

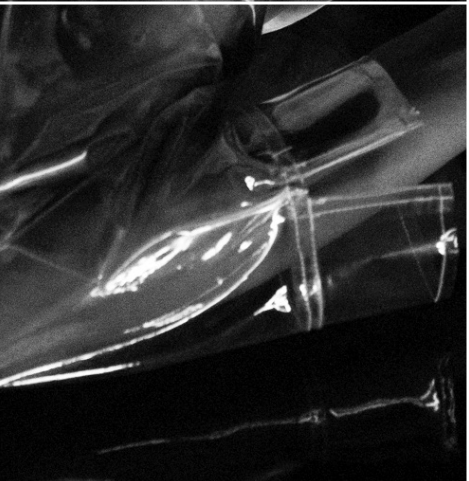
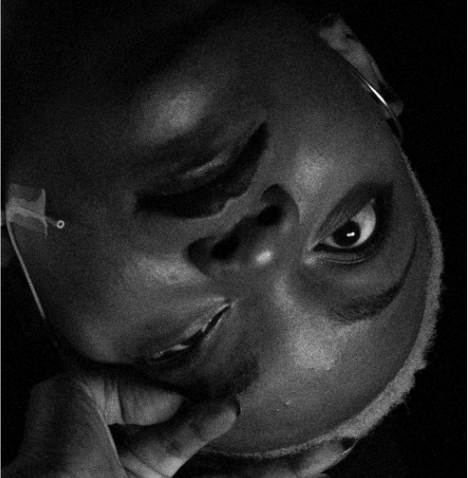
Meshell Ndegeocello with Staceyann Chin

Program Notes

Fri, Mar 6, 2020
7-8:30 pm

Edlis Neeson
Theater

Running time:
90 minutes



MUSEUM OF
CONTEMPORARY ART
CHICAGO

WINTER/SPRING 2020

POWER- HOUSE WOMEN WILLFULLY CREATING NEW WORLDS.

Cover, clockwise from top: Ligia Lewis, *Water Will (in Melody)*. Photo © Maria Baranova; Naomi Rincón Gallardo, *Axolotl Healing Capsule* from *The Formaldehyde Trip*, 2017. Photo: Fabiola Torres Alzaga, courtesy of the artist. Meshell Ndegeocello. Photo: Charlie Gross.

FROM THE CURATOR

Nina Simone's then-controversial "Four Women" (1966) sketches a highly symbolic character in each verse, illuminating how stereotype and reality become inseparable for black women. Each verse ends with a character's name, concluding with "Peaches." I always heard her climactic, gravelly yelling of that final name as the accumulated pain and anger of all four figures—four lives at different historical moments, four ways of coping with unbearable circumstances. Where Nina tensely withholds the fourth name until the last, screaming second, Meshell Ndegeocello's low, throbbing 2012 version plays it cool and even, until suddenly the instrumentals disappear and no name is uttered. I've always taken that decision to cut the word "Peaches" altogether as the ultimate homage: to Nina's irreproducible artistry and to the ways politically charged music-making can and must change over time. Meshell's bold, uncompromising music is also nuanced about the emotions brought up by politics and attentive to the politics of having feelings in the first place. When I saw Staceyann Chin perform with her last year, Staceyann's high-octane stage presence and intricately written poetry added to Meshell's low simmer. I hope the sounds and thoughts bubbling up through both their work will be undeniable tonight.

It's a new decade, and a new set of performing artists are on our stage this spring, bringing fresh perspectives and approaches to big topics. The women behind these shows each have powerful, lush creative visions of our world: imagined possibilities, alternate realities, invisible truths. That work is bound to get us thinking in new directions. I hope you'll join us next month!

Tara Aisha Willis
Associate Curator, Performance and Public Practice

Support for this MCA Project

This program is supported in part by the MCA's New Works Initiative, which meaningfully expands the MCA's ongoing commitment to supporting artists and bringing important new performances to our audiences. Established in 2014, lead support for the MCA New Works Initiative is provided by Elizabeth A. Liebman.

Music Talk:
Meshell Ndegeocello with
Staceyann Chin

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Program Notes
compiled by
Laura Paige Kyber

Meshell Ndegeocello with Staceyann Chin

This talk will run for 90 minutes with no intermission.

 American Sign Language interpretation is provided
by Veramarie Baldoza and Julikka LaChe.

Performers/Speakers:

Bass Meshell Ndegeocello

Spoken word Staceyann Chin

Guitar Chris Bruce

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Poet, actor, and performing artist STACEYANN CHIN is the author of the critically acclaimed memoir *The Other Side of Paradise*, cowriter and original performer in Russell Simmons's Tony Award-winning *Def Poetry Jam on Broadway*, and author of the one-woman shows *Hands Afire*, *Un-speakable Things*, *Border/Clash*, and *MotherStruck*. She has appeared on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and *60 Minutes*, and her poetry been featured in *The New York Times* and *Washington Post*. She proudly identifies as Caribbean, Black, Asian, lesbian, a woman, and a resident of New York City, as well as a Jamaican national. Her new book, *Crossfire: A Litany for Survival*, which collects Chin's empowering, feminist-LGBTQ-Caribbean, activist-driven poetry for the first time in a single book, was released October 1, 2019, by Haymarket Books.

MESHELL NDEGECELLO is a bassist, vocalist, and songwriter, whose music incorporates a wide variety of influences: funk, soul, jazz, hip hop, reggae, and rock. She has garnered critical acclaim throughout her career, including ten Grammy Award nominations. Ndegeocello has worked with The Rolling Stones, Prince, Madonna, Chaka Khan, Terence Blanchard, and Cassandra Wilson. She has also collaborated with Billy Preston, John Mellencamp, Missy "Misdemeanor" Elliott, Redman, Lizz Wright, Lalah Hathaway, Zap Mama, Cody ChesnuTT, Toshi Reagon, and many others. In 2016, Ndegeocello worked with collaborators including director Charlotte Brathwaite and designer Abigail DeVille to create *Can I Get a Witness? The Gospel According to James Baldwin*, an evolving work of music theater inspired by *The Fire Next Time*, Baldwin's polemic about race in America.

ABOUT THE WORK

"Every day I get better at knowing that it is not a choice to be an activist; rather, it is the only way to hold on to the better parts of my human self. It is the only way I can live and laugh without guilt."

—Staceyann Chin, *The Other Side of Paradise*, 2010

"I don't think I believe in politics anymore. I understand how it works. I have to participate, but I want to prepare people. It's not an easy fix. Let me address the things that people see as ephemeral instead. [My work is] just a vehicle for people to come together and talk. It just allows people to create space—not ranting and raving, but we can sit with each other and use ritual to deal with these questions and discomfort."

—Meshell Ndegeocello reflecting on her work in in an interview with *WNYC News*, 2019

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

Tue, Mar 31, 6–7:30pm

Talk: Witches and Warriors, On Colonialism

Taking Naomi Rincón Gallardo's speculative fiction *The Formaldehyde Trip* as a point of departure, a panel including Nao Bustamante, Leticia Alvarado, and Ramón Rivera-Servera discuss the world-making possibilities of indigenous and feminist resistance. Tickets are available online at mcachicago.org or at our box office.



Naomi Rincón Gallardo, *Bety* from *The Formaldehyde Trip*, 2017.
Photo: Fabiola Torres Alzaga, courtesy of the artist.

Apr 2–4, 8 pm

Naomi Rincón Gallardo

The Formaldehyde Trip

In this film-based experience with live musical accompaniment, a lush environment is created through songs, video, and costumes. Murdered Mixtec activist Alberta “Bety” Cariño goes on an imagined, psychedelic journey where indigenous rights and speculative fictions wind together through the underworld. Tickets are available online at mcachicago.org or at our box office.

Check mcachicago.org/stage for up-to-date listings.

Dinner and a Show



Sunflower hummus with artichoke, oregano, and flaxseed cracker. Photo: Neil Burger.

Transform your performance experience into an evening out. Marisol offers a \$45 seasonally inspired prix fixe menu exclusively for MCA event ticket holders.*

Book your table at marisolchicago.com or call 312-799-3599.

*Price does not include tax or gratuity. Please allow at least 75 minutes before showtime.

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at the MCA

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ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION

Select performances include open captioning, ASL interpretation, listening devices, or are relaxed sensory.

Please call 312-397-4010 in advance to reserve seats and inclusive services.

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mcachicago.org/stage

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312-397-4010

AT THE MCA
BOX OFFICE

220 E Chicago Ave
Chicago, IL 60611

Single performance tickets starting at \$30; \$10 for students, limited availability.

Groups of ten or more save 20% on full-price tickets; call 312-397-4010.

FREE MUSEUM ADMISSION WITH TICKET

Present your performance ticket stub to receive FREE ADMISSION* and 10% off your purchase at the MCA Store.** Or become an MCA Member and save 10%.

Ticket stub is valid during regular hours up to seven days after the performance date.

* Not accepted for special ticketed exhibitions.

** Regular price, in-stock merchandise only; no other discounts apply.

YOU PICK 2

Purchase tickets to two or more events at mcachicago.org/pick2 to receive up to 20% off. MCA Members receive an additional 10% discount!

SUPPORT FOR MCA PERFORMANCES

Lead support for the 2019–20 season is provided by Elizabeth A. Liebman.

Generous support is provided by Lois and Steve Eisen and The Eisen Family Foundation, Ginger Farley and Bob Shapiro, the Martha Struthers Farley and Donald C. Farley Jr. Family Foundation, Susan Manning and Doug Doetsch, Ock Ju Noh, Sharon* and Lee Oberlander, Carol Prins and John Hart/The Jessica Fund, and Ellen Stone Belic.

Additional support for MCA Stage is provided by Julie and Larry Bernstein, John D. and Leslie Henner Burns, Ms. Shawn M. Donnelley and Dr. Christopher M. Kelly, Nicholas and Nancy Giampietro, Stanislav Grezdo and Tracy Miller, Cynthia Hunt and Philip Rudolph, Ashlee Jacob, Anne L. Kaplan, Susie L. Karkomi and Marvin Leavitt, Anne and John Kern, and D. Elizabeth Price and Lou Yecies, Mary Ellen Murphy, Elisa K. Spain, and Ellen B. Wallace.

The MCA is a proud member of the Museums in the Park and receives major support from the Chicago Park District.

*Enact Chair as of
January 1, 2020

MUSEUM OF
CONTEMPORARY ART
CHICAGO

ABOUT ENACT

MCA performances are supported by Enact, a group of MCA donors dedicated to supporting the museum's renowned performance programs.

Join today for opportunities to meet artists and gain behind-the-scenes access alongside MCA curators—all while providing vital support.

Circle Donor membership is required to join Enact. Enact donations begin at \$1,000 annually. For more information on benefits or how to join, contact us at enact@mcachicago.org or 312-397-4044.

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ABOUT MCA PERFORMANCES

As an internationally renowned institution devoted to contemporary culture, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is committed to presenting the most thought-provoking visual and performing arts of our time. The MCA commissions and presents theater, dance, and music by leading artists from Chicago and around the world, holding performances in spaces throughout the museum, including the three-hundred seat Edlis Neeson Theater.

The MCA's groundbreaking performances are an integral part of the museum's cutting-edge, multidisciplinary programming. Along with exhibitions and public programs, MCA performances welcome visitors to experience the work and ideas of living artists and find their own civic voices.

PARKING

Validate your ticket at the coat check for \$13 parking MCA garage (220 East Chicago Ave) and Northwestern Medicine Lavin Family Pavilion Garage (259 East Erie St), operated by InterPark. \$13 parking is limited to six hours on the date of performance.

LOST AND FOUND

To inquire about a lost item, call the museum at 312-280-2660. Unclaimed articles are held for thirty days.

SEATING

Please switch off all noisemaking devices while you are in the theater.

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

REPRODUCTION

Unauthorized recording and reproduction of a performance are prohibited.

GENERAL INFORMATION
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BOX OFFICE
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