

THE STOREFRONT PROJECT

Program Notes
Sat-Sun, Sep 14-15
Sat-Sun, Sep 21-22

Roving
throughout
the MCA and
Prop Thr

FALL 2019

MUSEUM OF
CONTEMPORARY ART
CHICAGO

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FROM THE CURATOR

When we first chatted, it was easy to bond over our similarities: new leadership roles in long-standing Chicago institutions; and mutual passions for working toward racial equity, for wearing many hats as programmers and artists, and for articulating the challenges Chicago artists chip away at to make theater. Both of our institutions harbor artists making visually arresting, surprising, and playful work, however, the *differences* between MCA Chicago and Prop Thtr—large art museum vs. small industrial storefront, Magnificent Mile vs. residential neighborhood, large touring productions vs. close-to-home “DIY” theater—birthed *The Storefront Project*.

This weekend, three directors tangle with the MCA’s crevices and crannies, while three other directors adapt to Prop’s spaces; next weekend they switch. To both venues they bring their experiences beyond directing—from working as a house sitter, to performing as a drag queen, to chairing a university theater department—and their ingenuity in navigating Chicago’s robust storefront, DIY, underground, experimental, and devised theater scenes. By asking them to work in distinct buildings and infrastructures, we hope to highlight their unique strategies for devising theater and to demystify a lesser-known part of Chicago’s creative ecology. There are endless compromises, adaptations, and processes involved in getting from point A—source material—to point B—performance. We’re here to experience them all, together.

Tara Aisha Willis, Associate Curator,
Performance & Public Practice
Olivia Lilley, Artistic Director, Prop Thtr

Experience

dance

music

theater

everywhere

galleries

garages

hallways

as a place that performance ignites.

SUPPORT FOR THIS
MCA PROJECT

Many thanks to Olivia Lilley, Stefan Brun, David Rosenberg, Peter Bucci, Marlana Carlson, and Prop Thtr for your generous partnership and coordination.

Thank you to our colleagues on the Facilities and Operations, Security, Visitor Experience, Special Events and Rentals, and Housekeeping teams for making the entire museum campus a place for performance.

Gratitude to Ira S. Murfin for his excitement and John Green of Columbia College Chicago's European Devised Theater department, as well as to The League of Chicago Theatres, for creative programmatic support.

THE STOREFRONT PROJECT

Roving throughout the MCA and Prop Thtr. At the MCA, performances begin at the entrance to the Edlis Neeson Theater.

Running time is approximately 90 minutes with no intermission.

Please note that the order may change as the works continue to evolve.

PROGRAM A

Sat-Sun, Sep 14-15, noon and 3 pm at Prop Thtr
Sat-Sun, Sep 21-22, 7 and 8 pm at the MCA

And Words Were Her Weapon: In honor of Ida B. Wells, inspired by Wells's 1892 text *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*

Director, writer, and educator	Sydney Chatman
Adult performers	Michelle Davis, LaTanay Grundy, Sandra Hall, and Candace Hunter
Youth performers	Briohna Booker (12), Ayah Sol Hall (9), Brooklyn Truman (8), Arianna Washington (15), Marilyn Washington (8), and Laiyla Wilder (8)

Chouquette, inspired by Karl Lagerfeld's obituaries

Director	Coya Paz
Cocreators and performers	Hunter Bryant, Mia Vivens, and Vic Wynter

Nine Lives of a Cat, adapted from Charles Bennett's story of the same name and the life of Antonio Ligabue

Director	Denise Yvette Serna
Assistant director	Aliza Feder
Live art/production designer	Josie Koznarek
Performers	River Coello, Erik Strebig, and Sophie Wingland

PROGRAM B

Sat-Sun, Sep 14-15, 7 and 8 pm at the MCA
Sat-Sun, Sep 21-22, noon and 3 pm at Prop Thtr

Great Depression, inspired by Charles K. Harris's "After the Ball" and other songs and diaries from the 1930s

Director	Lucky Stiff
Devisers and performers	Lúc Ami, Danika Bonet, Ari Gato, Sterling Harris, Graham Hawley, Campbell Krausen, Mary Iris Loncto, and Willy LaQueue
Stage manager and administrator	Jimmie Swaggerty

BURROW, adapted from Franz Kafka's *The Burrow*

Creators and directors	April Cleveland with Mikael Burke
Performers	Kya Brickhouse, Gregory J. Fields, and Nicholas Wren
Dramaturg and assistant director	Grace Grindell
Translator and script supervisor	Kit Slover

This performance contains some nudity, sexual themes, and violence.

Dammsuga, adapted from a vacuum cleaner advertisement from 1915

Director	dado gyure
Composer and music director	Elenna Sindler
Sculptor and scenic design	Sam Rausch
Performer and movement	Laurie Roberts
Production manager	Jordan Tregash
Producing theater	A Red Orchid and c a k e

ABOUT THE WORK

"Like most storied artistic vanguards, Chicago's storefront theatre movement has historically been entwined with a specific set of aesthetics, personalities, and cultural circumstances. By reputation, storefront theatre defaults to authorial control, verisimilitude, charismatic presence, and centering the straight white male working class experience. Memorable as many of the performances that established that template may have been, it has never described the totality or diversity of Chicago's performance scene. Yet the legend of Chicago storefront theatre continues to overshadow the full range of performance practices in Chicago, tethering the city's theatrical reputation to a mythologized past.

With *The Storefront Project*, Olivia Lilley and Tara Aisha Willis, both relatively newly occupying leadership roles in two longstanding institutions—one an apparently quintessential Chicago storefront, the other a stop on the global contemporary performance touring circuit—have made the simple yet surprisingly audacious move to see past the entrenched assumptions of history. Using their respective resources to present new work in ways that center differences—individual, institutional, architectural, geographical, aesthetic—and to support relocating authorship to the collective process of theatrical creation, they are advancing a history of Chicago theatre and performance that we are only now beginning to be able to remember, one that looks and feels much more like the city in which we live."

—Ira S. Murfin, PhD

Excerpt from *The Storefront Project: Toward a Revised Category of "Chicago Theatre"*, available in full at mcachicago.org/storefront.

RELATED PROGRAMS

ASL-INTERPRETED PERFORMANCE

Sun, Sep 15, 7 and 8 pm

Sun, Sep 22, 7 and 8 pm

POST-SHOW TALK

Sun, Sep 15 and 22

Immediately following the 8 pm performance, join cocurators Tara Aisha Willis and Olivia Lilley in the Edlis Neeson Theater for a brief conversation with the artists.

FORUM: BREAKING THE MOLD/UNEARTHING THE FOUNDATIONS OF CHICAGO'S PERFORMANCE ECOLOGY

Mon, Sep 16, 6:30 pm, at the Theatre Center, Columbia College Chicago Classic Studio (Ground Floor), 72 E 11th St

Join Sydney Chatman, Denise Yvette Serna, and others as they discuss their participation in *The Storefront Project*. Find out what it's been like to devise new work to be performed backstage and in public spaces at the MCA and in the small black-box theaters and interstitial spaces of Prop Thtr. This conversation addresses questions raised by this cross-institutional collaboration about the history, practices, and reputation of Chicago's theater scene, and the possibilities and frustrations of its geographical locations, theatrical lineages, disciplinary categories, terminologies, practices, and economies of scale. Chicago performance scholar, writer, and artist Ira S. Murfin moderates.

SUPPORT FOR THE ARTISTS

Denise Yvette Serna gives thanks to Galleria Biffi Arte, Casa Museo Antonio Ligabue, Carolina Migli Bateson, Pavy, Millie, and Reggie.

Lucky Stiff extends gratitude to all of the trans elders who survived and those who left us too soon. We imagine this for you.

dado gyure gives special thanks to Rob Murphy, MD.

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Program notes
compiled by Laura
Paige Kyber

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

OLIVIA LILLEY is a director, writer, and producer. Her work runs the gamut from irreverent takes on classic texts (*Faust: Save me or I'll die, Neverland*) to dance theater biographies (*The Party House, In Sarah's Shadow*) to new plays that tackle contemporary intersectional issues (*Mary Shelley Sees The Future, The Winter & The Whiskey, Expectations [for little mixed girls]*). Lilley is the founding artistic director of The Runaways Lab Theatre (voted "Best New Theatre Company" in *The Chicago Reader's* Best Of 2014). She is the head of Pop Magic Productions, an artistic associate with Pivot Arts, and the artistic director of Prop Thtr.

PROGRAM A:

COYA PAZ (Director, *Choupette*) (she/hers) is the artistic director of Free Street Theater and is an associate professor in The Theatre School at DePaul University. She is the coauthor, with Chloe Johnston, of *Ensemble-Made Chicago: A Guide to Devised Performance*, and served as the founding coartistic director of Teatro Luna for nine years. Paz believes in the power of coffee to save the morning, lip gloss to save the day, and poetry and performance to save a life.

HUNTER BRYANT (Cocreator/ Performer, *Choupette*) (he/him) is humbled to be performing at the MCA. Some theater credits include *The Shipment* (Red Tape Theatre), *The Aristophanesathon* (The Hypocrites), and *Dontrell Who Kissed the Sea* (First Floor Theatre). His upcoming performances include *Middle Passage* at Lifeline Theatre. Bryant's film credits include "Raj" in *How Is This The World*, he was featured in *Oh Baby*, and his web and television credits include *Empire* (Season 6) and *Conspiracy Theorist*. He is proudly represented by DDO Artist Agency.

MIA VIVENS (Cocreator/Performer, *Choupette*) (she/hers) is a poetess/mover/maker originally hailing from Columbus, Ohio. She has spent her artistic life exploring intersections of identity; specifically focusing on the

black and brown queer community. Vivens has taught in schools all over the Chicagoland area, facilitating conversations on gender and sexuality. She works in the theater and in film as an actor, director, dancer, and movement director. She teaches sexual assault prevention to the Navy and fitness classes around the city.

VIC WYNTER (Cocreator/ Performer, *Choupette*) (they/them) shapeshifts through space discovering where and how they can contribute. Most recently, this baby bee buzzed with the Fly Honey Hive for the first time at The Den Theater. They've premiered original work at Kinship and About Face Theater's Queer Variety Show. They've also been on the Goodman stage in the IAM...Fest performance of *The Interrogation of Sandra Bland*. Wynter was a For Youth Inquiry (FYI) actor teaching the youth sexual health through immersive and interactive plays. In a past season, they performed on the Neo-Futurists stage in *The Arrow, One Night Only*, and assistant directed *The Arrow Takes A Leap & The Arrow Cleans House*. They love the worlds of performance, writing, and dance, which give birth to communities all while connecting folks with and to themselves. These are all ways of communicating in a world that tries stifling our voices.

DENISE YVETTE SERNA (Director, *Nine Lives of a Cat*) is a theater practitioner and arts activist based in Chicago. Chicago credits include *La Ruta* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), *The Revolutionists* (Strawdog Theatre Company), *Cambodian Rock Band* (Victory Gardens Theater), *HIR* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), *Richard & Jane & Dick & Sally* (LTC Carnival 2018: ConeXion!), *Earthquakes in London* (Steept Theatre Company), *The View Upstairs* (Circle Theatre Chicago), *For the Love of* (Pride Films & Plays), *HOMESET* (Pop Magic Productions), *SPARK* (20% Theatre Company), *(the)forget_me\knot* (inappropriate theatre company), *La Chingada* (inappropriate theatre company), and Climate Change Theatre

Action-Chicago (Global Hive Laboratories). International credits include *MEDUSA* (Global Hive Laboratories, Fusion Theatre Company, La Compagnie Certes, Teatro Trieste Trentaquattro), *Much Ado About Nothing* (The Shaw Theatre), *Om Svastyastu from London-The Wailing Woman* (Institut Seni Indonesia Denpasar), and *Heart's Core* (CAN - Refugee Women's Theatre Programme). Serna holds an MFA in theatre directing and is cofounder of Global Hive Laboratories, a collective of international practitioners working toward a global theater. She is an alumna of Steppenwolf Theatre Company's Multicultural Fellowship and serves as a member of artEquity's diverse cadre of facilitators who support equity-based initiatives nationwide.

RIVER COELLO (Performer, *Nine Lives of a Cat*) is a queer and trans multidisciplinary artist from Guayaquil, Ecuador, living in Chicago. As an actor, Coello has appeared on various stage productions, including *Medusa* and *The P*ssy Paragraphs* in Chicago. Coello has trained at Acting Studio Chicago, Second City Training Center, and the University of Michigan. As a writer, Coello's work explores various liminalities of the human condition through a focus on Coello's own identities and experiences, grounded in a deeply spiritual perspective.

ALIZA FEDER (Assistant director, *Nine Lives of a Cat*) is a Chicago-based director, writer, and makeup artist. She was previously the artistic director of Fermat's Last Theater Company in Madison. Feder's directing credits include *Miss Julie* (director and adaptor, Fermat's Last Theatre) and *Slipper Tongue* (Violet Surprise: A FemSlash Festival); assistant directing credits include *The Night Season* (Strawdog), *The Recommendation* (Windy City Playhouse), *Neighborhood 3: Requisition of Doom* (The Bower Theatre Ensemble), and *Medusa*, an internationally devised project with Pop Magic Productions and Global Hive Laboratories.

JOSIE KOZNAREK (Live art/ Production designer, *Nine Lives of a*

Cat) is an artist based in Chicago who specializes in paintings of flowing beauty. Working in live settings using an evocative stream-of-consciousness style, she is able to problem-solve using many different mediums and styles to tailor-make artistic experiences that can both accentuate live productions and stand on their own as singular finished pieces.

ERIK STREBIG (Performer, *Nine Lives of a Cat*) is an New York-based performing and teaching artist. They are thrilled to be back in Chicago and a part of *Nine Lives of a Cat*. Their credits include Looking Glass, Mercury Theatre, and Broadway Playhouse. Their current interests include ashtanga yoga, radical faeries, and unintentional art.

SOPHIE WINGLAND (Performer, *Nine Lives of a Cat*) is a musician, facilitator, and yoga instructor, originally from California. She is a classically trained singer and plays ukulele, hang drum, cello, slide whistle, toy accordion, and anything else she can get her hands on. Rooted in the belief that everyone is a musician, her work explores the nature of collaboration, playfulness, and healing. Wingland has a Master of Music in vocal arts from USC Thornton School, graduating with honors, and a Master of Music in new audiences and innovative practice from The Royal Conservatory in the Hague, where she studied community building through music. Wingland has performed across the United States and Europe, singing opera, jazz, contemporary, and folk music. She has devised theater and music projects with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chamber Opera of University of Southern California, Calefax Reed Quintet, the Oerol Festival, and Opera on Tap Los Angeles. She has taught voice and music at the Abrons Center for the Arts in New York City, Musik Den Haag in the Netherlands, and the Old Town School of Folk Music and Ravinia Music Festival's Reach, Teach, Play program in Chicago. She is currently the community engagement director for Harmony, Hope & Healing, where she leads choirs at shelters, recovery centers, and Cook County Jail.

SYDNEY CHATMAN (Director/Writer/Educator, *And Words Were Her Weapon*) is the 2019 Goodman Theatre Maggio Directing Fellow. She is a director, educator, mentor, producer, writer, and founding director of The Tofu Chitlin' Circuit featuring the self-penned, award-winning play *Black Girls (Can) Fly!*, which she also directed. Chatman is an African American Arts Alliance awardee and a 3Arts Make a Wave winner. Her credits include the Tony-nominated *The Trip to Bountiful* and a directing fellowship with the Lincoln Center's Directors Lab. Rooted in her community, she bridges the divide between audience and stage through theatrical performances and collaborations with the Adler Planetarium, Hyde Park Jazz Festival/Back Alley Jazz, The Reva and David Logan Center, Court Theatre, and Victory Gardens Theatre.

BRIOHNA BOOKER (Performer, *And Words Were Her Weapon*) is an inspiring, highly motivated six-grade honor student who aims high! She has been a student of Sydney Chatman since she was five years old, and has been a member of the Fly Girls team since 2014 where she performed in her debut of *Black Girls (Can) Fly!* written and directed by Chatman. She has been a fierce collaborator—supporting Chatman in play development and direction. Through her unyielding faith Booker stands up for what she believes and brings that conviction into her performance. She has performed at the University of Chicago Charter School, Green Line Performance Arts Center, Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, and Greenhouse Theatre Center. Booker aspires to be a famous actress and an international model.

Fifty-three-year-old LATANYA GRUNDY (Performer, *And Words Were Her Weapon*) was born and raised in Chicago and currently resides on the South Side in the Roseland neighborhood. She is the mother of three adult children. While Grundy has no formal acting experience, she has always wanted to try her hand at it; this is her first performance. During her free time, Grundy enjoys exercising, reading, and spending time with family.

AYAH SOL MASAI HALL (Performer, *And Words Were Her Weapon*) is an unapologetically black, empathetic, creative nine-year-old child wonder. She is a fifth-grade student at the National Teachers' Academy who loves reading, math, and science. Hall is a stargazer who loves space, nature, learning about her ancestors, and creative expression. Past credits include performing in the eighty-eighth annual Bud Billiken Day Parade with Sydney Chatman as a Fly Girl, Lookingglass Theater Company's Summer Camp on The Lake at the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, and *Hela* ("Suhaila/Little Girl") by J. Nicole Brooks at Sideshow Theater Company. She is a member of the World Scholars Program where she's traveled to Costa Rica. Hall wants to thank her Mama Sona, Baba Elisha, little brothers Ajani and Ameen, and the entire village who loves, supports, and encourages her to follow her dreams. Follow her on Instagram @readingwith_sol.

SANDRA HALL (Performer, *And Words Were Her Weapon*) is a writer, author, publisher, social worker, trainer, mother, grandmother, and mentor. Her publications include *I Miss My Time with You (A Memory Book)*, *Karen, Don't Forget Your Glasses*, *Perfect Pee & Poop*, *Life in Grandma Land*, and *Mothers R Special*, *Celebrating Momma N'em*. This is her first time participating in a play.

ABENA MICHELLE HUBBARD (Performer, *And Words Were Her Weapon*; credited as Michelle Davis) first became interested in drama and singing as a child while participating in a National Baptist Congress Youth Rally. She has also sung in the Illinois Baptist State Youth Choir, Lindbloom High School chorus and Acapella Chorus, and yearly in Glenn Burleigh's Christmas Cantata. A graduate of National Baptist Convention Gospel Music Workshop, Hubbard created the first Drama Ministry at West Point M.B. Church and directed their first productions written by Jon Ross. She has also acted in several plays during the existence of New Beginnings Church Drama Ministry and spent a few years as an extra in movies and TV shows through Holzer and Ridge Casting Company.

CANDACE HUNTER (Performer, *And Words Were Her Weapon*) is a self-sustaining visual artist residing in Chicago and calling the world home. Her touring one-person shows, including *DUST IN THEIR VEINS: a Visual Response to the Global Water Crisis*, *HOODED TRUTHS*, and *SO BE IT. SEE TO IT.*, have enjoyed robust viewings in multiple cities. Her multidisciplinary work, *LOSS/SCAPE, the Landscape of Loss*, now in its fifth and final year, examines the major loss of human capital on the western shores of Africa during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Hunter is a proud recipient of the 3Arts Award (2016), honored by the collective Diasporal Rhythm's (2014/15), and most recently received the Joyce Foundation's SPARK grant.

BROOKLYN TRUMAN (Performer, *And Words Were Her Weapon*) is an eight-year-old, loving, ambitious, and kind-hearted girl. She's known as "The Boss" because of her quick and adaptive learning and exceptional leadership skills. These attributes help her to maintain a 4.0 GPA and fly high in her gymnastics, cheer, and dance competitions. Her great sense of humor and keen attention to detail make her a wonderful asset to any team. Her God-given voice can melt your heart. She loves her dogs, anything VSCO girls, and making Tik Tok videos.

ARIANA WASHINGTON (Performer, *And Words Were Her Weapon*) is a freshman in high school. She was a returning participant in A Long Walk Home's Girl/Friends program, a Chicago-based national nonprofit that uses art to educate, inspire, and mobilize young people to end violence against girls and women. She is an activist who enjoys performing in plays and poetry slams. Washington hopes to develop her passion as a writer.

MARILYN WASHINGTON (Performer, *And Words Were Her Weapon*) is an inquisitive, full-of-life, and loving third grader who loves literacy and performing arts. You can catch Washington belting out her favorite songs and learning full dance routines from YouTube. She is a powerful actor with a great sense of comic timing and compassion. In February 2019, Washington

played the title role in *The Queen of Soul* by Sydney Chatman, a musical tribute celebrating the life of Aretha Franklin. Her rendition of "Respect" tore the house down! Washington has been steadfast in her dreams of making it to Hollywood. She wants to become a professional singer and actor.

LAIYLA WILDER (Performer, *And Words Were Her Weapon*) is a fearless, uniquely charming eight year old. Wilder tied for first place in the Drama Queen & King Monologue Competition at her school. One can always count on her to be there to lend a helping hand. Her humor, energy, and zest for life keeps her family on their toes! Although this is her first professional performance, Wilder is eagerly hoping for more opportunities.

PROGRAM B:

LUCKY STIFF (Director, *Great Depression*) is a director and performer working in Chicago and New York. They build original experiences that often combine nightclub culture with performance art, as well as classic stories. Their work spans theater, burlesque, and performance art, and takes inspiration from Weimar, Germany, Pierrot clowns, and golden age musicals. Their performances have been featured at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Disco Dining Club, and Bushwigg Festival of Drag, among many others. They are a coproducer of GODDESS at Berlin Nightclub and a cohost of *The Tea* podcast. They hold an MFA in directing for theater from Northwestern University.

LÚC AMI (Performer, *Great Depression*), also known as Cassandra Kendall, is a freelance theater artist in Chicago, specializing in devised theater, light design, and special effects makeup. They are a graduate of the Theatre Arts program at DePaul University. Doubling as a genderqueer drag artist, LúC Ami hosts a monthly immersive psychedelic club event at Berlin Nightclub called Unlimited Too and is a recent winner of Crash Landing! Their work can be seen on Instagram at Luc.Ami.

Originally from New Orleans, Louisiana, DANIKA BONET (Performer, *Great Depression*) moved to Chicago two and a half years ago to pursue her dream of becoming a successful drag performer. She has since won Roscoe's Drag Race, been a resident performer at Charlie's Chicago and now Scarlet Bar, and has performed all over the Midwest. She is crazy excited to be performing alongside her cast at the MCA, something she never thought she would do. From ten years of community theater and twelve years of competitive dancing, she is very excited to use those skills again to bring the story Lucky is trying to tell to life.

A Chicago-based drag queen, ARI GATO (Performer, *Great Depression*) is the winner of Crash Landing Cycle 27 at Berlin Nightclub and has graced the stages of Boystown, Steppenwolf, and Black Girl Magic. Out of drag, Ari Gato is known as Chicago actor Darren Patin, and has appeared in many theater productions around town including *Choir Boy* at Raven Theatre, *Grand Hotel* with Kokandy Productions, and *High Fidelity* with Refuge Theatre Project (Jeff Award winner for Best Musical in 2017).

STERLING HARRIS (Performer, *Great Depression*), a Chicago native, fell in love with tap at the age of six and hasn't stopped dancing since. He has choreographed for and performed in a variety of shows across the city ranging in various dance styles. While dance is his passion, Harris also holds a BA in neuroscience from Northwestern University. He is currently a touring apprentice with Chicago Tap Theatre and enjoys finding new opportunities to create, perform, and share his love for dance.

GRAHAM HAWLEY (Performer, *Great Depression*) is thrilled to collaborate with Lucky Stiff and the rest of the cast for this MCA/Prop Thtr production! His past Chicago credits include "Ensemble" in *Memphis*, "Grandma Dancer" in *Billy Elliot*, "Yulnick/Junior" in *Little Me* for Porchlight Music Theater, "Policeman/Sweep" in *Mary Poppins* for the Mercury Theater, and "Shane Stant/Dance Captain" in *Tonya and Nancy the Rock Opera* for Underscore

Theatre Company. Regional credits include "Neleus" in *Mary Poppins*, "Ensemble" in *Shrek* (Cardinal Stage Company), and "Party Kid" in *Carner and Gregor's Toast* (Bloomington Playwright's Project). He holds an MS in Leadership for Creative Enterprises from Northwestern University.

CAMPBELL KRAUSEN (Performer, *Great Depression*) is from the Chicago suburbs and has performed in fifteen children's theater and musical theater productions. This is her first experience with professional actors and she's excited and grateful to be a member of this team and to participate in this beautiful work of art.

WILLY LAQUEUE (Performer, *Great Depression*) is a dashing dandy and sultry starlet twinkling in the Windy City, where he's the headmaster of the Chicago Academy of Burlesque. He's been performing as a hip-hop dancer, teacher, and choreographer for two decades, venturing into burlesque in 2012, and he has twirled on stages and bar floors across the United States, Canada, and Europe. LaQueue has opened for Lizzo and Sandra Bernhard, been featured in burlesque festivals across the country, and performed at the historic birthplace of the modern LGBTQ rights movement, the Stonewall Inn. He's a flamboyant fop who shimmies in the spaces between drag, burlesque, and dance theater. He's light in his loafers, a dear friend of Dorothy, and the Limpest Wrist in Burlesque!

MARY IRIS LONCTO (Performer, *Great Depression*) is a dancer, actor, and choreographer in Chicago with a focus on multidisciplinary performance. Chicago credits include *Neverland* ("Tinkerbell") at Prop Thtr, *In Sarah's Shadow: The Eleanor Duse Story* ("Isadora Duncan") at Pop Magic Productions, and *A Manual for Living* (Choreographer/ Ensemble), an independent project directed by Elliott Hartmann. She is a company member with Perceptual Motion Inc. Modern Dance Company, as well as an artistic associate with Pop Magic Productions and Prop Thtr.

JIMMIE SWAGGERTY (Stage manager/Administrator, *Great Depression*) is a Chicago-based performance artist, event producer, and entrepreneur. Jimmie is also the founder of Boy Toy's Pocket Cabaret, a monthly burlesque and variety show celebrating its fifth year running this October! As a creator and a producer, Jimmie Swaggerty utilizes his education in business administration and marketing to promote and help grow burlesque and performance art in Chicago while also fostering new male presenting performers in the Chicago industry. He has performed throughout the country in cities like Seattle, New York, Savannah, and more. In 2016, Jimmie Swaggerty made his international debut at the Vienna Boylesque Festival and has since traveled and performed in other international shows and festivals. Through creative costume and choreographic reveals, high-energy acrobatic transitions, and a boyish charm, Jimmie Swaggerty captivates an audience of all gender identities and sexualities, inspiring his tagline, "everyone's favorite boy next door." Through Dauntless Entertainment Group, he has been involved in many large-scale events including coproducing Satanic Panic Fest, a Michigan Avenue immersive performance art event focused on the satanic panic paranoia of the 1980s and 1990s, and has done promotional items, websites, logos, and design for many of Chicago's productions. Jimmie Swaggerty is currently the senior administrative director of the Fashion Design department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago where he coproduces their annual fashion show and exhibition at Spertus Institute as well as assists in other large-scale projects including Ingri Fiksdal's collaborations with Henrik Vibskov on *STATE* at the MCA and Friedrich Floen on *Diorama* at Anish Kapoor's *Cloud Gate* in Chicago.

MIKAEL BURKE (Creator/Codirector, *BURROW*) is a Jeff-nominated director, deviser, and educator. A Princess Grace Award winner in theater and an MFA graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University, Burke most recently worked with Victory Gardens Theatre, Chicago Dramatists,

Northlight Theatre, About Face Theatre, and First Floor Theater in Chicago, and regionally with Asolo Repertory Theatre, Geva Theatre Center, and Indiana Repertory Theatre. A former Victory Gardens Theatre DII Fellow, he recently served as Northlight Theatre's inaugural Artistic Fellow and also serves as the head of the directing concentration for the summer high school training program at DePaul University's Theatre School. Additionally, Burke is a faculty member of the Chicago College of the Performing Arts at Roosevelt University, and a core faculty member in the theater division of the National High School Institute (Cherubs) at Northwestern University. His recent directing credits include *This Bitter Earth* by Harrison David Rivers; *Hooded, or Being Black for Dummies* by Tarrance Arvelle Chisholm; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare; and *Native Son* by Richard Wright, adapted by Nambi E. Kelley.

APRIL CLEVELAND (Creator/Codirector, *BURROW*) is a theater director with a background in philosophy and mathematics. An MFA graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University, Cleveland directs fast-paced thrillers across genres, from plays set in dystopic futures to contemporary versions of classic texts. Her favorite kind of theater interrogates reality, perception, and certainty. Her off-Broadway credits include *The Two Noble Kinsmen* in a modern version by Tim Slover (Classic Stage Company and OSF) for the Play On! Festival. Her recent directing credits include *Oresteia* (adapted by Robert Icke), *Cockroach* (Sam Holcroft), *The Witness* (Vivienne Franzmann), *Seven Homeless Mammoths Wander New England* (Madeleine George), and *Dying City* (Christopher Shinn). Cleveland recently worked with Pam Mackinnon on *Downstate* (a Steppenwolf Theatre coproduction with London's National Theatre), Robert Icke on *Hexenjagd* (Theater Basel, Switzerland), and Vanessa Stalling on *A Shayna Maidel* (TimeLine Theatre, Chicago). Cleveland serves as faculty for the directing concentration of the high school training program at DePaul University.

Born and raised in New York City, KYA BRICKHOUSE (Performer, *BURROW*) took an interest in acting at Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts. Brickhouse apprenticed at Williamstown Theatre Festival in 2015 and is a graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University (2019). Her DePaul credits include "Adela" in *The House of Bernarda Alba*, "Alex" in *The Witness*, "Tricia" in *Growing Up Blue*, and "The Messenger" in *A Dybbuk or Between Two Worlds*. Brickhouse's television and film credits include *The Red Line* (CBS) and *Trick* (Patrick Lussier). She is represented by Artists & Representatives (NYC).

GREGORY J. FIELDS (Performer, *BURROW*) is an actor and screenwriter from Los Angeles. He is a graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University (BFA in acting) and has worked in many theaters around the United States. He is excited to work alongside his ensemble members.

GRACE GRINDELL (Dramaturg/Assistant director, *BURROW*) is a Chicago-based playwright and dramaturg and a recent graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University. At The Theatre School, Grindell's play *Honey Girls* had its world premiere production directed by Carlos Murillo, and she was the dramaturg of the US premiere of Robert Icke's *Oresteia*, directed by April Cleveland. Grindell has worked with Victory Gardens Theater, Raven Theater, and The Alliance Theater in literary management and education programs. She is currently the recipient of The Playwriting Initiative Award at Interrobang Theatre Project.

KIT SLOVER (Translator/Script supervisor, *BURROW*) is a doctoral candidate in philosophy at Emory University and a playwright working at the intersection of post-critical metaphysics, philosophy of theater, and art criticism. Forthcoming publications include "Time and Transcendental Matter: The Sensible Role of the Thing in Itself" in *Proceedings of the 13th International Kant Congress*. He is currently developing *Feed*, a play about social media, political collapse, and the illusion of factual truth.

NICHOLAS WREN (Performer, *BURROW*) studies acting at The Theatre School at DePaul University (class of 2020). Wren's theater credits include *Krapp's Last Tape* (13th Street Rep), *Petie* (Theatre East), and *Parsippany Rhapsody* (Stella Adler Studio).

dado gyure (Director, *Dammsuga*) is an ensemble member at A Red Orchid Theatre where her recent production, *Killing Game*, contains original material by Eugene Ionesco never before seen in the United States. Her production of Sam Shepard's *Sympatico* toured to the McCarter Theatre in 2017. In 2018, gyure starred as "Karla Stock" in the world premiere and three-time Joseph Jefferson award-winning production of *TRAITOR* by Brett Neveu, directed by Michael Shannon. As the 2017 recipient of the Edes Prize for Emerging Artists from the University of Chicago, gyure produced David Lang's Pulitzer-winning *little match girl passion* at Facility Theatre in a vacant middle school cafeteria. gyure also directed the Chicago premiere of Jen Silverman's *Phoebe in Winter* and *The Ruse of Medusa* by Erik Satie for Facility Theatre, where she is a resident director. gyure has directed *The Mutilated* (Tennessee Williams), *A Red Handed Offer* (Ethan Lipton), *The Hothouse* (Harold Pinter), *Megacosm* (Brett Neveu), and *The Unseen* (Craig Wright), among others, at A Red Orchid Theatre. She holds an MFA from the University of Chicago in visual art. She has directed and acted at Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Famous Door Theatre Company, Shattered Globe Theatre, Mary-Arrchie Theatre Company, TUTA Theatre, Trap Door Theatre, and Facility Theatre, among others. gyure was awarded the Goodman Theatre's 2005 Michael Maggio Directing Fellowship, a Joseph Jefferson Award, and an After Dark Award. She teaches at DePaul University and the University of Illinois at Chicago as well as privately.

SAM RAUSCH (Sculptor/Scenic design, *Dammsuga*) is a Jeff-nominated theatrical set designer and a conceptual artist working in sculpture, site-specific installation,

and performance art. Rausch creates immersive environments that transform and examine how we engage with time, space, and relationships. Her art and design hold playful gestures of rainbow-blasting across the stage, into galleries and outdoor public art spaces. Rausch's art practice acts as an alternative vision of the world, creating situations that unite people together as she devises cosmic narratives that explore mystical symbols and allegories as an abstract means to critically examine the absurdity of life. Rausch currently lives and works as an arts educator in Chicago. Rausch has designed for theater companies such as A Red Orchid Theatre, Facility Theatre, Eclipse Theatre, Redmoon Theatre, and Factory Theatre. Her artwork has been shown at the Museum of Science and Industry and at art galleries across the East Coast and the Midwest. Rausch's commitment to transforming public spaces has led to receiving grants and fellowships from the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts, Chicago Sculpture International, and Chicago Parks District. She has been an artist resident at the Vermont Studio Center in Johnson, Vermont, the ArtFarm in Marquette, Nebraska, and the Windy Mowing Mills residency in Halifax, Vermont.

A San Francisco Bay Area native, LAURIE ROBERTS (Performer/Movement, *Dammsuga*) is an actor, dancer, movement director, and teacher. Roberts received an MFA in acting from the University of South Carolina and has collaborated with Hell in a Handbag Productions, A Red Orchid Theatre, and Facility Theatre in Chicago, and is an ensemble member with Theatre Y. She has also enjoyed working with extraordinary groups of artists across the country and internationally. A P3/East Studio Member, Roberts has taught the work of Tadashi Suzuki and Shogo Ota with Theatre Y, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, and Xavier University. Her movement direction was recently featured in *Killing Game* at A Red Orchid Theatre.

ELEENNA SINDLER (Composer/Music director, *Dammsuga*) is a performer-composer who likes to create works that bridge multiple genres and

artistic disciplines through a feminist lens. She has performed original compositions through the Chicago Arts Initiative, with the mentorship of Jesse Langen (Dal Niente) at music festivals EarTaxi, Omaha Under the Radar, at the Internationalen Ferienkurse für Neue Musik (Darmstadt, Germany) with Studio MusikFabrik, and at MCA Chicago with Eighth Blackbird. She recently wrote and co-devised a performance and sound piece for Collaboration's Peacebook and Light Festivals that explores the inner thoughts of a survivor of sexual assault's experience riding the CTA. Last spring, she worked as the composer and music director for A Red Orchid Theatre's (AROT) spring production, *Killing Game* by Eugene Ionesco, and will be returning to AROT this fall as music director for *Grey House* by Levi Holloway. She is a current student at Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music.

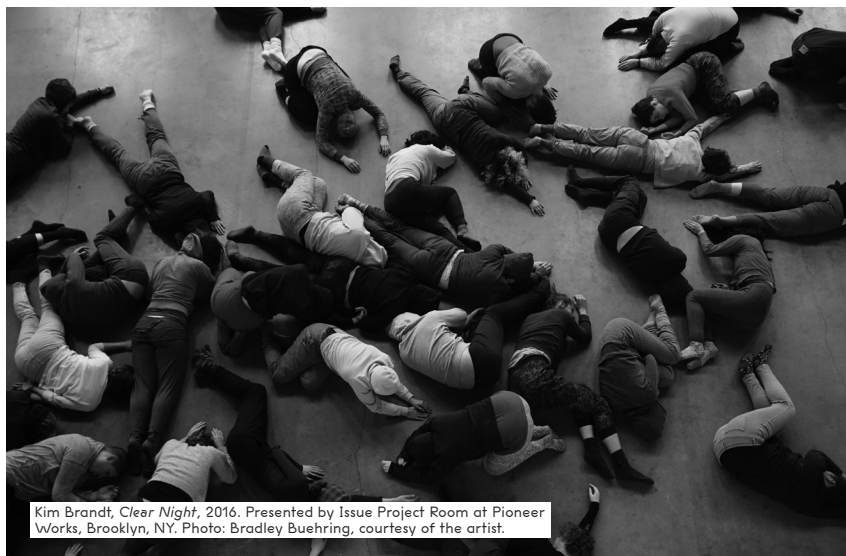
JORDAN TREGASH (Production manager, *Dammsuga*) is a Chicago-based theater artist who is thrilled to be working at the MCA with dado after her production of *Killing Game* (A Red Orchid Theatre). Some of his past credits include Facility Theater, Eclipse Theater, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. He is very grateful to be able to work in small part with his favorite museum in the city.

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

Tue, Oct 1, 3 and 6 pm
Wed-Thu, Oct 2-3, 12:30 pm
Free

KIM BRANDT, *LEVEL*

How do we share space with others? How does architecture influence how we move? Choreographer Kim Brandt brings performance out of the theater and into the museum with a critical mass of dancers from Chicago and New York that navigates movement scores amidst visitors. Featuring live sound by composer Nate Wooley.



Kim Brandt, *Clear Night*, 2016. Presented by Issue Project Room at Pioneer Works, Brooklyn, NY. Photo: Bradley Buehring, courtesy of the artist.

Sun, Oct 27
Free
Kovler Atrium, 2nd Floor

Between Gestures: Trajal Harrell and Ola Maciejewska

Two solo pieces by choreographers Trajal Harrell and Ola Maciejewska unfold over an afternoon in the museum's main atrium. These performances are part of *Between Gestures*, a one-week festival connecting Chicago to international contemporary dance and performance. For exact times, visit mcachicago.org/stage.

Dinner and a Show



Asparagus with chilled mussel vinaigrette and tarragon raita. 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.*

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

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ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION

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

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

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AT THE MCA
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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 15%.

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.

SUPPORT FOR MCA PERFORMANCES

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

Generous support is provided by Julie and Larry Bernstein, 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, and Carol Prins and John Hart/The Jessica Fund.

Additional support is provided by Ms. Shawn M. Donnelley and Dr. Christopher M. Kelly, Nicholas and Nancy Giampietro, Anne L. Kaplan, and D. Elizabeth Price and Lou Yecies.

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 March 2019

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.

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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 \$12 parking in the MCA garage (220 E Chicago Ave) and the Bernardin garage (747 N Wabash Ave). The \$12 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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VOLUNTEER FOR PERFORMANCES
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