

A photograph of a modern office interior. The room features a large window with a light blue frame and a white roller blind. A desk in the foreground is equipped with a silver desk lamp and a small potted plant. To the left, a black bookshelf is filled with books and a framed portrait. The ceiling is white with several recessed circular lights. The overall atmosphere is bright and professional.

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THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY  
JANUARY-JULY 2024



Photo: Ghislaine Leung.

JAN 20–APR 14, 2024

# GHISLAINE LEUNG

## HOLDINGS

Ghislaine Leung, who lives in London, takes to task familiar traditions like conceptual art, readymade sculpture, and institutional critique, re-imagining their underlying questions and methods in canny, playful ways. Central to her work are concise “scores.” These written descriptions outline the implementation and materials of a work, which an institution then interprets and executes in conversation with the artist. At the heart of this are Leung’s ongoing explorations of the dynamics of value, labor, and access, as well as the kinds of dependencies and displacements that shape her life and ours.

Leung’s exhibition at the Renaissance Society—her first solo presentation at a US museum—brings forward some of the core personal and conceptual underpinnings of her work more often in the background. Through a series of new scores, some presented in their full edition, *Holdings* negotiates the ways identity is constituted, articulated, accepted or disowned, in terms of both the artwork and the artist herself. Central to this is a sense of identity in motion, distributed and diasporic, plural and absent, propelled by lives that run counter to polarized logics and fixed positions.

As Leung weaves together the conceptual and the personal, she also astutely integrates formal and contextual cues. It can be tempting to favor one of these various aspects over the others when engaging with

Leung’s work, perhaps depending on one’s own interests, but for her all these layers intersect. At the Ren, Leung is a close observer of her architectural, institutional, and even acoustical surroundings, recognizing them as their own sites of contingency and negotiation, the space itself becoming part of the conditional grounds for the questions at hand.

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SAT, JAN 20, 4–7PM  
**Opening reception**

THU, JAN 25, 6PM  
**Exhibition walk-through**  
Led by curator Karsten Lund

SAT, MAR 9, 3PM  
**Talk**  
Ghislaine Leung, *Questions*

SAT, MAR 23, 3PM  
**Talk**  
Faye Gleisser

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## EVENTS

TALK

GHISLAINE LEUNG,  
QUESTIONSSAT, MAR 9, 3PM  
SWIFT HALL

Ghislaine Leung's works often utilize their surrounding structures—exhibition space, temporal duration, regional location, or organizational partners—as limits deployed through sets of conditions for each institution to perform the work. In her *Questions* talks, the artist challenges the structure and demand, of the artist talk, stipulating the requirement that no presentation be given but there instead only be questions asked, to which Leung will respond accordingly.

TALK

## FAYE GLEISSER

SAT, MAR 23, 3PM  
FILM STUDIES CENTER  
SCREENING ROOM,  
COBB 307

Art historian and curator Faye Gleisser is the author of *Risk Work: Making Art and Guerrilla Tactics in Punitive America, 1967-1987*, which describes how artists came to use guerrilla tactics in performance and conceptual art, maneuvering in response to policing, racism, and surveillance. For this talk, Gleisser draws on her research beyond the final scope of her recent book and leans into the orbit of Ghislaine Leung's exhibition. Shifting her frame of reference toward the present, she continues to explore risk-taking and vulnerability in artistic practices.

## OTHER EVENTS

BOOK LAUNCH AND DISCUSSION

## CELEBRATING MIYOKO ITO

SUN, FEB 4, 2PM  
SWIFT HALL

The Renaissance Society hosts a public event celebrating the artist Miyoko Ito, coinciding with the release of a new monograph, *Miyoko Ito: Heart of Hearts*, published by Pre-Echo Press. This is the first book dedicated to Ito, who made a career in Chicago and who had a retrospective exhibition at the Ren in 1980,

just three years before she died. The event will include an introduction by the book's editor, Jordan Stein, clips from a 1978 Ito interview with Video Data Bank, and a series of short presentations by local artists related to Ito's work, culminating in an informal panel discussion.

*Presented in collaboration with Pre-Echo Press.*



Miyoko Ito: *Heart of Hearts*, Pre-Echo Press, 2024.



# JORDAN STRAFER

## DECADENCE

Jordan Strafer is an artist based in Brooklyn, New York, whose primary medium is video. Her work revolves around stories of herself and her family, while also relating to a world that reflects the complex nature of racial identity, gender, sexuality, class, and “Americanism.” Situations that often seem absurd redirect the focus from the plot to our own way of seeing and—through their clearly staged and alienated form—allow a critical stance towards a society defined by questionable moral ideas and injustice.

For her exhibition at the Renaissance Society, the artist is producing the second chapter of a larger film project. *LOOPHOLE*, the first chapter, dealt with a romantic affair between a defense attorney and a juror during a nationally publicized rape trial in the United States in the 1990s. *DECADENCE*, the second chapter, is elliptical as it incorporates events from the night of the alleged rape, and the celebration after the acquittal. It encircles the events of *LOOPHOLE* like an embrace. Strafer depicts the loss of any structure and order and exposes the abuse of power, greed, and corruption that underlay the act of sexual violence. The film references the genre of the erotic thriller, which was popular at the time, and juxtaposes the deeply ambivalent feelings of fear and desire.

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SAT, MAY 4, 4–7PM  
**Opening reception**  
 with artist talk at 4pm

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*This exhibition is made possible by The Vega Foundation. Additional support has been provided by Girlfriend Fund.*





*Launched in 2017, Intermissions is an ongoing programming series devoted to performance and other inventive time-based works, staged in the Renaissance Society's empty gallery in between exhibitions. This recurring platform features two artists every year, supporting a wide variety of live projects.*

Photo: Devin T. Mays.

# INTERMISSIONS

## DEVIN T. MAYS

SAT, APR 20, 6PM  
SUN, APR 21, 6PM

Connecting city landscapes, empty lots, and exhibition spaces in his work, Devin T. Mays conjures sculptures from found pieces of concrete or works with images or sound as different ways of embracing impermanence and in-between states. In Chicago and Houston, the two cities where he lives and works, Mays has also been developing improvisatory performances that are, in his own words, “part poem, part sculpture, part song.” The extended moments when he gathers an audience around him are continuous with the other aspects of his wide-ranging practice, in all its material and immaterial forms. For many of these occasions, he brings in musicians or other artists as collaborators, too.

Mays has called his work an “an exercise in wandering”; at the Ren it finds a fleeting destination as he activates the large resonant gallery space for two nights. Sound, light, and language become central building blocks as Mays brings new elements into the space but also encounters what is already there. On each night, Mays sets things in motion in a different way. A performance can be a sensitive response to a room or a sudden vivifying of its surroundings. A performance can also be a kind of live description: the story of a space, through narrative or more roundabout means, starting from a score perhaps and then written in the present tense.

# CONCERTS



## ELLEN ARKBRO

FRI, FEB 23, 8PM  
ROCKEFELLER MEMORIAL CHAPEL  
5850 S WOODLAWN AVE

*Sculptures* is a work for organ by composer and musician Ellen Arkbro. The piece grows out of Arkbro's fascination for the textural qualities of chordal sound and is an extension of the explorations on her latest release *Sounds while waiting*. By fine-tuning complex, yet clear, harmonies she guides the listener through rare moments when harmony and space blend and become perceptually inseparable. The concert marks her Chicago debut.

*Co-presented by the Renaissance Society and Frequency Festival Chicago.*

Photo: Marcus Pal.



## KMRU

FRI, MAR 22, 8PM  
LOGAN CENTER  
PERFORMANCE PENTHOUSE  
915 E 60TH ST

In his work, Joseph Kamaru (KMRU), a Nairobi-born Berlin-based sound artist, treats sound as a sensorial medium through which social, material, and conceptual interpretations are manifested. KMRU carries with him a repository of listening experiences from Nairobi and beyond expanding his sonic practices, bringing an awareness of surroundings through creative compositions, installations and performances.

Photo: Ruiz Cruz.

# PUBLICATIONS



Coming soon

**MAX GUY: BUT TELL ME, IS IT A CIVILIZED COUNTRY?**  
This catalog—the first dedicated to the work of artist Max Guy, published on the occasion of his solo exhibition at the Renaissance Society—features essays by artist and writer Brit Barton, writer and dramaturg Matthew Goulish, and the exhibition's curator, Michael Harrison, as well as a transcription of a conversation between Guy and artist and writer Irena Haiduk. It will also include a new artist project made specifically for the book in the form of an annotated bibliography created by Guy of writings and images that relate to and inspire his practice.

# EDITIONS



**SHAHRYAR NASHAT**  
*Ashtrays*, 2023  
Edition of 20 + 10 AP  
(10 Pink & 10 Green)  
6.25 in diameter (15.24 cm)  
**\$500**  
10% off for Ren members  
at the \$500 level or above

*All proceeds from editions sales directly support Ren programs through the generosity of participating artists. For more new and recent editions and publications visit [store.renaissancesociety.org](http://store.renaissancesociety.org).*

# SAVE THE DATE

WED, APR 10, 2024, 7-10PM

# RENBEN 2024

CREATIVE DIRECTION

## KEVIN BEASLEY

## CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY

In alignment with EXPO ART WEEK

[renaissancesociety.org/events](https://renaissancesociety.org/events)

# SUPPORTERS

Major annual support for the Renaissance Society is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

Additional annual support is provided by The Provost's Discretionary Fund at the University of Chicago.

Ren programs are partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

All Renaissance Society publications are made possible by The Mansueto Foundation Publications Program.

# MEMBERSHIP

Renaissance Society members form an essential community of support for the new art and scholarship we produce with artists. They value our independence and commitment to fostering ambitious artistic expression and share with us a belief in art's capacity to reflect, challenge, and inspire contemporary thought. Their contributions ensure that our exhibitions and events are all free and open to the public.

Join us from just \$5 a month to get a members-only, artist-designed gift, 20% off publications, plus other great benefits.

[renaissancesociety.org/membership](https://renaissancesociety.org/membership)

# VISITING INFORMATION

All exhibitions and events take place at the Renaissance Society unless otherwise noted.

All are free, open to the public.

Follow us on Instagram: @RenSoc

## Opening hours

Wed-Fri: 12–6pm  
Sat and Sun: 10am–6pm

The Renaissance Society  
5811 S Ellis Ave  
Cobb Hall, 4th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60657

773 702 8670  
info@renaissancesociety.org

Closed Mondays, Tuesdays,  
and between exhibitions.

Appointments to visit may be  
scheduled outside of regular gallery  
hours. Please contact us via email  
to arrange an appointment.

## Group visits

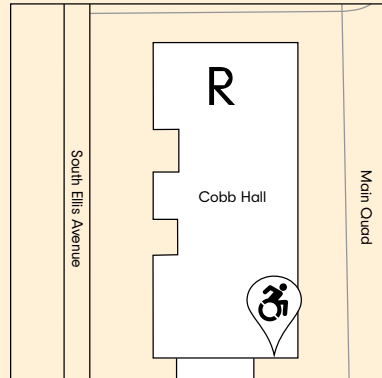
We are pleased to welcome visits  
from schools, universities, and other  
groups, and our library and archives are  
open to researchers by appointment.  
Please contact us to arrange a visit.

## Accessibility

The Renaissance Society gallery is located on the fourth floor of Cobb Hall, reachable by elevator. The building is accessible from sidewalk level via platform lift (marked on the map below). One gender-neutral, wheelchair accessible restroom is available on every floor. Service animals are welcome, and large-print gallery texts and portable seating are available upon request at the front desk.

Physical accessibility details for off-site event spaces may vary. Please check individual event pages on our website for specifics. Further accessibility information is available online at [renaissancesociety.org/visit](http://renaissancesociety.org/visit).

For access inquiries, requests,  
or feedback, please contact  
Michael Harrison by email at  
[maharrison@uchicago.edu](mailto:maharrison@uchicago.edu).



# CALENDAR

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THU, JAN 25, 6PM	Exhibition walk-through: <i>Holdings</i>	PG 3
SUN, FEB 4, 2PM	Book launch & discussion: <i>Miyoko Ito</i>	PG 4
FRI, FEB 23, 8PM	Concert: <i>Ellen Arkbro</i>	PG 10
SAT, MAR 9, 3PM	Talk: <i>Ghislaine Leung, Questions</i>	PG 4
FRI, MAR 22, 8PM	Concert: <i>KMRU</i>	PG 10
SAT, MAR 23, 3PM	Talk: <i>Faye Gleisser</i>	PG 4
WED, APR 10, 7–10PM	RENBEN 2024	PG 12
SAT, APR 20, 6PM	Intermissions: <i>Devin T. Mays</i>	PG 8
SUN, APR 21, 6PM	Intermissions: <i>Devin T. Mays</i>	PG 8
SAT, MAY 4, 4PM	Opening reception and artist talk: <i>Jordan Strafer, DECADENCE</i>	PG 7



JAN 20–APR 14, 2024

GHISLAINE  
LEUNG  
HOLDINGS

MAY 4–JUL 7, 2024

JORDAN  
STRAFER  
DECADENCE

THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY

at the University of Chicago  
5811 South Ellis Avenue  
Cobb Hall, 4th Floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60637

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[renaissancesociety.org](http://renaissancesociety.org)

Contemporary art  
exhibitions, events,  
and publishing