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Yoko Ono with *Glass Hammer*, 1967. © Yoko Ono. Photo by and © Clay Perry.

Multimedia material:

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MCA Chicago Announces Fall 2025 Exhibitions and Programming

CHICAGO— Today the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago announces its fall 2025 exhibition and programming schedule. The season includes the opening of the Chicago-exclusive, major fourth-floor exhibition [Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind](#) as well as notable upcoming events such as the fourth annual [Chicago Performs](#) series, a new season of [Family Day](#), the return of [Deem Symposium](#), and a roundtable talk on the current exhibition [City in a Garden: Queer Art and Activism in Chicago](#).

Chicago Performs

The MCA's annual *Chicago Performs* series returns for its fourth season with a four-day festival of poignant live performances by Robyn Mineko Williams & Artists, Red Clay Dance Company, and Helen Lee/Momentum Sensorium. This annual program highlights the wealth of innovative performance art being made by Chicagoans today, inviting local artists to share new and developing works with the public. Visit mcachicago.org/chicago-performs-2025 for more information and tickets.

Robyn Mineko Williams | *To Leave You*

Edlis Neeson Theater

Sep 18–19, 2025 | 7:30 pm

In *To Leave You*, choreographer Robyn Mineko Williams along with dancers Jessica Tong and Jason Hortin, musician Nate Kinsella, and visual designer Julia Miller seamlessly blend movement, music, and film in a tapestry of scenes investigating the idea of “trace:” a mapping of essences, memories, and the messages we leave behind when we exit this world.

Helen Lee/Momentum Sensorium | *Curiosities of Wellness in Bodies of Grief and Joy*

The Commons

Sep 20, 2025 | 10:30 am–1:30 pm and 3–6 pm

Curiosities of Wellness in Bodies of Grief and Joy is movement artist Helen Lee's ongoing invitation to audiences to sit with anger and loss by exploring collective healing through somatic practice. Bringing together offerings of performance, live music, art and movement therapy, plant medicine, and shared dialogue, Lee guides audiences through a series of mindfulness rituals, inviting them to find ease, grounding, and joy.

Red Clay Dance Company | *Freedom Square: The Black Girlhood Altar*

Edlis Neeson Theater

Sep 20–21, 2025 | 7:30 pm; 2 pm

Centered around *The Black Girlhood Altar*, an installation created by Scheherazade Tillet and Robert Narcisco of A Long Walk Home, this dance performance transforms the theater into a sanctuary for envisioning a utopian freedom for Black women and girls. Featuring music by Jamila Woods and choreography by artistic director Vershawn Sanders-Ward, the work is performed by a mixed cast from the Red Clay Dance Company and teens from Black Girls Dance.

Major 4th Floor Exhibitions

Yoko Ono: *Music of the Mind*

Oct 18, 2025–Feb 22, 2026

The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is thrilled to announce *Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind*, opening October 2025. The MCA is the exclusive US venue for this comprehensive solo exhibition dedicated to artist, musician, and activist Yoko Ono (b. 1933, Tokyo, Japan; lives in New York, NY). Traveling from Tate Modern in London, where it enjoyed record attendance, and organized in close collaboration with Ono's studio, this groundbreaking retrospective covers seventy years of Ono's trailblazing career, with over 200 works including participatory instruction pieces and scores, installations, a curated music room, films, music and photography, and archival materials. The exhibition reveals Ono's innovative approach to language, art, and participation that continues to speak to the present moment.

Participation is an important feature of Yoko Ono's vision as an artist, which is why visitors will be able to partake in several interactive, instruction-based artworks throughout *Music of the Mind*. This exhibition underscores Ono's legacy of radical performance and her significant and influential contributions to visual art, including Fluxus and Conceptualism; music; film, and activism. The MCA is proud to welcome this timely exhibition, spotlighting Ono's revelatory art from the last seven decades.

Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind documents the artist's career starting with the mid-1950s, exploring her pivotal role in avant-garde circles in New York, Tokyo, and London, including the development of her "instruction pieces," and the active role she played in the formation of Fluxus, the loose art collective and movement founded in New York in the early 1960s. The exhibition highlights key works from across her decades-long career, including her performance *Cut Piece* (1964), considered a landmark in performance and feminist art; her collaborations with notable musicians such as John Cage, Ornette Coleman, and her late husband, John Lennon; selected activations of instruction-based art from her influential book *Grapefruit* (1964); her innovative films of the 1960s and 70s including *FLY* (1970–71) and her banned *Film No.4 (Bottoms)* (1966–67) which she created as a "petition for peace;" recent works such as her ongoing *Wish Tree* installation (1996-present); and public artworks that are emblematic of Ono's commitment to peace activism.

The exhibition features several participatory artworks, such as *Painting to Hammer a Nail* (1961/1966), *Bag Piece* (1964), and *White Chess Set* (1966), among others. Later works like *Add Color (Refugee Boat)* (1960/2016) encourage guests to write their hopes and beliefs on a white boat and its surroundings, while the installation *My Mommy Is Beautiful* (2004) gives the public an opportunity to share thoughts about their relationship to their mothers and motherhood.

Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind was organized by Tate Modern, London, in collaboration with Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf. It was curated by Juliet Bingham, Curator, International Art, Tate Modern; Patrizia Dander, Head of Curatorial Department, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen; and Andrew de Brún, Assistant Curator, International Art, Tate Modern. The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago presentation is curated by Jamillah James, Manilow Senior Curator, with Korina Hernandez, Curatorial Assistant, in close collaboration with Studio One.

Project and Collections Exhibitions

[Collection in Conversation with Pablo Helguera](#)

Stairwell Galleries

Aug 2, 2025–July 5, 2026

The MCA invited artist and educator Pablo Helguera to create the next exhibition focused on its permanent collection. This exhibition, *Collection in Conversation with Pablo Helguera*, is informed by a series of conversations Helguera had with a group of Chicago artists, writers, activists, and educators at the MCA in the fall of 2024 and winter of 2025 around the role of art in moments of uncertainty.

Curated by Helguera and representatives from the MCA's curatorial and learning teams in response to the group's discussions, the exhibition will span all three floors of the museum's iconic stairwell galleries and consider ideas that emerged during Helguera's conversations with participants. Accompanied by the voices of the individuals whose unique perspectives on the present informed the selection of works, *Collection in Conversation with Pablo Helguera* presents well-known works from the collection in an entirely new context—a conversation between Chicagoans reckoning with the present.

Chicago participants included 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 Sohel, and

several others who wish to remain anonymous.

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

Events

Yoko Ono Event Scores

The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

Oct 16, 2025–February 22, 2026

On Saturdays, Sundays, and select Tuesdays throughout the full run of [Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind](#), performers from all walks of life will activate Ono's deceptively simple "event scores" from her groundbreaking 1964 book *Grapefruit*.

[Teen Creative Agency | Zine Fest 2025: The Power of Prints](#)

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

Dec 20, 2025 | 1–6 pm

The MCA's [Teen Creative Agency \(TCA\)](#) is celebrating fourteen years (and counting) of DIY publications by teens! This event showcases the original artwork, activism, and social practice of Chicago-area youth in zine form. Join the Museum of Contemporary Art's Teen Creative Agency for an afternoon of events and activities highlighting the past, present, and future of print making by Chicago teens. Visitors are invited to participate in activities organized by the TCA, such as zine making and on-site merch giveaways.

Performances

[Six Scores for Yoko Ono](#)

Kovler Atrium

Nov 4, 2025 | 6 pm

Experience the musical context of Yoko Ono's early work with performances of five 1960s scores—by Mieko Shiomi, Nam June Paik, Takehisa Kosugi, and George Maciunas—and a new commission by MCA Chanel Fellow, Andrew Hansung Park. The performances track the destruction of a violin, smashing boundaries between everyday sound and music.

The [MCA DNA Research Initiative](#) is a multi-year curatorial program, supported by the CHANEL Culture Fund, that invites early-career curators and writers to the museum for interdisciplinary research projects related to the institution's collection. Focused on the intersection of visual art and performance, this initiative surfaces overlooked art historical narratives within the organization's history while foregrounding the cross-disciplinary ethos that has been integral to the museum since its founding in 1967.

[Lit & Luz: Live Magazine Show](#)

Edlis Neeson Theater

Nov 14, 2025 | 7–9 pm

Experience the Lit & Luz Festival of Language, Literature, and Art's signature celebration, the Live Magazine Show, returning this year focused on the theme of "Repair/Reparar." Each year, Lit & Luz supports the creation of collaborative performances between writers and artists from Chicago and Mexico that includes poetry, video art, live performances and more exploring the relationship between languages and cultures across borders on the theater stage.

Talks

[OTV: Beyond the Screen](#)

Edlis Neeson Theater

Sep 27, 2025 | 9 am–5 pm

Join Open Television (OTV) in celebrating ten years of intersectional storytelling and shaping independent media's future. Connect with trailblazing artists and leaders across the film, nonprofit and tech ecosystems for visionary keynotes, roundtables on media evolution, and breakout sessions that focus on building lasting infrastructure for storytelling—honoring the past and igniting the next chapter to push media's impact beyond the screen.

[Deem Symposium | Designing for Dignity 3: A Convening of Possibilities](#)

Edlis Neeson Theater

Oct 25, 2025 | 10 am–5pm

The MCA Chicago will host *Deem Journal's* third annual symposium, Designing for Dignity 03: A Convening of Possibilities. The event will expand on the themes of the past two years' gatherings with a day of hybrid in-person/online programming dedicated to expansive perspectives on liberatory design thinking. This year's symposium will feature talks with artist and curator Edra Soto, and architect and scholar Mabel Wilson.

[City in a Garden Roundtable with Nick Cave, Edie Fake, and Mary Patten](#)

Edlis Neeson Theater

Oct 28, 2025 | 6–7:30 pm

How can an artist be an activist? Encounter three wide-ranging approaches by artists featured in [City in Garden: Queer Art and Activism in Chicago](#), including Nick Cave, Edie Fake, and Mary Patten, in conversation with exhibition curator Jack Schneider.

Screenings

[One to One: John & Yoko](#)

Edlis Neeson Theater

Nov 18, 2025 | 6-8:30 pm

Watch never-before-seen footage that follows the life of Yoko Ono and her husband John Lennon in 1970s New York City, including the only complete concert. This event will be followed by a conversation with its award-winning director, Kevin Macdonald.

[Visual AIDS Day With\(out\) Art](#)

Edlis Neeson Theater

Nov 30, 2025 | 2–3:30 pm

Day With(out) Art is an annual screening series led by Visual AIDS and hosted across the world. This year Visual AIDS presents *Meet Us Where We're At*, which features six videos focused on both drug users and the harm reduction practices they engage in through the continued HIV crisis.

Family Day Series

Family Day | Neighbors

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago
Oct 11, 2025 | 11 am–3 pm

Come greet your neighbors and make new friends. Connect with the artworks in [*City in a Garden: Queer Art and Activism in Chicago*](#) and celebrate the city we live in.

Family Day | Yes!

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago
Nov 8, 2025 | 11 am–3 pm

Feel the power of imagination and explore themes of conceptual art in [*Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind*](#).

Member Events

Members' Preview | Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago
Oct 17, 2025 | 7–9 pm

Members are invited to celebrate the opening of [*Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind*](#) at this exclusive event. Be among the first to experience the critically acclaimed exhibition that explores the artist's 70-year career with over 200 works.

Members' Only Hours | Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind

Griffin Galleries of Contemporary Art
Nov 14, 2025 | 9–10 am
Nov 19, 2025 | 5:30–7:30 pm
Dec 17, 2025 | 9–10 am
Jan 15, 2026 | 9–10 am.

Members get exclusive early-hours access to view the acclaimed exhibition [*Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind*](#). This event is only open to MCA Members. [Join or renew today!](#)

Advanced ticket reservations are encouraged.

Members' Holiday Party

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago
Dec 10, 2025 | 6–9 pm

Join us for the MCA's 3rd annual Members' Holiday Party! Mingle with fellow members and get a start on your holiday shopping at the MCA Store. Plus, live music, refreshments, and late-night gallery access!

Education

Educator Workshop | Color Alchemy

The Commons

Oct 4, 2025 | 11 am–1 pm

Color Alchemy is an immersive sensory experience that allows you to consciously create art through a meditative medium. This workshop invites educators to explore wellness in a unique form that combines sensory through teaching. Join us as we combine wellness and art for an unforgettable experience.

This iteration of Color Alchemy is led by wellness practitioner Cherish Hicks of Beyond Wellness and nail and studio artist Tacarra Sutton of Spifster.

We invite Chicago educators to engage in an early semester wellness event and art activation.

Learning Series | Built rebellions: The Art of the Collective 1 & 2

Crown Family Room

Part 1: Sept 27, 2025 | 11 am–1 pm

Part 2: Nov 11, 2025 | 11 am–1 pm

With this fall's two-part Learning Series, we invite participants to explore the development and impact of grassroots contemporary arts projects focused on supporting students and communities.

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. Museum capital improvements are supported by a Public Museum Capital Grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 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 (free for IL residents) from 10 am to 9 pm. The museum is closed on Mondays. Admission is free for all youth 18 and under, members of the military and veterans, and MCA members. Find more information about MCA's exhibitions, programs, and special events at mcachicago.org or at 312.280.2660.



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