Dear friends,

This year marked the Renaissance Society’s 103rd season. While the longevity of its activity is remarkable, what makes the Ren a truly singular institution is the potent blend of creative freedom and intellectual rigor it cultivates, and the dedicated community such a platform attracts. Nowhere is this more evident than in our 2017-18 program, which engaged a record number of visitors as it featured artists, scholars, and other contributors from as far away as Mumbai, Buenos Aires, and Paris, and of course from right here in Chicago too.

What further distinguishes the Ren is its ambitious commitment to commissioning new art. The 2017-18 season featured more new production than ever before, and this is the direct result of the Next Century Fund, led by transformational gifts from the Edlis Neeson Foundation, the Pritzker Traubert Foundation, and the Zell Family Foundation. Their inspirational generosity has been joined by major gifts from many others.

In the spirit of taking risks and exploring new ideas, in October we hosted our annual RenBen gala and art auction in Half Acre Brewing Company’s newly-opened Balmoral warehouse. With the faint smell of hops in the air, over 300 supporters of the Ren gathered to enjoy a night of great art, food, and conversation as we raised important funds for the Ren’s 2017-18 program. It was my honor to serve as one of the co-chairs with my husband, Ugo Alfano Casati, and our good friends Richard Wright and Valerie Carberry. My sincerest gratitude goes to the host committee, to all the attendees, and to the artists and galleries who donated work for the auction.

On behalf of the entire Board, I’d also like to offer a warm thank you to Anita Blanchard who completed her tenure this year. We are deeply appreciative of her service.

The true engine of the Ren is the incredible staff that work to support everything from daily operations and programmatic planning to organizing tours and sharing information. At the helm is Executive Director and Chief Curator Solveig Øvstebø, whose vision and leadership inspire everyone she meets. Her staff is small and mighty and deserves much recognition: Jessica Cochran, Julia DeRose, Max Guy, Michael Harrison, Colleen Kelly, Karsten Lund, Karen Reimer, Anna Searle Jones, and Pierre Sondeijker. This group of talented individuals makes the Ren an exceedingly special place.

All that the Ren does is made possible by its exceptional network of support, from individuals to foundations to educational and commercial entities. We are so grateful for the contributions that are recognized in the following pages, and to all those who play an active part in the Ren’s community.

With gratitude,
Jorge Cauz
The Renaissance Society might be small in physical size, but this season showcases just what a significant impact we make—on the artists with whom we work, on the audiences who engage with our program, and on the field of contemporary art around the world.

This can be seen in the powerful exhibition of new paintings by Jennifer Packer, *Tenderheaded*, which marked her first solo museum show; it went on to travel to the Rose Museum of Art at Brandeis University, and we launched the publication at Printed Matter in New York during Frieze art fair. The other exhibitions this season have also featured significant new production, in solo presentations by Alejandro Cesarco and Richard Rezac, as well as new works from Daniel G. Baird, Marissa Lee Benedict, Cécile B. Evans, and Xaviera Simmons for *Unthought Environments*.

As a non-collecting institution, we are often asked what happens to these projects that we commission. We were thrilled to announce in November that new work from three recent Renaissance Society exhibitions had found homes in the collections of major international museums: Kevin Beasley’s installation and performance *Your Face Is/Is Not Enough* in Tate Modern; Sadie Benning’s 40-panel work, *Shared Eye*, in the Museum of Modern Art; and Mathias Poledna’s 2014 film, *Substance*, in the Art Institute of Chicago.

The Ren’s community values our commitment to fostering ambitious artistic experimentation, and the relaunch of our membership program in February attracted new supporters from around the country. Enhanced benefits include monthly payment options, reciprocal admissions to peer institutions, and a whimsical tote designed by artist Peter Wächtler.

Members of our Student Committee, too, serve an important role as ambassadors of the Ren, connecting us to the wider University of Chicago campus and gaining behind-the-scenes experience. This year the group took part in a breakfast discussion with artist Alejandro Cesarco, hosted a Student Night featuring member-led walk-throughs of Richard Rezac’s exhibition, and travelled to Milwaukee, where they met with Michelle Grabner and visited galleries and artist-run spaces.

Other highlights this season include presenting our publications at the New York Art Book Fair, where we debuted the catalogue for *Between the Ticks of the Watch*. We were pleased to introduce late gallery hours on Thursday evenings until 8pm, which aligns with a number of other campus institutions and offers more flexibility for visitors. And, as you can see throughout the following pages, this is all in addition to our rich and robust program of exhibitions, events, and publishing that form an unparalleled platform for critical inquiry and dialogue.

I would like to express my gratitude to our brilliant and hard-working staff team, to our unceasingly supportive Board of Directors, and to all of those who have contributed to the success of this season, whether financially, intellectually, or creatively. It is thanks to all of you that this institution maintains the strength and ambition that are its hallmarks.

When I came to the Ren in 2013, I felt that we were uniquely positioned to support artists in pursuing projects that they couldn’t elsewhere. Our unwavering faith in artists and their ideas, coupled with the incredible generosity of our supporters, means that our work continues to play a vital and necessary role in the cultural landscape of Chicago and beyond.

Solveig Øvstebø
Executive Director and Chief Curator
The work of representing black subjects in a media landscape saturated with images of black victims of state-sponsored violence is indeed risky. How does one simultaneously confront these oppressive forces without allowing the nefarious visual order of surveillance to dictate the ways in which those most oppressed by it are seen?
— Lauren DeLand, Art in America

Based in observation, improvisation, and memory, Jennifer Packer’s canvases are intimate and contemplative, rendered in loose strokes and strong color. The new and recent paintings in Tenderheaded, the New York-based artist’s first solo institutional presentation, exhibited a rigorous engagement with art history as well as a highly personal response to how black bodies navigate within the present political landscape.

Packer’s practice is marked by its restraint, producing works that are complicated, sometimes elusive, but always generous. Whether portraiture or floral still lives, her paintings open up on to experiences of care, intimacy, and loss.

Curated by Solveig Øvstebø
Supported by the Joyce Foundation

Between [the two video works] Everness and Revision, I explore the idea of tempo, phrasing, duration—the musicality of looking. What we consider tragic has shifted in the past ten years, as have the power and usage of words and facts. So, to go back to the problems of reading and deciphering seemed rather timely.
— Alejandro Cesarco, Artforum

Including video, photographs, and a wall-based screenprint, Alejandro Cesarco’s poetic installation suggested themes of duration, refusal, repetition, and affective forms. At the heart of the exhibition were two related video works: the first chapter of the artist’s 2008 video, Everness, which features an actor reciting a monologue, written by Cesarco, on the meaning of tragedy; and Revision, a new remake of this chapter with the same actor, now almost a decade later.

This presentation, as in the artist’s broader practice, represented a sustained investigation into time, memory, and how meaning is perceived. Sometimes romantic, other times melancholic, his works evince a deep engagement with the histories and aesthetics of conceptual art.

Curated by Solveig Øvstebø
Supported by the Chicago Committee of the Renaissance Society
[T]he elemental frame of reference might be all-encompassing, but to rethink our world in terms of phenomena that [Lund] calls ‘elusive, easily forgotten, or deliberately kept out of sight,’ is to speak in the closest thing we have to a universal language.

— Perri Wilson, The Chicago Maroon

Unthought Environments was informed by evolving discussions in various fields, including media studies, ecology, and philosophy. Exploring what our “unthought environments” might be today, it considered how elemental surroundings become another kind of vital infrastructure, seemingly there to be used and overlooked, but sometimes veering into the foreground.

Against this backdrop, new and recent artworks offer a set of explorations with different focal points in the elemental sphere as it intersects with our more human-made domains. The artists' videos, sculptures, photographs, installations, and digital images delve into the state of water in multiple countries; the mining operations that feed our computers; the effects of the sun; electromagnetic fields made visible; dust storms; and other phenomena brought to life.

Curated by Karsten Lund

Supported by VIA Art Fun, the Goethe-Institut, and Pro Helvetia

When you walk through Richard Rezac’s new exhibition, Address, it seems to make perfect sense. In the white-walled, window-interrupted, vaulted-ceiling room that is the Renaissance Society’s main gallery, 20 meticulous objects... draw you into their individual orbits, their sound fields, with craftsmanship as exquisite as the composition can be subtly playful.

— Steve Johnson, The Chicago Tribune

Address brought together twenty sculptures by the Chicago-based artist Richard Rezac produced over the last two decades. These new and recent works demonstrate the artist’s ongoing engagement with the sculptural logic of geometry and the elusive mechanisms of interpretation.

Avoiding symbolism or illustration, while at the same time not concrete or closed, Rezac’s sculptures enacted a formal investigation through their determined construction and precise positioning in space. Their scale was modest in relation to the Renaissance Society’s lofty gallery and closer to that of the bodies of audience members who encounter them. As such, the works exude a certain familiarity, an invitation to explore the multiple layers and possible readings of each piece.

Curated by Solveig Øvstebø

Supported by the Henry Moore Foundation and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts
After its January 2017 launch, our performance series Intermissions continued this season with the presentation of two works in the empty gallery between exhibitions.

AUG 26, 2017
Intermissions: Jochen Dehn
This marked the first performance in the United States by the German artist Jochen Dehn, inspired by the scientific and philosophical discovery of “nothing,” his work Arches and Avalanches unfolded as a lengthy series of narrative demonstrations using all sorts of objects and ad hoc sculptures.

Supported by the Efroymson Family Fund, with additional support from the Cultural Service at the Consulate General of France in Chicago and the France Chicago Center

FEB 3–4, 2018
Intermissions: Gordon Hall
Gordon Hall’s Brothers and Sisters was both an exhibition and a performance. Over two days, the artist presented a set of precisely designed objects of ambiguous purpose. Suggesting possible uses by imagined bodies, this family of sculptures was put to use for the audience on two evenings at dusk.

Supported by the Efroymson Family Fund

The Ren continues to present experimental approaches to sound and musical performance, bringing diverse practitioners to Hyde Park for a series of dynamic free concerts.

SEP 30, 2017
Concert: Lea Bertucci
A compelling voice in new music and sound installation, this New York-based musician brought her experimental approach to Bond Chapel, layering saxophone and looped tape collage.

JAN 13, 2018
Concert: Joshua Abrams & Natural Information Society
This Chicago-based band uses traditional and electric instrumentation to develop pulsing aural environments with a psychedelic feeling. In Bond Chapel, they presented a new piece, featuring an expanded line-up of musicians.

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Supported by the Efroymson Family Fund

APR 7, 2018
Concert: Jana Winderen
Live performances and immersive sound installations by this Oslo-based artist focus on audio environments and ecosystems that are difficult for humans to reach. Here, Winderen presented Spring Bloom in the Marginal Ice Zone, a new, live eight-channel mix of underwater sounds.

Presented by the Renaissance Society and Lampo, in partnership with STAGE (Scientists, Technologists and Artists Generating Exploration) at the University of Chicago. Supported by the Office for Contemporary Art Norway.

MAY 4, 2018
Concert: Cameron Shafii
Shafii, a San Francisco-based Iranian composer, creates electroacoustic music using a range of digital processes and generative systems, and here he premiered variations on three works from his new album Corpora Vilia.

Presented by the Renaissance Society and Lampo, in partnership with STAGE (Scientists, Technologists and Artists Generating Exploration) at the University of Chicago. Supported by the Office for Contemporary Art Norway.

Jana Winderen performs Spring Bloom in the Marginal Ice Zone
**Between the Ticks of the Watch**

Featuring work by artists Kevin Beasley, Peter Downsbrough, Goutam Ghosh, Falke Pisano, and Martha Wilson, this 2016 group exhibition presented a platform for considering doubt as both state of mind and pragmatic tool. The illustrated catalogue features newly commissioned scholarly essays, plus a cover by Downsbrough, transcript of Pisano’s video work, and a text by Beasley.

Contributors: Kevin Beasley, Peter Downsbrough, Ranjit Hoskote, Falke Pisano, Heidi Salaverría, Richard Shiff, and Solveig Øvstebø

Softcover, 220pp.

Designed by David Khan-Giordano

**Jennifer Packer: Tenderheaded**

Packer’s 2017 exhibition, *Tenderheaded*, established her as one of the most compelling painters working today. Art historian Jessica Bell Brown describes Packer’s scenes as “empathically mundane and radically tender,” embodying questions of representation, visibility, and desire. This publication marked the first monograph dedicated to the artist’s work.

Contributors: Jessica Bell Brown, April Freely, Kerry James Marshall, Safiya Sinclair, and Solveig Øvstebø

Hardcover, 100pp.

Designed by Hyo Kwon

**Robert Grosvenor**

In 2017, the Renaissance Society presented an exhibition of a major, seldom-seen work from 1989 to 1990. Grosvenor has made significant contributions as a sculptor over the past fifty years, but relatively few books have been published about his work. This monograph documents the Renaissance Society show and also features new scholarship considering Grosvenor’s work with a broad scope.

Contributors: Yve-Alain Bois, Bruce Hainley, Susan Howe, John Yau, and Solveig Øvstebø


Designed by David Khan-Giordano

**Antennae, The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture**

Giovanni Aloi, *Unthought Environments: Interview with Karsten Lund*, Issue 44, Summer 2018

**Art in America**


**Artcritical**


**Artforum**


**Artforum**


**Artforum**


**Artforum**


**Chicago Gallery News**

An Interview with a Curator: Solveig Øvstebø, May 15, 2018.

**Chicago Tribune**


**Contemporary Art Daily**

Tenderheaded documentation, October 24, 2017.

**Crain’s Chicago Business**

Lisa Bertagnoli, Here’s why local art collectors are in Germany this Summer, June 22, 2017.

**Crain’s Chicago Business**

Lisa Bertagnoli, University-based museums are raking it in, March 12, 2018.

**Frieze**


**Frieze Masters**

Jennifer Packer, Artists’ Artists, volume 6 (Fall 2017).

**Hyperallergic**


**Inside/Within**


**Newcity**


**Newcity**


**Observer**

Margaret Carrigan, Jennifer Packer on Painting the Vulnerability of the Black Female Body, September 14, 2017.

**The Seen**

Stephanie Cristello, Musical Grammar, Alejandro Cesarco interview, April 2018.

**UChicago News**

Andrew Bauld, Renaissance Society builds upon history of artistic expression, experimentation, March 26, 2018.
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Richard Rezac leads a walk-through of Address
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<td>Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José Bienvenu Gallery, New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kavi Gupta Gallery, Chicago</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Art Fair Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Equipment Energy Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPO Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frost Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2Vino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half Acre Brewing Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icon Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seaberg Picture Framing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sotheby’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sotheby’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS
YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2018 AND 2017

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS
YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2018 AND 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>$122,453</td>
<td>$152,453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>298,940</td>
<td>436,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-kind contributions</td>
<td>308,357</td>
<td>308,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>629,750</td>
<td>697,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program services</td>
<td>1,326,319</td>
<td>1,309,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and general</td>
<td>262,270</td>
<td>262,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>270,405</td>
<td>237,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,858,994</td>
<td>1,808,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>$6,758,683</td>
<td>$6,345,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily unrestricted</td>
<td>633,500</td>
<td>942,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7,392,183</td>
<td>7,287,255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total liabilities and net assets</td>
<td>$7,499,917</td>
<td>$7,371,124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table provides a detailed breakdown of revenues, expenses, net assets, and financial position for the years ended June 30, 2018, and June 30, 2017, respectively. This includes various categories such as grants, contributions, in-kind contributions, benefit revenues, net of expenses, and expenses for programs, management, and general, fundraising, and change in net assets. The financial statements also show the beginning and ending balances of net assets, including unrestricted and temporarily restricted funds.
I support the Ren because it has the best things I like about museum exhibitions: It's not too big. The shows are provocative. The artists are edgy. And the website helps me get prepared for my visit.
– Beverly Serrell, Sustaining Member

In the planning, presentation and the public response of my exhibition at the Renaissance Society this past spring, the experience was certainly the most thorough and fulfilling that I have had in my four decades practicing art. This institution, staffed by committed and concerned professionals, afforded me this opportunity with complete trust and cooperation. With this ethic, the Ren honors and rewards artists’ and performers’ contributions for Chicago, and beyond.
– Richard Rezac, artist and Publishing Circle Member