

THE
RENAISSANCE
SOCIETY
ANNUAL REPORT
2022-23



2022–23 SEASON LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on our last year at the Renaissance Society and look to the future, I'd like to begin with words crafted by our team. In a recent grant application, they described today's landscape and the Ren's unique place with in it:

Media consolidation, market forces, polarized politics, and rising cultural conflict: ours is a moment in which expression is increasingly narrowed and conformed. The field of contemporary art is not immune to these pressures, and capitalism's unceasing drive toward growth—whether in terms of square footage, audience figures, or income—risks compromising institutions' commitment to art itself. At the Renaissance Society, we believe it is urgent to cultivate spaces that counter these tendencies. We are committed to staying small, a choice that can seem counterintuitive to stakeholders and donors but that is bolstered by our experience that artistic ambition and experimentation are best served by the focus, flexibility, and curatorial attention that this scale enables.

Confident in this perspective and the values that inspire it, our institution's focus over the next few years is threefold: honing a curatorial methodology focused on adventurous new commissions and an intimate, artist-driven scale of production; thinking creatively about infrastructure; and reframing our approach to engagement in terms of networks as opposed to audiences.

This year offered some incredible opportunities to follow artists into revelatory or intimate spaces, a number of which also resonated deeply with the city of Chicago as their context. In his first solo museum exhibition, Max Guy presented an installation of new works centered on *The Wizard of Oz* and its lasting place in the cultural imagination. A gigantic flag floating overhead in the gallery merged

the official colors of Oz—yellow, orange, purple, and blue—and an added star from the Chicago flag. This is just one of the many connections between Chicago and Oz that Guy brought out within the exhibition.

Chicago's specter lurked, too, within Aria Dean's new commission, *Abattoir, U.S.A.* In her film, the slaughterhouse implied in the title is animated using Unreal Engine, a 3D computer graphics tool. It depicts an "impossible architecture" that explores both the slaughterhouse's allegorical power and its complex history as a literal place. It's an unforgettable experimental film that fittingly had its premiere in a city once called "the slaughterhouse of the world."

These two solo shows are testaments to what can happen when an artist is given a big platform, hands-on curatorial support, and a lot of freedom to pursue their ideas. Other exhibitions and publication projects this year demonstrated the kind of thought-provoking, boundary-pushing outcomes that can arise in a decidedly small but daring institution like this one. The artist Shahryar Nashat and writer Bruce Hainley co-organized a lively exhibition that reinvented the conventions around how museum presentations are dreamed up and talked about. Kevin Beasley's artistic vision for a book led to our publication of a 300-page monograph that also came with a double LP record on vinyl. And the music program brought magical concerts like a new four-hour piece in Bond Chapel by Whitney Johnson—another new commission—among others.

All in all the Ren season was full. We could also talk about the group exhibition organized by Karsten Lund, *Fear of Property*, or a RenBen for the ages performatively anchored by countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo, or the two theatrical table readings directed by legendary artists Pope.L and Catherine Sullivan. This fullness was all made possible by the Ren's unparalleled team, led by Myriam Ben Salah. Each person's commitment,

attentiveness, and joy for the process is what creates a fertile environment for artists. After all, the focus, flexibility, and curatorial attention that characterizes this institution is not only enabled by the Ren's scale, but also its people.

Our great ambition—to remain the "mouse that roars" as James Rondeau of the Art Institute of Chicago once said, in a shout-out to the Ren's outsized influence in the contemporary art world—takes enormous will and effort. But it is also our enduring pleasure.

In gratitude,
Nancy Lerner Frej

Reflecting on a past season, almost a year ago from the viewpoint of the present, is always an interesting exercise at the time of writing this report. It is impossible not to reflect on it through the prism of world-shifting events. On February 24th, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine in an escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian war that started in 2014, and it is still ongoing to this day. On October 7th, 2023 the Palestinian group Hamas launched an unprecedented deadly assault on Israel from the Gaza Strip, killing 1,200 people and taking 250 hostages. At the time of this writing, between 25,000 and 35,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed by the Israeli military in response. These events might not seem different from other ongoing conflicts: The thirty-five non-international armed conflicts happening in Africa or the nineteen armed conflicts happening in Asia as I type. All of this might seem far from our 3,000 square-foot gallery on the top floor of Cobb Hall, on the campus of the University of Chicago. And yet, they have reshaped the ways in which we think about our post-World War II status quo. They have drawn into question our assumptions around a shared sense of humanist ethics, around the preservation of human dignity and safety. They have eroded freedom of speech, a right that many of us in Western societies took for granted. Here at the Ren specifically, and to me personally, these conflicts have prompted other questions: Why is it that we do what we do? Why is it that we dedicate our lives to art and artists? Contrary to popular belief in our field, art is not “necessary,” and it doesn’t have an inherent positive impact by default. When louder and clearer voices have failed to get our attention, why is it that we need art?

In a piece published in the aftermath of Russia’s attack on Ukraine, art critic Jason Farago quotes writer Margo Jefferson on the reason we need art in war time: because “*history cannot exist without the discipline of imagination.*” He goes on “*Somewhere in the interstice between form and meaning, between picture and plotline, between thinking and feeling, art gives us a*

view of human suffering and human capabilities that testimonials, or even our own eyes, are not always able to. Art is important because it reaffirms the place of form and imagination in times that would deny their potentialities (. . .) It is what allows us to discern, in the daily tide of images and insanities, any meaning at all.” I don’t always agree with Farago’s takes but I somehow found solace in his and Jefferson’s words when mine were lacking.

Our past season has been about this search for meaning; it has been about being in close conversations with artists to try and make sense of the world we live in. And with deep belief in the potential of imagination, it has been about giving them the time, space, resources, and companionship to reflect, and make, in ambitious and experimental ways.

Our group exhibitions at the Renaissance Society don’t aim to be topical or related to current events, but they bring about new ways of thinking about seemingly familiar aspects of life, as seen through the eyes of artists. *Fear of Property*, curated by my colleague Karsten Lund, considered the many forms and many emotional dimensions of “property,” via works by Kevin Beasley, Rose Salane, Christopher Williams, Isshaq Albarbary, Niloufar Emamifar and other artists. It recognized both the comforts of property, such as the promise of safety and stability offered by owning a home, as well as property’s vulnerability and related histories of violence, such as the taking of land and erasure of language.

Max Guy’s exhibition in the fall, *But tell me, is it a civilized country?*, grew out of his interest in how *The Wizard of Oz* has imprinted itself on the cultural imagination for multiple generations. He also teased out how the beloved film opens unlikely doorways onto America’s fraught histories of urbanism, race, and power. Notably, this was Guy’s first museum solo exhibition as well as the first opportunity for Michael Harrison, Curatorial Assistant at the Renaissance Society, to be the lead curator for an exhibition here.

Aria Dean’s new commission used video game technology as a tool for filmmaking, embracing this novel process to engage with the long shadow of the slaughterhouse as a modernist fixture and also our evolving relations with images and experimental film. Her sometimes abstract, but always compelling and masterful gem of a film was the ambitious outcome of the Ren’s partnership with The Vega Foundation, and it later traveled to the Power Plant in Toronto and the Institute of Contemporary Art in London. We now turn to working on a book with Aria, featuring new writing by Erika Balsom and Keller Easterling, plus conversations between Aria and film historian Bruce Jenkins, and with some of her collaborators on the project.

Sometimes an artist’s effort to get at the psychological and economic undercurrents of life today requires stepping off the normal path and pushing at the usual ways of doing things. Shahryar Nashat and Bruce Hainley’s unorthodox project in the spring—which *Artnet News* called a “true head-scratcher of an exhibition”—embodied the truth that art museums aren’t so separate from the weird world of livestreaming and TikTok, or the realm of celebrity and publicity, or the lures of monetizing oneself. As Shahryar later said about his experience at the Ren: “The team’s commitment not only sets them apart but also created an environment where I felt inspired and supported to push boundaries.” This feels like a show that couldn’t have happened anywhere else and it’s all the more unforgettable for it.

Surfacing between exhibitions in the fall and spring, our *Intermissions* series continues to be a platform where artists conjure striking new works into being, always concentrated into a couple of days for a live audience. In November, Nour Mobarak turned the Ren’s entire empty gallery space into an instrument and a zone of improvisation, using sensors to track her location in the room and trigger different sounds and effects. And within the dark space in April, Özgür Kar’s new

animated work featured towering skeletons in lieu of live performers, delivering a Beckett-like monologue that looked to the light of dawn and better days.

This past year the Ren’s music series gathered full crowds for Whitney Johnson’s immersive four-hour work for string quartet and electronics in Bond Chapel, the transfixing experience of Kali Malone’s slowly morphing organ concert in Rockefeller Chapel, and Julia Reidy’s microtonal compositions on guitar that reach for the instrument’s outer ranges. Each of these concerts embody how artistic experimentation, as it diverges from the usual scripts, can still be deeply emotionally resonant.

The spring was marked by a new iteration of our recently reshaped benefit event. RenBen 2023, orchestrated by artist and choreographer Adam Linder brought together a cast of flamboyant characters. Aram Moshayedi’s recount in *Artforum* managed to seize the energy of the evening: “*The cake was finally served; the speed skater flew between tables waving a flag emblazoned with the night’s financial stakeholders; McMenemy became the star of a music video in her mind; the wall hustlers uncoupled themselves from the architecture and sexualized whatever bits of the room’s center they could, all while Anthony Roth Costanzo cried to my soul in the style of Jimmy Somerville. It was a disorienting crescendo that unified the evening’s disparate gestures into a single tableau. Any attentions that had been adrift were by now thoroughly overwhelmed. Good luck to next year’s RenBen artist to match what the bejeweled Linder orchestrated.*”

History indeed cannot exist without the discipline of imagination.

—Myriam Ben Salah

SEP 10–NOV 6, 2022
FEAR OF PROPERTY

By interrogating our understanding of ‘property,’ we force ourselves to recognize the relationships between ourselves and the people and places around us. And, in that recognition, we see that our present and most visible systems of ownership are not the only ones possible.

—Rebecka Kann, *Sixty Inches from Center*

Property is an abstract idea that shapes concrete reality in profound ways, shadowed by questions of who owns what, and why, and the friction of public and private interests. As time goes by, property also comes in many different forms: some are physical, others intangible. *Fear of Property* developed out of conversations with sixteen artists around these ideas, as well as various related histories and emerging futures. In doing so, the exhibition built on the intuition that property organizes not only social and economic relations, but emotional life as well.

The exhibition featured new commissions by Joi T. Arcand, Kevin Beasley, Niloufar Emamifar & Isshaq Albarbary, Christopher Meerdo, Rose Salane, and Daniel de Paula, Marissa Benedict & David Rueter, alongside works by Christopher Williams, Ghislaine Leung, Pedro Neves Marques, Karrabing Film Collective, and Andrew Norman Wilson. In addition to the works on view in the gallery, six videos were viewable on online throughout the run of the show.

Curated by Karsten Lund

SEP 10, 2022
Opening Reception

OCT 23, 2022
Discussion
 Eunsong Kim

NOV 1, 2022
Discussion
 Jonathan Levy

NOV 5, 2022
Discussion
 Eula Biss

DEC 3, 2022–FEB 5, 2023

MAX GUY
**BUT TELL ME, IS IT A
 CIVILIZED COUNTRY?**

By bringing Oz into the present, Guy’s smart show prompts the question: With the forcefulness of the collective imagination that we regularly display and sometimes shift at the drop of a hat, how can we reimagine, stand on end, and remake the careless, rough, stained, and unwelcoming parts of our world?
 —Marcus Civin, *Art in America*

For his first museum solo exhibition, Chicago-based artist Max Guy presented an installation of new works centered on *The Wizard of Oz*. Dorothy’s journey from Kansas to the fantastical land of Oz and back again is a tale of slippage between worlds, imagining a reality with highly porous boundaries. Meanwhile, Oz itself embodies another kind of dual existence: as a fully developed fantasy world on narrative terms, and as a massively successful multimedia franchise that has deeply imprinted itself on the American cultural landscape.

Anchored in Chicago—where L. Frank Baum’s original novel was written and home of enduring monuments to Oz fandom—the exhibition bridged the parallel universes of the Emerald City and its birthplace, drawing out the traces each carries of the other. A number of latent currents coursed underneath: critical perspectives on Modernist urbanism, the products of fan culture, and the transformative power of storytelling and even the simplest acts of world-making.

Curated by Michael Harrison

DEC 3, 2022
Opening Reception and Artist Talk

JAN 28–29, 2023
Screening
 Curtis Miller: *The Dark Side of Oz*, 1989

FEB 4, 2023
Discussion
 Max Guy with Lin Hixson
 and Matthew Goulish



FEB 25–APR 16, 2023

ARIA DEAN

ABATTOIR, U.S.A.!

Dean seizes on what [Upton] Sinclair only hints at: the immense power of the abattoir as a space of figural possibility . . . In this hallucinatory work, on display in a city that was the center of the American meatpacking industry for decades, the slaughterhouse becomes a paradigm through which to confront the heterological outside of liberal humanism.

–Erika Balsom, *Artforum*

Aria Dean's newly commissioned film *Abattoir, U.S.A.!* surveys the interior of an empty slaughterhouse. Animated using Unreal Engine—a 3D computer graphics tool used to create real-time environments—the film navigates an impossible architecture that merges diverse historical design elements and non-Euclidean spaces. Projecting the slaughterhouse into a virtual space, *Abattoir, U.S.A.!* ultimately explores how meaning is produced through moving images, working across material, symbolic, and technological registers.

Dean was initially inspired by philosophers Georges Bataille and Frank Wilderson, each of whom address the slaughterhouse in their writings as crucial to the constitution of civil society. The project also builds on Dean's own research into industrial architecture, ruminating on the slaughterhouse as both an allegorical structure and a literal place. The film was accompanied by an immersive score by Evan Zierk, and Dean also altered the architecture of the Renaissance Society to create the film's viewing context, at times uncannily doubling what was on-screen.

Curated by Myriam Ben Salah with Karsten Lund and Michael Harrison

FEB 25, 2023
Opening Reception and Artist Talk

MAR 28, 2023
Discussion
Aria Dean with Michael Connor,
Filip Kostic, and Evan Zierk

APR 15, 2023
Discussion
Aria Dean with Bruce Jenkins

Hainley and Nashat's critique works by inhabiting the form of the exhibition to expose its cracks. By including works that wouldn't normally be considered art—livestreams, pole dancers—the exhibition plays with elevating them into art, while at the same time razing the works of art on view to the level of image-commodity.

–Lisa Yin Zhang, *Frieze*

For over a year, Shahryar Nashat and Bruce Hainley shaped this exhibition project quietly behind the scenes. Most shows begin with a clear statement of intent and a press release. Here, the title of the show was, and still is, conspicuously absent. In lieu of any explanation, Nashat and Hainley offered an origin story: a fortuitous celebrity sighting, which led them to think about how bodies become “living currencies,” monetized by choice or against one's wishes, negotiating between exploitation and personal agency.

Even more than usual, in the absence of the usual promotional campaign and interpretative aids, this show came to rest on a first-person experience in the exhibition space. In the gallery, as one encountered works by various artists and a number of not-quite artworks, certain meta-themes became more palpable and lively: maybe most of all efforts to make sense of the body as an abstract idea, an image, and an undeniably sensual object in a current world negotiating between hypervisibility and erasure.

*Organized by Bruce Hainley
and Shahryar Nashat with Myriam
Ben Salah and Karsten Lund*

MAY 13, 2023
Opening Reception and Organizer Talk

MAY 21, 2023
Table Read
The Dramatic Circle by Adrienne Kennedy
Directed by Pope.L

JUN 21, 2023
Table Read
The Twilight Saga: Eclipse
Directed by Catherine Sullivan



NOV 12–13, 2022

Nour Mobarak

In her performances and sound installations, Nour Mobarak uses the human voice as her material and the moving body as a catalyst or instrument. In this newly commissioned work—produced as a collaboration between the Renaissance Society and Lampo—Mobarak used a real-time tracking system to trigger sounds and effects in response to her changing location within the Renaissance Society’s gallery space. What took shape was a dynamic, immersive performance of voice, electronics, and movement.

During two three-hour performances, on consecutive days, the gallery became a site of live experimentation as she explored what this spatialized digital set-up could do. Through her movement in the demarcated space, she gradually activated this system in compounding, and sometimes confounding, ways. Along with her own vocal improvisations, Mobarak layered in other voices, drawn from a sound bank she has compiled. These samples include recordings of

the world’s most phonemically complex languages, each one reflecting a much wider sonic palette than English.

Curated by Andrew Fenchel and Karsten Lund with Michael Harrison

Intermissions: Nour Mobarak, 2022. Photo: Ryan Edmund Thiel.



APR 22–23, 2023

Özgür Kar

Özgür Kar creates animations of skeletal characters appearing on their own towering screens. While each of his projects hints at different stories and explores new configurations in space, they often function like multi-part soundscapes and deconstructed theater pieces as isolated figures become performers in looping scenes that are at once austere and emotion-filled.

As part of the Intermissions series, Kar presented *DAWN*, a new work created for the Renaissance Society’s space, unfolding across two days as visitors were invited to come and go. With echoes of early animated films, existential monologues in the vein of Samuel Beckett, medieval danse macabre, and more, Kar’s new work at the Ren imagined an endless performance without human actors.

Curated by Karsten Lund

Intermissions: Özgür Kar, 2023. Photo: Cody Schlabaugh.



OCT 1, 2022
Kali Malone

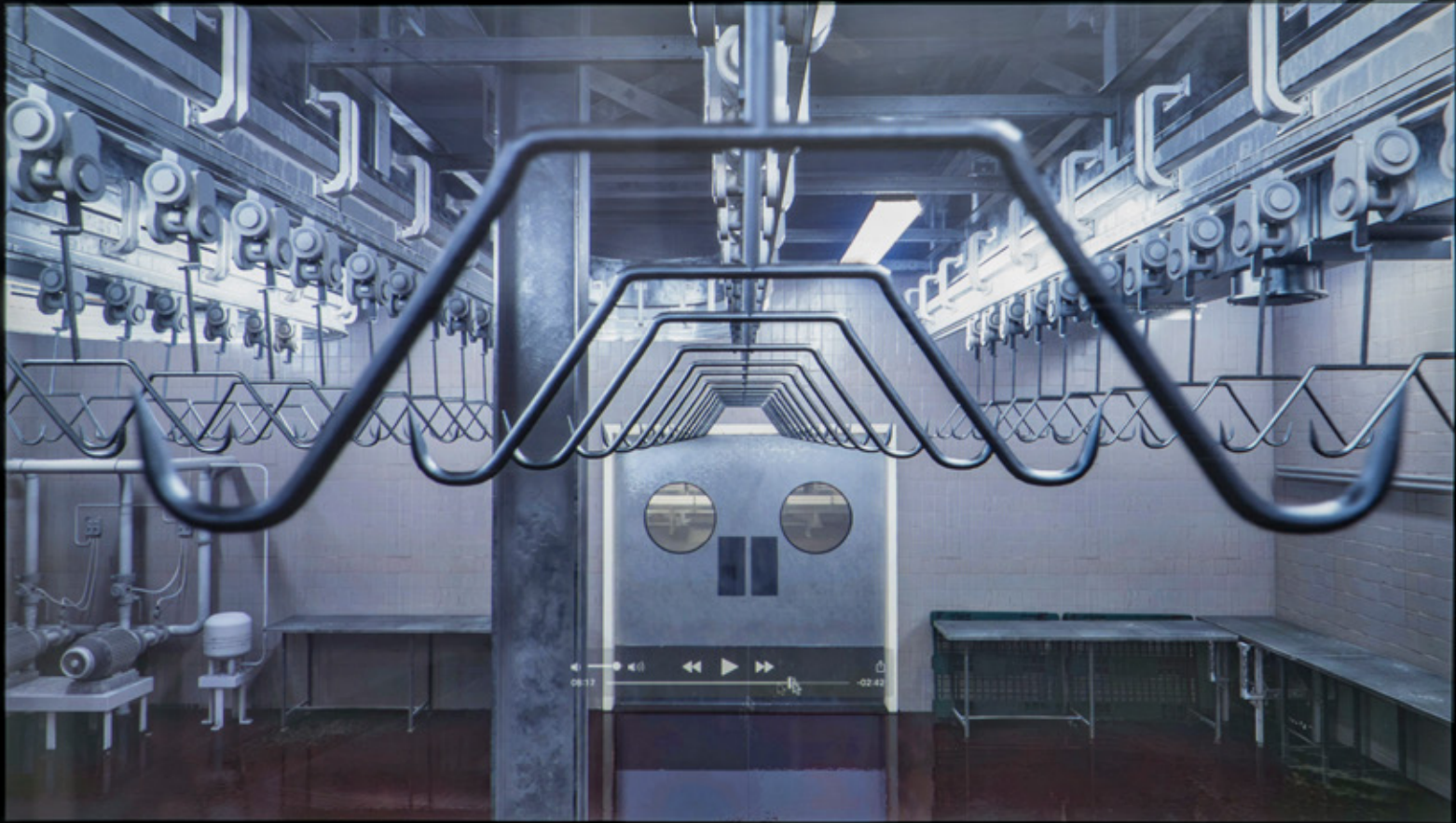
Kali Malone, an American composer and musician living in Stockholm and Paris, uses specific tuning systems to create “sonic monoliths” that are minimalist in structure but rich in harmonic texture. Playing the famed Reneker organ at Rockefeller Chapel, Malone performed works from her critically acclaimed album *The Sacrificial Code*, a series of pipe organ pieces that use their slow and seemingly austere qualities to build profound emotional resonance. Featuring repetition and extended durations, her performances have a perception-altering quality, what Malone describes as “an exercise in transcendence through self-restraint.”

FEB 23, 2023
Julia Reidy

Berlin-based composer Julia Reidy has drawn acclaim for solo performances on 12-string guitar that bridge microtonality, fingerpicking techniques, and classic minimalism. Their recent work has utilized an increasingly broad sonic palette, fleshing out guitar-based composition with electronics, field recordings, and auto-tuned vocals. For this intimate concert in Bond Chapel, Reidy showcased non-traditional song forms that are as experimental as they are emotive, featuring rhythmic elasticity, unstable harmonics, and unorthodox tuning.

APR 1, 2023
Whitney Johnson

Chicago-based musician Whitney Johnson explores the mysterious relationship between sound and the human psyche, drawing on research interests ranging from neuropsychology to sound healing. At Bond Chapel, Johnson premiered *The Tuning of the Elements*, a new four-hour durational work for string quartet and electronics. Surrounding string players at the center, eight speakers throughout the space played binaural beat patterns corresponding to the frequencies of different brainwaves. Visitors were free to circulate in the chapel, testing the potential for relaxing or stimulating energies depending on their path.





Kevin Beasley: *A View of a Landscape*

The most ambitious publication devoted to Kevin Beasley's work to date, *A View of a Landscape* comprises a 300-page monograph and double LP record, designed together and conceived by the artist as equal, integrated elements. The book is an expansive look at Beasley's work in sculpture, sound, and performance, illuminating how his practice finds its grounding in his family's land in Virginia, a place that also brings out larger American histories. Along with texts by nine writers with strong ties to the artist, the substantial book features a large array of images that include Beasley's work and materials from his own amassed visual archive. The double LP features newly recorded tracks by musicians and artists from Beasley's close creative circles, produced in partnership with London-based record label Hyperdub. The musician's tracks are uniquely their own, but they all sample recordings that Beasley made, reflecting an ongoing spirit of collaboration.

Contributors: (Book) Andy Battaglia, Kevin Beasley, Daphne A. Brooks, Adrienne Edwards, Leon Finley,

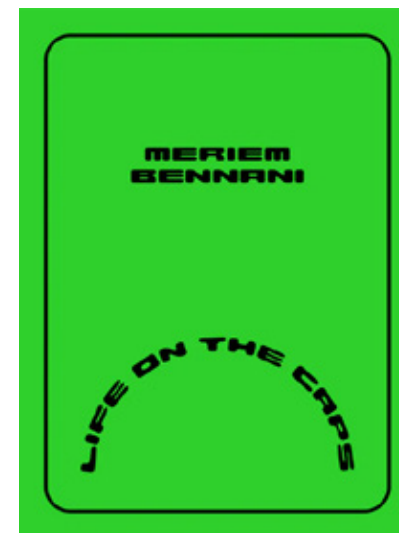
Mark Godfrey, Thomas J. Lax, Ralph Lemon, Tiona Nekkia McClodden, and Fred Moten; (Double LP) Laurel Halo, Jlin, Eli Keszler, L'Rain, Ralph Lemon, Robert Aiki Aubrey Lowe, Kelsey Lu, Jason Moran, Fred Moten, Moor Mother, Okwui Okpokwasili, and SCRAATCH

Softcover with double LP, 300 pages
Edited by Karsten Lund
and Solveig Øvstebø
Designed by Hyo Kwon

Book Launch: MAR 11, 2023

Lead support for the publication was provided by the Wagner Foundation. Additional support was provided by Pamela J. Joyner and Alfred J. Giuffrida; the Rennie Collection, Vancouver; and Wendy Fisher & A4 Arts Foundation.

Kevin Beasley, *A View of a Landscape*, Publication, 2022.



Meriem Bennani: *Life on the CAPS*

Meriem Bennani is a Moroccan artist who lives and works in New York. *Life on the CAPS* is the final chapter in her film trilogy of the same name. Set in a supernatural, dystopian future surrounding a fictional island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, it is rooted in Bennani's research and reflections on the histories of island societies, biotechnology, and vernacular music. Layering live-action footage and computer-generated animation, Bennani intuitively adapts editing techniques that evoke documentary film, science fiction, phone footage, music videos, and reality TV. Enacting a variety of cunning shifts, *Life on the CAPS* moves fluidly from the imaginary to the geopolitical and ranges from the microscopic scale of DNA to the global eye of surveillance. At the same time, it engages with the power of individual experience as well as the power of collectivity while building on an emotive, formal experimentation that refutes boundaries. Her one-person exhibition at the Renaissance Society marked the debut of this personal, electric yet melancholic consideration of what it is to live in a state of limbo, and this accompanying book

captures the film through a combination of still images and selections from a transcript of the film.

Contributors: Essays by Emily LaBarge and Elvia Wilke; transcripts of conversations between Meriem Bennani and Omar Berrada, Fatima Al Quadiri and *Bidoun*, Amal Benzekri, and Aziz Bouyabrine

Softcover, 220 pages
Edited by Negar Azimi and Tiffany Malakooti
Designed by Tiffany Malakooti

Book Launch: OCT 20, 2023

This publication was made possible through the generous support of the Kamel Lazar Foundation, Geneva/Tunis.

Meriem Bennani, *Life on the CAPS*, Publication, 2022.

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Randall Kroszner and David Nelson
Mondriaan Foundation
Valeria Napoleone
Elisa Nuyten
Neil Ross and Lynn Hauser
SAHA Foundation
Margaret Stone
Anne Van Wart and Michael Keable
David W. Williams and Eric Ceputis

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Michael Alper and Helyn Goldenberg
Trissa Babrowski and Sundeep Mullangi
Greg Cameron and Greg Thompson
Jack Connelly
Consulate General of the Netherlands
Jay Dandy and Melissa Weber

Dirk Denison and David Salkin
Carey Fouks
Michael Gray and Nada Milakovic Gray
Paul and Dedrea Gray
Jennifer Heller Wold
Ambassador Bruce Heyman
and Mrs. Vicki Heyman
Ariela Lazar
Liz and Eric Lefkofsky
Kerry James Marshall and
Cheryl Lynn Bruce
John Mathias
Monique Meloche and Evan Boris
Gary Metzner and Scott Johnson
John Morace
Courtney Sherrer
Todd and Betiana Simon
Robin Loewenberg Tebbe and Mark Tebbe
Jack and Susy Wadsworth
John and Carol Winzeler
John and Evonne Yonover

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Mary Jo and Doug Basler
James Cahn and Jeremiah Collatz
Craig and Janet Duchossois
Gail Elden
Gray Center for Arts & Inquiry
Sarai Hoffman and Stephen Pratt
Anne Rorimer
Karen Strohl

Up to \$999

Harvey and Doris Adelstein
Teal Black
Richard Born
Ray Chay
Erin Daly
Nancie and Bruce Dunn
Julia Fish
Kere Frey
Rheanna Guess
Brad Holland
Vicki Hood
Scott Hunter
Michael I. Jacobs
Margery Kaye and William R. Padnos
Samuel Lee
Lisa Meyerowitz and Daniel Greene
Janine Mileaf and Matthew Witkovsky
Herbert and Paula Molner

Pamela Moore and Charlie Rose
Letitia Noel
Nan Nolan
Hunter Riley
Patricia Sternberg
University of Chicago Foundations
University of Chicago
Open Practice Committee
David Vitale
Melanie Wang
Julie and Dan Wheeler
Rob Wiesenberger
Delphine Zurfluh and Tim Geannopoulos



Table read of *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse*, directed by Catherine Sullivan, performance view, 2023.



In keeping with the format of artist-conceived evenings inaugurated by Piero Golia in 2022, prolific and peripatetic dancer and choreographer Adam Linder was invited to Chicago to design *RenBen 2023: TRU RENAISSANCE*.

This was Linder's first project in Chicago. The benefit took place at The Rotunda at The DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center, a former horse stable designed in 1880 by legendary architect and urban planner Daniel Burnham.

Linder enlisted a number of artists to join in the evening, including renowned countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo, performer, model, and actress Lily McMenemy, dancers Stephen Thompson and Zach Nicol, professional speedskater Jeffrey Swider-Peltz, and additional collaborators who formed a series of gradually unfolding spectacles, dazzling renditions, and unlikely juxtapositions. Guests were met by fashion photographer Will Davidson as the space gave way to Lily McMenemy holding center court, while Thompson and Nicol slowly circled the periphery as part of *SOME TRADE*. Lula Cafe served up abundant and beautiful courses while

Costanzo graced the audience with a menu in song and cake cutters deliberately disassembled dessert by Dream Cake Test Kitchen. The night ended in a burst of energy as Swider-Peltz raced the edges of the interior and Costanzo belted out "Smalltown Boy" by Bronski Beat, marking one more unforgettable RenBen.

Linder's *Shelf Life* was one of two inaugural commissions for the Museum of Modern Art's Kravis Studio, dedicated to live art in 2020. Linder is the 2016 recipient of the Hammer Museum's Mohn Award, granted for artistic excellence to an artist featured in its biennial, *Made in L.A.*—the first time this award was bestowed on a dancer. Further, Linder has developed projects and performances for The Wattis Institute in San Francisco, Serralves Museum in Porto, LAXART in Los Angeles, The Schinkel Pavillon in Berlin, The Centre Pompidou in Paris, and countless other arts venues.



RENBEN CONTRIBUTIONS 2022-23

\$25,000 and above

Gucci
 Laura D. and Marshall B. Front
 Penelope R. Steiner
 Richard Wright and Valerie Carberry

\$10,000 - \$24,999

Anonymous
 Silvia Beltrametti and Jay Krehbiel
 Christine Meleo Bernstein
 and Armyan Bernstein
 Heiji Choy Black and Brian Black
 Marilyn and Larry Fields
 Nancy Lerner Frej and David Frej
 Hannah Hoffman Gallery
 Michelle and Glenn Holland
 The Jarl and Pamela Mohn Family Trust
 Randall Kroszner and David Nelson
 Lina Lazaar and Ali Munir
 H. Gael Neeson
 Neil Ross and Lynn Hauser
 Glen Saltzberg and Jordana Joseph
 ValeriaNapoleoneXX
 Anne Van Wart and Michael Keable

\$1,000 - \$9,999

Lorin Adolph
 Michael Alper and Helyn Goldenberg
 Julia and Larry Antonatos
 Susan Bowey
 Gay-Young Cho and Christopher Chiu
 Christie's
 Debra Couch and Sanjog Misra
 David Kordansky Gallery
 Dana Earles
 Francois Ghebaly Gallery
 Martin and Peggy Friedman
 Gladstone Gallery
 Madeleine Grynsztejn and Tom Shapiro
 Jack and Sandra Guthman
 Janaina and Bernardo Hees
 Ambassador Bruce Heyman
 and Mrs. Vicki Heyman
 Jessica Jackson Hutchins
 Henry Johnson
 Sonali H. Lamba
 Karen Lothan
 John and Katie MacCarthy
 John Mathias
 Monique Meloche and Evan Boris

Jay Ezra Nayssan
 Sylvia Neil and Dan Fischel
 Benedicta M. Badia Nordenstahl
 Maria Seferian and Richard d'Abo
 Margaret Stone

\$500 - \$999

Phillip Lumpkin
 Max Nussbaumer

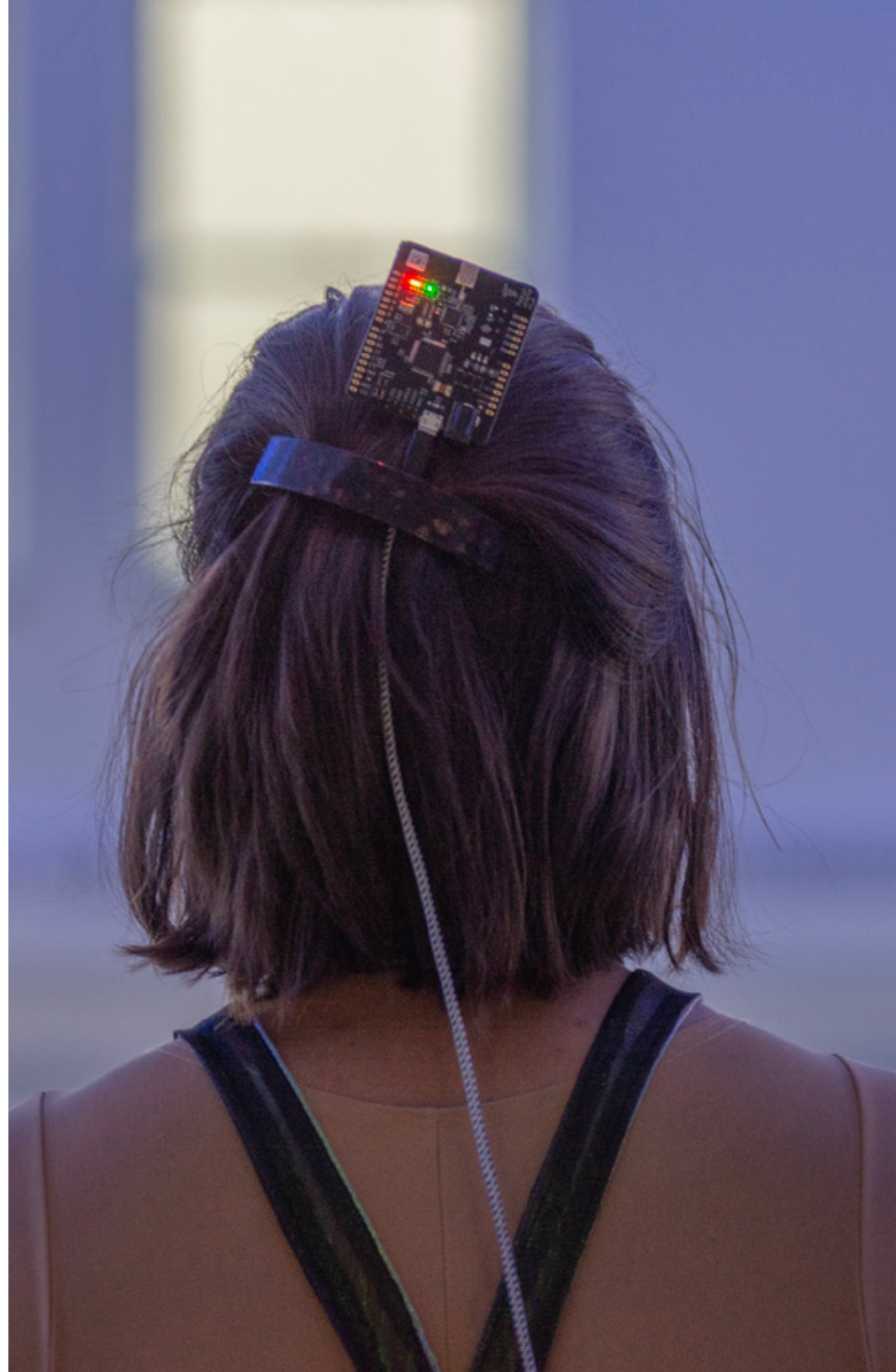
Up to \$499

Rheanna Guess
 Bruce Jenkins
 Alan Longino
 Julia Phillips
 Jason Pickleman and Leslie Bodenstein
 Claudia Roeder-Leuz and Christian Leuz
 Daniel and Rena Sternberg
 William Tedford
 Acasia Wilson Feinberg

In-Kind

The Study at University of Chicago

Intermissions: Nour Mobarak, 2022. Photo: Ryan Edmund Thiel.





THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2023 AND 2022

ASSETS	2023	2022
Current assets:		
Cash	\$ 424,685	\$ 604,605
Accounts receivable	8,054	3,130
Contributions and grants receivable – Current portion	368,319	374,132
Contribution receivable – Donated space, current	177,815	-
Inventory	27,076	27,076
Prepaid expenses	22,883	15,175
Total current assets	<u>1,028,832</u>	<u>1,024,118</u>
Property and equipment – Net	<u>7,830</u>	<u>768</u>
Other assets:		
Investments, at fair value	7,440,057	7,176,901
Contributions and grants receivable, net – Noncurrent portion	561,740	544,894
Contribution receivable – Donated space, noncurrent portion	688,938	-
Total other assets	<u>8,690,735</u>	<u>7,721,795</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 9,727,397</u>	<u>\$ 8,746,681</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 123,006	\$ 102,966
Total current liabilities	<u>123,006</u>	<u>102,966</u>
Net assets:		
Without donor restrictions	7,969,473	7,855,715
With donor restrictions	1,634,918	788,000
Total net assets	<u>9,604,391</u>	<u>8,643,715</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 9,727,397</u>	<u>\$ 8,746,681</u>

THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS
YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2023 AND 2022

	2023			2022		
	WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	TOTAL	WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	TOTAL
Revenues						
Grants	\$ 380,994	\$ 166,165	\$ 547,159	\$ 170,844	\$ 50,000	\$ 220,844
Contributions	273,245	-	273,245	452,836	-	452,836
Contributions non-financial assets	288,139	866,753	1,154,892	91,950	-	91,950
Benefit revenues, net of direct donor costs of \$157,290 in 2023 and \$233,234 in 2022	199,537	-	199,537	215,766	-	215,766
Editions and portfolios	40,495	-	40,495	114,530	-	114,530
Educational trips	2,142	-	2,142	154,314	-	154,314
Exhibit touring fees	3,000	-	3,000	20,000	-	20,000
Publications	35,808	-	35,808	14,001	-	14,001
Investment return	775,794	-	775,794	(1,158,001)	-	(1,158,001)
Miscellaneous	5,045	-	5,045	-	-	-
Net assets released from restriction	186,000	(186,000)	-	141,000	(141,100)	-
Total revenues and support	<u>2,190,199</u>	<u>846,918</u>	<u>3,037,117</u>	<u>217,240</u>	<u>(91,000)</u>	<u>126,240</u>
Expenses						
Program services	1,581,151	-	1,581,151	1,307,407	-	1,307,407
Management and general	282,329	-	282,329	276,462	-	276,462
Fundraising	212,961	-	212,961	179,472	-	179,472
Total expenses	<u>2,076,441</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,076,441</u>	<u>1,763,341</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,763,341</u>
Change in net assets	<u>113,758</u>	<u>846,918</u>	<u>960,676</u>	<u>(1,546,101)</u>	<u>(91,000)</u>	<u>(1,637,101)</u>
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>7,855,715</u>	<u>788,000</u>	<u>8,643,715</u>	<u>9,401,816</u>	<u>879,000</u>	<u>10,280,816</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 7,969,473</u>	<u>\$ 1,634,918</u>	<u>\$ 9,604,391</u>	<u>\$ 7,855,715</u>	<u>\$ 788,000</u>	<u>\$ 8,643,715</u>



Aria Dean in conversation with Bruce Jenkins, 2023.

Back cover: Zeal (@zealouspole), 2023, Photo: Bob.



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