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THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY
SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2026



Karimah Ashadu, *MUSCLE*, 2025 (still). HD digital film, colour with stereo sound. 22:20 mins. © Karimah Ashadu. Courtesy the artist, Camden Art Centre, Fondazione In Between Art Film, Sadie Coles HQ, and the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago.

KARIMAH ASHADU TENDERED

In fall 2026, the Renaissance Society and Fondazione In Between Art Film present *Tendered*, a solo exhibition by Karimah Ashadu, whose moving-image practice examines the conditions under which bodies are rendered legible within contemporary systems of labor and value, especially within the cultural context of West Africa. Working across film and installation, Ashadu develops close, sustained encounters with people whose lives unfold within informal economies, attending to how aspirations are negotiated under material constraint.

The exhibition marks the U.S. debut of *MUSCLE*, a new moving-image installation centered on bodybuilders training in the heart of Lagos's slums. The work situates bodybuilding within a broader field of exertion: the body as site of labor, investment, and self-fashioning. *MUSCLE* was co-commissioned and co-produced by the Renaissance Society, Fondazione In Between Art Film, and Camden Art Centre, and is accompanied by a series of new sculptural works that draw directly from the film's environments.

Having grown up between Nigeria and the United Kingdom, the artist situates her point of view within a constant negotiation of distance. In *MUSCLE*, she works with a sympathetic—and sometimes visceral—proximity to the subjects of the film, eschewing the documentary point of view. As she gathers the stories of men in this film, she extends an ongoing inquiry present

in earlier works, including *Machine Boys* (2024), *Plateau* (2022), and *Red Gold* (2016).

The exhibition is organized within the framework of *Unison*, a biennial initiative established by the Fondazione In Between Art Film to commission and produce moving image-based exhibitions in collaboration with international institutions. *Tendered* is curated by Alessandro Rabottini and Leonardo Bigazzi of Fondazione In Between Art Film with Myriam Ben Salah and Karsten Lund for its iteration at the Renaissance Society.

Opening reception

With artist talk at 4pm
Swift Hall, 3rd Floor
Sat, Sep 12, 4–7pm

Karimah Ashadu: *Tendered* is presented in conjunction with the installation of the artist's work *Machine Boys* at the Art Institute of Chicago, opening September 11, 2026.

Renaissance Society programs are supported by Teiger Foundation and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Additional support for this exhibition is provided by Sadie Coles HQ, London.

EVENTS

SCREENING

CONVERSATIONS AT THE EDGE: AN EVENING WITH KARIMAH ASHADU

THU, SEP 10, 6PM
SISKEL FILM CENTER
164 N STATE ST

Presented at the Siskel Film Center in collaboration with SAIC's Conversations at the Edge series, this screening brings together three other films by Karimah Ashadu—*Plateau*, *Brown Goods*, and *King of Boys (Abattoir of Makoko)*—and will be followed by a conversation between the artist and Giampaolo Bianconi, Dittmer Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Art Institute of Chicago. Over the past fifteen years, Ashadu has forged a bold, formally inventive cinema that plunges viewers into the tactile realities of labor. Shooting on location in Lagos, Hamburg, and Nigeria's Jos Plateau, Ashadu maps informal economies shaped by migration, global commerce, and colonial extraction.

This program is supported by the Goethe-Institut Chicago.

Visit renaissancesociety.org for updates.

SCREENING

THE AFRICAN FILM INSTITUTE PRESENTS "SOMETIMES IT WAS BEAUTIFUL"

THU, OCT 15, 6PM
LOGAN CENTER FOR THE ARTS,
SCREENING ROOM 201
915 E 60TH ST

In conjunction with Karimah Ashadu's exhibition, artist and filmmaker Christian Nyampeta and anthropologist Natacha Nsabimana will show two short films: *Sometimes It Was Beautiful* by Nyampeta, and *Fragments for Venus* by Alice Diop. They will be in conversation after the viewing.

Nyampeta, based in New York, launched The African Film Institute, housed at e-flux, in 2019. Their conversation is part of an ongoing collaboration on African cinema. The title for this event, *Sometimes It Was Beautiful*, taken from Nyampeta's short, also gestures to the complex history of visual story telling with regards to black bodies which will be the focus of their conversation.



Above: Karimah Ashadu, *King of Boys (Abattoir of Makoko)*, 2015 (still). HD digital film, colour with stereo sound. 5 mins. © Karimah Ashadu. Courtesy the artist and Sadie Coles HQ, London.

Below: Karimah Ashadu, *Plateau*, 2021–22 (still). HD digital film, colour with stereo sound - single channel. 30 mins. © Karimah Ashadu. Courtesy the artist, Fondazione In Between Art Film, and Sadie Coles HQ, London.



TONY LEWIS

THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT

For a new exhibition at the Renaissance Society, Tony Lewis focuses on his ongoing use of stenographic shorthand symbols—which transcribe speech into quick fluid strokes—as a starting point for drawing. Its full title sets the scene: *The Long and Short of It: An Introduction to Gregg Shorthand as the Amalgamator of Language Systems, Drawing, Abstraction, and Improvisational Gesture in the Work of Tony Lewis*. Presenting new and recent works, from multiple series, the exhibition is shaped with the institution's unique gallery space in mind. Leaping off from the original uses of shorthand in other settings, Lewis's drawings take us to unexpected places as meaning-making and gesture converge.

Over the past fifteen years, Lewis has developed an inventive practice that has drawing at its core. Often working at a large scale, he uses powdered graphite, pencil, and paper in varied ways to feel out what the medium can do or to explore new forms drawing might take. Across his practice over time, he has turned to a wide range of visual and written sources, including the stenographic systems at the heart of this show.

Lewis's ongoing exploration of drawing is equally an investigation of language and how it is used. From the start, Lewis has been probing at the formal qualities of language, how writing can turn into a kind of abstraction, and how linguistic systems get tied up with the social dynamics of power, race, or

humor for that matter. Lewis's drawings are beguiling to look at given their material richness, poetic undercurrents, and evident human touch. They offer a lot to think about, too.

Lewis has lived and worked in Chicago since 2009, and he completed an MFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2012. This is his first solo exhibition at a museum in Chicago. A book will be published by the Ren following the exhibition, offering a more comprehensive look at the artist's "shorthand" drawings over time.

Opening reception

With artist talk at 4pm
Swift Hall, 3rd Floor
Sat, Dec 12, 4-7pm

Lead support for this exhibition is provided by Murat Ahmed & Katherine Mackenzie, and Gary Metzner & Scott Johnson. Major support is provided by School Museum Fund, The Hees Family.

Friends of Tony Lewis Patron Circle: Gwendolyn Hatten Butler, Susan A. Gescheidle, and Abby Pucker & Michal Dzitko.

Renaissance Society programs are supported by Teiger Foundation and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

Opposite: Tony Lewis, *Lotus* (detail), 2022. Photo: Josh Schaedel. Overleaf: Tony Lewis, *Plunder* (detail), 2017.





Image: *Mirlitons*. © Martin Argyroglo.

INTERMISSIONS

FRANÇOIS CHAIGNAUD & AYMERIC HAINAUX

A tour de force of rhythm, sound, and movement, *Mirlitons* is a visceral performance by choreographer François Chaignaud and musician Aymeric Hainaux. As two voices and two bodies meet in this space, converging on a central stage, their collaboration melds beatboxing, song, and dance. Performed to date across Europe in wide-ranging venues, from Brussels to Paris to Vienna, *Mirlitons* now arrives in Chicago. At the Renaissance Society, where it appears as part of the *Intermissions* series, Chaignaud and Hainaux's performance surges to life with a vivid intensity in this reverberant room under the high vaulted ceiling.

In Chaignaud's words: "The scene is an arena. Two masked bodies, martial, unrecognizable, humble, and rattling. Microphones, loudspeakers, risers, bells, shoes. A ritual of presentations, a confrontation, a knot, a denouement. A total saturation of frequencies and muscles: a therapy through excess. Bodies and sounds torn between the melancholy of vanished rituals and the aggressiveness of actuality. Lips and heels in search of a forgotten code. A gracious and enduring duel of beatbox and percussions: a wall, a halo, an ancient world lost in the face of toxic perspiration, buried in the two fighters."

SAT, NOV 14, 7PM
SUN, NOV 15, 7PM

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 between exhibitions. This recurring platform features two artists every year, supporting a wide variety of live projects.

Mirlitons is supported by FUSED, a program of Villa Albertine and Albertine Foundation.

**LEA BERTUCCI
AND NORBERT
RODENKIRCHEN**

TUE, OCT 27, 8PM
SWIFT HALL, THIRD FLOOR
1025 E 58TH ST

Experimental musician Lea Bertucci presents her new composition, *The Days Pass Quickly Immersed in the Shadow of Eternity*. The work was written for master flutist Norbert Rodenkirchen, who performs live fragments of ancient songs and improvisations connected to the origins of his remarkable collection of historic flutes. These are sampled and deployed across an eight-speaker array to create a spatialized field of resonant drones, melodic fragments, and psychoacoustic textures. Crystalline in texture yet richly dissonant, the composition draws from folkloric and early music traditions to create a haunting meditation on time, duration, and memory that evokes the primeval and the futuristic simultaneously.

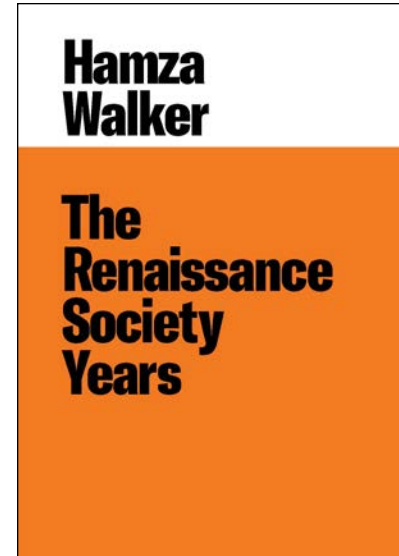
*Presented in partnership with
Experimental Sound Studio.*

BOOK LAUNCH
**HAMZA WALKER:
THE RENAISSANCE
SOCIETY YEARS**

MON, SEP 14, 7PM
CONSTELLATION
3111 N WESTERN AVE

*with Jason Roebke,
Ken Vandermark,
and Hamza Walker*

Whether organizing groundbreaking gallery exhibitions or growing the institution's concert series for experimental music, Hamza Walker helped shape every aspect of the Renaissance Society's public program over his two decades at the museum. This event celebrating the release of *Hamza Walker: The Renaissance Society Years* embraces the longtime former Ren curator's polymath spirit, setting his collected essays to music in a rotating free-improv trio format. Saxophonist Ken Vandermark and bassist Jason Roebke provide the instrumentals, while a cast of readers, including the author himself, Matthew Goulish, Sharon Udoh, and Anna Martine Whitehead give voice to Walker's writings.



HAMZA WALKER:

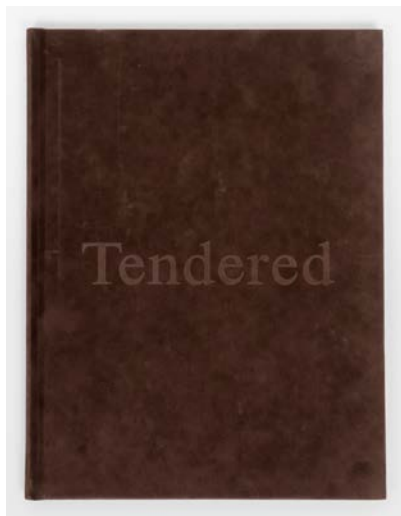
THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY YEARS

Hamza Walker was Director of Education at the Renaissance Society for 20 years, between 1994 and 2015. During that time, he wrote essays about every single exhibition, both those he organized, and many others curated by Susanne Ghez. These texts were published first in the Renaissance Society's newsletters and then eventually on the exhibition posters, which were distributed far more widely.

In the course of this workman-like writing in the service of the institution, Walker developed not only his distinctive personal writing style and a keen eye, but also a theory of what museum education could be and do.

This book collects those essays together into a volume that celebrates Walker's brilliant, joyful, and generous writing. It also serves as a lively record of 20 years of the Renaissance Society's exhibition programming, and reflects the prevalent theories, issues, and fashions of the art world during that time, not to mention events occurring in the wider world.

Softcover, 9 x 6.5 inches, 424 Pages
Designed by David Khan-Giordano



KARIMAH ASHADU

Tendered is the first comprehensive monograph dedicated to the filmic works of Karimah Ashadu (British/Nigerian, b. 1985). Published on the occasion of Ashadu's first institutional exhibitions in London at Camden Art Centre and Chicago at the Renaissance Society, this detailed overview of her practice features newly commissioned essays, an extended conversation with the artist, and a collection of synopses documenting her video installations. It is a rich resource for readers who hope to gain an understanding of the breadth of Ashadu's work to date, which engages with contemporary manifestations of Nigerian history borne by its people and landscapes.

Hardcover, 9.8 x 12.8 inches, 168 pages
 Edited by Alessandro Rabottini and Leonardo Bigazzi with Bianca Stoppani
 Designed by Lorenzo Mason Studio, Michele Bellinaso, Lorenzo Mason, Simone Spinazzè

Texts by Alessandro Rabottini, Bettina Steinbrügge, Arese Uwuoruya, Dr. Clive Chijioke Nwonka, and a conversation between the artist and Myriam Ben Salah, Gina Buenfeld-Murley, and Martin Clark, moderated by Leonardo Bigazzi.

Co-published by the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, Mousse Publishing, and Camden Art Centre.

© Karimah Ashadu. Courtesy the artist, Camden Art Centre, Fondazione In Between Art Film, Sadie Coles HQ, and the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago.
 Photo: Katie Morrison.



DIEGO MARCON

This publication brings together a wide range of elements that define Diego Marcon's practice. It links four films, including *Krapfen*, which was co-commissioned by Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Lafayette Anticipations, New Museum, the Renaissance Society, and The Vega Foundation, and premiered at the Renaissance Society. The book also includes a series of visual documents from their production: props, costumes, set fragments, objects used in filming, as well as preparatory drawings, working images, models, and technical plans. These elements, usually relegated to behind the scenes, appear here as works in their own right, revealing the almost obsessive precision with which Marcon constructs his worlds. The book thus offers a broader interpretation of his work, where cinema, sculpture, installation, and scenography are inseparable.

Hardcover, 12 x 8.8 inches, 424 pages
 Designed by Julie Peeters

Coming soon

Dala Nasser: Material as Witness
Ximena Garrido-Lecca: Germinations
Leah Ke Yi Zheng: Change, I Ching
 (64 Paintings)

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

A BOWLING FUNDRAISER FOR THE REN



THU, NOV 19, 7-10PM
SEVEN TEN SOCIAL

Please join the Ren team for our fourth annual evening of strikes, spares, suds, and sliders. This bowling tournament—and social—raises critical support for 2026-27 exhibitions and programs.

All bowling ticket buyers have the opportunity to bowl on a team. Lane Sponsors can bring their own teams. Don't bowl? Get a Cheering Section ticket and join us to watch the competition and root for your favorite bowlers!

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

Lane Sponsor
Includes game for 8, food and drinks
\$5,000

Single Bowling Ticket
Includes game for one, food and drinks
\$500

Cheering Section
Includes food and drinks
\$350

Artist Sponsor
Includes single bowling ticket benefits
\$350

Image: Lawrence Weiner, *Visual AIDS Strike*, 2007. © 2026
Lawrence Weiner Estate / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

JOIN US

Every contribution—large or small—sustains our mission and brings you closer to the Ren's work.

Whether you become a member or make a deeper commitment through our Ren Giving Community, your support helps keep the Ren free and open to all. You enable bold ideas, rigorous dialogue, and artist-driven experimentation at the highest level.

Join us from just \$8.33 a month to get a members-only, artist-designed gift, plus other great benefits.

Ren Student Committee

The Ren's Student Committee is an active group of students, both undergraduate and graduate, from any college or university in Chicago, that convenes monthly throughout the academic year for a range of programs that include studio visits with local artists, professional development workshops with Ren staff and more. More info at our kick-off.

renaissancesociety.org/membership

SUPPORTERS

Major annual support for the Renaissance Society is provided by the Mellon Foundation.

Renaissance Society programs are supported by Teiger Foundation and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

General operations are supported by grants from the Illinois Arts Council and The Provost's Discretionary Fund at the University of Chicago.

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

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

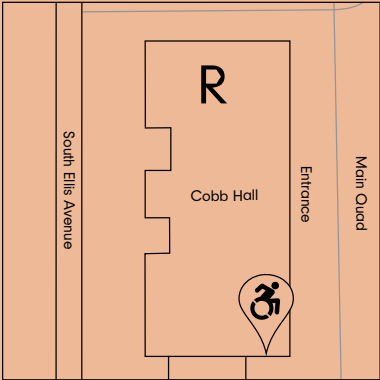
Opening hours

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

The Renaissance Society
5811 S Ellis Avenue
Cobb Hall, 4th Floor
Chicago, IL 60637

773 702 8670
info@renaissancesociety.org
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

THU, SEP 10, 6PM	Screening: <i>Conversations at the Edge</i>	PG 4
SAT, SEP 12, 4PM	Opening reception and artist talk: <i>Karimah Ashadu</i>	PG 3
MON, SEP 14, 7PM	Book Launch: <i>Hamza Walker: The Renaissance Society Years</i>	PG 12
THU, OCT 8, 6-8PM	Info Night + Kick-off: <i>Ren Student Committee</i>	PG 17
THU, OCT 15, 6PM	Screening: <i>The African Film Institute presents "Sometimes It Was Beautiful"</i>	PG 4
TUE, OCT 27, 8PM	Concert: <i>Lea Bertucci & Norbert Rodenkirchen</i>	PG 12
NOV 14-15, 7PM	Intermissions: <i>François Chaignaud & Aymeric Hinaux</i>	PG 11
SAT, DEC 12, 4PM	Opening reception and artist talk: <i>Tony Lewis</i>	PG 7
EARLY 2027	Other events to be announced.	

SEP 12–NOV 1, 2026

KARIMAH ASHADU TENDERED

DEC 12, 2026–FEB 7, 2027

TONY LEWIS THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT

THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY

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

773 702 8670
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renaissancesociety.org

Contemporary art
exhibitions, events,
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