

ON
STAGE:
SPRING
2022

MARCH 24-
MAY 8

MCA

Encounter how we are bound to one another, even when we seem separate.

SPRING PERFORMANCE SUITE

MAMMALIAN DIVING
REFLEX/DARREN
O'DONNELL
*ALL THE SEX I'VE
EVER HAD*



MARCH 24-26, 29-31

MAR 24, 8 PM **ST**
MAR 25, 8 PM **ST** **ASL**
MAR 26, 2 PM **ST**
MAR 29, 8 PM **ST**
MAR 30, 8 PM **ST** **ASL** **(L)**
MAR 31, 8 PM **ST**

AUTUMN KNIGHT
M__ER



APRIL 14-16

APR 14, 8 PM
APR 15, 8 PM **ASL**, **(L)** + **CC**
APR 16, 2 PM

KINETIC LIGHT
WIRED



MAY 5-8

MAY 5, 8 PM **AD** **ASL**
MAY 6, 8 PM **AD** **ASL**
MAY 7, 8 PM **AD** **ASL** **(L)**
MAY 8, 2 PM **AD** **ASL**

ST English/Spanish Supertitles
ASL American Sign Language
(L) Livestream
CC Closed Captions
AD Audio Description

RELATED PROGRAMS

DIALOGUE FORUM:
IDENTITY AND DISSENT
WITH PATRISSE CULLORS
AND ALICE SHEPPARD
TUE, NOV 9, 3:30 PM
mcachicago.org/
dialogue-forum-21

As part of the MCA's Dialogue Season on dissent, artist and activist Patrisse Cullors and artist Alice Sheppard discussed the ways individual identities are framed in activism, art, and dissent. Cullors and Sheppard each shared their strategies for holding multiple viewpoints and pushing against the impulse to frame and label what they are doing as one thing or another.

SOUNDTRACK:
BONITA APPLEBLUNT
TUE, MAR 15, 6-7 PM

Contemporary sound-based artists transform your MCA experience on select Fridays with custom soundtracks reflecting their perspective of works on view in the museum. For this Soundtrack, DJ Bonita Appleblunt spins a set of underground and modern Afro-inspired genres in response to the exhibitions on view, before joining the cast of *All The Sex I've Ever Had* onstage as emcee.

COMMON USE:
BODIES OF WORK
TUE, APR 19, 6-7:30 PM

This Common Use program, coauthored and designed with MCA Advisory Partner Bodies of Work, will address disability aesthetics in performance.

RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM: Photo: Jim Lee; Autumn Knight performs *M__ER* at OnTheBoards, Seattle, WA, 2019. Photo: Courtesy of the artist; Laurel Lawson, a white woman with very short cropped hair, bounds toward the camera: wheelchair high off the ground, arms open and reaching. A mask of delicate gold wire and lustrous pearls covers half her face. The stage floor below her is drenched in blue light; the same light gives her pale skin a light violet glow. A strand of silver barbed wire appears, close up, in the upper corner. Photo: Robbie Sweeny/Kinetic Light.

CURATOR'S NOTE

The first of many themes to come, this spring's *On Stage* series explores the kinds of complex entanglements that have become all the more clear in recent years. It is less and less possible to ignore our connections to others and how those connections create mutual risk and shared responsibility. These performances shake them up, move them around, and reframe them in the theater. Since 2020, the fissures already present in society have at times violently widened and at others slowly, tediously come into view. Artists have a unique capability to see all those fissures—and the possibilities beyond them—before the rest of us. Performers have a particular power to bring those possibilities into existence among us, even if for a fleeting hour or two onstage. Afterwards, we may feel changed, emerge reflective, or slough off one experience quickly for the next. But there's no denying or undoing how a performance creates some new, entwined configuration between us.

Following the lead of artists during this time, we've learned that performance can be powerful even without an in-person aspect (through digital platforms and analog publications alike). These years have reminded us that slowing down can incubate fresh ideas that might never have surfaced otherwise. As we reenter the theater, we welcome a new rhythm and a renewed focus through the *On Stage* series: each spring, a suite of performances will tackle a fresh, rigorous, and relevant conversation through a new theme. The work of artists has been vital as we all imagine alternate versions of society, even as the infrastructure supporting artistic labor has felt less stable than ever. Aiming each year toward this thematic suite of performances gives our work with artists a sustainable, dedicated, yearlong arc, finding connections among their works and building a robust conversation around a central idea.

In these three works, complex entanglements abound. These relationships include those of performer with audience, audience members with each other, bodies with objects, and our present lives with past histories. All performance is a one-of-a-kind experience unique to the perceptions of each audience, capable of changing and transforming us. But these projects send us back out of the theater better-attuned to how we have always already altered—and been altered by—others.

On Stage: Entanglement proposes that it's not our differences themselves that separate us, but rather the pervasive assumption that our differences must be what disconnect us, as ethics scholar Denise Ferreira da Silva reminds us.¹ These artists look at the world as it is and was to move away from all its inherent exclusions. But instead of simply moving toward inclusion, they insist on defiant connection. What seems to separate is also opportunity for connection, producing its own mess of meanings: discomfort, loss, and precarity as much as pleasure, joy, and beauty. These performances emphasize distance and separation as much as intimacy and closeness.

Returning to the theater during the constant ricochet of protocols for gathering, distancing, and isolating is a reminder of those shifting connections and intricate complications that have always undergirded our experiences. As feminist physicist Karen Barad puts it, we share in both "response and responsibility" when we come together—even more so if we go on trying to be together.² Exposing how we are mutually implicated from three different angles, these works are assembled around the idea that our living, moving, and being have always been contingent on the forces around us. That no single person's experience can be fully separated from another's, even at a distance.

— Tara Aisha Willis
Curator, Performance and Public Practice

- 1 Denise Ferreira da Silva, "On Difference Without Separability," catalogue, 32a São Paulo Art Biennial, *Incerteza viva* (Living Uncertainty), 2016.
- 2 Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007. xi.

MAR 24–25 AND 29–31, 8 PM, MAR 26, 2 PM



Mammalian Diving Reflex/ Darren O'Donnell All The Sex I've Ever Had

EDLIS NEESON THEATER AND ONLINE

ABOUT THE WORK

“We believe that almost all people are generous and willing to share when provided the right context. Within the context of our performances, we make connections between people (us as artists, our collaborators, and the local attendees), triggering a temporary situation characterized by social generosity.”

— Mammalian Diving Reflex

Have you ever feared that what you share with others shapes how they view you? Have you ever been worried that no one could relate to your true self? We all share these anxious moments—and, as a result, miss the opportunity to relate to others. In Mammalian Diving Reflex’s *All the Sex I’ve Ever Had*, we go beyond acceptance and into a world of connectivity, vulnerability, intimacy, and sex. Six experienced and brave Chicagoans over the age of sixty-five invite an audience to share a vulnerable, safe space as they detail their most intimate, prosperous, and difficult times through stories of their sex lives.

Ask yourself: Do we ever stop being human, even in our elder years? Has our society created an imaginary chopping block for our emotional capacity as we age? Allow for connectivity and reflection to happen as they share their personal love journeys.

How do relatability and entanglement connect us? How do we give proper recognition to our social connections? Mammalian Diving Reflex puts together performances to push social dynamics and practices amongst ourselves. When we focus on being in the moment instead of looking to create the moment, we get to see just how connected we are—and look to our instincts to guide us.

This performance calls on each individual in the audience to celebrate their own bravery. It calls on everyone in attendance to smile at the

things that may bring you joy, and to take time to reflect as well.

Time is unforgiving. We miss so many lessons in life if we forget the wisdom of those who have lived longer than we have. We all go through the same process as the next individual. One day we go from being taken care of to taking care of someone else—and back to being taken care of again. In between, love and life happen, and knowing that should make us yearn even more to learn from others who are further along in life’s process.

This performance is not comic relief, nor is it meant for the exploitation of our predecessors. This performance is a time for reflection and accessibility. It’s rare in life that we all get a chance to learn from a panel of strangers looking to pause for a moment of relatability in life’s entanglements.

— Otez Gary
Curatorial Assistant, Performance and Public Practice

Running time is 90 minutes
Livestream on March 30

This program is in English with supertitles in Spanish and English and is based on lived experiences of the performers. It may include profanity, descriptions of sex, and/or violence. ASL interpretation offered on March 25 and March 30 for both the on site performance and Livestream. Assisted listening devices are available for all MCA performances.

This presentation of *All The Sex I’ve Ever Had* is made possible in part thanks to grants from the Canada Council for the Arts and Ontario Arts Council touring programs.

CAST
Barbara
Debra
Dhamana
Dion
Renee
Robert

DJ/EMCEE
Bonita Appleblunt

ARTISTIC AND RESEARCH DIRECTOR
Darren O’Donnell

PROJECT DIRECTOR AND SENIOR PRODUCER
Ryan Lewis

LEAD PROJECT PRODUCER
Virginia Antonipillai

COPRODUCERS/COWRITERS
Craig McCorquodale
Marie Lola Minimo
Maile Zox

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGNER/
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
Katelan Braymer

Thank you to Goodman Theatre, Puerto Rican Arts Alliance, El Rescale Transitional Living Program, Kroc Center, Little Brothers, Berlin, and many other organizations that have helped in our search for cast members.



Photo: Michiel Devijver.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Based in Germany and Canada, MAMMALIAN DIVING REFLEX is dedicated to investigating the social sphere, always on the lookout for contradictions to whip into aesthetically scintillating experiences. They create site- and social-specific performance events, theater productions, participatory gallery installations, videos, film, art objects, and theoretical texts, collaborating with non-artists to create work that recognizes the social responsibility of art, fosters a dialogue, and dismantles barriers between individuals of all ages, cultural, economic, and social backgrounds. Mammalian brings people together in new and unusual ways around the world. They make ideal entertainment for the end of the world.

VIRGINIA ANTONIPILLAI (Lead Project Producer) is Mammalian's Creative Producer and Operations Coordinator. Antonipillai began collaborating with Mammalian in 2010 when she was 14 years old as a Project Coordinator for *Nightwalks with Teenagers* in Cape Breton. Antonipillai has since been a central member of the Young Mammals and toured with Mammalian to various cities to produce, direct, and write projects and facilitate workshops regarding youth engagement. As one of the original crew from Parkdale, Antonipillai continues to be an important part of the company's succession strategy, which is focused on diversifying the cultural sector with young creators of color. She holds an Honors B.A. in Communications from McMaster University.

KATELAN BRAYMER (Environment Designer and Technical Director) is a Lighting Designer and Technical Director for theater, dance and opera. US/International Tours include *All the Sex I've Ever Had*: Ghent, Belgium / Helsinki, Finland / Austin, TX (Mammalian Diving Reflex); *The Real James Bond... was Dominican* (DNAWORKS); *Halfway to Dawn*, *Stardust* (David Rousseve); *Inflatable Trio*, *Ruth Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (Lionel Popkin); and *Pang!* (Dan Froot), *Designs: Drift*, *90Sugar*, *ROSEWOOD* (Michaela Taylor);

It's Alive, It's Alive, *Fefu and her Friends*, *Hir*, *Underneath*, *Silent*, *Forgotten*, *Kiss*, *A Taste of Honey*, *The Hairy Ape* (Odyssey Theatre); *Company Debut* (Movement Headquarters Ballet); *Terra* (LACDC); *Safe and Sound*, *Gnarled* (Kevin Williamson); *You In Midair* (Danna Schaeffer); *MEAT* (Emma Zakes Green); *TIM* (Brandon Baruch); *Jocasta Project* (Ghost Road); *Free Outgoing* (East West Players); *Blood Rock* (Berns & Rich), *notes on change_* (Erica Sobol); and *JACK* (Taylor, Berg, Whyte). Films in production include *Harbor* (Ivana Horvat), *Mad Woman* (Marc Ancito), and *Tracers* (First Two Rounds). Braymer has been a Lighting Assistant at the LA Opera since 2011.

RYAN LEWIS (Project Director and Senior Producer) has produced dozens of national and international tours for Mammalian Diving Reflex and has toured Mammalian's productions *All the Sex I've Ever Had* to Voorhuit (Belgium), True Colors Festival and Kyoto Experiment (Japan), *Nightwalks with Teenagers* to University of Reading (UK) and Nuit Blanche Brussels (Belgium), *Haircuts by Children* to Les Tombees de la Nuit (France), and *Teentalitarianism* to 10 nodi festival (Italy). Prior to Mammalian, Lewis was employed as the Stage Manager for Music Programs at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity and the Technical Coordinator for Patrick Roberge Productions. In Australia, Lewis was the Marketing Assistant and subsequently the Acting Marketing Manager at Back to Back Theatre. Other select roles include Auditions Coordinator at The Production Company and Company Management Assistant at Opera Australia's National Tour of *The King & I*.

MARIE LOLA MINIMO (Coproducer/Cowriter) is a Creative Industries BA graduate from X University (formerly known as Ryerson). Specializing in fashion and publishing, Minimo has worked on creative projects with the Amsterdam Fashion Institute, RMIT University, and others. They recently worked as the marketing and public relations manager for Talk Media, a Toronto-based storytelling collective that creates events that innovate the way people experience journalism and they previously interned with Mammalian Diving Reflex, working in administration and producing. Minimo is interested in creative direction, fashion, and learning more about how art, business, and culture interact. When Minimo isn't arranging Spotify playlists for every possible situation, you can find them mood-boarding their next identity crisis on Pinterest.

CRAIG MCCORQUODALE (Coproducer/Cowriter) is an artist based in Glasgow, Scotland, working primarily with performance and live art. He thinks of performance as a kind of combat sport—something vivid and capricious. Working with the knowledge people have of their own life, McCorquodale attempts to build a social sculpture founded on risk, complexity, and new empathy. In 2021, McCorquodale was awarded the Jerwood Arts Live Work Fund, and has been supported by Battersea Arts Centre, the British Council, and La Teatrería, Mexico. He is currently working with National Theatre of Scotland, and has recently been commissioned by Lyra. In October 2021, he presented an exhibition at Zeitraumexit in Mannheim, Germany, as part of Wunder der Prärie Festival. With Mammalian, he has toured internationally to Vooruit (Ghent, Belgium) on *All the Sex I've Ever Had* and the Shetland Islands with *The World is a Wedding*. He regularly collaborates with 21Common, and in this context has shown work at Sydney Fringe (Sydney, Australia), Taranaki Festival (New Plymouth, New Zealand) and the Made in Scotland Showcase at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2018 and 2021. In 2020, he graduated with a First Class Honours from the Contemporary Performance Practice Programme at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

MAILE ZOx (Coproducer, Script Writer) is an actor, director, and designer from New Orleans. Under the mentorship of Darren O'Donnell, ZoX previously coproduced Mammalian's *Dare Night: 2.0* in Toronto. She is a founding member of the Beaubourg Theatre Collective, best known for the Beaubourg School, a cost-free, multidisciplinary, and multigenerational school. Recent costumer credits include *Iron Mike* (dir. Craig Gillespie) and the indie feature *Fucktoys/Heartland Express* (dir. Annapurna Sriram). Theatrical credits include *John* (dir. by Xavier Juárez). She starred in and directed the seminal performance of *A Roller Rink Temptation* by Catherine Weingarten. Her performance in the short "Yelena" (dir. Milena Martinović) earned her Honorable Mention at the UNO Film Festival. She has been featured in music videos by Arcade Fire and Tank and the Bangas, on the History Channel in the new Roots (dir. Thomas Carter), as well as in the newest COVID-19 vaccine public service announcement for the state of Louisiana.



Photo: Michiel Devijver.

APRIL 14–15, 8 PM, AND APRIL 16, 2 PM



Autumn Knight with an audience member in *M_ _ _ER* at Diverseworks in Houston, TX, 2018. Photo: Lynn Lane.

Autumn Knight

M_ _ _ER

EDLIS NEESON THEATER AND ONLINE

ABOUT THE WORK

Autumn Knight takes the very nature of live performance as her artistic medium to amplify race, gender, and power dynamics. Her work responds, in the moment, to its venue, geographic location, and the social relationships of the audiences who come into the space. COVID-19 has posed a particularly challenging set of problems for work that relies on the liveness and proximity created in performance. Now, our city has begun to recalibrate to the unpredictability of public group interactions, and what better moment to reflect on the once-familiar social entanglements we find ourselves in? After more than two years waiting for *M_ _ _ER* to grace the MCA's stage, Curatorial Assistant Laura Paige Kyber invites Knight to reflect on the work in her own words.

LAURA PAIGE KYBER

You have a multifaceted artistic practice that includes writing, movement, devised theater, performance art, improvisation, installation, and video. Who do you align yourself with as predecessors? Who are your peers in today's artistic landscape? How do you see this piece, *M_ _ _ER*, sitting within a larger conversation right now?

AUTUMN KNIGHT

I align myself with a host of practitioners in various genres—practitioners of psychotherapy, stand-up comedy, improvisation, experimentation, activism, liberation, researchers. Peers today whose work I respect and enjoy, to name a few, are NIC Kay, Will Rawls, Mariana Valencia, Jaamil Olawale Kosoko, keyon gaskin, Lisa "Li" Harris, Ligia Lewis, Sondra Perry, and Okwui Okpokwasili, among many others. The work sits within the larger conversation in that it addresses ideas that could exist at any moment but works to consider the present moment and possibilities.

LPK *M_ _ _ER* invites audiences to think about the concepts of "mother," "matter," and

"murder." How does the medium of performance allow you to guide viewers toward the ideas you want to convey?

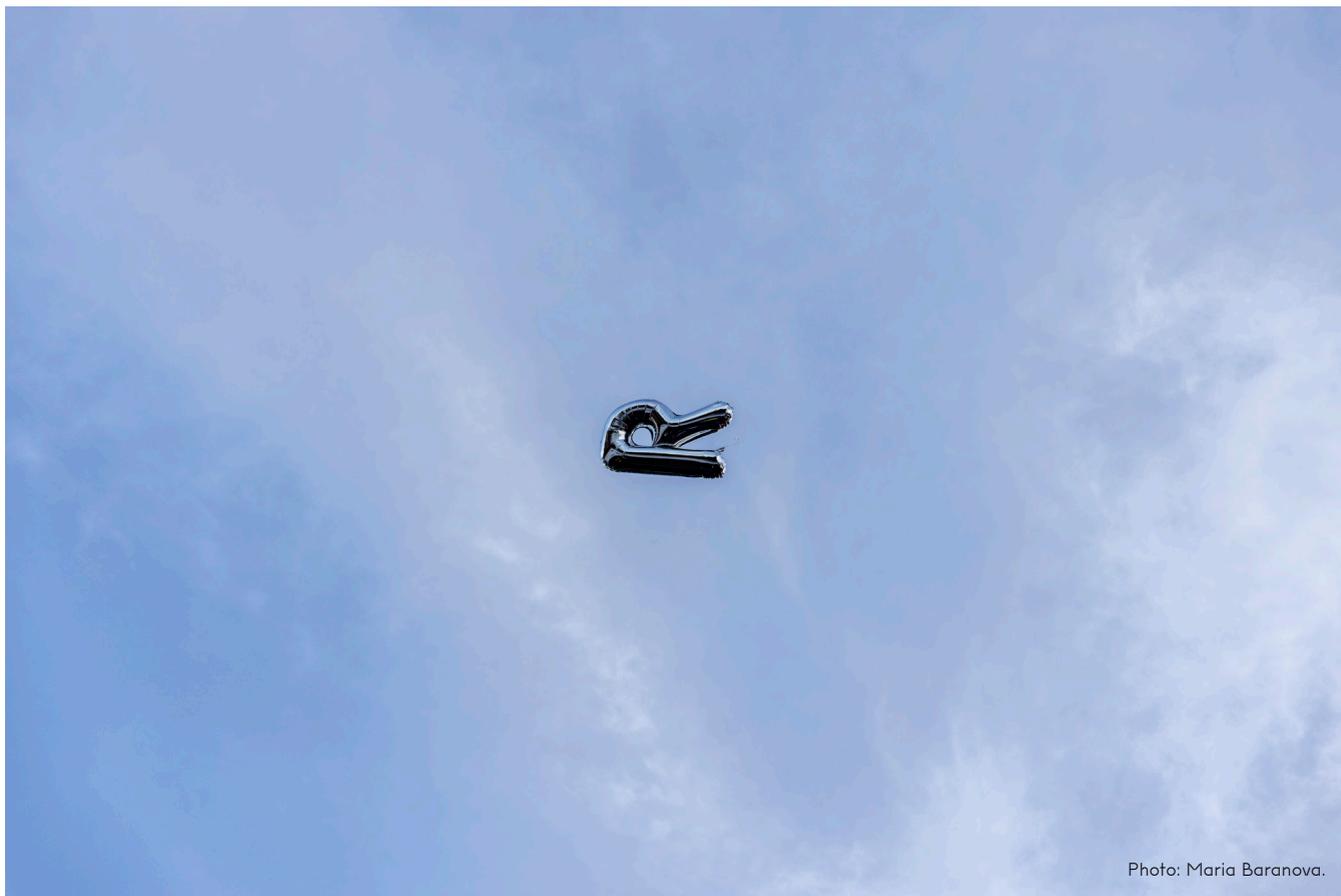
AK Performance sets up a moment for immediate dialogue. The discourse around the work happens in and during the work itself: it *is* the work. The ideas that have been placed together in this work are a proposal. A proposal against death, a proposal for more life, a proposal to keep these ideas together for a second, to consider their relationship. Live performance creates an instant feedback loop, which allows us collectively to reconsider what I've proposed as an artist, as a facilitator.

LPK "Participatory" is a word some have used to describe your work. Usually it's meant to indicate that the performers will ask audiences to respond, rather than just watch from a distance. How do you think about the "participatory" elements of your work? Is that an accurate term? How do you experience your role in the dynamic as a performer?

AK Every live performance, event, or gathering is participatory. It depends on the context. Participation, in some respects, requires silence, sitting, watching or witnessing, and internally digesting the content, with the possibility of later sharing your thoughts with friends, family, colleagues, or lovers. I am inviting the audience to share audibly, and sometimes physically, their reflections and responses in real time, inviting interiority (which everyone is experiencing) into the space in real time. Maybe the invitation is to play with me rather than watch me play. The invitation is to create an experience together. To co-author a moment with the thoughts you were thinking anyway.

LPK What do you want your audiences to bring into the space with them when they see your work? What do you hope they'll take with them in the end?

AK Curiosity. Excitement. Anticipation. Grace. Possibility. I hope they take away with them the feeling of being alive. Of having a one-off, singular experience—that the formation of people in the same time and space and at those points in their lives will never be the same again. It's the bringing-together of the narratives, emotional lives, anxieties, hopes, judgments, and knowledges at a particular time into conversation for a couple of hours that gives the experience weight and provides lots of information.



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

American Art, and The Kitchen (NYC). Her performance and video work is held in the permanent collection of the Studio Museum in Harlem. Knight is a recent recipient of The Nancy B. Negley Rome Prize.

TUÇE YASAK (Lighting Designer) has been following light in New York since 2009, creating more than 100 site-specific light installations for performance in the United States and abroad. Yasak received the 2018 Bessie (*Memoirs of a... Unicorn* by Marjani Forté-Saunders at Collapsable Hole and NYLA Dance) and 2019 Bessie (*Oba Qween Baba King Baba* by Ni'Ja Whitson at Danspace) for Outstanding Visual Design with her lighting design. She has been collaborating with Raja Feather Kelly and the feath3r theory since 2015. Among her recent collaborations are *UGLY, HYSTERIA*, and *BLUE* by Raja Feather Kelly (New York Live Arts, Bushwick Starr, and ImPulsTanz), *This Bridge Called My Ass* by Miguel Gutierrez (The Chocolate Factory, Montpellier Dance Festival, The Walker Art Center, and PICA), *We're Gonna Die* written by Young Jean Lee and directed by Raja Feather Kelly (2nd Stage Theater), *M_ _ _ER* by Autumn Knight (On The Boards and Abrons Arts Center), *joyUS justUS* by Contra-Tiempo (national tour and Jacobs Pillow). Light, movement, and architecture intertwine in Yasak's work to support spacemaking and storytelling. Her *Light Journals* were presented in March 2021 by Ars Nova NY and she is currently developing her first individual installation, *Wall*.

RENA ANAKWE (Sound Designer) is an interdisciplinary artist, performer, and healer working primarily with sound, visuals, and scent. Exploring intersections between traditional healing practices, spirituality, and performance, she creates works focused on sensory-based, experiential interactions using creative technology. Most recently, she was awarded the 2021 Canadian Women Artists' Award from NYFA and the Canadian Women's Club of New York, a 2021-22 MacDowell Fellowship for Interdisciplinary Arts, and a 2022 Jack Nusbaum Artist Residency at Brooklyn Academy of Music. Anakwe was a 2020-21 resident of the Jerome Foundation AIRspace Residency for Performing Artists at Abrons Arts Center, a 2020 Radiophrenia commissioned artist, a 2019 ISSUE Project Room Artist-in-Residence, a 2019 Abrons Arts Center Sound Series commissioned artist, and a 2018 Signal Culture Artist-in-Residence. She has collaborated, produced, and shown work at New York institutions including Park Avenue Armory/NY Live Arts, En Garde Arts/Brookfield Place, Weeksville Heritage Center, Dia Foundation, Fridman Gallery, Knockdown Center, Lincoln Center, MoMA PS1, CultureHub, Pioneer Works, and Montez Press Radio. Most recently, under the moniker A Space for Sound, Anakwe released the first in an ongoing audio series titled *Sound Bath Mixtape vol. 1* through New York-based label and collective PTP. In Fall 2021, her forthcoming album *Sometimes underwater (feels like home)* will be released through RVNG Intl.'s Commend HERE Label. She is based in Brooklyn, New York, by way of Nigeria and Canada.

AUTUMN KNIGHT (Performer and Writer) is an interdisciplinary artist working with performance, installation, video, and text. Her video and performance work has been viewed within several institutions including the the New Museum (New York), Western Front, (Vancouver, Canada), Akademie der Kunste (Berlin), On the Boards (Seattle), The Whitney Museum of

Running time is 90 minutes
Livestream on April 15

Livestream is coproduced by On the Boards, contemporary performance center, Seattle, Washington.

This program is improvised. Content may include profanity and discussions about sex and childbirth. Seating will be onstage and any participation will follow COVID-19 guidelines.

This performance includes ASL interpretation on April 15 for both the on-site performance and livestream. All seats are accessible to people using wheelchairs or assisted walking devices. Assisted listening devices are available for all MCA performances.

WRITER AND PERFORMER
Autumn Knight

SOUND DESIGNER
Rena Anakwe

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Tuçe Yasak

VIDEO DESIGN
Ross Karre

Autumn Knight: *M_ _ _ER* is a National Performance Network/Visual Artist Network (NPN/VAN) Creation & Development Fund Project co-commissioned by DiverseWorks (Houston), On the Boards (Seattle), and Women & Their Work (Austin). The Creation Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

M_ _ _ER premiered at DiverseWorks in 2018 and toured to Women & Their Work and On the Boards in the 2019-20 season.

MAY 5–7, 8 PM, AND MAY 8, 2 PM



Kinetic Light *Wired*

EDLIS NEESON THEATER AND ONLINE

ABOUT THE WORK

The history of barbed wire is inextricably linked to the history of Chicago.

On November 24, 1874, Joseph F. Glidden of DeKalb, Illinois—a small city sixty miles west of the MCA—received a patent for “The Winner,” a design that would become the most widely produced model of barbed wire in the United States. With the twisting entwinement of three metal strands, Glidden radically transformed the American farming industry, ending the era of the open range and restructuring the midwestern landscape into strictly defined tracts of land. Referred to as the “Devil’s Rope,” barbed wire offered new possibilities for containment and control, acting as both an effective barrier for cattle and, perhaps most importantly, a clear and enforceable demarcation of private property.

As we have come to understand, property has always been distributed disproportionately within this country, often accruing within the hands of white men.¹ As such, barbed wire’s effects of confinement and exclusion have disproportionately rippled through Black and Brown communities. The abandoned lot, the prison, the United States–Mexico border: barbed wire enforces the boundaries of each, continuing to operate today as a material of oppression. Beyond its racial implications, barbed wire has also historically administered the involuntary segregation of disabled people from the rest of society, often demarcating the perimeters of institutions and representing various forms of cultural and societal othering, separation, confinement, or control.

In spite of its role in incarceration, immigration, and institutionalization—three of our most urgent contemporary issues—barbed wire has largely evaded scrutiny. *Wired* brings these troubled histories to the fore, yet it also gestures towards the apparent contradictions of the material: Between the violence of its

function and the intricate beauty of its design, between its sharpness and its delicacy, between its capacity to divide and its potential to connect. By attending to these tensions, *Wired* not only unearths little-known histories of barbed wire, but also points to the unexpected potential for pleasure held within this material.

Just as *Wired* challenges us to view barbed wire differently, so too does this production challenge conventions of dance and aesthetics through the lens of disability, as many of Kinetic Light’s past performances have. As you experience *Wired*, we invite you to consider the following question: how does barbed wire, a material typically used for confinement, open new possibilities for movement?

— Nolan Jimbo
Marjorie Susman Curatorial Fellow

1 Cheryl I. Harris, “Whiteness as Property,” *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (June 1993): 1710–91.

LEFT: Three dancers face each other onstage. Jerron Herman, a dark-skinned Black man with blonde hair, stands boldly facing the others, his body tense with energy. His tight pants and leather top shimmer. His fist flies overhead as silver barbed wire cascades from head to feet. Alice Sheppard and Laurel Lawson are stacked and lean in toward Jerron with concentrated expressions. Alice, a multiracial Black woman with coffee-colored skin and short curly hair, hovers in the air. Laurel, a white woman with cropped hair, balances beneath her; she grips Alice’s wheels while tilting on one wheel. Photo: Robbie Sweeny/Kinetic Light.

Running time is 100 minutes, which includes a 20-minute intermission.

Livestream on May 7

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility and other programming for *Wired* was developed with Kinetic Light and MCA Advisory Partner Bodies of Work: A Network of Disability Art and Culture in the Department of Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois-Chicago.

Wired honors histories of race, gender, and disability in America through an exploration of barbed wire. At times, the performance includes depictions of violence, as well as disability-based and racial injustice.

If you need to leave the theater at any point in the performance, please do so. Quiet spaces are available throughout the performance. You are welcome to reenter whenever you are ready.

ASL interpretation and audio description are available for all shows. There is no spoken dialogue in *Wired*. Audio description is available through Kinetic Light's app, Audimance. Orientation to and demonstration of the app will be available in the lobby prior to all shows, along with a tactile exhibit that serves as an introduction to the *Wired* set, props, costumes, and theatrical elements.

Wired content and artistry will remain the same for all performances. The show shares many aspects of MCA's Relaxed Performances. Light haze is present in certain sections. There are no strobe lighting effects. Stimulation kits are available for all performances.

The show will be livestreamed on Saturday, including ASL, with one channel being audio described. Friday and Sunday's performances will offer an alternative lighting design.

Wired is made possible with funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Ford Foundation, New England Foundation for the Arts' National Theater Project, MAP Fund, O'Donnell Green Music and Dance Foundation, Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation, and Café Royal Cultural Foundation. Lead support for Kinetic Light is provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Ford Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and Borealis Philanthropies' Disability Inclusion Fund.

Wired is commissioned, in part, by The Shed Open Call 2020; supported by a Pillow Lab Residency; and developed, in part, at Z Space (San Francisco, CA, 2020-21).

The engagement model for *Wired* was developed with support from the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago's New Works Initiative, with lead support provided by Elizabeth A. Liebman. Generous support is provided by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Events (DCASE).

This project was supported by a National Performance Network (NPN) Artist Engagement Fund, with funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency). For more information, visit npnweb.org.

Flight support by The Chicago Flyhouse and bungees from Adrenalin Dreams.



To learn more about the history of barbed wire, Kinetic Light recommends the following resources:

- *The Devil's Rope: A Cultural History of Barbed Wire* by Alan Krell
- *The Perfect Fence: Untangling the Meaning of Barbed Wire* by Lyn Ellen Bennett and Scott Abbott
- *Barbed Wire: A Political History* by Olivier Razaq, translated by Jonathan Kneight
- *Barbed Wire: An Ecology of Modernity* by Reviel Netz
- *Barbed Wire Identification Encyclopedia* by Harold L. Hagemeyer
- "Melvin Edwards" Article by Michael Brenson, for BOMB
- The Glidden Homestead & Historical Center (DeKalb, IL)
- Ellwood House Museum (DeKalb, IL)
- Devil's Rope Museum (McLean, TX)
- Kansas Barbed Wire Museum (La Crosse, KS)

For a complete list of *Wired*/Kinetic Light credits, visit kineticlight.org.

WIRED CAST, ARTISTIC COLLABORATORS, AND PRODUCTION TEAM

CONCEPTION, RESEARCH, AND DIRECTION
Alice Sheppard

CHOREOGRAPHED IN COLLABORATION

Jerron Herman
Laurel Lawson
Alice Sheppard

DANCERS

Jerron Herman
Laurel Lawson
Alice Sheppard

LIGHTING, PROJECTION, SCENIC AND PRODUCTION DESIGN

Michael Maag

SCENIC AND PROP DESIGN

Josephine Shokrian

MUSIC

LeahAnn "Lafemmebear" Mitchell:

Act 1—Sections 1, 4, 7;

Act 2—Sections 3, 4

Ailís Ní Ráin:

Act 1—Sections 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9;

Act 2—Sections 1, 2, 5

ACCESS ARTISTS

Audio Description: Shannon Finnegan, Cheryl Green, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, Mo Pickering-Symes, using The Rationale Method

SOUND DESIGN

Dylan Keefe, Andy Slater

AUDIMANCE DESIGN

Laurel Lawson, CyCore Systems

AUDIMANCE ENGINEER

Seán McCord

COSTUME AND MAKEUP DESIGN

Laurel Lawson, with jumpsuit fabrication by Timberlake Studios, Inc

FLIGHT DIRECTOR

Catherine A. Nelson

AUTOMATION OPERATOR

Danica O'Neill

RIGGING CONSULTANT

Chicago Flyhouse

LIGHTING AND VIDEO SUPERVISOR

Jordan Wiggins

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

Tiffany Schrepferman

STAGEHAND

Latania Brown

SCENIC AND PROP FABRICATION

Lu Barnes-Lee, Misae Carrol, Max Chen, Sophronia Cook, Anthony Freitas, Marissa Todd

KINETIC LIGHT ADMINISTRATION AND PRODUCTION TEAM

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Alice Sheppard

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Molly Terbovich-Ridenhour

CREATIVE CO-CONSPIRATOR

rachel hickman

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Morgan Carlisle

LAB COORDINATOR

morgaine de leonardis

ORGANIZER

Kevin Gotkin

MARKETING AND PR LIAISON

Mariclare Hulbert

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Matthew Zimmerman

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER AND REHEARSAL DIRECTOR

Tiffany Schrepferman

COMPANY MANAGER

Stephanie Byrnes Harrell

CONSULTANTS

Advance NYC, Benvenuti Arts, CyCore Systems, Mikaela Tripp

LIGHTING AND ACCESS DESIGN FELLOW

Ben Levine

TECHNICAL AND CULTURAL FELLOW

Mel Chua

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

JERRON HERMAN (Choreographic Collaborator; he/him/his) is a dancer and choreographic collaborator with Kinetic Light. He is a disabled dancer and writer who creates works to facilitate welcoming. Herman began his training as a company member with Heidi Latsky Dance from 2011-2019, performing widely, and now collaborates with Kinetic Light. In addition, Herman regularly writes on art and culture and currently serves on the Board of Trustees at Dance/USA as Vice Chair. His awards include a 2020 Disability Futures Fellowship by the Ford and Mellon Foundations respectively, as well as the Grants to Artists Award from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts and a Jerome Hill Artist Fellowship from the Jerome Foundation, both in 2021.

LAUREL LAWSON (Choreographic Collaborator; she/her/they/them) is a choreographic collaborator, dancer, designer, and engineer with Kinetic Light. She is the primary costume and makeup designer, contributes technical and production design, and designs the wheelchairs that she and Alice Sheppard use in performance for *Wired*, in collaboration with Paul Schulte, lead engineer for Top End. She is also the product designer and lead for both access and technology initiatives, including Audimance, the company's approach to audio description, and Access ALLways, a holistic approach to disabled-led equitable access. Lawson began her professional dance career with Atlanta's Full Radius Dance. In her independent and transdisciplinary practice, housed at Rose Tree Productions, her work includes both traditional choreography and novel ways of creating art through technology and design. Her work has been recognized with a Dance/USA Artist Fellowship, funded by Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. A noted public speaker and teacher, she speaks on a range of technical topics as well as on leadership practice, accessibility, culture and equity, and how to cultivate creativity and drive innovation.

MICHAEL MAAG (Lighting, Projection, Scenic and Production Design, he/him/his) is the scenographer for Kinetic Light. Maag is an award-winning designer of lighting, video, and projection for theatre, dance, musicals, opera, and planetariums. He sculpts with light and shadow to create lighting environments that tell a story. Maag has built custom optics for projections in theaters, museums and planetariums; he also designs and builds electronics and lighting for costumes and scenery. Maag is passionate about bringing the perspective of a disabled artist to technical theatre and design. He is currently the Resident Lighting Designer at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. His designs have been seen on the Festival's stages for the last 20 years, as well as at theatres across the country. He has spoken at several theatre and architecture conferences on the importance of access for the disabled artist in the technical theatre field.

LEAHANN "LAFEMMEBEAR" MITCHELL (Composer; she/her/hers) is an independent composer, music producer, Grammy-nominated sound engineer, and interdisciplinary artist whose words and work have been featured in *Esquire*, *The Guardian*, *GLAAD*, *Queerty*, *Out.Tv Euro*, *Billboard*, and *MTV News*. Her past and present collaborators include poet Aja Monet and the V-Day organization, *Time's Up* and *me too*. International, *Peppermint (RuPaul's Drag Race)*, *Dawn Richard*, *Suzi Analogue*, and *Sudan Archives*. In October 2021, she became the first Black trans woman ever to produce a record on a Top Ten charting album with "I'm a Survivor (Lafemmebear Remix)" on Reba McEntire's *REVIVED, REMIXED, REVISITED*. In addition to her music projects, Lafemmebear produces and directs the documentary series *We See You: Black Trans Living Legends*, which focuses on preserving the legacies of living Black queer and trans elders.

AILÍS NÍ RÍAIN (Composer; she/her/hers) is an Irish contemporary classical composer who works across concert music, installation, and music-theatre. Her work has been performed across Europe, in Israel, Brazil, USA, and Japan and broadcast on BBC and RTÉ. She has been awarded international fellowships, associate artist positions and residences at Yaddo, USA, the Atlantic Center for the Arts, The Irish Cultural Centre in Paris, the Ragdale Foundation, ArtOMI in New York and Bogliasco in Italy. In 2016 she was awarded the prestigious Paul Hamlyn Award for Composers. Ailís experiences

deafness, hyperacusis and tinnitus and has a particular interest in diversity and inclusion in the arts. She is a board member of Disability Arts Online. Her Debut Disc portrait album will be released by NMC Recordings [London, UK] in Autumn 2022 and includes a new commission for Dame Evelyn Glennie. Her orchestral debut takes place in Ireland in 2022.

ALICE SHEPPARD (Conception and Direction; she/her/hers) is the Founder and Artistic Director of Kinetic Light, as well as a choreographer and dancer in the company. Sheppard studied ballet and modern dance with Kitty Lunn and made her debut with Infinity Dance Theater. Sheppard has danced with AXIS Dance Company, Ballet Cymru, Marjani Forté-Saunders, Full Radius Dance, GDance, Marc Brew Company, MBDance, and Steve Paxton. Her choreography has been commissioned by Full Radius Dance (2019), CRIPSIE (2016), and MOMENTA (2019, 2016 and 2014). A Bessie award-winning choreographer, Sheppard creates movement that challenges conventional understandings of disabled and dancing bodies. In addition to performance and choreography, Sheppard is a sought-after speaker and has lectured on topics related to disability arts, race and dance. Her writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, in academic journals, and the anthology *Disability Visibility*, edited by Alice Wong. She is a 2020 Disability Futures Fellow, a joint initiative of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Ford Foundation, respectively.

JOSEPHINE SHOKRIAN (Scenic and Prop Design) is a New York based artist who works primarily in sculpture, installation, photography, and sound. Shokrian also works behind the scenes in set, production, and stage design for which past collaborations include Glasser, Tourmaline, Beyoncé, and Lady Gaga; publications include *Document Journal*, *Teen Vogue*, *Numéro*, and *T Magazine*. Shokrian has shared work at the Kitchen, New York; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; GMA Summer Concert Series, New York; and The Staples Center, Los Angeles. Her most recent work, for Kinetic Light's *Wired*, synthesizes Shokrian's multivalent approach to scenic design while drawing on aesthetic, conceptual and practical considerations that celebrate and nurture disability and social life.

SUPPORT FOR PERFORMANCE AND PUBLIC PRACTICE

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

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ABOUT PERFORMANCE AND PUBLIC PRACTICE

The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is committed to fostering social connections and presenting the most thought-provoking creative arts of our time. The MCA commissions and presents performing arts and opportunities for dialogue with leading artists and scholars from Chicago and around the world. These events serve as spaces for gathering throughout the museum and online. The MCA's groundbreaking live experiences are an integral part of the museum's cutting-edge, multidisciplinary programming. Along with exhibitions, publications, and programs, MCA Performance and Public Practice welcomes visitors to experience the work and ideas of living artists and exercise their own civic voices.

REPRODUCTION

Unauthorized recording and reproduction of a performance are prohibited.

GENERAL INFORMATION

312-280-2660

BOX OFFICE

312-397-4010

VOLUNTEER FOR PERFORMANCES

312-397-4072

mcastage@mcachicago.org

CURATOR

Tara Aisha Willis

CURATORIAL ASSISTANTS

Otez Gary

Laura Paige Kyber

MARJORIE SUSMAN CURATORIAL FELLOW

Nolan Jimbo

THEATER PRODUCTION MANAGER

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THEATER PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

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Mitchell Scollon

Corrine Slade

Rabia Tayyabi

HOUSE MANAGER

Cameron Heinze

DESIGNER

Nat Pyper

EDITOR

Leah Froats

Issue designed by Nat Pyper.