances are presented in the first-floor Edlis Neeson Theater.

ENTER THROUGH
THE GIFT SHOP

Members receive
a 10% discount
year-round at the
MCA Store



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: TRUSTEES HELYN GOLDENBERG, DORIE STERNBERG, AND RHONA HOFFMAN WERE INSTRUMENTAL TO THE STORE’S EARLY SUCCESS.

Recognized by Fodor’s as “one of the world’s best museum gift shops,” the MCA Store surprises, delights, and entertains by presenting products that embody the creative process. “I think of the store not as a ‘gift shop,’ or solely as an ‘extension’ of the museum, but as an integral part of the museum—our longest running exhibition. It has generated a loyal following and served as another point of entry for participating in creative culture,” says Mark Millmore, the store’s director of retail.

Our audience has connected with designers and products of distinction since the store was founded in 1969 by then Women’s Board members Helyn Goldenberg and Rhona Hoffman. Goldenberg recalls, “At meetings someone might say, ‘the store only made

twelve dollars.’ But we would say, ‘that’s all right, because that wasn’t the only purpose of the store.’ The purpose was also to be another place where visitors could stop and talk about the exhibitions, and many did.”



The MCA Store, with its constantly changing window displays, attracts visitors and serves as a first point of entry for many guests.

Always current and ever-changing, the store continues to be a platform for discovery, a hub of discussion about global art and design, and a complement to the MCA’s cutting-edge exhibitions and programs.

NEW 2016
SELECTIONS

See these and a
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6
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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Check your mailbox, inbox, and our website often for more information about these upcoming events.

mcachicago.org

MCA Prime Time
February 5
7–11 pm, 21+
MCA Prime Time is an after-hours series that celebrates Chicago’s most creative individuals and organizations. For this installment of the event, the MCA partners with indie music tastemaker Pitchfork to transform the museum in spectacular ways. Electronic musician Holly Herndon will headline the event.

MCA Talk: Architecture Is Art . . . Is Architecture Art?
March 10
6 pm
Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects
Presented in partnership with the Chicago Architecture Foundation, this New York-based firm is known for its deliberate designs.

MCA Live: Felonius Monk
March 17
7 pm
In conjunction with her exhibition, Kathryn Andrews invites Felonius Monk and friends to perform a special comedy act.

eighth blackbird
March 25–26
7:30 pm
Ghostlight
This performance of new music by eighth blackbird invokes the myths, truths, and



MCA Prime Time



eighth blackbird



Kerry James Marshall Members’ Preview

lies that swirl around American history.

Kerry James Marshall:
Mastery Preview
April 21
Circle Donor Preview, 5:30–7 pm; Members’ Preview 7–9 pm
Members are invited to preview an exhibition featuring the works of one of America’s greatest living artists: *Kerry James Marshall*. At this intimate evening event, you’ll be able to connect with other members while listening to MCA staff share insights about the exhibition and its most significant works.

Members’ Double Discount Days
April 29–May 8
Members save 20% at the MCA Store and at mcachicagostore.org.

MCA Prime Time
May 6
7–11 pm, 21+

Tapping into the creative pulse of Chicago, Prime Time features an eclectic mix of live music, performance art, video screenings, and interactive program. Cocurated with Chicago’s long-standing independent music clubs, the Metro and Smart Bar.

MCA Screen: Black Radical Imagination
May 17
6–7 pm
Black Radical Imagination invokes the aesthetics of Afrofuturism and Afrosurrealism through visual shorts.

MCA Prime Time. October 7, 2015.

Video stills, eighth blackbird documentary, MCA Chicago.

Kerry James Marshall, *Untitled (Mirror Girl)*, 2014. Acrylic on PVC panel; 83 3/4 x 59 3/4 in. (212.7 x 151.8 cm). Collection Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, gift of Marshall Field’s by exchange, 2015.8.

MCA SEEN



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