A FESTIVAL OF PERFORMANCE, INSTALLATION, AND IDEAS.

CounterCurrent projects range from large scale spectacle to intimate interaction and activate sites around the city of Houston, TX. CounterCurrent is presented by Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts, which is part of the University of Houston Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts.

Free tickets are available online and in person. Many events require reservations due to limited space. Reservations can be made at countercurrentfestival.org or at the MATCH Box Office.

Events range from active participatory art to seated performances—be prepared for unique experiences! Check out #CounterCurrent19 to get a peek at how projects are made and how the festival is put together!

COUNTERCURRENT BOX OFFICE AT THE MATCH
3400 Main Street
Phone: 713.521.4533
Email: boxoffice@matchhouston.org
RSVP: countercurrentfestival.org
MATCH Box Office Hours
2pm–5pm Wed–Fri
12pm–3pm Sat–Sun

TICKETS
All CounterCurrent events are FREE. Reservations are first-come, first-served. During the festival, the box office is open daily at the MATCH. We encourage you to build your own itinerary for the festival week and experience as many of our unique events as you can. If you need help planning your festival, please e-mail info@countercurrentfestival.org.

UPDATES
Depending on the event, you may need to wear comfortable shoes, take public transportation, or be prepared for last-minute changes due to weather. Sign up for our mailing list to receive festival programming updates and exclusive access to social events during our festival seasons!

SOCIAL
Follow us for up-to-the-minute updates, promotions, and exciting coverage of our events.
Facebook: @mitchellcenterforthearts
Twitter: @mitchellcenter
Instagram: @mitchell_center

PARKING
Ticket confirmation emails will contain detailed parking information for each CounterCurrent event. Most venues have free or inexpensive nearby parking. Across from the MATCH is the Mid-Main Garage. At UH, arts event parking is available along Entrances 16 and 18 at Cullen Boulevard and Elgin Street.

METRORAIL
The Metro Light Rail makes a stop a half-block south of the MATCH at the Ensemble Theatre Station.

WALK UPS
A small number of walk-up tickets are held for every CounterCurrent performance—yes, even the sold out ones! Tickets are first-come, first-served at the venue 30 minutes before each performance. We encourage you to try your luck at the door!

NO-SHOW & LATE SEATING POLICIES
CounterCurrent events are offered free-of-charge but we rely on you to attend the events for which you have made reservations. CounterCurrent venues will not guarantee entry after the start time of any performance. Please allow yourself enough time to park and check in at the door up to 30 minutes prior to show time. All reservations will be released five minutes prior to each event.

COVER: OKWUI OKPOKWASILI PORTRAIT, 2014. PHOTO BY PETER BORN
Ten Tiny Dances®: Nightlife

Tue 4/9

Ganzeer
PERPETU-WAR
Tue 4/9–Sun 4/14

Tia-Simone Gardner
SALT WATER
Wed 4/10–Sun 4/14

Current Conversations
Wed 4/10–Sat 4/13

Stacy Garrop

LA QUEERADORA
Wed 4/10–Thu 4/11

Jennif(f)er Tamayo

Ellen Fullman
THE WATCH, REPRISE, 2016
Thu 4/11 + Sat 4/13

Okwui Okpokwasili + Peter Born
SITTING ON A MAN’S HEAD
Fri 4/12
Sat 4/13

Awilda Rodriguez Lora
SUSTENTO
Fri 4/13

MF Problem (Autumn Knight/Robert Pruitt)
WE BEEN DID THAT
Sun 4/14

Curatorial Studies at Bard College.

From 2012-2016, Fields served as the Director and Curator of Suplex Projects, a curatorial platform based in Houston, TX, and Chicago, IL. He is a recent graduate of the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College.

In 2018; Public Communication: Performing Knowledge of the Accessions Journal (2015); The Color of Love (2018) an exhibition featuring Peggy Ahwesh, Julia Brown, and The Color of Love artists include An’Marie Krockenberger. Order one at the bar, and a portion of proceeds from the cocktail go to support the Mitchell Center’s programming. No advanced reservations or tickets are required to attend. See you there!

Nightlife is not just a scene for entertainment. Clubs are intersections free from the repression and struggles of everyday life. Or at least they should be.

– Honey Dijon, Artforum, Summer, 2017

Ten Tiny Dances®: Nightlife brings together artists, dancers, and club scene icons from Houston and beyond for a night of performances that reflect on the ways in which the cultural knowledge unique to individual club cultures is transmitted and archived through dance, gesture, fashion, and music. Ranging from Texas-style vogue and drag to New Orleans bounce and underground ChicanX house, this constellation of individual performances draws attention to the fluid nature of nightlife culture, in which categorization, identity, and aesthetics are continually challenged, adapted, and evolved. Participating artists include Brittan Broussard and Leticia Contreras, Marya DeSade, Art/Marie Gill, House of Kenzo (Brexxit and Grapefruit with music by LeDef), Devin Kenny, Neon Mavericks (Justin Butterfras and Mark Evans), T.J. Dedeaux-Norris aka Meka Jean, T. J. Dedeaux-Norris aka Meka Jean, Sines Muerte (Sina and Panchitron), Danielle Quinn, and Jennif(f)er Tamayo. Following the performances, Rich's nightclub will open up to an after party (8:30pm-12am) with a DJ set by Wild Moccasins.

Created in Portland, Oregon in 2002, Ten Tiny Dances® continues to be produced by founder Mike Barber and others, by permission. See tentinydances.org for more information.

Max Fields

Curated by Max Fields

DATE / TIME / SITE(S)

Tue 4/9
7:30pm-8:30pm
Rich’s nightclub
2401 San Jacinto St.

NOTES
All-ages event. Audience members under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Some performances may feature nudity and/or explicit music. Limited seating will be available for those who need it. Please be prepared to stand and walk for the performance. Cash bar and on-site valet parking.

DURATION
60 minutes
**GANZEER, TANK VS. BREAD-MAN, 2011. PAINT ON WALL.**

PHOTO BY MEHRI KHALIL

**DATE / TIME / SITE(S)**

Tue 4/9–Sun 4/14
12pm–8pm

Waterfront at Tony Marron Park / 808 North York St.

**Opening Reception**

Wed 4/10
6–8pm

Sunset Coffee Building

1005 Commerce St.

**NOTES**

Parking is available at Tony Marron Park. The artwork is on the waterfront of the Buffalo Bayou, a short walk from the parking area. Comfortable shoes are advised.

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**GANZEER (Cairo, Egypt; Denver, CO) is a multidisciplinary artist who works seamlessly between art, design, and storytelling. Called a “chameleon” in the New York Times, his work has stirred trouble in art galleries, alleyways, and museums around the world, such as the Brooklyn Museum in New York, the Palace of the Arts in Cairo, Greek State Museum in Thessaloniki, the V&A in London, and the Edith Russ Haus in Oldenburg. His current major projects include a short story collection titled TIMES NEW HUMAN, and a sci-fi graphic novel titled THE SOLAR GRID, which earned him a Global Thinker Award from Foreign Policy in 2016.**

Perpetu-War was developed through a joint residency with the Center for Energy and Environmental Research in the Human Sciences (CEHRS) at Rice University, with additional support from the Buffalo Bayou Partnership and Midway.

“Make Art, Not War” has become something of a cliché, but, artist, Ganzeer, wonders if there is something to it. Is it possible that art represents the antithesis of the culture of warfare that has dominated humanity since the beginning of time?

**Perpetu-War** is a speculative public art project that alludes to a post-war world wherein artists and their actions occupy the cultural importance and impact often associated with war heroes. Ganzeer’s installation interrogates Houston’s relationship to the military-energy-industrial complex, highlighting the city’s complex histories of arms manufacturing and distribution. Specifically, the installation is staged on the Buffalo Bayou near the location of a former tank manufacturing center and shipping warehouse.

**Tia-Simone Gardner**

**DATE / TIME / SITE(S)**

Wed 4/10–Sun 4/14
12pm–8pm

Waterfront at Allen’s Landing

1005 Commerce St.

**Opening Reception**

Wed 4/10
6–8pm

Sunset Coffee Building

1005 Commerce St.

**NOTES**

The installation runs on a cycle of 30 minutes. Visitors are invited to drop in and leave at any time.

Tia-Simone Gardner is a visual artist, educator, and black feminist scholar. Her creative and scholarly practice engages notions of ritual, iconoclasm, and geography. Gardner received her BA in Art and Art History from the University of Alabama in Birmingham. In 2009 she received her MFA in Interdisciplinary Practices and Time-Based Media from the University of Pennsylvania. She recently received her Ph.D. in Feminist Studies from the Department of Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Minnesota. She is currently working on a project on blackness and the Mississippi River as well as expanding her dissertation, titled Sensing Place: House-Scalable Geographies, and a Humanity Workable City, into an artist book and a series of site-specific installations.

Taking place at “Houston’s birthplace,” Allen’s Landing on Buffalo Bayou, Gardner’s Salt Water Sweet Water (2019) is a site-specific response to Houston’s own history of commerce and construction. Visitors will interact with these histories through a presentation of projected image, sound, and performance.

**TIA-SIMONE GARDNER** (Minneapolis, MN) illuminates often overlooked histories as they relate to the American black diaspora through an interrogation of the complex relationships between American waterways, colonialism, migration, and trade. Gardner is an artist, educator, and black feminist scholar. Her creative and scholarly practice engage notions of ritual, iconoclasm, and geography. Gardner received her BA in Art and Art History from the University of Alabama in Birmingham. In 2009 she received her MFA in Interdisciplinary Practices and Time-Based Media from the University of Pennsylvania. She recently received her Ph.D. in Feminist Studies from the Department of Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Minnesota. She is currently working on a project on blackness and the Mississippi River as well as expanding her dissertation, titled Sensing Place: House-Scalable Geographies, and a Humanity Workable City, into an artist book and a series of site-specific installations.

**TIA-SIMONE GARDNER,** *There’s Something in the Water*, 2018. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

**Sweet Water Salt Water** is presented with support from the Buffalo Bayou Partnership.
Current Conversations are a series of public discussions across disciplines and along parallel lines of inquiry. CounterCurrent festival artists and University of Houston faculty experts engage in lively discussion about themes and concepts connected to this year’s festival programming. Each one-hour, lunchtime talk kicks off with a set of rapid-fire presentations followed by questions and answers among panelists and the audience. Light fare and coffee will be provided.

CARRIE MARIE SCHNEIDER (Houston, TX) is an artist interested in reimagining the sociocultural politics of space and time through the organization social projects that interrogate the many ways in which community, care, and economics are connected. Her projects include Hear Our Houston (2011), a hub of public generated audio walking tours, Care House (2012), an installation in the house she grew up in considering the roles of caregiving/caretaking and the bodies of mother/home and Sunblossom Residency (2009-15). Schneider co-organizes Charge, a convening at Art League Houston of local and national presenters to platform artist-led models and to consider artists’ work in the larger economy. Schneider was an inaugural fellow for the 2017 Center for Art and Social Engagement fellowship through the University of Houston and Project Row Houses.

DATE / TIME / SITE(S)
Wed 4/10–Sat 4/13
12pm–1pm, daily
MATCH
Rehearsal Room, first floor
3400 Main St.
NOTES
Light lunch and coffee provided.
DURATION
60 minutes

Organized by Carrie Marie Schneider

LA QUEERADORA

Jennif(f)er Tamayo’s LA QUEERADORA installation sits at the intersection of digital cultural production and embodied cultural performance. It asks: How do material bodies, whose lives hold an archive of cultural knowledge and experience, compete with a manufactured and digitally porous production of identity? In Tamayo’s work, the racial project of U.S. Latinidad, as an often capitalist and anti-Black enterprise, becomes an optic through which these questions can be approached. The “Latin-Explosion” of the artist’s childhood and its subsequent productions are, in many ways, imbricated with the rise of mainstream internet culture. Both began to “enter” households during the 80s and 90s. Dora the Explorer (DTE), then, serves as a critical site of inquiry through which the artist interrogates the ways constructions of Latinidad are indebted to and shaped by novel digital technologies. Dora’s physical construction, emerging from an initial design to be a ‘live-action’ character, is imbued with a digital materiality key to her production of Latinidad: fluid, placeless, and amorphous.

JENNIFER TAMAYO (JT) (Sacramento, CA) is a queer, migrant, formerly undocumented poet, essayist, and performer. JT is the daughter of Nancy, Flora, Leonor, Sol, and Ana. Her poetry collections include [Red Missed Aches] (Switchback, 2011) selected by Cathy Park Hong for the Gatewood Prize (2010), Poems are the Only Real Bodies (Bloof Books, 2013), I FOU-OA ONE (2017 reprint Noemi Books and Letras Latina’s Akrilica Series) and most recently, to kill the future in the present (Green Lantern Press, 2018). Her work has been published in Poetry magazines, Hypervelencer, Contemporary and she has staged performances at La MaMa, The Museum of Modern Art, The Watts Institute, and The Brooklyn Museum. She holds fellowships from the Hemispheric Institute for Performance & Politics and CantoMundo. Currently, JT lives and works on Ohlone and Patwin lands and is a Ph.D. student in the department of Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies at UC Berkeley; you can find her writing and art at jennifertamayo.com.

JT’s residency is hosted in conjunction with the Latino Art Now! 2019 National Conference on Latino Art.

DATE / TIME / SITE(S)
Wed 4/10–Thu 4/11
5pm–8pm installation
8pm–8:45pm performance
MATCH, Box 1
3400 Main St.
NOTES
Visitors are invited to drop in and leave at any time. The installation will be activated with live performances each day at 5pm. Multiple visits recommended.
DURATION
45 minutes
Long String Instrument composer and performer, Ellen Fullman, explores the acoustics of large resonant spaces with her compositions and collaborative improvisations. Fullman will literally "play" the iconic atrium of the Philip Johnson-designed Hines College of Architecture and Design building at the University of Houston, an action first performed in 1994. The title, The Watch, references a specific and repeated experience the artist has had involving vigilance and a wristwatch. For the artist, the title, The Watch, is a reminder of the possibility to transcend mundane existence through maintained focused attention. For the Long String Instrument, Fullman has designed a tablature graphic notation that choreographs the position of her body through the harmonic spectrum of upper partial tones that resides in vibrating strings. With rosin-coated fingers, she bows the instrument lengthwise, drawing out cascading patterns of harmonics that can serve as both melody and harmony. Fullman reminds us that music resides in the movement of air particles. In her work, Fullman says, "resonance is harmony is composition."

ELLEN FULLMAN (Berkeley, CA) has been developing her installation, the Long String instrument, for over 30 years. She has been the recipient of numerous awards, commissions, and residencies including: Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grants to Artists (2015); Center for Cultural Innovation Grants (2008 and 2013); Japan/U.S. Friendship Commission/NEA Fellowship for Japan (2007); and DAAD Artists-in-Berlin residency (2000). Fullman has recorded extensively with this unusual instrument. The Long String Instrument (Superior Viaduct, 2015) was first issued on Apollo Records in 1985 and was selected as the number one reissue for 2015 by the Wire. Fullman's work has been cited in many publications, most notably Alvin Lucier's Music 109: Notes on Experimental Instrument (Superior Viaduct, 2015) was first issued on Apollo Records in 1985 and

An installation and durational “public song” featuring participants from the Houston community. Sitting on a Man’s Head will take place in and around a row house in Third Ward, Houston. Collaborators Okpokwasili and Born derived this new work from the practice of “sitting on a man,” one of the many disruptive durational protest methods used by women in Southeastern Nigeria during the period of British colonial rule. In Sitting on a Man’s Head, the space of restoration and restitution is considered. Where the women in Nigeria had long-standing kinship and communal bonds, shared languages and shared concerns, Okpokwasili and Born consider making a space for the formation of new bonds of kinship around common questions.

Sitting on a Man’s Head was developed as part of Performing the Neighborhood, a joint initiative with Project Row Houses to bring performance-based artists to Houston annually. Performing the Neighborhood is supported in part with an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Okwui Okpokwasili (New York, NY) is a performer, choreographer, and writer creating multidisciplinary performance pieces that seek to shape and amplify the shared psychic space the audience and performer inhabit, and, through centering the African/ African American feminine, to illuminate universal human conditions. As the child of immigrants from Nigeria, born and raised in the Bronx, the reconstitution of memory and the slippery terrain of identity as a particular condition of the African diaspora features prominently in much of Okpokwasili’s work. She was recently named a 2018 McArthur Fellow (www.macfound.org/fellows/1019).

Peter Born (New York, NY) is a director, designer, and filmmaker. In addition to his work with Okwui Okpokwasili, he collaborates with David Thomson and Nora Chipaumire, among others. He is a former New York public high school teacher, an itinerant oral designer, corporate actor-facilitator, and furniture designer. His collaborations with Okpokwasili have garnered two New York Dance Performance “Besse” Awards.
SUSTENTO: FROM LA PERFORMERA TO LA MUJER MARAVILLA

Awilda Rodríguez Lora

DATE / TIME / SITE(S)
Fri 4/12
8pm-8:45pm
MATCH, Box 1
3400 Main St.

NOTES
This performance contains mature subject matter which may include nudity and graphic language.

DURATION
45 minutes

SUSTENTO: from La Performera to La Mujer Maravilla is a lecture-performance by the transdisciplinary artist, Awilda Rodríguez Lora also known as La Performera. Stories, movements, and songs are strategies used by La Performera to invite the audience to reflect on the concept of sustento (sustenance) as a complex and vital idea for survival in creative and everyday practices. As a performance choreographer, Rodríguez Lora challenges traditional notions of womanhood, sexuality, and autonomy, examining relationships between the economy of living, corporeally, and the contemporary art market. Awilda Rodríguez Lora is part of Collective Presence, a curatorial project organized by DiverseWorks that addresses current social and political issues impacting the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean.

AWILDA RODRÍGUEZ LORA (San Juan, PR) is a performance choreographer. She challenges in her humanity, the concepts of woman, sexuality, and self-determination. These concepts are explored through the use of movement, sound, and video as well as through literal instantiations of an “economy of living” that either potentiate or subtracts from her body’s “value” in the contemporary art market. Born in Mexico, raised in Puerto Rico, and working in-between North and South America and the Hispanic Caribbean, Rodríguez Lora’s performances traverse multiple geographic histories and realities. In this way, her work promotes progressive dialogues regarding hemispheric colonial legacies, and the unstable categories of race, gender, class, and sexuality. Rodríguez Lora has performed at Brooklyn Museum, Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance (BAAD), New York University, the Art Institute of Chicago, Columbia College Dance Center, and the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), among others. Her solo work has been recently featured at DEFORMES (Chile), Posta Sur Performance Encounter (Chile), Independence Dom (Dominican Republic) and the Miami International Performance Art Festival (USA).

Awilda Rodríguez Lora is hosted in conjunction with DiverseWorks’ project, Collective Presence, and the Latino Art Now! 2019 National Conference on Latino Art.

HOW DOES A COMPOSER COMPOSE?

In this lecture-demonstration, Garrop takes the audience through a step-by-step process of how she composes instrumental music, demystifying a process that for many remains challenging to understand. For CounterCurrent19, Garrop will focus on the compositional process she utilized for her woodwind arrangement Bohemian Café. The presentation features videos of Prague street performers from whom she drew inspiration, photos of her early pencil sketches for the work, and examples (both audio and visual) of how the piece took shape within a music notation program. The presentation ends with a video from the world premiere of Bohemian Café, performed by members of Fifth House Ensemble. The audience is encouraged to ask questions throughout. This presentation is for general audiences with no musical training.

STACY GARROP’S (Chicago, IL) music is centered on dramatic and lyrical storytelling. The sharing of stories is a defining element of her humanity. We strive to share with others the experiences and concepts that we find compelling. Garrop shares stories by taking audiences on sonic journeys. After teaching composition full-time at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University from 2000-2016, she stepped down from her position to become a freelance composer. Garrop currently serves as composer-in-residence of the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra, sponsored by New Music USA and the League of American Orchestras’ Music Alive 2016-2019 residence program. Stacy has received awards and grants including a Fromm Music Foundation Grant, Raymond and Beverly Sackler Music Composition Prize, and three Barlow Endowment commissions. Her chamber and orchestral works are published by Theodore Presser Company, and she self-publishes her choral works under Inkjar Publishing Company. She is a Cedille Records recording artist and has works on nine of their CDs, with pieces on ten additional record labels. She has been commissioned and performed by numerous ensembles including the Albany Symphony, Capitol Saxophone Quartet, Carthage College Wind Ensemble, Chanticleer, Chicago a cappella, Gaudete Brass Quintet, San Francisco Choral Society, and Volti. Her works have been performed by the Cabrillo and Grant Park Music Festival Orchestras, the Avalon and Cecilia String Quartets, Cielas Ensemble, Fifth House Ensemble, and the Lincoln Trio, as well as wind ensembles at the Chicago College of the Performing Arts and SUNY Potsdam Crane School.

DATE / TIME / SITE(S)
Sat 4/13
4pm-5:15pm
MATCH, Box 1
3400 Main St.

DURATION
75 minutes

STACY GARROP'S BOHEMIAN CAFE

PHOTO BY DARRELL HOEMANN
ABOUT THE MITCHELL CENTER

The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts is dedicated to ground-breaking, transformational collaborations across the performing, visual, and literary arts. Based in the University of Houston Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts, the Mitchell Center commissions and produces new works, presents public performances and exhibitions, supports curriculum and scholarships, and hosts residencies with renowned visiting artists from throughout the world.

ABOUT THE KATHRINE G. MCGOVERN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

The University of Houston Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts is an academic home of creativity and innovation located in one of the nation’s largest cities. The esteemed faculty provides top-quality instruction to student artists of more than thirty degree programs in the visual and performing arts. The College of the Arts Blaffer Art Museum and two centers—the Center for Art and Social Engagement (CASE) and the Mitchell Center—are catalysts for creating dialogue between the college and the community at large. Through this, the College of the Arts seeks to empower its students to use their talents to positively impact their communities and ultimately change the world.

MF PROBLEM (AUTUMN KNIGHT/ROBERT PRUITT)

(NEW YORK, NY) is dedicated to the exploration of experimental social art practices. They focus on collaborative, conceptual, visual, and performative strategies that critique the divisions of race, power, and inequalities found in national and global social structures. MF Problem creates artwork in response to their life as an artist couple, as visionaries, as black magicians, and as time travelers. MF Problem includes two artists, Robert Pruitt and Autumn Knight, MF Problem began doing projects formally in 2012. This collective started in Houston and then moved to New York, NY in 2016. The artists contribute to the collective while maintaining their individual art practices. Robert Pruitt makes large-scale drawings that capture a confluence of concepts including but not limited to science fiction, black African and Southern US cultures, comics, and astral inquiries. Autumn Knight makes performance, video, installation, and text on the complexity of inter/intrapersonal activity.

FESTIVAL PARTNERS + SPONSORS