

ADRIENNE TRUSSCOTT  
*THIS*

Program  
Notes

Thu-Sun  
May 2-4, 2019

MCA  
STAGE

Edlis Neeson  
Theater

Eyes  
Wide

Lights  
Low

at MCA  
Stage

Winter/Spring  
2018-19

*THIS* running time is 60  
minutes with no intermission.

SUPPORT FOR THIS  
MCA STAGE PROJECT



THE WHITEHALL HOTEL  
*Chicago's First Independent Boutique Hotel*

SUPPORT FOR THE  
ARTISTS

Financial and in-kind support for *THIS* is provided by New York Live Arts, the Foundation for Contemporary Art, Mount Tremper Arts, Tuxedo Cat, Sid Gold's Request Room, Adelaide Fringe, and CATCH.

Writing, Concept, and Performance	Adrienne Truscott
Direction	Ellie Heyman
Set, Video, and Sound Design	Carmine Covelli
Lighting Design	Mary Ellen Stebbins

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MCA PRODUCTION CREW

Lighting Supervisor	Matt Sharp
Audio Engineer	Mati Johnson
Stagehand	Matt Bearor
Wardrobe	Anna Martin
Technical Crew	Lena Aubrey, Sam Clapp Danny Drust, Hanna Elliot Theresa Murphy, Devonte Washington

## 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

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## ACCESSIBLE EVENTS

ASL-INTERPRETED PERFORMANCE  
WITH AUDIO DESCRIPTION AND RELAXED  
PERFORMANCE 🐾

Sun, May 5, 2 pm

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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; Bermuda/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 of 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 (of the Air)*, presented by Night Vale Presents. It's been downloaded more than four million times, rated number one 1 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, Themselves and Schmeer* (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 Yassen Vasilev and *Home/Yuvā* 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;



Adrienne Truscott, *THIS*. Photo: Ian Douglas.

## ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION

Select MCA Stage performances include open-captioning, sign-interpretation, listening devices, or are sensory relaxed.

Please call 312-397-4010 in advance to reserve seats and inclusive services.



## BUY TICKETS

ONLINE  
mchicago.org/stage

BY PHONE  
312-397-4010

AT THE MCA  
BOX OFFICE

220 E Chicago Ave  
Chicago, IL 60611

Single performance tickets starting at \$30; \$10 for students, limited availability.

Groups of ten or more save 20% on full-price tickets; call 312-397-4010.

## FREE MUSEUM ADMISSION WITH TICKET

Present your MCA Stage ticket stub to receive FREE ADMISSION\* and 10% off your purchase at the MCA Store.\*\* Or become an MCA Member and save 15%.

Ticket stub is valid during regular hours up to seven days after the performance date.

\* Not accepted for special ticketed exhibitions.

\*\* Regular price, in-stock merchandise only; no other discounts apply.



Adrienne Truscott, *THIS*. Photo: Ian Douglas.

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), *Olagón* (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*

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Program notes  
compiled by  
Laura Paige Kyber

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## SUPPORT FOR MCA STAGE

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

Generous support is provided by:

Lois and Steve Eisen  
and The Eisen Family  
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Ginger Farley and  
Bob Shapiro

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Additional support for  
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Ms. Shawn M. Donnelley  
and Dr. Christopher  
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Cynthia Hunt and  
Philip Rudolph

Anne L. Kaplan  
Anne and John Kern

D. Elizabeth Price and  
Lou Yecies

\*Enact Chair  
As of March 2019

MUSEUM OF  
CONTEMPORARY ART  
CHICAGO

## 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](mailto:enact@mcachicago.org) or 312-397-4044.

The MCA is a proud member of the Museums in the Park and receives major support from the Chicago Park District.

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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

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