Winter/Spring 2018-19

THIS running time is 60 minutes with no intermission.

Low Lights

Wide Eyes

Adrienne Truscott

Stage at MCA

Ellis Neeson Theater

May 2-4, 2019 Thu-Sun

Program Notes
FROM THE CURATOR

What if you aim for failure, rather than run from it? For Adrienne Truscott, everything she does on stage carries the possibility of failure, and that palpable risk becomes her certainty that something interesting is bubbling up in her work. Right when things could go terribly wrong and the stakes are high, a certain rigor and focus become necessary. But so does acceptance of her own messiness: she embraces the possibilities that open up when breaking down onstage is not a mistake, but a crucial part of the show. Truscott will try anything.

Over the last four years, inserting comedy into her dance, circus, and performance art projects—and vice-versa—has taken Truscott into the contentious (and often misogynist) world of stand-up, as in her show Asking For It: A One-Lady Rape About Comedy Starring Her Pussy and Little Else! As she said on a recent panel about “serious comedy,” sometimes “the terms and visibility of your discomfort with my work are also the terms of my ‘success.’”

Truscott’s forays into stand-up have brought new strategies for holding an audience’s attention into her repertoire, and she switches between them at the speed of light. In THIS, she leaves the comedy club behind to try to make a dance again—but you won’t see any dancing here. Instead, THIS treats text like choreography and narrative like a living thing, changing each moment. Truscott puts herself through the paces of her personal story, mining her life and wide range of styles for material. In doing so, she throws herself—and us—off balance: What is fiction? What is true? What is personal? What is fair game for everyone? And why on earth make performance at all? But that’s for you to decide—or at least you can try.

Tara Aisha Willis
Associate Curator of Performance
ABOUT THE WORK

*THIS* is a solo performance that may not always be a solo, a dance that may not be a dance, and a comedy that may not always be funny. It is a performance that continually shifts to reflect the moment at hand—the venue and location, the current news cycle, and the experience of time as it transforms in our memory. It plays with a range of assumptions—about authorship, the linearity of narrative, truth, and autobiography. *THIS* is a performance that addresses trauma, despite the traumatic inadequacy of making art in the current political landscape.

RELATED PROGRAMS

POST-SHOW TALK
Fri, May 3, immediately following performance

Please stay after the performance for a brief conversation with Adrienne Truscott and Associate Curator of Performance Tara Aisha Willis.

ACCESSIBLE EVENTS

ASL-INTERPRETED PERFORMANCE WITH AUDIO DESCRIPTION AND RELAXED PERFORMANCE
Sun, May 5, 2 pm

ADRIENNE TRUSCOTT (Writing, Concept, and Performance) has been making multi-genre, multi-platform work for more than twenty years. She's a choreographer, comedian, writer, and performance maker, and has been one half of The Wau Wau Sisters, a fifteen-year-long collaboration and boundary-busting cabaret/circus act. Her group choreographic works (THIS; they will use the highways; Genesis, no! Ha! A Solo; Bermude/Disappearance [never performed]; make, I mean; and Too Freedom) have been presented in New York by American Realness, Dance Theater Workshop, Danspace Project, The Kitchen, PS122, Movement Research at Judson Memorial Church, New York Live Arts, and at Project Arts Centre, Dublin, among others. Her critically acclaimed solo evening Adrienne Truscott’s Asking For It: A One-Lady Rape About Comedy Starring Her Pussy and Little Else! won the Edinburgh Foster’s Panel Prize, the Malcolm Hardee Award for Innovation in Comedy and was a finalist for the Total Theatre Award for Playing With Form (United Kingdom) and is considered a critical impetus for the current conversation about rape culture. She is a 2014 Doris Duke Impact Award Artist, a 2016 FCA Artist Grant recipient (theater/performance art), a 2017 Adelaide Fringe Artist Ambassador (Australia), and a 2017 Bessie-nominated artist for Outstanding Production for THIS. She has performed at the Sydney Opera House’s Festival of Dangerous Ideas, on the cult storytelling series The Moth, and occasionally contributes to The Guardian. Her essays have been published in two Australian anthologies—Women of Letters: Between Us and Doing It: Women Tell the Truth about Great Sex. THIS premiered at New York Live Arts in April 2017. Wild Bore, a project Truscott spearheaded as a commissioned collaboration with artists of the United Kingdom and Australia at The Malthouse (Melbourne), is currently on tour and was recently nominated for a 2018 Green Room Theatre Award for Best Writing and received the award for Best Ensemble. As an artist, Truscott wears many hats and is attracted to the possibility of failure as a mandate for rigor.

ELLIE HEYMAN (Direction) is a New York–based theater director. Her work is best known for its athletic physicality and visually imaginative aesthetic. She is the Director in Residence at Joe’s Pub at the Public Theater. Heyman also directed, with long-term collaborator Julian Koster of the band Neutral Milk Hotel, The Traveling Imaginary, a theatrical rock show, rated in the “top five shows of the year” by National Public Radio and a Time Out “Critic’s Pick” on two continents. She also codirected/developed the narrative podcast The Orbiting Human Circus (at the Air), presented by Night Vale Presents. It’s been downloaded more than four million times, rated number one in Apple Podcasts and featured in the New York Times, Wired, The Telegraph, and The Guardian (Top Podcasts of 2016) and features Charlie Day, John Cameron Mitchell, Mandy Patinkin, and Tim Robbins. Recent credits include Jason Craig and Dave Malloy’s Beardo (Drama Desk Award Nomination, Pipeline Theatre) Erin Markey: Boner Killer (Under the Radar/The Public Theater, New York); Becca Blackwell’s They, Themself and Schmerm (Under the Radar/The Public Theater); Adrienne Truscott’s THIS (Bessie Award Nomination for Outstanding Production, New York Live Arts (NYLA). International credits include Elevation 506 in Bulgaria with Yasen Vasilev and Home/Yuva in Istanbul with Sami Berat Marcali. Many of these shows are continuing to tour throughout 2019. Her work has been presented in New York by Abrons Art Center, Big Theater, The Drama League, En Garde Arts, La Mama, New World Stages, the LaGuardia Performing Arts Center, NYLA, New York Theater Workshop, The Public Theater/Joe’s Pub and, in Brooklyn, at the Bushwick Starr and Banana Bag and Bodice, as well as at the Kennedy Center, Washington, DC; the Boston Center for American Performance; Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island; the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; Duke University, Durham, North Carolina;
Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and indie rock clubs across the United States. Her recent projects include Boomtown by Dane Terry (PS122 COIL 2018), a stripped-down jazz underscored A Streetcar Named Desire (Ubuntu Theater Project, Oakland, California), and the new Talking Band Show. She is a graduate of Northwestern University and received her MFA from Boston University. Heyman is also a Fellow and Artist in Residence at the Drama League Directing, and a Time Warner Directing Fellow at the Women's Project Theatre, New York.

CARMINE COVELLI (Set, Sound, and Video Design) splits time between Brooklyn and Tivoli, New York, Covelli is the drummer for The Julie Ruin (Run Fast, Hit Reset) and plays the drums for comedy/cabaret superstars Bridget Everett (and The Tender Moments), Meow Meow, and occasionally, Alan Cumming, among others. He appears in the comedy special Bridget Everett: Gynecological Wonder, which aired on Comedy Central. As an actor/performer he’s been featured in several works by Adrienne Truscott and performance artist Neal Medlyn. His relaxed yet confident dancing skills were highlighted on the last episode of season 2 of Inside Amy Schumer along with Ad-Rock (Beastie Boys) and Bridget Everett. He’s designed video for the iconic pop-punk dance band Le Tigre’s live shows and shot all the footage for their concert documentary Who Took The Bomp? He’s made several short films and the web series People Are Detectives and is codirector with Adam Horovitz on a film about art critic and fireworks enthusiast Peter Schjeldahl, currently in post-production. Covelli makes soundscapes for theater and enjoys working with wood and developing computer-based interactive exhibits for museums.

MARY ELLEN STEBBINS (Lighting Design) has recently worked on Black Inscription (Prototype Festival, HERE Arts Center, New York), War Stories (Opera Philadelphia), Olegón (Eighth Blackbird), Orpheus Unsung (Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis, and Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey), and Quixote (Peak Performances at Montclair State University, Montclair, New Jersey). Her collaborators include Ars Nova, Bristol Valley Theater, Columbia Stages, Gotham Chamber Opera, Manhattan School of Music, Monica Bill Barnes, New Repertory Theatre, The New School, and Pipeline Theatre (all in New York) and Banana Bag and Bodice in Brooklyn, as well as Princeton University. She has been in residence with HOWL Ensemble and Third Space and was a 2016 Henry Hewes Award nominee. She was a 2014 Live Design Young Designer to Watch, received The 2011 USITT Barbizon Lighting Design Award, was named a 2009 Hangar Theatre Lab Company Design Fellow, and is a union member of USA 829. Stebbins has an MFA from Boston University and an AB from Harvard University.
DATE NIGHT

Marisol Escobar. Photo: Herman Hiller.

Join us for dinner or drinks before or after the theater at Marisol, named one of the “hottest restaurants in Chicago” by Zagat and one of Vogue’s “Six Chicago Restaurants You Should Know About Now.” Call 312–799–3599 to make reservations.

MARISOL

RESTAURANT AND BAR
AT THE MCA
205 E PEARSON ST
CHICAGO, IL 60611

SEASON CALENDAR

2019 WINTER/SPRING

Jan 24–27  Mariano Pensotti
Arde brillante en los bosques
de la noche (Burning bright
in the forest of the night)

Feb 7–10  Ingri Fiksdal and
Jonas Corell Petersen
STATE

Feb 11–13  Ingri Fiksdal
Diorama

Mar 21–24  Annie Dorsen
The Great Outdoors

Apr 18–21  Yan Duyvendak and
Omar Ghayatt
Still in Paradise

Apr 25–28  Yan Duyvendak and
Roger Bernat
Please, Continue (Hamlet)

May 2–5  Adrienne Truscott
THIS

May 9–12  Manuela Infante
Estado Vegetal
SUPPORT FOR MCA STAGE

Lead support for the 2018–19 season of MCA Stage is provided by Elizabeth A. Liebman.

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*Enact Chair
As of March 2019

ABOUT ENACT

MCA Stage is supported by Enact, a group of MCA donors dedicated to supporting the museum’s renowned Stage programs.

Join today for opportunities to meet artists and gain behind-the-scenes access alongside MCA curators—all while providing vital support.

Circle Donor membership is required to join Enact. Enact donations begin at $1,000 annually. For more information on benefits or to join, contact us at enact@mcachicago.org or 312-397-4044.

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ABOUT MCA STAGE

As an internationally renowned institution devoted to contemporary culture, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago presents the most thought-provoking visual art and performing arts of our time. MCA Stage is a vibrant series presenting theater, dance, and music by leading artists from the United States and around the world in the MCA’s three-hundred-seat Edlis Neeson Theater.

MCA Stage’s groundbreaking performances are an integral part of the MCA’s artist-activated, audience-engaged programming. Along with the museum’s exhibitions and educational initiatives, they encourage a broad and diverse community to experience and discuss the work and ideas of living artists.

PARKING
Validate your ticket at the coat check for $12 parking in the MCA garage (220 E Chicago Ave) and the Bernardin garage (747 North Wabash). The $12 parking is limited to six hours on the date of performance.

LOST AND FOUND
To inquire about a lost item, call the museum at 312-280-2660. Unclaimed articles are held for thirty days.

SEATING
Please switch off all noisemaking devices while you are in the theater.

Patrons are seated at the management’s discretion. Food and open beverage containers are not allowed in the seating area.

REPRODUCTION
Unauthorized recording and reproduction of a performance are prohibited.

GENERAL INFORMATION
312-280-2660

BOX OFFICE
312-397-4010

VOLUNTEER FOR PERFORMANCES
312-397-4072
mcastage@mcachicago.org

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
CHICAGO
220 E CHICAGO AVE
CHICAGO, IL 60611
MCACHICAGO.ORG

MCASTAGE@MCACHICAGO.ORG