Estado Vegetal running time is 90 minutes with no intermission. Performed in Spanish with English surtitles.
Support for this MCA stage project

This engagement of Manuela Infante is made possible through Southern Exposure: Performing Arts of Latin America, a program of Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts.

Support for the Artists

Estado Vegetal was developed in residency at Baryshnikov Arts Center.

Performance: Marcela Salinas
Direction: Manuela Infante
Writing: Manuela Infante and Marcela Salinas
Design: Rocío Hernández
Design and Props: Ignacia Pizarro
Construction: Carmina Infante
Production: Alex Waghorn
Original Translation: Bruce Gibbons and British Council Chile
Revised Translation: Alexandra Ripp
Surtitles: Surtitles
Original Translation: Bruce Gibbons and British Council Chile
Revised Translation: Alexandra Ripp
Coproduction: Fundacion Teatro a Mil

From the Curator

Manuela Infante describes Estado Vegetal (Vegetative state) as a “failed dialogue with nature,” an impossible world where human society and the complex agency of plants run parallel and intermingle. Here, what seems like a monologue is actually a swarm, a branching, layered network of voices. Using ingenious stage craft, sound design, storytelling, and slapstick, it nudges you, its human audience, to question the ways we communicate and think about ourselves in a world that does not completely belong to us.

Estado Vegetal asks us to alter our basic point of departure: humanity. What can theater become when plants are active participants? What is our capacity to perceive a story, a body onstage, a gesture, or an exclamation, if human beings are not at the center of our thinking?

We are deeply grateful to former MCA Curator of Performance Yolanda Cesta Cursach, for seeing the importance of this work and its potential to bring a wholly unique perspective and approach to Chicago theater audiences. I have heard audience members express, after seeing this performance, that they felt hesitant fascination and then delight and excitement, and I look forward to experiencing that progression with you, here on the MCA Stage!

Tara Aisha Willis
Associate Curator of Performance
Estado Vegetal is a polyphonic, branching, exuberant, reiterative, divisible, and sessile monologue. Its protagonist is a woman, who is not an individual; she is a multitude, a swarm. This is not an animal play; it is a vegetable play.

Based on the revolutionary thinking of plant philosopher Michael Marder and plant neurobiologist Stefano Mancuso, the exploration consists of probing the ways in which new concepts such as plant intelligence, vegetative soul, or plant communication can transform creative practice.

If we accept that plants have other ways of thinking, feeling, communicating, other ways of being intelligent, a different form of consciousness and another notion of time, perhaps we can create a new understanding of how we, as human beings, think, feel, communicate, and remain aware. As Marder writes in Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life, “Recognizing a valid ‘other’ in plants is also beginning to recognize that vegetal other within us.”

Estado Vegetal dances tirelessly around an impossible dialogue, that of humans and plants—a failed dialogue with nature that is, perhaps, our most innate monologue.
RELATED PROGRAMS

POST-SHOW TALK
Fri, May 10, immediately following the performance

Please stay after the performance for a brief conversation with the artists, moderated by Tara Aisha Willis, Associate Curator of Performance.

ACCESSIBLE EVENTS

ASL-INTERPRETED PERFORMANCE
Fri, May 10, 7:30 pm

ASL-INTERPRETED PERFORMANCE WITH AUDIO DESCRIPTION AND RELAXED PERFORMANCE
Sun, May 12, 2 pm
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

MANUELA INFANTE (Writer/Director) is a Chilean theater playwright, director, scriptwriter, and musician. She has an MA in cultural analysis from the University of Amsterdam and is well known for offering scenic articulations of complex theoretical issues. With her group Teatro de Chile (2002–16) she wrote and directed work with the permanent support of the Chilean Funds for the Arts. Four of her plays have been published and translated into English and Italian. Her work has toured Argentina, Brazil, Germany, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Peru, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, and the United States. She has produced work at Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin; Festival de Modena, Italy; the Watermill Center, New York; Festivales de Buenos Aires (FIBA); Teatro a Mil International Festival Foundation (FITAM), Santiago; and TheaterWorks, Singapore. In 2015 she was the first woman to be appointed director of The National Festival for Dramaturgy (Muestra Nacional) in Chile.

ROCÍO HERNÁNDEZ (Designer) is a theater designer from the University of Chile. For the last ten years her creative practice has focused on theater set, lighting, and costume design. In addition, she has worked in creating audiovisuals for live entertainment. Her career in scenic design has comprised approximately forty theatrical productions for a diverse array of companies and directors both nationally and internationally. Hernández also has participated in several renowned international theater festivals.

MARCELA SALINAS (Writer/Performer) earned her degree in acting from the University of Chile. For the last ten years her creative practice has focused on theater set, lighting, and costume design. In addition, she has worked in creating audiovisuals for live entertainment. Her career in scenic design has comprised approximately forty theatrical productions for a diverse array of companies and directors both nationally and internationally. Hernández also has participated in several renowned international theater festivals.

In 2009, she directed Dr. Mortis, a cycle of radio theater works, which was nominated for Best Radio Contribution by the Asociación de Periodistas de Espectáculos (APES), Chile. Over the last decade, Salinas has served as a faculty member at Universidad Mayor, Universidad ARCIS, and Universidad de Chile, among other institutions and cultural centers. She specializes in vocal technique at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Since 2007, her research has focused on musical performance with her company Lágrimas, Celos y Dudas, where she currently develops creative material in various platforms such as theater, concerts, audiovisuals, and space interventions.

Manuela Infante, Vegetative State at Singapore International Festival of Arts 2017. Photo: Call The Shots.
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.
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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.

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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