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As of September 13, 2011

remixed/ reimagined

On June 23, 2011, MCA Chicago celebrated the achievements of MCA Stage with **remixed/reimagined** the Performance Benefit. This innovative evening was cochaired by MCA Trustee Sara Albrecht and MCA Performance Committee member Jay Franke. Our sincere thanks to all who contributed to the event and to all who continue to support MCA Stage in its fifteenth season.

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Photo: Kristin Basta

Curious Theatre Branch
Still in Play:
A Performance
of Getting Ready
Thursday–Saturday,
September 15–17, 2011

**Museum of
Contemporary Art
Chicago**

Artists Up Close

Gain insight into the creative process through these intimate opportunities to engage with the artists.

Open Doors
During Curious Theatre Branch's final production residency week at MCA Chicago (August 29–September 6), museum visitors were invited to view the company at work on the stage.

First Night
Thursday, September 15
Following the opening night performance, audience members are invited to engage in a conversation about the work with Jenny Magnus, Stefan Brün, and the artistic collaborators.

CD Release—one night only!
Friday, September 16, 9:30pm
Join us and members of Curious Theatre Branch for a CD release concert celebrating a collaborative recording by The Crooked Mouth (composed of Curious Theatre Branch ensemble members), ElvisBride, and Midnight Moxie. Separate admission ticket is required.

Speakeasy
Saturday, September 17
Following the performance, audience members are invited to mingle with the Curious Theatre Branch artists in the lobby, with a cash bar and snacks available.

Support for the Curious Theatre Branch Development Residency at MCA Chicago is provided by the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, Aeromexico, and the Mexican Consulate of Chicago.

Special thanks

People who participated in early workshops and were tremendously helpful in developing the work
Scott Barsotti
Marlena Carlson
Casey Cunningham
Jason Greenberg
Ramah Jihan
Kat McJimsey
Guy Massey
Chris Schoen
HB Ward

Babysitters
Manni Brun
Marianka Campisi
Izzy Carr
Kate O'Reilly and Giselle Greenberg
Julie Tessier

Design Conversations
Emily Altman
Xia Magnus
Joseph Riley
Michael St. John

Build Crew
Ron Bieganski
Anita Evans
Bryn Magnus

All the Office Hours participants ... thanks for the great conversations!
Sherry Antonini
Maci and Meka Greenberg
Peter Handler
Bana Kattan
Clover Morell
Prop Theater

For his wonderful inspiration
Diego Piñón Sepp

Curious Theatre Branch Board of Directors
Janet Sayre
Julie Berggren
Ira Glass
Beau O'Reilly

And Lena Luna Magnus Brun, who got to watch a LOT of movies, and is a very tolerant young lady ...

And oh, yes, to Beau O'Reilly, for his collection.

curioustheatrebranch.com
(773) 508-0666
curioustheatre@gmail.com

Curious Theatre Branch Still in Play: A Performance of Getting Ready

Written by Jenny Magnus
Directed by Stefan Brün
Featuring the Curious Theatre Branch ensemble and music by The Crooked Mouth

Music Direction by Beau O'Reilly
Video Composition by Jeffrey Bivens
Costumes by Diane Hamm
Sound Design by Joseph Fosco
Lighting Design by Richard Norwood
Stage Managed by Jen Moniz
Set Painting by Sue Hawks
Choreography by Jayita Bhattacharya

Actors
Nia Amandes
Jayita Bhattacharya
Jeff Bivens
Briana Finegan
Sidonie Greenberg
Judith Harding
Cat Jarboe
Jenny Magnus
Troy Martin
Beau O'Reilly
Colm O'Reilly
Matt Reiger
John Starrs
Matt Test
Vicki Walden
HB Ward

The Crooked Mouth
Beau O'Reilly *vocals and cane*
Troy Martin *guitar, ukulele, and vocals*
Matt Test *banjo, accordion, piano, and vocals*
Vicki Walden *bass and vocals*
Jenny Magnus *drums and vocals*

The MCA Stage presentation of *Still in Play: A Performance of Getting Ready* is a world premiere, and was developed by Jenny Magnus with Curious Theatre Branch as part of the Jenny Magnus artist residency at MCA Chicago.

About the Performances

An examination and homage to sustained attention, *Still in Play: A Performance of Getting Ready* is the story of a troupe that is really a tribe struggling to be an ensemble. A group of actors come together to prepare for a show, and in their attentions to themselves and each other, they weave the fabric of their determination to make something happen on the stage. Taking place in the 60 minutes before the performance, the actors inhabit the space in ways that become evidently theatrical, moving from individual actions to group actions, and revealing the conflicted Eros of collaboration. Written by Jenny Magnus, and performed by members of the wider Curious Theatre Branch ensemble, *Still in Play: A Performance of Getting Ready* is an insider's view of theater-making, both in its vision and its heartache.

The stage is the arena for a theater company; all their struggles are won and lost there: the struggle for dominance, for attention, for a cooperative body—of both an individual and a group, the struggle to just continue in the face of overwhelming reasons to quit. As the Curious actors enter and get ready for their show, they enact the rituals they have created over years, rituals that both provoke and shield them from a perpetual re-examination of their status and motivations. Some actors are born ready; they come in with all the energy and focus they are ever going to have. Others have to slowly put on their decided bodies, a step-by-step transformation from person in the world to person on the stage. In *Still in Play: A Performance of Getting Ready*, whether they play ductball, mutter into a camera, rehearse a monologue, enact a song, groan, or simply sit and wait, the actors all seek the moments of heightened awareness that emerge when someone participates in their chosen art form.

About the Music

The music for this production was created by The Crooked Mouth in collaboration with ElvisBride. As described by the band, the music is part cabaret, part rock 'n' roll, and all lyric- and story-driven.

The CD release concert on Friday, September 16, also includes special guests Midnight Moxie, the all-girl rock doo-wop trio.

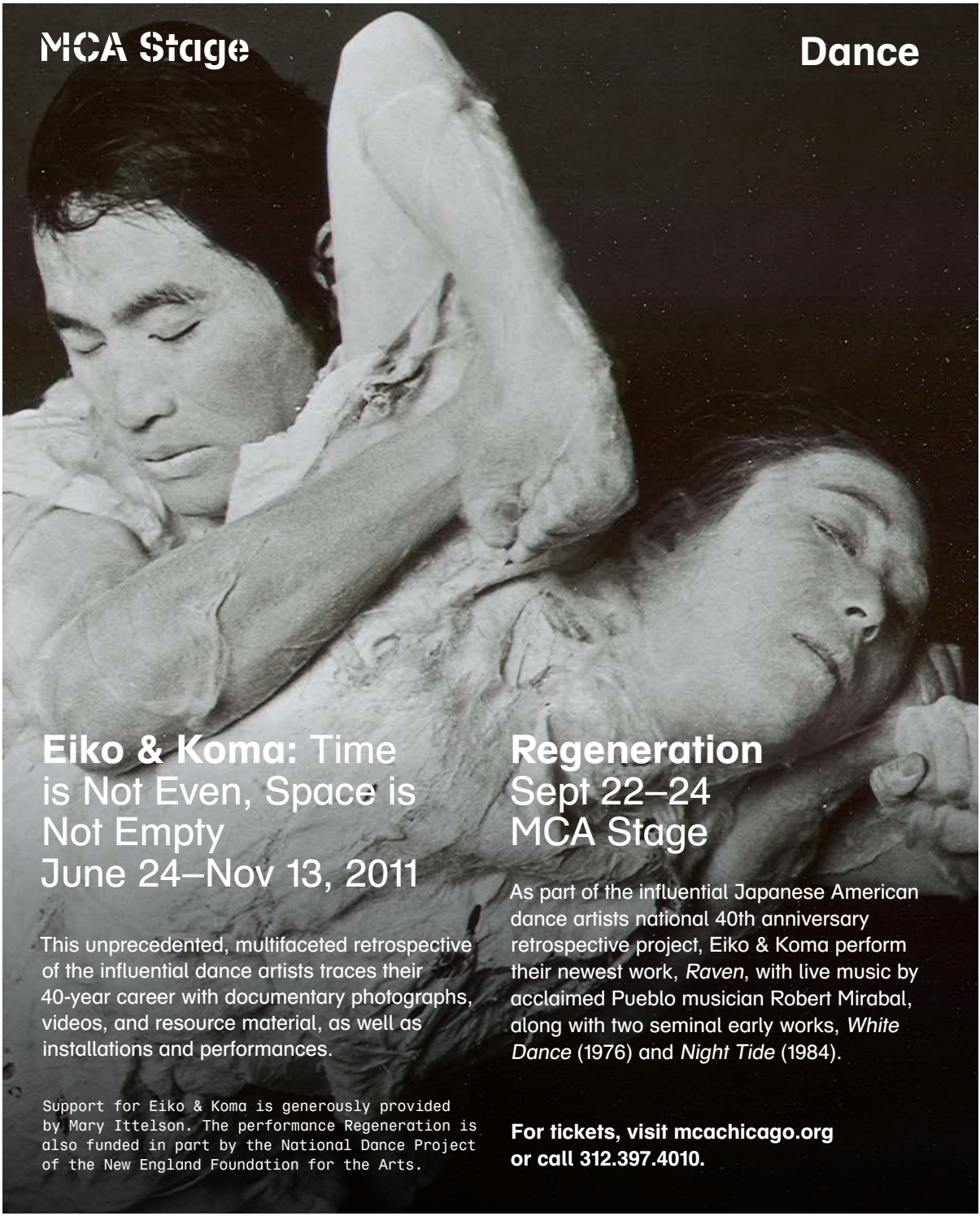
To listen to songs from the show, visit The Crooked Mouth's website at crookedmouthband.wordpress.com/sounds/.

About the Bands

The Crooked Mouth is composed of Beau O'Reilly and Jenny Magnus (of Maestro Subgum and the Whole), multi-instrumentalist Matt Test and guitarist/ukulele player Troy Martin (of ElvisBride), and bass player Vicki Walden (of performance troupes Dog and Lucky Pierre). With roots in vaudeville, country, rock, and pop, their original acoustic music reflects on themes of loss and forbearance. Their appearance at MCA Stage on Friday, September 16, marks their first CD release.

ElvisBride, formed in 2009 from a play at Chicago's Rhinoceros Theatre Festival, combines inventive arrangements with dark humor. Members include pianist/keyboardist/composer/improviser Julian Berke; singers Taylor Bibat, Casey Cuttingham, and Cat Jarboe; singer/songwriter/ukulele player Troy Martin; multi-instrumentalist Matt Test; and drummer Tom Vale.

Midnight Moxie is an all-girl doo-wop rock trio from Chicago. Formed in summer 2009, the band consists of sisters Meg and Nia O'Reilly Amandes and close friend Sarah Chang. In August 2009, Midnight Moxie played alongside such Chicago greats as Jon Spiegel, Pete Special, Miki Greenberg, Paul Amandes, and The Crooked Mouth String Band, as part of the first annual Roots Underground Fest. The trio's music is inspired by a mix of 1960s vocal arrangements with the edge of rock and roll.



MCA Stage

Dance

**Eiko & Koma: Time
is Not Even, Space is
Not Empty**
June 24–Nov 13, 2011

This unprecedented, multifaceted retrospective of the influential dance artists traces their 40-year career with documentary photographs, videos, and resource material, as well as installations and performances.

Support for Eiko & Koma is generously provided by Mary Ittelson. The performance *Regeneration* is also funded in part by the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts.

Regeneration
Sept 22–24
MCA Stage

As part of the influential Japanese American dance artists national 40th anniversary retrospective project, Eiko & Koma perform their newest work, *Raven*, with live music by acclaimed Pueblo musician Robert Mirabal, along with two seminal early works, *White Dance* (1976) and *Night Tide* (1984).

For tickets, visit mcachicago.org
or call 312.397.4010.

Photo: Marcus Leatherdale

Author's Notes Still in Play

I have been working with and at MCA Chicago since the Performance Program started.

Fifteen years ago, on the inaugural evening for the stage, I performed with an enormous jump-rope, as I recall, as part of a big lineup of performers. With *Curious*, at MCA Chicago, I have done *Vaudevilles*, a Beckett Festival, and my play *Round and Round: a sexfarce tragedy*, among other things. So it seemed like a natural next step to enter into this year-long residency and work on something altogether new, created for this space. In August 2010, I took the invitation by MCA Chicago to be in residence quite literally, and came up with the idea of *Office Hours*, my research/performance/inhabitation. I thought, if I am to do this residency I need to find a way to really reside.

So over the course of the year, I resided during six periods, for an hour a day, four days a week, talking to people and being present in the space, thinking about my work in relation to this grand institution. That was certainly something I had never done before. And as for residing in the theater space itself, my *Curious* tribe and I were given four big chunks of time, several days each, to come in and work in this room, enabling us to make our work for this particular space.

I had never done that before. I have never worked for a year on something like this before. I have never made something for so many people before. I have never done devised work before. I have never shown the work before it was pretty well done before. I have never collaborated with so many people before. If I were to name the one thing I am most excited about in this whole experience, it is having been given the opportunity to not know, to risk in such a public way, to be forced to loosen my control grip, and to try things that I really didn't know if I could do.

I am firmly in the status of a mid-career artist. No longer emerging, by any chronological standard. Making this work and having this experience has made me consider my lost innocence, artistic and otherwise, and to consider that once innocence is gone, it's gone. But the adult version of innocence is willingness. I have been profoundly willing, and it has been really, really fun. My warmest thanks go out to Yolanda and Peter, Surinder, Richard, Dennis, and all the other MCA people I have worked with over this year. They are all the real deal. And I just have to say, my dear *Curious* tribe, flung far and wide, you are all the best, fun-est, weirdest, crankiest, iconoclast-iest, and most loving gang an outsider like me could ever hope to have.
—Jenny Magnus

About the Artists

Jenny Magnus

is a writer, performer, musician, director, and teacher who is a founding co-Artistic Director of the Curious Theatre Branch, an all-original theater company, now entering its 24th year. Magnus is an interdisciplinary artist who brings composition, intention, rhythm, dynamics, and inventiveness to every form of making she encounters. She has created hybrid forms of performance, music, images, and philosophy in her explorations and meditations about awareness, attention, and the performative moment, riding a shifting line between singing and speaking, talking about thinking and thinking about talking, and live and mediated images.

Her intrepid curiosity about being present in front of people has also led to an active teaching career, in which she brings a conscious intention to challenge students of whatever age or situation to see themselves as the authors of their own education, striving for excellence in their attention and intention. Magnus is primarily interested in provoking herself and others to look more closely, listen more thoughtfully, and participate in explosive inquiry whenever possible.

Magnus is the author/creator of plays that have been produced at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the former Lunar Cabaret, and the Prop Theater, and which have been toured throughout the United States and Europe. She has performed in many solo performances as well. She was a longtime member of the band Maestro Subgum and the Whole and made multiple records with them, as well as three solo recorded CDs. Magnus has a current band called The Crooked Mouth, and is represented and distributed by UvuLittle Recordings.

Magnus is a longtime Adjunct Faculty member with Columbia College Chicago, in both the graduate Interdisciplinary Arts Department and the undergraduate Interactive Arts and Media Department. She has taught performance and writing at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, The University of Chicago, the Chicago Public Schools, the Metropolitan Correctional Center of Chicago, and The University of Illinois. She has also been a Free Street Theater teaching artist, and created her own Curious School. In 1998, Jenny Magnus was named among the Artists of the Year by the *Chicago Tribune*.

Beau O'Reilly

is a noted Chicago playwright, actor, and director. He is cofounder of the Curious Theatre Branch, now in its 24th year. O'Reilly curates the Rhinoceros Theatre Festival, an annual festival of new work, and is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, in the MFA Writing Program. In addition to having written more than one hundred plays for the theater, he is a regular contributor to *This American Life* on National Public Radio. O'Reilly sings and writes songs with The Crooked Mouth and led the seminal rock 'n' roll cabaret band Maestro Subgum And the Whole during its 20-year run.



Photo: Kristin Basta

Stefan Brün

is an Artistic Associate with the Curious Theatre Branch. He is the Director/Outside Eye for the year-long performance project *Still in Play* by Jenny Magnus. He has been creating theater work for the last 30 years both in Germany and the United States. He cofounded the Prop Theater in 1981. A study of the works of Bertolt Brecht led him to direct a number of Brecht's plays in Chicago; intern at the Berliner Ensemble for a season; and translate a 600-page unreleased fragment into English, *Fatzer*, premiering a performance in Chicago. Brün assistant directed and directed at the Bonn and then Frankfurt Civic Theaters, working on more than 20 productions, and for television, directing 18 episodes of a series, *Westerdeich* for RTL TV. He helped co-found the National New Play Network.

Now Artistic Director at the Prop Theater, he directed the hit play, *Hizzoner*, about the first Mayor Daley, which ran for more than 400 performances; *Busted City* by Paul Carr, about Chicago's first African-American Mayor; *The Darkest Pit* by Kristiana Colón, about a school shooting; and *Debris of the Prophet* by Paul Carr, about an editorial cartoonist whose world turns into a cartoon. Brün teaches in the Interactive Arts and Media department at Columbia College Chicago.

Jeffrey Bivens

is an actor, director, rogue video artist, and resident web designer for Curious Theatre Branch. He directed *Endgame*, *Jet Black Chevrolet*, and *Make Sweat an Oak*, and has appeared in *Waiting for Godot*, *The Caretaker*, *The Turtle at Play*, *No Danger of the... Spiritual Thing*, *ElvisBride*, and *The Madelyn Trilogy*. He has performed locally with the European Repertory Company, Theater Oobleck, and Northwestern University.



Photo: Kristin Basta

Joseph Fosco

composes music and sound design for film, video, and dance. He has designed for The Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Victory Gardens Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Marriott's Theatre in Lincolnshire, Noble Fool Theatricals/Fox Valley Repertory, Theater Wit, Porchlight Theatre, and many other Chicago theaters. Regionally he has composed music and designed sound at Barrow Street Theatre (New York); 29th Street Repertory (New York); and theaters in Seattle, Madison, and Milwaukee. In the United Kingdom, Fosco has designed in London, Edinburgh, Brighton, and Manchester. His work has been nominated for a New York Drama Desk award and seven Joseph Jefferson (Jeff) awards. He has received three Jeff awards, two After Dark awards, and an Orgie Theatre award. He performs with the Chicago Scratch Orchestra and is a company member of A Red Orchid Theatre.

Diane Hamm

is an independent, self-taught designer of theatrical costumes, makeup, fashion, and metalsmithing. Her formal education focused on learning theory, and she holds degrees in Alternative and Community Education and Educational Psychology. She has worked with numerous community-based and storefront theaters in Chicago, for recent productions including *Hamlet* (Chicago Parks District), *The Buzz That Is The Buzz* (Curious Theatre Branch), *Debris of the Prophet* and *The Informer* (Prop Theater). She serves as Managing Director at Prop Theater and is a resident artist teaching Sewing for Stage.



Photo: Kristin Basta

Jen Moniz

has been a stage manager and occasional assistant director for a number of Curious Theatre Branch productions, including *The Madelyn Trilogy*, *Truck on a Role/Room*, *ElvisBride*, *I Am In A Small Space For A Reason I Don't Understand*, *Jet Black Chevrolet*, and more. In last year's Rhinofest, she made her directorial debut with her adaptation of Gertrude Stein's *Mexico*.

Richard Norwood

designed Curious Theatre Branch's 2008 *Round and Round: a sexfarce tragedy*. He has designed numerous shows for Trap Door Theatre, Remy Bumpo Theatre, Vitalist Theatre and Zephyr Dance. Recent designs include *Me Too, I am Catherine Deneuve* for Trap Door Theatre and *The Nativity* for Congo Square Theatre. Norwood is the Theatre Production Manager at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.

Adam Rust

is from Wisconsin and earned his BS-Art from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. While working as a cartoonist for *Mad Magazine*, he moved to Chicago to obtain his MFA from Columbia College Chicago. In addition to set design he is working on sculpture and art installation. Rust and his wife Skye curate, own, and manage Woolly Mammoth Antiques and Oddities in Chicago's north-side neighborhood Andersonville.

Curious Theatre Branch

Founded in 1988 by Jenny Magnus and Beau O'Reilly—as the Curious Theatre “Branch” of the alt-rock cabaret act Maestro Subgum and the Whole—Curious has consistently worked with an ensemble of artists in a nonhierarchical decision-making process, through which the philosophy of collaboration as a social force is explored on every level.

Curious Theatre Branch has produced more than 100 full productions of world-premiere shows in 20 years, amazing audiences year after year in how much can be accomplished for so little. Curious has developed its own recognizable style, using an economy of means and production to make deeper and deeper, rather than larger and larger, work.

Each year, Curious Theatre Branch curates and produces the Rhinoceros Theater Festival, which provides production and exhibition opportunities to hundreds of artists, drawing thousands in attendance each year. The Rhino Fest features works in theater and performance from Chicago companies and national artists alike and is the longest-running, last-standing, multi-arts fringe festival in Chicago.

In 1995, Beau O'Reilly was named one of the 50 most influential people in Chicago theater by *Chicago Magazine*. In 1998, Beau O'Reilly and Jenny Magnus were named among the Artists of the Year by the *Chicago Tribune*, and nearly every year since 1998 *Newcity* has included them among the 50 most influential people in Chicago theater.

Curious's *Waiting for Godot* was named one of the top five theater productions of 2006 by *Newcity*. In 2007, Curious Theatre Branch won an Orgie Award for Original Theater for the year-long Samuel Beckett festival, *No Danger of the Spiritual Thing: 100 Years of Beckett* (best ensemble), which was presented at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.

MCA Stage

Music
Dance

**Faustin Linyekula/
Studios Kabako
more more more ...
future
Oct 21–23, 2011**

**“An ethereal figure with
a spirit of steel ... an
intellectual and practical
force to be reckoned with.”
The Star (South Africa)**

For tickets, visit mcachicago.org or call 312.397.4010.

Support for this project is generously provided by the Institut Français and the Cultural Services of the French Consulate in Chicago. The U.S. tour of *more more more...* *future* is generously funded by the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts.

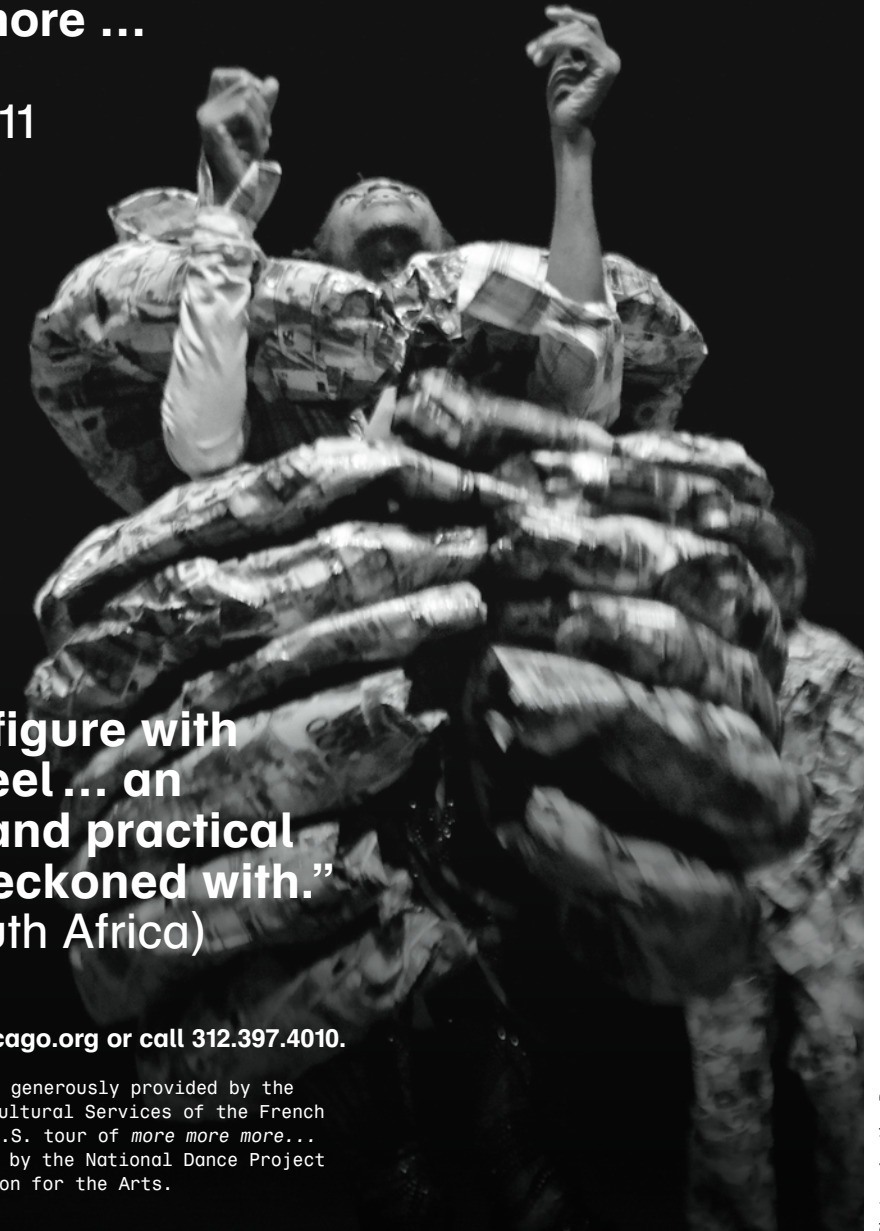


Photo: Agathe Poupeney

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

As one of the nation's largest multidisciplinary museums devoted to the art of our time, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago offers exhibitions of the most thought-provoking art of today. The museum's performing arts program, MCA Stage, is the most active presenter of theater, dance, and music in Chicago, featuring leading performers from around the globe in our 300-seat theater.

MCA Stage is committed to presenting groundbreaking performances that focus on collaboration; working closely with artists; converging with the larger programming of the museum; and offering a contemporary view of the traditional roots of performance.

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Program notes compiled by
Yolanda Cesta Cursach

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Courtesy Guidelines and Information

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Validate your ticket at coat check for \$11 parking in the MCA garage (220 E. Chicago Avenue) and Bernardin garage (747 N. Wabash). The \$11 parking is limited to six hours on date of performance.

Lost and found

To inquire about a lost item, call the museum at 312.280.2660. Unclaimed articles are held for 30 days.

Seating

Switch off all noise-making devices while you are in the theater.

Late arrivals are seated at the management's discretion. Food and open beverage containers are not allowed in the seating area.

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Unauthorized recording and reproduction of a performance is prohibited.

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Museum hours

Tuesday: 10 am–8 pm
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Closed Mondays, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day