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THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY
SEPTEMBER 2024 - FEBRUARY 2025





Neil Beloufa, imagery generated from [Humanities](#), 2024.

SEP 14–NOV 10, 2024
NEIL BELOUFA
HUMANITIES

SAT, SEP 14, 4–7PM
Opening reception
 With artist talk at 4pm

WED, SEP 25, 6PM
Exhibition walk-through
 With the curator Myriam Ben Salah

Neil Beloufa is an artist whose polymorphous practice spans film, sculpture, installations, as well as social and collective experiments. In a constant flirtation with failure, his work insistently interrogates the art field: its institutions and formats, its capacities and limitations. His critical stances, experimental openness, and ongoing search for alternative solutions have led him to explore the digital world and the novel forms of community that coalesce there.

For his exhibition at the Renaissance Society, Beloufa considers the power of individual storytelling in building large-scale propaganda. While riffing on the gamification of society and the trend of immersive art experiences, he developed a custom, interactive multimedia system that guides each visitor through the process of becoming the center of their own success story, creating a company, a cult, or a political party and thus highlighting the incongruous likeness between those.

EVENTS

DISCUSSION

NEİL BELOUFA,
PATRICK JAGODA,
AND GARY KAFER

WED, OCT 16, 1PM
ZOOM

For this online program, two scholars from the University of Chicago offer their reflections on Neil Beloufa's interactive exhibition at the Ren before joining the artist in conversation. Patrick Jagoda is a specialist in media theory and game studies in the Department of English, whose research has explored network aesthetics and the rise of gamification in American culture, among other subjects. Gary Kafer, from the Department of Cinema and Media Studies, examines the politics of twenty-first century digital culture, with a focus on surveillance systems and how data-based processes reproduce existing power relations.

OTHER EVENTS

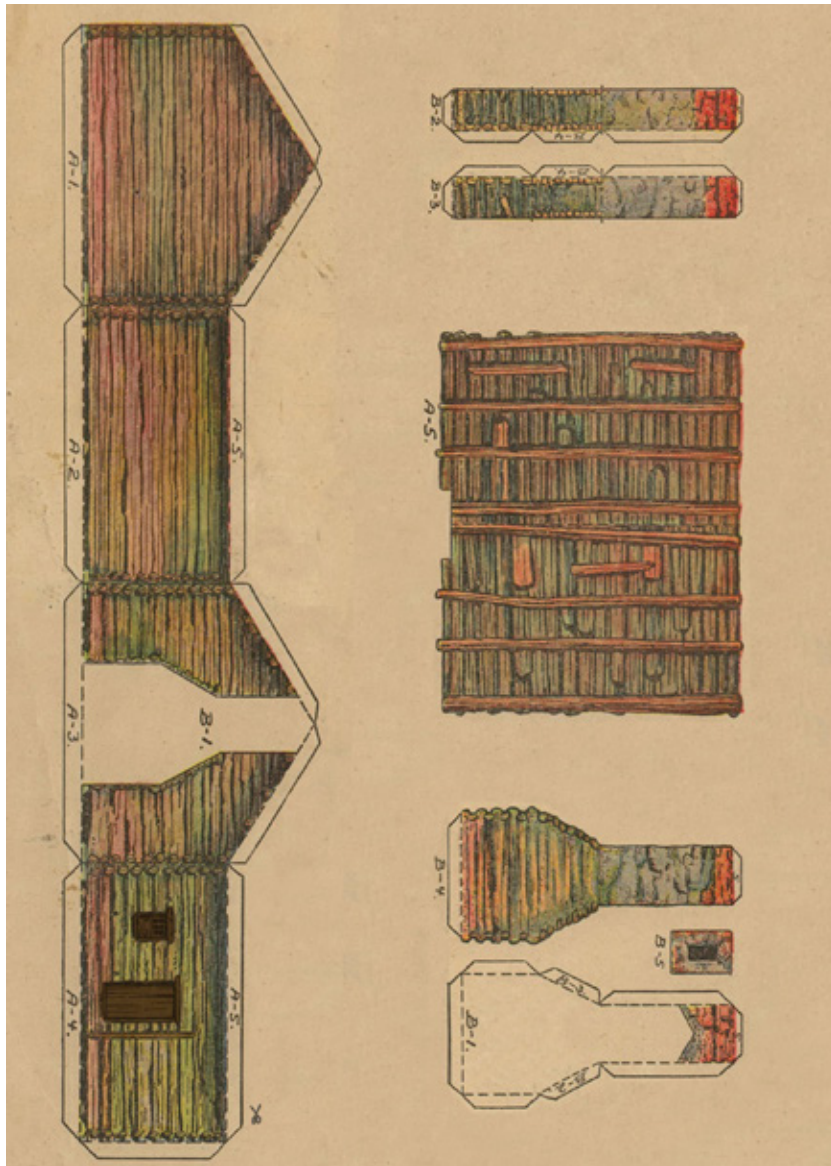
BOOK LAUNCH

MAX GUY

WED, OCT 30, 7PM
21C MUSEUM HOTEL CHICAGO
55 E ONTARIO ST

We are pleased to announce the publication of *Max Guy: But tell me, is it a civilized country?* The book was developed on the occasion of Guy's 2022 exhibition at the Renaissance Society, an installation of new works centered on *The Wizard of Oz*. This launch and program celebrate the artist's first museum exhibition and monograph. For more on the publication, see page 14.





Courtesy of Isabelle Frances McGuire.

ISABELLE FRANCES MCGUIRE

YEAR ZERO

Across a growing body of work, Isabelle Frances McGuire turns to familiar figures in American culture with a special interest in the ones that are elevated as models of behavior worth emulating, sometimes against all odds. Whether looking to Elvis, Jesus, Napoleon, or Baby Yoda, McGuire embraces some of the archetypes that loom large in the cultural imagination, or the stories that follow them, and gives them a new uncanny life.

McGuire's exhibition at the Renaissance Society springs out of the lasting lionization of Abraham Lincoln and it expands from there to think more widely about forms of reenactment, ranging from dedicated Civil War reenactors to other expressions of this impulse today. In various ways here, McGuire tests out different approaches to recreating the past, reanimating old models, or revisiting persistent symbols.

On a material level, McGuire's work takes shape as technology meets and mediates history's lingering specters. With the learn-it-and-do-it spirit of an engineer, the Chicago-based artist creates sculptures and installations using new and old technologies. This ranges from decommissioned animatronic robots to 3D printing and computer-controlled milling based on digital models. At times, McGuire also uses DIY methods like "modding" and "kitbashing," in which 3D models are altered or combined to make new forms, borrowing techniques from gaming culture as readily as from the history of art.

SAT, DEC 7, 4-7PM

Opening reception

With artist talk at 4pm

THU, JAN 9, 6PM

Exhibition walk-through

With the artist and curator Karsten Lund

EVENTS



Film still detail from [A Star Is Born](#), 1954, directed by George Cukor.

SUICIDE MOI

SAT, JAN 18, 7PM

RENAISSANCE SOCIETY

Suicide Moi is a collaborative art and music project featuring Isabelle Frances McGuire, Liz Vitlin, and Julian Flavin. Its name is borrowed from an album of poetry by Jean Baudrillard, recorded live at Whiskey Pete's Casino in 1996, on which the French philosopher is backed by an all-star band. This band isn't that band, but it appreciates the slippage between reality and simulacrum no less. For one day only, Suicide Moi occupies McGuire's exhibition, becoming a new animating force, live in the present tense. The group's debut album, *Anastasia*, is set to be released this year.

BETSY ROSS
TALKS TO
THE RENAISSANCE
SOCIETY

SAT, FEB 8, 3PM

SWIFT HALL, THIRD FLOOR

1025 E 58TH ST

Betsy Ross is known for sewing the first American flag and aiding in the design of its original thirteen stars and thirteen stripes, following a visit from George Washington to her upholstery shop in Philadelphia. While this meeting took place in 1776, and didn't leave a paper trail, the story only reached a larger public almost a century later as the country's centennial drew near. Held up as a patriotic role model and a national icon, her legend has only grown over time. For this afternoon event, Betsy Ross joins us in person.

INTERMISSIONS

JACQUELINE KIYOMI GORK

SAT, NOV 16, 6–11PM
SUN, NOV 17, 4–6PM

Jacqueline Kiyomi Gork, who lives in Los Angeles, is an artist working with sound, sculpture, and architecture. Recognizing the physical, temporal, and experiential aspects of sound, her work often blurs the line between installation and performance as it offers activations of sonic space for audiences to explore or settle into.

While embracing the fact that there isn't a single uniform listening experience for different people, Gork's work draws out how the presence of our bodies in a space also affects the behavior of sound.

At the Renaissance Society, Gork develops a new project for the *Intermissions* series in collaboration with Laetitia Sonami, a legendary performer, sound artist, and electronic musician who has lived in San Francisco since the late 1970s. Directly engaging with this

unique setting, Gork introduces new physical elements into the empty gallery space, positions multiple sound sources, and experiments with the room's unusual acoustics using spatialization software and other methods. For two days, Sonami and Gork mobilize and shape the sound within this environment in a durational performance that extends across various listening zones.

Special thanks to Meyer Sound, Berkeley, CA.

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.

Installation view of [Jacqueline Kiyomi Gork: Poems of Electronic Air](#) at the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, 2024. Courtesy of Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts. Photo: Julia Featheringill.



CONCERTS



CELIA HOLLANDER

FRI, OCT 4, 8PM
BOND CHAPEL
1025 E 58TH ST

Celia Hollander is a Los Angeles-based artist and composer working with audio, scores, performance, installation, and text. Her music is a combination of electronic, digital, and acoustic palettes and she often collaborates with other artists in cross-medium interdisciplinary projects. In some works, fragments are sped up or slowed down, looped, reversed, pitch-shifted, and otherwise modulated. In others, her compositions and improvisations flow through rolling textures and swirling motifs, dwelling on central concepts like the complex

movements of the wind and rain. In Bond Chapel, Hollander presents new material from an upcoming release. On the afternoon of Saturday, October 5, Hollander will also give a public artist talk, discussing elements of her recorded music, installation work, and writings. Visit www.renaissancesociety.org for more details.

Celia Hollander, photo courtesy of the artist.

The 2024-2025 Music Series is generously sponsored by a grant from the University of Chicago Women's Board.



ELI WINTER ENSEMBLE PRESENTS GHOST NOTES

SUN, NOV 3, 8PM
BOND CHAPEL
1025 E 58TH ST

Eli Winter is a writer, composer, and self-taught guitarist based in Chicago. Reaching across technical styles and musical idioms, Winter has developed a practice rooted in listening and collaboration, drawing inspiration from luminaries like fellow Houstonian Pauline Oliveros, his compatriots across Chicago's jazz scene and beyond, and a host of guitar heroes. In his evolving work *Ghost Notes*, Winter explores new compositional methods, collaging and sculpting a bank of samples reaching

back across years of recordings created with friends and fellow travelers, from studios to living rooms. This ensemble performance in Bond Chapel assembles a group of musicians who appeared on the original recordings, playing through the new works live as compositions for the first time and taking them as launchpads for further improvisation.

Co-presented with Experimental Sound Studio.

Eli Winter, photo: Auden Lincoln-Vogel.

PUBLICATIONS



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

This book accompanies Max Guy's exhibition *But tell me, is it a civilized country?*, an installation of new works centered on *The Wizard of Oz*. The title is drawn from a conversation between the Witch of the North and Dorothy in which the Witch defines "civilized" as not including magic. Anchored in Chicago—where L. Frank Baum's novel was written and first published, and home to enduring monuments to Oz fandom—the exhibition and book bridge the parallel universes of the Emerald City and its birthplace, drawing out the traces each carries of the other. This catalog features essays by artists and writers Brit Barton and Matthew Goulish, and the exhibition's curator, Michael Harrison, as well as the transcription of a conversation between Guy and artist Irena Haiduk. The publication also includes 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.

ARIA DEAN: ABATTOIR, U.S.A.!
Aria Dean's moving-image work *Abattoir, U.S.A.!* surveys the interior of an empty slaughterhouse. This slaughterhouse was built and animated using Unreal Engine, a 3D computer graphics tool for creating virtual environments. The viewer follows a linear path through an impossible architecture. This book documents the exhibition as well as selected material from Dean's process and research. It includes a new essay by the artist reflecting on the project, an essay by film scholar Erika Balsom, a short introduction to the film by writer and poet Kyle Thomas Hinton, and a quasi-fictional text by architect and writer Keller Easterling. The book also includes transcripts of two conversations: one between Dean and film historian Bruce Jenkins in which they discuss Dean's work in relation to historical avant-garde films; and another with Dean and co-director of Rhizome Michael Connor, the film's animator Filip Kostik, and its soundtrack composer Evan Zierk. Together they discuss the technical process of using Unreal Engine and the nature of virtuality.

Coming soon

HAMZA WALKER
A collection of essays written for the Renaissance Society from 1994-2014.

GHISLAINE LEUNG
Contributors include Mike Sperlinger, Eleanor Ivory Weber, and curator Karsten Lund.

These and other Renaissance Society titles will be available to purchase at:
store.renaissancesociety.org

EDITIONS



JORDAN STRAFER
Holly, 2023
Highlighter and ballpoint pen
on onion skin paper, fused glass

Each 11.75 x 14.25 in (29 cm x 36 cm)
Unique works



Holly (Nothing Curls), 2023
Ballpoint pen on onion skin paper,
fused glass

\$6,000 each
10% off for Renaissance Society Members
at the \$500 level or above

SHAHRYAR NASHAT
This new custom tote—designed for the Ren by artist Shahryar Nashat—features an intrepid wolf, a recurring interloper in the artist's work.

\$60
Free with Renaissance Society
Memberships at the Friend level
and above. (See p. 17)

All proceeds from Editions sales directly support Renaissance Society programs through the generosity of participating artists. Members receive 10% off of most editions.

A BOWLING FUNDRAISER FOR THE REN



THURS, NOV 21, 7-10PM
SEVEN TEN SOCIAL

Please join the Ren team for our second annual evening of strikes, spares, suds, and sliders. This bowling tournament—and social—raises critical support for 2024-25 exhibitions and programs.

All ticket buyers will receive a Ren baseball cap and the opportunity to bowl on a team. Lane Sponsors can bring their own teams. Don't bowl? Join us to watch the competition and cheer on your favorite bowlers!

Single Ticket
Includes optional game for one, Ren baseball cap, food, beer + wine
\$500

Lane Sponsor
Includes game for 8, Ren baseball caps for every bowler, food, beer + wine
\$3,500

Tickets available at renaissancesociety.org/events or by calling 773-702-8670

SUPPORTERS

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

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

The 2024-2025 Music Series is generously sponsored by a grant from the University of Chicago Women's Board.

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, plus other great benefits.

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

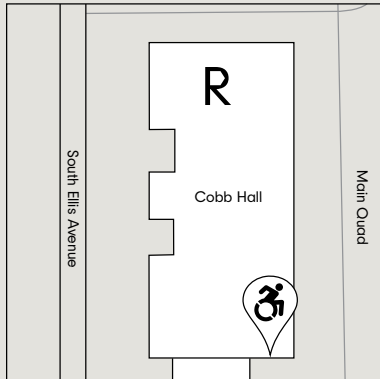
Opening hours

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.



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.

CART: most artist talks and lectures feature onsite live captioning.

For access inquiries, requests, or feedback, please contact Michael Harrison by email at maharrison@uchicago.edu.

CALENDAR

SAT, SEP 14, 4PM	Opening reception and artist talk: <i>Neil Beloufa, Humanities</i>	PG 3
WED, SEP 25, 6PM	Exhibition walk-through: <i>Neil Beloufa, Humanities</i>	PG 3
FRI, OCT 4, 8PM	Concert: <i>Celia Hollander</i>	PG 12
WED, OCT 16, 1PM	Discussion (Zoom): Neil Beloufa, Patrick Jagoda, Gary Kafer	PG 4
WED, OCT 30, 7PM	Book Launch: <i>Max Guy: But tell me, is it a civilized country?</i>	PG 4
SUN, NOV 3, 8PM	Concert: <i>Eli Winter Ensemble</i>	PG 13
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THU, NOV 21, 7-10PM	A Bowling Fundraiser for the Ren	PG 16
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SEP 14–NOV 10, 2024

NEİL BELOUFA HUMANITIES

DEC 7, 2024–FEB 9, 2025

ISABELLE FRANCES MCGUIRE YEAR ZERO

THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY

at the University of Chicago
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