

ELEVATE

CHICAGO DANCE 2022

OCTOBER 13-16

RETURN TO ELEVATE
HOMEPAGE

Photo: Elai Pineda Arts Festival 2022, Edge Theater. Photo by William Frederick

ELEVATE

Chicago Cultural Center

78 E. Washington St.

Sunday, October 16, 2022 • 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

FREE EVENT. Wheelchair Accessible.



10:00a Maggie Bridger (Learning Lab, 1st Floor, until 1:00pm)

Film Screenings in Claudia Cassidy Theater, 2nd Floor North:

10:00a Gabriel Bruno Enrique Lopez Eng Gonzalez

Nora Sharp and Grace McCants

Every house has a door (Lin Hixson and Matthew Goulish)

11:00a Synapse Arts: Rahila Coats, Maggie Bridger, and Rachel Damon

12:00p Carolyn Castillo aka GoldGrrl / Chicago Movement Series

JaNiah Cooper

Nadia Oussenko



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The Elevate Chicago Dance festival was only supposed to happen once. Born out of a partnership with the New England Foundation for the Arts' Regional Dance Development Initiative, the festival was a way to showcase the work of Chicago dance artists and bring local, regional, and national audiences and presenters together. That "one time" festival was supposed to have its third iteration in 2020 and we all know what happened then.

Here we are in 2022, altered, making our way back to rehearsal studios and live performance. This festival is showcasing some of what Chicago's dance artists have been thinking about, dancing about, and working toward over the last couple of years. We are intentionally positioning works-in-progress showings, excerpts, panel discussions, site-responsive performances, durational works, and completed pieces for the stage all side by side with one another to underscore the reality that this is what artists are doing now and it is worth support and recognition.

As we've listened, watched, and learned from our fellow artists in preparation for this festival we've asked ourselves, what do we need to gather again in performance? How has our work changed? And, what kind of practices help us sustain shifts in the field? We hope you ask these questions with us and remain open to all that comes next.

Joanna Furnans
Executive Director, Chicago Dancemakers Forum

Maggie Bridger

“Cultivating Chicago's Disability Dance Community”

Learning Lab, 1st Floor

A video interview/performance that documents some of the work developed by Maggie and her collaborators at High Concept Labs and the Learning Lab at the Chicago Cultural Center with a particular focus on ways that disabled dance artists are developing and sustaining disability dance in Chicago. Attendees will also be invited to add to an interactive map of accessible dance spaces in Chicago.

Maggie Bridger is a 2022 City of Chicago Individual Artist Program grantee, and PhD candidate at the University of Illinois at Chicago in the Department of Disability and Human Development. She is a co-founder of the Inclusive Dance Workshop Series at Access Living, for which she and her project partner received a 2021 Chicago Area Albert Schweitzer Fellowship. She was part of the inaugural cohort of the Dancing Disability Lab at UCLA, serves on the committee to organize Chicago's integrated dance concert, CounterBalance, and was one of Synapse Arts' 2021 New Works artists. Maggie is a 2022 Artist in Residence at High Concept Labs.



Gabriel Bruno Enrique Lopez Eng Gonzalez

“far from the 掛包: a memoir of reintegration”

Claudia Cassidy Theater, 10:00am

expanding upon the work the artist was developing in their bedroom during quarantine, they investigate american midwestern aesthetics of queer-ness, asian-ness, and movement practice. the film's visual and metaphorical language is steeped in perspective gained from two years teaching english and dance on remote taiwanese islands, kinmen and penghu. the film is a work of self-documentary-autobiographical-fiction and aims to use the internet as a compass back to living in the united states and specifically chicago.

Gabriel Bruno Eng Gonzalez (he/they) graduated from Beloit College in 2020. He is a fulbright scholar, dance maker, writer, sociologist, cyclist, swimmer, and video artist. Gabriel's love of dance and teaching allows space for him and others to feel human, queer, and mixed without a sense of shame. Through our imaginations we allow ourselves and our stories to be in the world. Gabriel's choreographic and written work has been exhibited at Chelonia, ACDA, Zullo Raw Movement's Queerly Contemporary Festival, WIM Dance, This Body Lives, Elgin Fringe Festival, Counterpulse, Hello Giggles, and Teen Vogue. He has had the pleasure of working with Katy Pyle, jess pretty, Estrellx Supernova, Katlin Michael Bourgeois, Chris Johnson, Gina T'ai, Ching-i Chang, and more.



Nora Sharp and Grace McCants

"The Real Dance: A Micro Reality TV Show - Episode 2"

Claudia Cassidy Theater, 10:00am

The Real Dance: A Micro Reality TV Show is a film series that approaches contemporary dancemaking through the low-stakes, high-investment aesthetic & entertainment lens of reality TV, focusing on the daily lives, dramas, personalities, and backstories of people who make dance. Episode 2, co-directed by and co-starring Grace McCants and Nora Sharp with cinematography by Bea Cabrera, Sydney Sullivan, and Spence Warren, explores dynamics of codependence and interdependence at the intersection of relationships and artmaking.

Co-directed, performed, and edited by Grace McCants and Nora Sharp
Assistant Editing by Sydney Sullivan
Videography by Bea Cabrera, Spence Warren, and Sydney Sullivan

Music:

"Love Is a Hurtin' Thing" performed by: Gloria Ann Taylor,
Writer(s)/Composer(s) Ben Raleigh & David Linden, Courtesy of Ubiquity Recordings, Inc., Wise Brothers Music LLC ASCAP, & Wixen Music Publishing obo Rawlou Music BMI. All Rights Reserved.

"Space Chess," "Zero Gravity Interlude," #1479, and #9677 by Yuri

Creative Consultation by Gina Hoch-Stall and Aaron Greer

This project is partially supported by an Individual Artists Program Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events, as well as a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency, a state agency through federal funds provided by the National Endowment for the Arts. Originally premiered at the Pivot Arts Festival 2022.



Nora Sharp and Grace McCants, cont.

"The Real Dance: A Micro Reality TV Show - Episode 2"

Claudia Cassidy Theater, 10:00am

Grace McCants grew up studying gymnastics in Madison, WI, holds a degree in Dance from Oberlin College, and has called Brooklyn home for most of her adult life. She has worked on the product and strategy side of social justice and accessibility tech at AnnieCannons and Bocoup. Grace performed with Nora Sharp & crew in the premiere of Family Reunion, an hour-long improvisation of movement, conversation, video, and queer community, at Steppenwolf Theatre's LookOut Series in early 2020. In 2022, she has worked with The Syndicate workshopping Hal Cosentino's new play Lineage. Nora Sharp is a creator and performer whose work has been presented by On the Boards, Steppenwolf Theatre's LookOut Series, Movement Research at the Judson Church, the Fly Honey Show, and Midwest RAD Fest among elsewhere, and supported by residencies at the Hambidge Center, Links Hall, and High Concept Labs. Nora also for 5 years facilitated the works-in-progress series Research Project, which provided a community platform for performance and response at OuterSpace Studios, and in 2019 created THE AMTRAKLOR, a fundraiser for Links Hall that gifted a roundtrip train ticket to a local artist for creative research. Nora can be heard as a guest on Volume 3 of Alyssa Gregory's podcast The Process with co-host Tia Greer.



Every house has a door

Lin Hixson and Matthew Goulish

**Screening of lockdown short films:
"Cuckoo in the Depths of the Woods,"
"Characters with Long Ears," and "Aquarium"**
Claudia Cassidy Theater, 10:00am

In response to the inability to safely convene live audiences in 2020 and 2021, Every house has a door continued working in small and careful ways culminating these three short films. Each film is related to and is embedded within the large-scale, multi-year project The Carnival of the Animals.

In 2020 and 2021, during the Covid-19 pandemic, out of desire to continue working together and make progress on unfinished works, we began making films in a converted garage and later a un-used art gallery. Attuned to the particular needs of the moment each work reflects the evolving possibilities of working in proximity that were possible at the time of filming. The Three short films screened in the festival are embedded within the larger series of modular performance, The Carnival of the Animals. This multi-year collaboration follows the 14-movement structure of Camille Saint-Saëns's 1886 musical suite for children. The Every house Carnival considers endangered and extinct species, with an original performance devised in response to each of Saint-Saëns's titles, following those imaginative classifications.



Every house has a door , cont.

Lin Hixson and Matthew Goulish

**Screening of lockdown short films:
"Cuckoo in the Depths of the Woods,"
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Claudia Cassidy Theater, 10:00am

Aquarium

Lin Hixson, direction

Matthew Goulish, dramaturgy

Essi Kausalainen, costume design

Hadley Austin, cinematography and editing

Yoni Goldstein, cinematography and editing

Christine Shallenberg, lighting design

Sarah Skaggs, production and company management

Elise Cowin, performance

Bryan Saner, performance

Alex Bradley Cohen, performance

Madeleine Aguilar, song arrangement and performance (short film)

Characters with Long Ears

Lin Hixson, direction

Matthew Goulish, dramaturgy and writing

Essi Kausalainen, costumes and textiles

Julia Pello, cinematography and editing

David Hall, sound

Christine Shallenberg, lighting

Elise Cowin, performance

Bryan Saner, performance

Alex Bradley Cohen, performance

Isaac Cresswell, performance

Sky Cubacub, performance

Tim Kinsella, ending score

Jenny Polus, ending score

Sarah Skaggs, production and company management



Every house has a door, cont. Lin Hixson and Matthew Goulish

**Screening of lockdown short films:
"Cuckoo in the Depths of the Woods,"
"Characters with Long Ears," and "Aquarium"**
Claudia Cassidy Theater, 10:00am

The Cuckoo in the Depths of the Woods

Lin Hixson, direction

Sarah Skaggs, production and company management

Julia Pello, Cinematography and Editing

Essi Kausalainen, Costumes and Textiles

Corey Smith, Sound and Music

Matthew Goulish, Dramaturgy

Christine Shallenberg , Lighting

Elise Cowin, performance

Alex Bradley Cohen, performance

Bryan Saner, performance

Narration written by Matthew Goulish and performed by Abhay Ghiara

Lin Hixson, director, and Matthew Goulish, dramaturg, formed Every house has a door in 2008 to convene diverse, intergenerational project-specific teams of specialists, including emerging as well as internationally recognized artists. Drawn to historically or critically neglected subjects, Every house creates performance works and performance-related projects in many media. Based in Chicago, the company presents work for local, national and international audiences.



Synapse Arts

Rahila Coats, Maggie Bridger, Rachel Damon

"what I know" by Rahila Coats

"Radiate" by Maggie Bridger

"Leverage" by Rachel Damon/Aaron Greer

Claudia Cassidy Theater, 11:00am

Taking time to watch a woman move as a soloist, from her own power, in both subtlety and intensity, unafraid for her body to be seen, is a radical act. Synapse Arts presents a suite of three woman-made screendances and aims to position these works within respectful discourse that moves our field forward. The three screendances were produced as part of the company's 2021 New Works program during pandemic shutdowns. Together, Rahila Coats' "what I know," Maggie Bridger's "Radiate," and Rachel Damon/Aaron Greer's "Leverage" represent women artists figuring out how to retain what is most important in the expression of their artwork in the face of a pandemic.

In "what I know," Coats' investigates issues of race and gender within the relationships Black women have with their grandmothers. Working with Jenn Freeman/Po' Chop, Coats offers this solo that is now both a dance film and a live performance. Bridger's unique artistic vision explores the generative potential of pain in creating movement. Her film "Radiate" brings the viewer into the intimacy of her home and studio practices. Damon co-directed "Leverage" with filmmaker Aaron Greer, exploring the freedoms and tensions that are inherent in creating. The turns of chance and decisions weighted by opportunities to be leveraged are made visible as women reveal and conceal their own bodies and voices.



Synapse Arts, cont.

Rahila Coats, Maggie Bridger, Rachel Damon

what i know

Rahila Naomi Stadem Coats, Choreographer

Grace Kerpan, Photographer

Max Lazarus, Composer

Curtis Coats and 2020 Bly/Coats Family Tree Book, Influences

Sean Rafferty and Jenai Cutcher, Videographers

Rahila Coats, Editor

Jenn Freeman/Po' Chop, Mentor

what i know stemmed from a cloudy perception of my paternal grandmother and my women ancestors. I used this time to investigate anger, exhaustion, and comfort.

Radiate

Maggie Bridger, Director and Choreographer

Bryan Saner, Mentor

"Radiate" poses embodied questions about the nature of pain and illness through the mediums of film and movement. Contrasting dominant understandings of pain that situate it as solely personal and tragic, choreographer Maggie Bridger draws on the tools, movements and practices she uses to calm her pain to offer alternate visions for what pain is and does. "Radiate" invites the viewer into Maggie's home and studio practice, engaging with themes of intimacy, time and care as it depicts the frustration, humor and mundanity of pain as she experiences it.

LEVERAGE

Synopsis: This introspective film grapples with the challenges of creativity, gender, and an embodied sense of overwhelm, by giving four women dancers agency to conceal or reveal their own bodies and voices.

Cast and Crew

Produced and Directed for the screen by Aaron Greer & Rachel Damon

Choreography and Lighting by Rachel Damon

Performers Amanda Ramirez, Dylan Roth, Gretchen Soechting-McGuire, Laura Tennal

Cinematographer Mitch Fowler

Sound Designer Ryan Ingebritsen

Editor Aaron Greer



Synapse Arts, cont.

Rahila Coats, Maggie Bridger, Rachel Damon

Synapse Arts works towards a world where individuals are free to develop their unique talents and express their singular visions using their minds and whole bodies. We specifically encourage individuals whose creativity is not fully supported by the dominant society, most notably women; those who identify as LGBTQIAA+ and our allies; families of varying economic, ethnic and cultural origins; and children. While valuing the development of each individual, Synapse equally values cooperation and affords situations in which people come together in creative work, collective processes, and ensemble efforts. Based in Chicago, we work locally and think globally, recognizing that our vision can move through social and artistic networks that defy geographic boundaries.

Rahila Naomi Stadem Coats is an improviser, choreographer, performer, and teaching artist. Her works have been shown through the support of Twenty Percent Productions, 2018 Jerusalem Jazz Festival, MN Fringe Festival, Company Projects, Synapse Arts, and University of Ghana- Legon. Currently she dances with Red Clay Dance Company, performs with music group Family Junket, and works in CONDUIT alongside Gina Hoch-Stall and Ann Marie Iego. In 2021, She received Chicago's 3Art's Make A Wave Award along with 120 other artists. She holds gratitude for her family that has brought her to Chicago and celebrates the community she learns and loves from in the city.

Maggie Bridger (MS) is a PhD Candidate at University of Illinois, Chicago and a dance artist. Her research and artistic interests center around disabled bodyminds in dance, with a focus on reimagining pain through dancemaking. Maggie is a co-founder of the Inclusive Dance Workshop Series and serves on the committee to organize Chicago's integrated dance concert, CounterBalance. She is currently an Artist in Residence with High Concept Labs and will be in residence at the Chicago Cultural Center's Learning Lab beginning October 16, 2022 where she will pilot a program to further support and cultivate Chicago's disability dance community.

Rachel Damon is a Chicago-based theatrical designer, choreographer, and performer whose career. She uses her multidisciplinary skills to spearhead performance works created through collaboration, improvisation, and teamwork. Damon is co-founder and Artistic Director of Synapse Arts in Chicago. Aaron Greer is an independent filmmaker and professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Carolyn Castillo aka GoldGrll Chicago Movement Series

"ELEMENTS"

Claudia Cassidy Theater, 11:00am

Directed by Bobbi Mann.

"ELEMENTS" is a selection from a series of short dance films I directed with filmmaker Bobbi Mann. The collective's channel is called Chicago Movement Series and features local dancers in site-specific works.

CAST:

Orb Box as AIR

Romero as ETHER

Doc Sach as WATER

Andrew Coleman as EARTH

Isaiah Johnson as FIRE

Music by Noetik the Alchemist "Old Tree", "Origin of Drum"

Evgeny Teilor "Floating Mind"

Ocean Jams "Case Closed"

Drake Stafford "Nonconceptual"

Anchor Hill "Jungle Heat"

Shanae Mosely & Orb Box "Bad Bitch Queen Goddess"

Arpebu "Red Hot"

Poetry by Brael Kokeb

Directed by Carolyn Castillo Production Bobbi Mann Email us:
chicagomovementseries@gmail.com

Orb Box (Lawrence Young) died in May 2021 and Andrew Coleman in May 2022. I dedicate this screening to their artistry and incredible lives.



JaNiah Cooper

"sunken"

Claudia Cassidy Theater, 12:00pm

More information coming soon.



Nadia Oussenko

"Winter Studies"

Claudia Cassidy Theater, 12:00pm

Winter Studies explores the feeling of isolation as a result of combined pandemic/winter months in Chicago, and a desire to connect to my physical body while battling with apathy and lack of motivation. An empty dark apartment serves as sanctuary for meditative exploration and healing.

Nadia Oussenko is a choreographer, filmmaker, photographer, and educator. She completed a Master of Fine Arts degree in Dance at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she discovered her desire to pursue choreography for the camera. Oussenko is a former Chicago Dancemakers Forum Lab Artist, and her dance films have been screened at festivals around the world, such as the San Francisco Dance Film Festival, Moves International Festival of Movement on Screen in Manchester, England, the Dance on Camera Festival in New York, ADF Dancing for the Camera Festival in Durham, NC, and The Chicago International Movies and Music Festival. As an educator, Nadia works as a teaching artist with Dancing With Class, and is an adjunct dance faculty member at Governors State University.

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Photo: El Pinel Arts Festival 2022, Edge Theater. Photo by William Frederick

Elevate Chicago Dance 2022 is supported by the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), Chicago Park District's Night Out in the Parks program, The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, Farley Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency. Food/Beverage donated by Dill Pickle, Illuminated Brew Works, Jewel Osco Andersonville, Milkweed Inn, and Whole Foods Edgewater. Additional support and partnership provided by 21c Museum Hotel, The Dance Center at Columbia College Chicago, High Concept Labs, Links Hall, Monira Foundation, and Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center. With this support, all participating artists and performers are being paid an honorarium that meets Working Artists and the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E.) requirements.

