

## NOGUCHI MUSEUM ANNOUNCES DECEMBER PERFORMANCES FOR *BRENDAN FERNANDES: CONTRACT AND RELEASE*



Héctor Cerna and Violetta Komyshan perform in *Brendan Fernandes: Contract and Release* with training device by Brendan Fernandes, scaffolding by Norman Kelley, and performance copy of Isamu Noguchi's set for Martha Graham's *Appalachian Spring* (1944). Photo: Matthew Carasella. ©INFGM / ARS

### WHAT

The Noguchi Museum announces the December schedule of performances for *Brendan Fernandes: Contract and Release*, a collaboration between the Museum and Fernandes, who works at the intersection of dance and the visual arts. For this project, Fernandes worked with Noguchi Museum Senior Curator Dakin Hart and architecture and design collaborative Norman Kelley to transform the Museum's collection installation *Noguchi: Body-Space Devices* into a performance space. There, the audience can follow dancers as they interact with Isamu Noguchi's work, exploring bodies in space, movement, and the ways in which often grueling training techniques—including the Martha Graham technique known as "contract and release," for which this project is named—may be fetishized.

The performances, which take place on most Saturdays through March 2020, will be held in the Museum's second-floor galleries.

### WHEN

The hour-long performances will take place at **1:30** and **3:00 pm** on the following Saturdays: **December 7 and 14, 2019.**

## WHERE

### The Noguchi Museum

9-01 33rd Road, Long Island City, NY

## ADMISSION

Free with Museum admission

General admission \$10

Seniors and students with valid ID \$5

## PERFORMANCES

*Contract and Release* is the second iteration in a developing series of autobiographical examinations of the movement vocabularies that are intrinsic to Fernandes's work. The first, *The Master and Form*, commissioned by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts and presented in the Whitney Biennial 2019, examined the mastery of balletic form and its relationship to pain and pleasure. In *Contract and Release*, Fernandes undermines the traditional dichotomy in which ballet embodies the adherence to rigorous technique while modern dance is viewed as free-form. (The third, opening next year at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, will explore *shibari*, Japanese rope bondage.)

In each one-hour performance of *Contract and Release*, three dancers will perform various tasks using sculptures as training devices. These include wooden assembly models of Noguchi's interlocking sculptures, the artist's large red *Play Sculpture*, and six rocking chairs designed by Fernandes and fabricated by furniture maker Jason Lewis. Inspired by the blade-like (non-rocking) rocking chair that Noguchi made for Graham's iconic *Appalachian Spring* (1944), Fernandes's training devices will actually rock, creating an endurance test for dancers as they try to remain still while they contract and release their core muscles.

Wearing non-gendered costumes created by innovative designer Rad Hourani and combining patterns of phrasing established by Fernandes, but without a fixed score, the dancers will bring Noguchi and Graham's joint multidisciplinary legacy into the present, transforming The Noguchi Museum's galleries into what the artist, referring to his sets for Graham, called a space of the mind.

## ABOUT BRENDAN FERNANDES

Brendan Fernandes (b. 1979, Nairobi, Kenya) is an internationally recognized Canadian artist working at the intersection of dance and the visual arts. Currently based in Chicago, Fernandes creates projects that address issues of race, queer culture, migration, protest, and other forms of collective movement, while developing new spaces and new forms of agency. His work takes hybrid forms: part ballet, part queer dance hall, part political protest, and is always rooted in collaboration and fostering solidarity.



Oisín Monaghan and Héctor Cerna perform in *Brendan Fernandes: Contract and Release* with Isamu Noguchi's *Play Sculpture* (c. 1965, fabricated 2017).  
Photo: Matthew Carasella. ©INFGM / ARS

Fernandes is a graduate of the Whitney Independent Study Program (2007) and a recipient of a Robert Rauschenberg Fellowship (2014). Shortlisted for the Sobey Art Award IN 2010, he is the recipient of a 2017 Canada Council New Chapter grant. His projects have been shown at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York), The Museum of Modern Art (New York), The Getty Museum (Los Angeles), the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), and MAC (Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal); among many others. *The Master and Form* was presented at the 2019 Whitney Biennial, at the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York). He is currently artist-in-residence and a faculty member at Northwestern University and represented by Monique Meloche Gallery, in Chicago. Upcoming projects in 2019 will be presented at the Smithsonian Museum of American Art (Washington, D.C.) and the Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago). [brendanfernandes.ca](http://brendanfernandes.ca)

## ABOUT THE CAST

The six dancers who perform *Contract and Release* are:

**Héctor Cerna**, a contemporary movement artist based in New York City;

**Violetta Komyslan**, a member of Michele Wiles's BalletNext;

**Victor Lozano**, a dancer and choreographer currently performing with Pam Tanowitz Dance, Dance Heginbotham, and Madboots Dance;

**Tiffany Mangulabnan**, an independent dancer working with a diverse range of choreographers, who in 2016 co-founded konverjdans (with Amy Saunder and Jordan Miller);

**Oisín Monaghan**, who collaborates widely with visual and performing artists; and

**Amy Saunder**, who has been freelancing in New York City since 2016, when she co-founded konverjdans with Jordan Miller and Tiffany Mangulabnan.

## ABOUT THE NOGUCHI MUSEUM

Founded in 1985 by Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988), one of the leading sculptors and designers of the twentieth century, The Noguchi Museum was the first museum in America to be established, designed, and installed by a living artist to show their own work. Widely viewed as among the artist's greatest achievements, the Museum comprises ten indoor galleries in a converted factory building, as well as an internationally acclaimed outdoor sculpture garden. Since its founding, it has served as an international hub for Noguchi research and appreciation. In addition to housing the artist's archives and the catalogue raisonné of his work, the Museum exhibits a comprehensive selection of sculpture, models for public projects and gardens, dance sets, and his Akari light sculptures. Provocative, frequently-changing installations drawn from the permanent collection, together with diverse special exhibitions related to Noguchi and the milieu in which he worked, offer a rich, contextualized view of Noguchi's art and illuminate his enduring influence as a category-defying, multicultural, cross-disciplinary innovator. **718.204.7088 | [noguchi.org](http://noguchi.org) | [@noguchimuseum](https://www.instagram.com/noguchimuseum)**

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