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Performance view, Edgar Arceneaux: *Until, Until, Until...*, featuring Frank Lawson, 3-Legged Dog, New York, 2015.
Photo: Paula Court

Multimedia Material:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/f93g2gdy2tjt539ykkz86/AIrU8YCFOEhOzfHbvbf0nE?rlkey=7dho74wmbjvtbnc5bzd1ckwax&st=s61vwq0t&dl=0>

MCA Chicago presents Edgar Arceneaux's *Until, Until, Until...* from October 17–19, 2024

CHICAGO— The Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) Chicago announces a rare presentation of [Edgar Arceneaux's *Until, Until, Until...*](#), running from October 17 through 19 at 7:30 pm in the Edlis Neeson Theater. Taking place three weeks before the 2024 presidential election, Arceneaux's performance at the MCA will offer a critical perspective on issues of race, media, and truth in America.

Arceneaux's performance is a homage to a homage. It is based on [Ben Vereen's controversial 1981 performance at President Ronald Reagan's inaugural ball](#). In the original 1981 performance, Vereen performed a two-act tribute to the work of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century vaudevillian performer Bert Williams, who was forced to perform in blackface throughout his entertainment career. In the first act, Vereen appears in blackface, performing one of Williams's signature songs, "Waiting for the Robert E. Lee," after which the audience erupts in applause. In the second act, however, Vereen's character offers to buy a member of the audience a drink—but is denied due to his skin color. [After this scene, Vereen sings "Nobody," another song popularized by Williams, as he removes his blackface.](#) The ABC television broadcast only aired the first half of Vereen's performance, leaving out the crucial second half and its criticism of racial dynamics in America. A public backlash against Vereen's use of blackface and minstrel-derived performance followed, effectively ending his career.

In *Until, Until, Until...*, Arceneaux recreates the original 1981 performance with collaborator Frank Lawson, who acts as a double for Vereen. Lawson performs an abstracted, dreamlike, fragmentation of Vereen's experience, which also includes blackface. However, *Until, Until, Until...* takes place from Vereen's perspective, restaging fragments of the original performance to explore what was lost when the ABC television broadcast was cut short, obscuring Vereen's message to the public. Audience members will be immersed in the piece, taking on the role of guests at the inaugural celebration from forty years ago, complete with a fully staffed, hosted bar. In Arceneaux's re-telling, now unfiltered, previously censored criticisms address the persistence of discrimination from Williams's time in the early 19th century to today, permeating American racial dynamics. *Until, Until, Until...* examines how collective memories are formed—and challenges us to become cognizant of how they are warped by time, power, and media.

Edgar Arceneaux's *Until, Until, Until...* was commissioned by Performa and MIT's Vera List Visual Arts Center for the Performa 15 Biennial. This presentation is organized by Laura Paige Kyber, Assistant Curator of Performance.

To purchase tickets, please visit the [event ticketing page](#).

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Edgar Arceneaux (b. 1972, Los Angeles, CA; lives in Los Angeles, CA) works in the fields of drawing, sculpture, installation, performance, and video; often exploring connections between historical events and present-day truths. Arceneaux has had solo exhibitions at The Kitchen (NYC), Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; the Vera List Center at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and Museum für Gegenwartskunst in Basel, Switzerland; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Linz, Austria. His work has also been presented at the Museum of Modern Art (NYC), Bronx Museum, Performa 15, the Whitney Museum, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Art in Oslo, San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts, among other venues. Arceneaux's work has been collected at the Whitney Museum, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Ludwig Museum, Cologne; Walker Art Center; Minneapolis Institute of Art; Orange County Museum of Art, and Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Arceneaux attended the California Institute of the Arts (MFA, 2001), Fachhochschule Aachen (2000), the

Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (1999), and Art Center College of Design (BFA, 1996).

SUPPORT

Lead support for the 2024-25 season of MCA Performance and Public Programs is provided by Elizabeth A. Liebman.

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 mcachicago.org or at 312.280.2660.



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