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MEDIA CONTACT:

Manuel Venegas

mvenegas@mcachicago.org

Saadia Pervaiz

spervaiz@mcachicago.org

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MCA Chicago Announces *Chicago Performs*, a showcase of performance works by Chicago Artists

CHICAGO— The Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) Chicago, is thrilled to announce the 2023 *Chicago Performs* showcase—an intimate festival of live arts highlighting essential local artists on a national platform.

Chicago Performs is an annual celebration of Chicago-based artists working across a variety of disciplines in performance. Each year, the platform demonstrates the vitality of Chicago artists on a national stage by inviting three to four local artists to share new works of performance, including pieces developed through the MCA's In Progress series and New Works Initiative. The series brings together work across genres and career-stages and provides a platform for Chicago artists to develop projects that will push them into new phases of their artistic practice. The 2023 iteration of *Chicago Performs* includes work by Irene Hsiao, Jonas Becker, and Anjal Chande.

“The MCA is proud to use our platform to highlight the local artists and creativity that is coming out of Chicago,” said Madeleine Grynsztejn, Pritzker Director of the MCA. “Events like this invite diverse audiences into an open space to experience and discuss contemporary work being created in our city.”

To close the weekend, the artists will sit for a moderated talk.

“For many artists in this series it's their first time working on a stage as large as the MCA's, with the full support of its technical equipment and staff. Artists are able to envision their work in entirely new ways and think about touring outside of our city for the first time,” said Curatorial Associate Laura Paige Kyber. “Similarly, it's fabulous to host colleagues from across the country and have them visit the museum, get to know our city, and the artists who live here. It truly positions Chicago as a cultural hub.”

Chicago Performs is organized by Tara Aisha Willis, former Curator, with Laura Paige Kyber, Curatorial Associate.

Chicago Performs Programs

Irene Hsiao | *Blue Alice*

The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago
September 7 and 9 | Museum hours, exact time TBD

Blue Alice is a durational movement piece. Within a sculptural costume designed by Vin Reed made of tarp and mylar, *Blue Alice* continuously shape-shifts throughout the performance. Often performed in gallery spaces, Hsiao crafts her performance in response to the art works on view, operating on a spectrum between human and object. *Blue Alice*'s expansive dress creates a sound similar to the ocean or a monsoon as it moves, drawing attention to the fragility of the materials, and the strenuous nature of durational work. Imagining the costume as a shell, a shelter, or an armor through which viewers glimpse the shining creature hiding inside, Hsiao's improvised performance plays with expected norms for how to interact with art and performance in a museum setting.

Anjal Chande | *The Next Cup of Tea*

Edlis Neeson Theater
September 7 and 8 | 7:30-8:30 PM

The Next Cup of Tea is a solo dance-theater performance by Anjal Chande that investigates how to make sense of the never-ending impulses that run through our heads, our everyday moments, and our contradictory experiences. Through improvisational dance and storytelling, Chande reflects on money and being brown in a stratified America, routine interactions with her grandfather, the paradox of art, and more. Chande's improvisational movement follows her non-conformist impulses, whether that be the bharatanatyam technique in which she is trained, pedestrian habits, mood or personality, or other subconscious influences. The Next Cup of Tea explores the intersection between mundane materiality and the mind's subjective world. Through interaction with abstract props, Chande contrasts the ordinariness of daily physical routine with the compelling, gnawing quality of inner feelings eager to be seen, heard, and understood. Juxtaposing the personal, political, and philosophical dimensions of the individual experience, The Next Cup of Tea serves as an introspective invitation to look at our kaleidoscopic interior, and to accept the task of deciphering whatever it is we feel today.

Jonas Becker | *New Normal*

Edlis Neeson Theater
September 9 | 7:30-8:30 PM
September 10 | 2-3 PM

Jonas Becker's *New Normal* explores how we, as individuals in society, adjust to large-scale cultural trauma, environmental deterioration, the loss of civil liberties, and increased financial precarity. As conditions erode over time, expectations shift silently for some, for others violently. In this iterative performance, six male-identified performers respond to the slow violence of our current moment through endurance and illusion, struggle and support. Rocks that appear heavy are made of paper, and gestures where performers entangle each other oscillate between aggression and care. Importantly, some radical bodies resist normalization, while for others, the new normal is nothing new. The performers test their limits, adjust, and readjust, responding physically to diminishing environmental standards and political conditions. This presentation in the Edlis Neeson Theater expands on an *In Progress* showing of the work in the MCA's main atrium in 2019, with an emotionally resonant arrangement of motion, sound and lighting.

Tickets on sale starting August 2. To purchase tickets visit experience.mcchicago.org/packages or call 312-397-4010.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Irene Hsiao creates performances in conversation with visual art in museums, galleries, and public spaces, a practice that includes site-specific interaction with visual artworks and experimental engagement with artists, institutions, and the public. Her work includes durational improvisation, interactive installations, dances for stage, video, and virtual performance. She is a 2022-23 Fellow at High Concept Labs, first Artist in Residence at 21c Museum Hotel in 2022-2023, inaugural Artist in Residence at the Smart Museum of Art in 2020 and 2021, and a 2020 Chicago Dancemakers Forum Lab Artist. She has received individual artist awards from the Illinois Arts Council Agency and City of Chicago Department of Culture & Special Events.

Anjal Chande is an artist, performer, producer, writer, space-maker, and visionary, who was recently featured on Vocalo Radio's "This Is What Chicago Sounds Like" in September 2022. Described by The New York Times as a "gifted stylist" and by Time Out Chicago as "arrestingly poetic," her work has been presented/supported by Chicago Dancemakers Forum 2019 Lab Artist Award, Ragdale Foundation, Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, the Illinois Arts Council, Sophiensaele in Berlin, the Smithsonian in Washington, DC, Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Drive East in New York, World Music Festival in Chicago, and numerous stages in India. She received a Fulbright award to perform and study in Berlin, researching the dance community and factors that contribute to thriving urban arts ecosystems. Chande founded Soham Dance Space in 2007 as a home for creative practice, live performance, critical dialogue, and community gatherings. She is a mover and shaker in the Chicago dance field and a vocal advocate for artists of color. Trained in numerous music and dance forms since childhood, Chande draws from a wide creative range in making her art. She teaches performance art and bharatanatyam through radical pedagogies and has a desire to instill a sense of creative possibility and critical reflection within her students. Her essay on bharatanatyam dance in Chicago will be in the forthcoming Third Coast Dance anthology published by University of Illinois Press.

Jonas Becker makes photographs, videos, and performances that explore how systems of power place value on the body and the resource-rich landscape. His practice is research based, excavating layers of mainstream and marginalized histories, particularly in rural America. Each of Becker's projects focuses on a specific landscape, drawing attention to interrelated histories and human impact. Becker has exhibited internationally, including the MCA Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Photography, ICA LA, and LAXART. Becker works between his home state of West Virginia and Chicago, IL, where he is a professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

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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.



ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART CHICAGO

The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The MCA interweaves exhibitions, performances, collections, and educational programs while providing a place for audiences to contemplate and discuss contemporary art in pursuit of a creative and diverse future. The MCA believes in the values of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) as a platform to enact structural change. The museum is generously supported by its Board of Trustees; individual and corporate members; private and corporate foundations, including the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; and government agencies. Museum capital improvements are supported by a Public Museum Capital Grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The MCA is a proud member of Museums in the Park and receives major support from the Chicago Park District.

The MCA is located at 220 E. Chicago Avenue and is open 10 am to 5 pm Wednesday to Sunday and Tuesdays (free for IL residents) from 10 am to 9 pm. The museum is closed on Mondays. Admission is free for all youth 18 and under, members of the military and veterans, and MCA members. Find more information about MCA's exhibitions, programs, and special events at mchicago.org or at 312.280.2660.