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**May 15, 2025**

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Prime Time: F00TW3RK, June 30, 2018. Photo: Kiam Marcelo Junio

Multimedia Material:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/61y4a650nnf6evup56nne/AAodZxvV1Klip5wOP-hgvYc?rlkey=5uketp5ucscvmzbo1c214lj15&st=l38ag6va&dl=0>

## **MCA Chicago announces 2025 Tuesdays on the Terrace lineup, summer exhibitions, and programs**

CHICAGO—Today the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) Chicago announces its upcoming summer exhibitions and programming schedule. Events include the return of [Tuesdays on the Terrace](#), exhibitions [Paul Pfeiffer: Prologue to the Story of the Birth of Freedom](#) and [City in a Garden: Queer Art and Activism in Chicago](#), and the return of MCA's [Prime Time](#).

### **Tuesdays on the Terrace**

#### **Tuesdays on the Terrace**

Every Tuesday, Jun 24 through Aug 26, 5:30–8 pm

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

Enjoy an evening of free music on the MCA's Anne and John Kern Terrace Garden during our annual summer concert series, now in its 26th year, celebrating artists from Chicago's

internationally renowned music community.

Tuesdays on the Terrace continues to offer an expansive and contemporary look at jazz in Chicago while embracing the city's diverse musical traditions. This year's series highlights a range of Chicago artists working in genres like pop, soul, R&B, and more, alongside a strong foundation of jazz performances. Gates open at 4:30 pm, with performances running from 5:30 to 8:00 pm, including a set break.

Visitors can enjoy light fare and refreshments from the bar or bring their own food while relaxing on the terrace and sculpture garden lawn. Please note that outside alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

The 2025 presentation of *Tuesdays on the Terrace* is organized by Laura Paige Kyber, Assistant Curator.

Line up:

- June 24: Isaiah Collier & The Chosen Few
- July 1: Twin Talk
- July 8: Kouri Hall
- July 15: Shaunee Dez
- July 22: Rotary Connection 222
- July 29: NADIMA
- August 5: Family Junket
- August 12: Tromblau & Friends
- August 19: Bethany Pickens' Soulful Coalition
- August 26: Corey Wilkes

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Exhibitions

##### [Paul Pfeiffer: Prologue to the Story of the Birth of Freedom](#)

May 3–Aug 31, 2025

*Paul Pfeiffer: Prologue to the Story of the Birth of Freedom* presents 25 years of work from artist Paul Pfeiffer (b. 1966, Honolulu, HI; lives in New York, NY), whose practice interrogates ideas of spectacle and mass culture. By repurposing the tools and systems of media production—including editing, staging, and outsourcing—Pfeiffer recontextualizes global celebrities such as pop stars, film actors, and athletes to reveal relationships between audiences and icons. As the artist puts it, “who’s using who? Is the image making us, or do we make images?”

Whether through televised broadcasts of sporting events, editorial photographs of cultural icons, or the ecstasy of a soccer stadium, Pfeiffer interrogates the consumption of images and culture. For Pfeiffer, the basketball court, the boxing ring, and the stadium not only serve as platforms for grand spectacles but as sites where the body politic—of a nation, of a community, of society—is imagined, defined, and contested.

Spanning two and a half decades of work, the exhibition features works by Pfeiffer in the MCA Collection, including *Fragment of a Crucifixion (After Francis Bacon)* (1999) and *Self-Portrait as a Fountain* (2000), which is part of the D.Daskalopoulos Collection Gift. This exhibition is the MCA's fourth that centrally features Pfeiffer's work, following his career-defining solo show *Paul Pfeiffer* in 2003, *MCA Screen: Paul Pfeiffer* in 2018, and *Fragments of a Crucifixion* in 2019. The accompanying catalogue for this exhibition includes an interview from *Fragments of a Crucifixion* between Pfeiffer and former MCA Marjorie Susan Curatorial Fellow Chanon Kenji Praepipatmangkol, and features contributions from University of Chicago Professor Emeritus

Tom Gunning, artist Julie Mehretu, and historian Lawrence Chua.

*Paul Pfeiffer: Prologue to the Story of the Birth of Freedom* is organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and curated by Clara Kim, Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs, and Paula Kroll, Curatorial Assistant. The MCA presentation is curated by Bana Kattan, former Pamela Alper Associate Curator, with Iris Colburn, Curatorial Associate.

## Project and Collections Exhibitions

### [City in a Garden: Queer Art and Activism in Chicago](#)

Jul 5, 2025–Jan 25, 2026

Sylvia Neil & Daniel Fischel Galleries

*City in a Garden: Queer Art and Activism in Chicago* is an intergenerational group exhibition that highlights Chicago's essential, yet often underacknowledged, role in the story of queer art and activism. The exhibition examines this history from the mid-1980s, when activists radically mobilized in response to the US government's disastrous handling of the AIDS crisis. In this moment of change, activists reclaimed the historically pejorative epithet "queer" as a liberatory term, encompassing all who purposefully deviate from heteronormative society. Drawn from the MCA's collection and other local collections, *City in a Garden* follows this paradigm shift in LGBTQ+ history by bringing together work from over 30 artists and collectives working in Chicago from the 1980s to the present.

These artists address queerness through diverse media and methods: documenting clandestine queer spaces in photographs, creating sculptures that challenge normative depictions of gender and sexuality, and exploring queer intimacy through drawings, paintings, and videos. *City in a Garden* also features archival materials related to groups who innovatively combine artistic practices with their activism. The exhibition takes its title from Chicago's official motto, *Urbs in Horto*, which translates to "city in a garden." In the context of this presentation, this motto speaks to the exhibited artists' and activists' utopian visions of a metropolitan sanctuary for people of all races, genders, and sexualities. As queer people continue to fight for their lives and livelihoods under ongoing and renewed political threats, these visions remain as urgent today as ever.

*City in a Garden: Queer Art and Activism in Chicago* is curated by Jack Schneider, Assistant Curator.

### [Collection in Conversation with Pablo Helguera](#)

Aug 2, 2025–Jul 5, 2026

Stairwell Galleries

The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is excited to announce *Collection in Conversation with Pablo Helguera*, a community-informed exhibition running from August 2, 2025, to July 5, 2026, in the MCA's stairwell galleries. For this exhibition, the MCA invited artist and educator Pablo Helguera to draw a selection of works from the museum's permanent collection, inspired by conversations with Chicago artists, writers, activists, and educators.

In the fall of 2024, the MCA invited a group of twenty people with different backgrounds and life experiences to meet and discuss the role of art in moments of uncertainty and possibility. This exhibition, which is curated by Helguera and representatives from the MCA's curatorial and learning teams in response to the group's discussions, will be organized by theme throughout the three floors of the MCA's stairwell galleries, confronting trauma, resistance, complicity, and the power of individuals and movements during unpredictable times. Each floor of the exhibition will be accompanied by the voices of individuals whose unique perspectives from the conversations informed the selection of works. With this exhibition, the MCA experiments with a new mode of presenting its permanent collection—in conversation with the people it is meant to serve.

Chicago participants include Olivia Gude, Tempestt Hazel, Jeremiah Hulsebos-Spofford, Ankit Khadgi, Maira Khwaja, S. Y. Lim, Stephanie Manriquez, Magdalena Moskalewicz, Nissa Rhee, Monica Rickert-Bolter, Mérida M. Rúa, Pia Singh, Carlos Salazar-Lermont, Sufyan Soheli, and several others who wish to remain anonymous.

*Collection in Conversation with Pablo Helguera* is organized by Pablo Helguera, guest curator, Iris Colburn, Curatorial Associate, and Miguel Aguilar, Manager of Learning, School Partnerships and Curriculum.

## Events

### [Youth-Led Programming | Reflections on Wafaa Bilal: Indulge Me](#)

Saturday, May 24, 12–2 pm

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

This workshop invites participants to explore the current MCA exhibition of artist Wafaa Bilal, whose work uses technology to investigate power, culture, and consumption. Afterward, they can engage in a creative activity facilitated by Teen Creative Agency Apprentice Madeleine Affable, along with members of the UIC Arab American Cultural Center.

Registration is open. Please visit [mcachicago.org/youthevents](https://mcachicago.org/youthevents) to sign up.

### [2025 Art Auction](#)

Friday, Jun 6, 6:30–11 pm

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

The Museum of Contemporary Art and Sotheby's are excited to announce the [2025 Art Auction](#), Chicago's premier event celebrating art and artists, which will take place on June 6, 2025. This year, the auction boasts a selection of works from some of the most significant contemporary artists of our time, including Yoko Ono, Sarah Sze, Gary Simmons, Rashid Johnson, Nicole Eisenman, and Paul Pfeiffer.

Bidding for the auction will officially open online on May 19, 2025, with the in person event following at the MCA on June 6. Select works for the auction will be on the second floor of the Sylvia Neil and Daniel Fischel Galleries, from May 30 through June 6, 2025. The evening will begin at 6:30 pm with a cocktail reception, a viewing of available works, and a silent auction, followed by a seated dinner and a live auction led by Phyllis Kao, Vice President, Sotheby's New York. Guests also have the option of bidding online and by phone. Proceeds from the auction will help support the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and its vision of championing revelatory art for all through exhibitions, educational programs, and live art events.

The 2025 Art Auction honors Ed Ruscha, an artist whose rise the MCA has had the pleasure of witnessing, starting in 1988 with *Ed Ruscha: Recent Paintings*, and again in 2000 with the major exhibition *Ed Ruscha*, which cemented his status as an important international figure in contemporary art. During his six-decade career, Ruscha has created work spanning painting, drawing, photography, books, and film, revealing an artist whose influence exceeds any one genre or movement. The MCA is deeply grateful that he is among the generous and storied artists who enliven our institution with their work for this auction.

The 2025 Art Auction is cochaired by board trustees Anita Blanchard, Ilan Shalit, and Joyce Yaung. Those wishing to attend can find [more information online](#), including table reservation and tier details.

### 21 Minus | . (Period) of Time

Saturday, Jun 14, 1–6 pm

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

21Minus is an all-day showcase of art created by Chicago youth and curated by the MCA's [Teen Creative Agency \(TCA\)](#). Join us for an afternoon of performances, workshops, art installations, film screenings, and more, all centered around the theme of “. (Period) of Time.” This event is free for people ages 21 and under, as well as their families, though all are welcome and encouraged to attend.

### Prime Time | City in a Garden

Friday, July 18, 7–10 pm

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

It's time to dance at the MCA with the return of Prime Time! Queen! is Smartbar's legendary LGBTQ+ party—now more than a decade old—, and for this night only it will take over the museum for a special evening of DJs, drag queens, dancing, and more in support of the exhibition [City in a Garden: Queer Art and Activism in Chicago](#). Get ready to work your body and your mind as you experience prime Chicago music and art.

In addition to the dance party, Gerber/Hart—whose extraordinary collection of LGBTQ+ holdings is one of the largest in the world—will showcase ephemera from historical LGBTQ+ Chicago, bring queer-themed board games like Gay Monopoly, plus other developing surprises for the night.

Note: This is a 21+ event.

### Cripping the Galleries | Matt Bodett

Saturday, August 16, 2–3:30 pm

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

Cripping the Galleries is a collaborative series between the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, and Bodies of Work featuring local artists activating museums through the lens of crip\* culture and access. This summer, artist and director of the Center for Mad Culture, Matt Bodett, leads an interactive writing workshop in response to artwork in the MCA galleries.

\* *Crip* as a noun is pejorative, reclaimed by disabled people who embrace it as an outsider identity with an edge. As a verb, to *crip* (or *cripping*) means to expose oppressive systems of normalcy and to imagine a world otherwise.

## **Performances**

### Amreeka

Friday, Aug 22, 6–8 pm

Edlis Neeson Theater

Amreeka is a roving stand-up comedy night curated by artist Wafaa Bilal and named in response to how some Middle Easterners jokingly refer to “America.” Get ready to laugh with Amreeka mainstays Suzie Afridi, Charles McBee, and Usama Siddiquee, who find common ground by poking fun at the personal and the political.

## **Talks**



**Talk | *Politics of Poetics*: Solmaz Sharif and Wafaa Bilal**

Saturday, Jun 21, 2–4 pm  
Edlis Neeson Theater

*Politics of Poetics* is a series of readings and workshops that highlights influential contemporary poets whose practices traverse the political through writing, teaching, and activism. This summer, Solmaz Sharif—winner of the 2017 American Book Award for poetry for her book *Look*—will join artist Wafaa Bilal, [whose exhibition is currently open on the MCA's second floor](#), for a reading and conversation on shared themes in their work, including investigations of contemporary warfare and its aftermath involving the U.S., Iran, and Iraq.

**Music Talk | Remembering Charles Stepney with Duane Powell and the Stepney Sisters**

Sunday, July 27, 2–3:30 pm  
Edlis Neeson Theater

After hitting the stage as a part of the MCA's [Tuesdays on the Terrace](#) series, the Stepney Sisters will join DJ and music historian Duane Powell for an afternoon of music and remembrance. The Stepney Sisters will share stories about their father, legendary Chicago-based composer and music producer, Charles Stepney, known for his work with Earth, Wind & Fire, Minnie Riperton, and The Dells, among other legends of soul and R&B.

**Screening and Talk | *Alma's Rainbow***

Edlis Neeson Theater  
Saturday, Jul 12, 2–3:30 pm

[Sisters is Cinema](#)—which celebrates Black girls, women, and gender nonconforming media makers—will host part of their series building a collection of essential films made by Black women, *The Black Women's Film Canon*, at the MCA in July. For this iteration, Turner Classic Movies host Jacqueline Stewart joins director Ayoka Chenzira for a screening of her 1994 coming-of-age story, *Alma's Rainbow*, followed by a live conversation.

**Learning Series**

**Educator Workshop | Color Alchemy**

Tuesday, Jun 17, 11 am–1 pm

Even though it's designed for educators, Color Alchemy is an immersive painting and meditation experience that is open to all. This workshop invites educators to explore creativity and wellness practices.

**Member Events**

**Member Appreciation Night: Tuesdays on the Terrace**

Tuesday, Jul 22, 5–9 pm

Join us at this exclusive event that's just for you—our MCA Members! As a thank you for your support, we've put together an evening celebration during the July 22 iteration of Tuesdays on the Terrace.

## ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART CHICAGO

The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The MCA interweaves exhibitions, performances, collections, and educational programs while providing a place for audiences to contemplate and discuss contemporary art in pursuit of a creative and diverse future. The MCA believes in the values of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) as a platform to enact structural change. The museum is generously supported by its Board of Trustees; individual and corporate members; private and corporate foundations, including the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; and government agencies. The MCA acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council. The MCA is a proud member of Museums in the Park and receives major support from the Chicago Park District.

[The MCA is located at 220 E. Chicago Avenue](#) and is open 10 am to 5 pm Wednesday to Sunday and Tuesdays from 10 am to 9 pm. Tuesday evenings (5-9 pm) are free for Illinois residents. The museum is closed on Mondays. Admission is free for all youth 18 and under, members of the military and veterans, and MCA members. Free admission for anyone 18 and under is generously provided by Liz and Eric Lefkofsky, and Northern Trust. Find more information about MCA's exhibitions, programs, and special events at [mcachicago.org](http://mcachicago.org) or at 312.280.2660.



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