

KIM BRANDT Level

Program Notes
Tue, Oct 1, 3 and 6 pm
Wed-Thu, Oct 2-3,
12:30 pm

A roving
performance,
beginning on
the MCA's
front steps

MUSEUM OF
CONTEMPORARY ART
CHICAGO

FALL 2019



Experience

dance

music

theater

everywhere

galleries

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hallways

as a place

that

performance

ignites.

FROM THE CURATOR

If you're reading this, you are probably experiencing Kim Brandt's performance *Level*. You may not have noticed it unfolding around you, or you may have already tuned in to the dancers and musicians filling the museum with movement and sound. When I first experienced Kim's work, it was as a performer, trying to fit my body into a pyramid of dancers, hold that shape together, then slowly dissolve it to the ground, with subtle lighting changes that drew out each weight adjustment, breath, and shift of muscle. The way our minimal actions held the audience's attention intrigued me.

This performance was made specifically for the MCA's architecture: Kim visited Chicago a year ago to spend time in the museum's public spaces, study the city's architecture and geography, and do research in the MCA's library. But creating *Level* meant making detailed observations of her own senses—of how people move through space and how the performers negotiate each movement together. *Level* carefully and simply asks us to think about how we see bodies in space and, by extension, how we see the walls, floors, shapes, and volumes of the room around those bodies. How are you looking? What does it mean to be here together? What does it feel like to move with a group? If you pay close attention, you may start to feel your own perceptions implicated in the performance.

Tara Aisha Willis
Associate Curator
Performance & Public Practice

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Special thanks to Mario Gooden, Ellen Alderman, and The Graham Foundation, to Erin Toale, and the Hyde Park Art Center, and to the Chicago Architecture Biennial.

Thank you to our colleagues on the Facilities and Operations, Security, Visitor Experience, Special Events and Rentals, and Housekeeping teams for making the entire museum campus a place for performance.

Kim Brandt *Level*

A roving performance, beginning on the MCA's front steps

Running time is 60 minutes with no intermission.

Choreographer	Kim Brandt
Composer	Nate Wooley
Costume designer	Strauss Bourque-LaFrance
Performers	Martita Abril, Anna Adams Stark, Liz Charky, Courtney Cooke, Jessica Cook, Leslie Cuyjet, Ayano Elson, Joanna Furnans, Berit Godo, Gina Hochstall, Kyli Kleven, Emily Navarra, Zachary Nicol, Lydia Okrent, Jessica Ray, and Nora Stephens
Musicians	Katinka Kleijn, Ryan Packard, Seth Parker Woods, and Nate Wooley

ABOUT THE WORK

Level is the latest of Brandt's works that explore the interconnectedness of people and the spaces they inhabit. Her recent works have been staged in a Brooklyn cemetery and in an art center's basement, timed with the changing light of a room at dawn and sunset, and evocative of a horizon line or topographical map. Each work highlights the act of congregation as equally important as the performance itself. The text below provided context for her artistic inquiry.

"The property of matter and light is very strange. How can we accept that everything can be, at the same time, an entity confined in volume (a particle) and a wave spread out over huge regions of space? This is one of the paradoxes of quantum theory, or as the Hindu mystics put it centuries ago, 'smaller than small, bigger than big'. We are and we are not our bodies. . . .

Moreover, 'we' and the sum universe cannot be separated in the way of the old Cartesian dialectic of 'I' and 'World'. Observer and observed are part of the same process. What did Paracelsus say? 'The galaxa goes through the belly.'

What is it that you contain? The dead, time, light patterns of millennia, the expanding universe opening in your gut."

—Jeanette Winterson, *Gut Symmetries*, 1998



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

KIM BRANDT (Choreographer) creates performances that ask motion to answer questions about how a body can be, and to explore how a coming together alters the tone of our environment. She has presented her work at The Shed (2019), MoMA/PS1 (2018), SculptureCenter (2017), Abrons Arts Center (2017), Pioneer Works (2016), Artists Space (2015), AVA Gallery (2015), and The Kitchen (2014). Her work has been supported by a NYFA/NYSCA Fellowship in Interdisciplinary Arts (2018), a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grants to Artists Award (2017), Mertz Gilmore Foundation (2016–18), The Jerome Foundation Travel & Study Grant (2016), and Brooklyn Arts Council (2016). She has received residencies at MoMA/PS1 (2017–18), Djerassi (2018), Movement Research (2016–18), Bogliasco Foundation (2016), and Issue Project Room (2015). She has performed in works by Bruce Nauman, Ryan McNamara, and Walter Dundervill, and her press and interviews have appeared in *Artforum*, *The New York Times*, *Bomb Magazine*, and *Girls Like Us*, among others. Brandt received an MFA in sculpture from Tyler School of Art.

NATE WOOLEY (Composer/Musician) works as an interpreter, improviser, and composer within the contemporary conjuncture of contemporary classical, jazz, noise, and electronic music. He has performed as a soloist or a commissioned composer at SWR Donaueschingen, Musica Polonica Nova, Wrocław Jazztopad, Festival International de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville, A'larme Berlin, Music Unlimited, and numerous international jazz festivals. Wooley has been an artist in residence at London's Café Oto and Brooklyn's Issue Project Room and was a 2016 recipient of the Foundation of Contemporary Arts Grants to Artists Award in Music/Sound. He made his New York Philharmonic debut in 2018 as a soloist in Ashley Fure's triple concerto *Filament*. Wooley is the founder of the For/With Festival, which commissions and premieres works created through

collaboration between composer and performer, all with an emphasis on radical timbral techniques and improvisation within composition. He is currently the editor of *Sound American*, the curator of the Database of Recorded American Music, and a teacher at the New School for Social Research.

STRAUSS BOURQUE-LAFRANCE (Costume designer) is a New York-based artist who has exhibited work throughout the United States and Europe. Outside of his studio practice Strauss works with other artists to help articulate visual and conceptual aspects of their work. He has recently collaborated with Tere O'Connor, Moriah Evans, Tess Dvorman, Lydia Okrent, and Kim Brandt.

MARTITA ABRIL (Performer/NYC) is a performer, choreographer, curator, and teaching artist from the border city of Tijuana, México. She's worked with dance artists and companies throughout México, South America, and the United States, and is currently working with Kim Brandt, Yanira Castro, Yoshiko Chuma, and Simone Forti.

ANNA ADAMS STARK (Performer/NYC) is a performer and arts administrator living and working in New York. She hails from Normal, Illinois, and holds a BFA from the University of Iowa. She is grateful to be working with Kim and this beautiful group of humans.

LIZ CHARKY (Performer/NYC) is a performing artist and director working across film and live performance. She is a 2019 artist in residence at Outpost Artist Resources and Cucalorus Film Festival, and her work has been created with support from 6BASE, AUNTS at Superchief Gallery, Bowery Poetry Club, Chez Bushwick, Dixon Place, Outpost Artist Resources, Movement Research at the Judson Church, YoungArts at Baryshnikov Arts Center, and Green Space LIC.

COURTNEY COOKE (Performer/NYC) is a dancer, healer, and

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Program notes
compiled by Laura
Paige Kyber

educator in Brooklyn, New York. Cooke has worked with Kim Brandt for the past five years and has also recently danced with choreographers Jennifer Monson and Emily Wexler. She also works as a teaching artist and has a private practice leading meditation and healing services.

JESSICA COOK (Performer/NYC) has presented her work in venues such as LmaK Gallery, MoMA PS1 (with Laurel Atwell), Judson Memorial Church, Roulette Intermedium, 92nd St Y, Pieter Performance Space, and AUNTS (New Museum, Mana Contemporary, Chasama Gallery). Cook is a 2019 Artist-In-Residence at Movement Research.

LESLIE CUYJET (Performer/NYC) is thrilled to return to her family's hometown of Chicago. She has been working with Kim Brandt since 2014 and currently lives in Brooklyn, New York.

AYANO ELSON (Performer/NYC) is an Okinawan-American choreographer and performer based in Brooklyn, New York. She has recently performed in works by Kim Brandt, Jessica Cook, Simone Forti, Kyli Kleven, and Haegue Yang at Danspace, MoMA, MoMA PS1, Movement Research at Judson Memorial Church, Pioneer Works, Roulette, and The Shed.

JOANNA FURNANS (Performer/Chicago) is an independent dance artist. Her work has been supported by a 2019 MANCC (Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography) Forward Dialogues Laboratory, a 2019 Offshore Creation Residency at the Yard, a 2019 Institutional Incubator Sponsorship at High Concept Labs, a 2018 Chicago Dancemaker's Forum Lab Artist Award, the Illinois Arts Council Agency, the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), the Chicago Dancers' Fund, the Chicago Moving Company, Links Hall, and the Walker Art Center. Furnans is also managing editor of the *Performance Response Journal*.

BERIT GODO (Performer/Chicago) is a Seattle native. Godo's home in Chicago is at the Joel Hall Dancers and Center, where they are a first

company apprentice, assistant studio manager, and teacher. Their dance/movement credits include *Firebird*, *Masks and Myths*, *Unwinding* (Mandalala South Asian Performing Arts), *Rite of Spring* (Brittany Harlin), and *The Fly Honey Show* (The Inconvenience), as well as movement direction work for *Grace or the Art of Climbing* (Brown Paper Box Theatre Co.) and *Les Innocents* ((re)discover theatre). Godo appears courtesy of the Joel Hall Dancers.

GINA HOCHSTALL (Performer/Chicago) has been described by Thinkingdance.net as "one of [Philadelphia]'s strongest dancers." Hochstall is a choreographic deviser and movement-based artist who serves as the artistic director of RealLivePeople, a contemporary dance theater company. Hochstall recently earned her MFA in dance from The Ohio State University on a Dean's Distinguished three-year fellowship.

KYLI KLEVEN (Performer/NYC) is a choreographer and performer based in New York. She has performed in the work of Ryan McNamara, Kim Brandt, Neil Greenberg, Milka Djordjevič, and Jennifer Monson. She is a 2018-19 Movement Research Artist in Residence, works at The Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, and started life in Alaska.

KATINKA KLEIJN (Musician/Chicago) is a member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the International Contemporary Ensemble. Kleijn is known for *Intelligence in the Human-Machine*, a duo for cellist and brainwaves, and *Water on the Bridge* for cellos and swimming pool. Her work *Forward Echo* for eleven improvisers was premiered at the Instigation Festival in September 2019.

EMILY NAVARRA (Performer/Chicago) is a dance studies graduate from the University of South Florida and holds a Certificate of Completion in Authentic Movement Training from the European Society of Authentic Movement in Munich, Germany. She has worked under various choreographers such as Iñaki Azpillaga and Wim

Vandekeybus (Ultima Vez), and Lloyd Newson (DV8 Physical Theatre). Her work has been presented in the United States, Europe, Southeast Asia, North Africa, and the United Kingdom. She is the recipient of two Civil Society grants from The Department of State and the United States Consulate of Ho Chi Minh City and has resided overseas for the past decade in North Africa, Europe, and Southeast Asia. Navarra recently moved back to Chicago.

ZACHARY NICOL (Performer/Chicago) has contributed as a collaborative and performing artist to recent projects by Alexandra Pirici, Ginger Krebs, Catherine Sullivan, Jonas Becker, Anna Martine Whitehead, Joanna Furnans, Elise Cowin, A.J. McClenon, and Lio Mehiel, among others. Their independent work across disciplines has been presented in the United States and Canada.

LYDIA OKRENT (Performer/NYC) is a New York-based artist working in the field of dance and performance practices as a dancer, dramaturg, and writer.

RYAN PACKARD (Musician/Chicago) is a percussionist, composer, and sound artist. His performance practice is an amalgamation of composition, sound art, experimental new music, improvisation, and pop music and he has been featured throughout the United States, South America, Europe, and Asia.

JESSICA RAY (Performer/Chicago) is a Chicago-based dance artist. Her work has been nationally presented by AUNTS at the Pulitzer Foundation in St. Louis, Roulette Intermedium in Brooklyn, New York, and at Pieter Performance Space in Los Angeles, among others. Jessica was a Co-Mission resident at Chicago's Links Hall in 2017.

NORA STEPHENS (Performer/NYC) is a dance artist and educator living in Brooklyn, New York. Her works have been presented internationally and at Gibney Dance, Danspace Project, 92nd St. Y, CPR, DancenOw/NYC, Chez Bushwick, and with AUNTS, among others in New York. She has been working with Kim Brandt since 2014.

SETH PARKER WOODS (Musician/Chicago), who was *Musical America's* "Artist of the Month: October 2017" and *Strings Magazine* cover artist, has established himself as an in-demand soloist and chamber musician both stateside and throughout Europe and Asia. A fierce advocate for contemporary music and interdisciplinary arts, his collaborators have included Basel Ballet, Berlin Staatsballet, Ictus Ensemble, Lucerne Festival, Orchestra of St. Luke's, Tate Modern, Vanessa Beecroft, and Adam Pendleton.

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

Sun, Oct 27, various times

Between Gestures: Trajal Harrell and Ola Maciejewska
Free

Two solo pieces by choreographers Trajal Harrell and Ola Maciejewska unfold over an afternoon in the museum's main atrium along with screenings and a panel discussion. This program is part of *Between Gestures*, a one-week festival connecting Chicago to international contemporary dance and performance.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

10:30 AM-NOON

Dialogue Forum: Notes on Agency, Dance in the Museum with January Parkos Arnall, Hendrik Folkerts, Elizabeth Lebovici, and Mlondi Zondi in the Edlis Neeson Theater

A panel of curators and scholars envision the ways dance in the museum might become a more inclusive and encompassing practice.

NOON-4:30 PM

Selections of rare performance footage from the Nouvelle Cinémathèque de la Danse screen in the Commons

12:15-12:45 PM

Trajal Harrell performs *Okidoki* in the Kovler Atrium

2-2:40 PM

Ola Maciejewski performs *LOIE FULLER: Research* in the Kovler Atrium

3:30-4 PM

Trajal Harrell performs *Okidoki* in the Kovler Atrium

Proposed by the Cultural Service of the Consulate of France in Chicago and the Goethe Institut Chicago.



Ola Maciejewska, *LOIE FULLER: Research*.
Photo: Martin Argyroglo.

Winter/Spring performances will be announced in November. Check mcachicago.org/stage for up-to-date listings.

Dinner and a Show



Asparagus with chilled mussel vinaigrette and tarragon raita. Photo: Neil Burger.

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ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION

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

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