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PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday, 13 July 2021

HOME, MANCHESTER ANNOUNCE UK SOLO EXHIBITION DEBUT BY INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED ARTIST: CASSILS "HUMAN MEASURE"

INCLUDING WORLD PREMIERE OF MAJOR NEW COMMISSION FOR STAGE
IN COLLABORATION WITH CHOREOGRAPHER
JASMINE ALBUQUERQUE



Human Measure, Cyanotype, Detail. Photo: Bonny Taylor

Exhibition: Sat 2 Oct - Sun 12 Dec, 2021

Preview: Fri 1 Oct from 18.00

Performance: Thu 7 Oct 2021 Theatre 1, HOME*

*live stream details to follow

HOME

Images can be downloaded here: <https://bit.ly/3hzokru>

Cassils is a transgender visual artist who makes their own body the material and protagonist of their performances. Working in live performance, sculpture, photography, sound design and film, Cassils contemplates the history(s) of LGBTQI+ violence, representation, struggle and power. For Cassils, performance is a form of social sculpture: drawing from the idea that bodies are formed in relation to forces of power and social expectations, their work investigates historical contexts to examine the present moment.

Referencing conceptualism, feminism, and body art, Cassils powerfully trains their body for different performative purposes, committing to a process of extreme physical and psychological endurance. By positioning their body as a battleground, it is with sweat, blood, and sinew that Cassils shares experiences for contemplating histories of violence, representation, struggle, and survival.

Curated by Bren O'Callaghan for HOME, Manchester, **Human Measure** will be Cassils' first UK solo exhibition and a 10-year survey at a critical moment for advocacy.

The recent government review of the UK Gender Recognition Act fell short of promises to reform and remove need for a medical diagnosis in order to self-identify, omitting legal recognition for non-binary persons or support for minors. Toxic online abuse by those purporting to champion women's rights and the rise of far-right forums have contributed to a trebling in anti-trans hate crimes since 2014, with Great Britain placed 10th across Europe in terms of LGBTQI+ liberties according to ILGA-Europe's [Rainbow Europe Map](#), rating particularly low for hate crime, legal gender recognition and bodily integrity.

It is against this backdrop we present the world premiere of Cassils' first piece of contemporary dance and a new commission for HOME's mainstage. **Human Measure** (2021) builds on Cassils' knowledge of kinesiology, martial arts and sports science to reinterpret Yves Kline's Anthropometries paintings. In addition to being an artist Yves Kline was a judo master and published *The Foundations of Judo* (1954), a book illustrated with hundreds of photographs of Klein performing the movements that form the basis of judo.

Cassils references this work to demonstrate movements grounded in oppression and resilience, culminating as the dancers' bodies impress a stain upon a giant cyanotype - to be exposed the color of "International Yves Klein Blue". A collaboration with renowned choreographer Jasmine Albuquerque, who has worked with the likes of St Vincent, Devandra Banhart, Laura Marling and Mike Mills, the performance will draw

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upon personal safety, vulnerability and problematises visibility in a moment of heightened violence against the GNC/Trans community.

The title of both exhibition and performance, *Human Measure* is chosen to reflect both the representational and indexical qualities of Cassils' practice, through which their body creates a trace or impression - by measuring the ever increasing girth of tissue in daily photographs, exhalation of breath captured in glass sculptures, the etching of fistmarks in clay, litres of excreted urine or silhouette painted in sweat.

These works grapple with the question: "What does it mean to engage in the politics of representation in a moment of heightened violence?" Or as art historian and critic David Getz put it, "*Cassils insists on recognition but refuses to be objectified.*"

Cassils said: "As an artist I hope to challenge us to examine our various modes of participation in repeated scenes of violence, as victims or instigators, as bystanders, as witnesses, as consumers of mass media. I believe art can create a rupture in these routine processes of identification, objectification, and abjection, putting pressure on empathy and its failures."

"Cassils is an advocate for the power of personal agency when it can feel outside the reach of any individual to affect transformative change", says Bren O'Callaghan, Curator, HOME.

"Their tenacious interrogation across structures of oppression travel beyond a presumed representation of the transgendered or non-binary body alone. Their work is urgent, courageous and radical in scope and ambition. Cassils encourages the audience to look outside of their own lived experience, to remain informed and contribute to a wider collective effort - an intersectional congress - that shatters the specificity of self. The exhibition and new commission relates to all oppressed bodies, with HOME inviting the citizens of our city and beyond to witness this powerful presentation and UK-first."

OPEN CALL

This announcement is accompanied by an open call for five UK-based, transgender, gender non conforming and non-binary professional dancers, who will join Cassils and Albuquerque for a deep dive, two-week rehearsal process culminating in the premiere, both for in-person audiences and streamed online. This call is to everyone. We particularly welcome applications from Black and ethnically diverse candidates.

See homemcr.org/about/jobs for more information

EVENTS AND WIDER RESPONSE

An artist advisory group of trans and non-binary creatives have engaged in dialogue upon the occasion to devise a range of public-facing responses. Chester Tenneson and Zorian Clayton will shape a series of critical and creative essays, including contributions



by Dominic Johnson (Professor of Performance and Visual Culture, Queen Mary University, London), and Libro Levi Bridgeman (Hotpencil Press).

Filmmaker Campbell X will curate a film series that celebrates trans/non-binary joy and desire, combating the filmic trope of the transgender victim. Kate O'Donnell, founder of Manchester-based art organisation Trans Creative, will be in conversation with Cassils and curator Bren O'Callaghan, while UK-based Zimbabwean writer and performer mandla rae will explore ritual and remembrance with a performative assembly.

"Both the exhibition and performance create an important focus upon contemporary trans artist practice, much needed within the predominantly cisgender-focussed canon of artistic practice", say the artists in a group statement. "Cassils' play with this context via institutional critique is astute, highlighting the need for wider attention upon contemporary trans artist voices and intersectional dialogues."

Listings information

Cassils: Human Measure

HOME, 2 Tony Wilson Place, Manchester, M15 4FM
Homemcr.org

Exhibition: Sat 2 Oct - Sun 12 Dec, 2021

Preview: Fri 1 Oct from 18.00

Performance: 7 Oct 2021

Live stream details TBA

Entrance to HOME exhibitions is free to all.

Tickets for the live performance of Human Measure on Thu 7 Oct 2021 in Theatre 1 will go on sale 30 July to HOME Friends, 2 Aug to HOME Members and 3 Aug to the general public.

Ticket information for the live stream will follow in due course.

[ENDS]

Note to Journalists: Cassils uses plural I gender-neutral pronouns (i.e. "they") as defined in the [GLAAD Media Reference Guide on Transgender Issues](#).

For more information, images or interview requests, please contact Kat Harrison-Dibbits, Head of Communication at HOME on 0161 212 3463 or email kat.harrison-dibbits@homemcr.org.

We wish to acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts.



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Cassils is a transgender visual artist who makes their own body the material and protagonist of their performances. Working in live performance, sculpture, photography, sound design and film, Cassils contemplates the history(s) of LGBTQI+ violence, representation, struggle and empowerment. For Cassils, performance is a form of social sculpture: Drawing from the idea that bodies are formed in relation to forces of power and social expectations, their work investigates historical contexts to examine the present moment.

Solo exhibitions include Banff Center for the Arts, Perth Museum of Contemporary Art, Perth, Australia; The Station Museum of Contemporary Art, Houston, TX; Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York, NY; Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Omaha, NE; Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA; MU Eindhoven, Netherlands; and Trinity Square Video, Toronto, Canada. Cassils's work has been featured at MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA; Museum of Contemporary Art Tucson, AZ; Oakland Museum of California, CA; Kunstpalais, Erlangen, Germany; MUCEM, Marseille, France; Deutsches Historisches Museum and the Schwules Museum, Berlin, Germany; MUCA Roma, Mexico City, Mexico; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA; Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Los Angeles, CA; and Museo de Arte y Diseño Contemporáneo, San José, Costa Rica. Cassils's performances have been featured at The Broad, Los Angeles, CA; The National Theatre, London, UK; ANTI Contemporary Performance Festival, Kuopio, Finland; Wiener Festwochen, Vienna, Austria; Dark Mofo, MONA, Hobart, Tasmania; and Queer Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia. Cassils's films have premiered at Sundance International Film Festival, Park City, UT; OUTfest, Los Angeles, CA; Institute for Contemporary Art, London, UK; Museu da Imagem e do Som, São Paulo, Brazil; International Film Festival Rotterdam, The Netherlands; M+, at West Kowloon, Hong Kong, China; and Outsider Festival, Austin, TX for Early Career Retrospective: Cassils.

Cassils is the recipient of the USA Artist Fellowship, Guggenheim Fellowship, a 2020 Fleck Residency from the Banff Center for the Arts, a Princeton Lewis Artist Fellowship finalist, a Villa Bellagio Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship, the inaugural ANTI Festival International Prize for Live Art, California Community Foundation Grant, Creative Capital Award, MOTHA (Museum of Transgender History) award, and Visual Artist Fellowship from the Canada Council of the Arts. Cassils's work has been featured in The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, NPR, Wired, The Guardian, Art Forum, and academic journals such as Performance Research, TDR: The Drama Review, TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly, QED: A Journal in LGBTQ Worldmaking, Places Journal, and October. Cassils is the subject of the monograph Cassils, published by MU Eindhoven in 2015; and is the subject of a new catalogue published by The Station Museum of Contemporary Art. Cassils is also co founder of the feminist performance troupe the Toxic Titties (2020-2008) and [In Plain Sight](#), a coalition of 80 artists and 17 immigration justice organizations, united to create an artwork dedicated to the abolition of immigrant detention and the United States culture of incarceration.

FULL CV: <https://www.cassils.net/cassils-about-the-artist>
<https://www.cassils.net>

Bren O'Callaghan is Curator at HOME, Manchester's international centre for contemporary art, independent film and theatre. His interests lie in dismantling barriers to cultural participation and working with artists who sit at the crossroads of art, counterculture and activism. A champion for emerging to established artists, he has curated exhibitions, produced and commissioned new work by the likes of Rachel Maclean, John Walter, AL+AL, Lauren John Joseph, Maurice Vellekoop and Bruce LaBruce. In 2019 he produced the largest UK exhibition to date of artwork by the visionary director David Lynch for HOME and Manchester International Festival. In 2019-20 Bren founded The Manchester Open, a biennial showcase for Greater Manchester artists that broke audience records, attracting 33,000 visitors in two months. Award-winning Creative Producer with the BBC Public Space Broadcasting Project (2004-2010). Encompassing 23 cities



throughout the UK, it was the largest network of giant outdoor digital screens in the world, for which he pioneered a programme of video art, community participation and interactive commissions.

<https://www.brenocallaghan.com>

Jasmine Albuquerque is a choreographer, dancer and teacher based in Los Angeles. She is co-founder of WIFE and has performed with companies such as Hysterica, Blue13 Bollywood Collage Dance Theater and Ryan Heffington's Fingered. Other performances include Soft Sex, Istanbul Light Festival, TEDx SoCal, KTCHN, We Are The World, Frequency Festival, Jane's Addiction and Hecuba at venues including the Hammer Museum, Zebulon, the El Rey, the Wiltern, MOCA, The Ford, The Orpheum and LACMA. Jasmine has choreographed music videos for St. Vincent, Devendra Banhart, Ry X, Monica Dogra and danced in videos for Beck, Laura Marling, Rodrigo Amarante, Lawrence Rothman, Verve Records, Fitz & The Tantrums, MIKA and Morcheeba. She has a degree in History from UCLA and trained in contemporary dance at The Edge Performing Arts Center and in Budapest, Hungary.

<https://jasminealbuquerque.com>

About HOME

HOME is Manchester's centre for international contemporary culture. Since opening in 2015, HOME has welcomed over 2.9 million visitors to see thrilling theatre and dance shows, experience great independent films from across the world, dive into the new art in our galleries, relax in our café and browse our bookshop. We work with international and UK artists to produce extraordinary experiences, creating an exciting mix of thought-provoking drama, dance, film and contemporary visual art with a strong focus on international work, new commissions and talent development. Our ambition is to push the boundaries of form and technology, to experiment, have fun and take risks. We want to explore what it means to be human today, and to share great new art with the widest possible audience. HOME has welcomed the following artists and more since opening: AL and AL, Rachel Maclean, Phil Collins, Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, Larry Achiampong, Sophie Al-Maria, Noor Afsan Mirza & Brad Butler, John Walter & David Lynch. Upcoming exhibitions include the British Art Show (24 September 2020 until 10 January 2021). www.homemcr.org | @HOME_mcr | Facebook HOME_mcr

ARTIST ADVISORY GROUP

Zorian Clayton is Assistant Curator of Prints at the Victoria & Albert Museum. He has been the co-chair of the V&A LGBTQ+ Working Group for the past eight years, and is also a programmer for the BFI Flare Festival, the largest LGBTIQ+ film festival in Europe, specialising in trans and non-binary content. Since 2017, he is a board member of Trans Creative.

Kate O'Donnell is an award-winning performer and writer, director and theatre and cabaret maker. In 2016 she founded Trans Creative arts company and initiated Manchester's first trans arts festival, Trans Vegas. Her theatre work includes the award-winning Big Girl's Blouse, one woman show You've Changed, as Feste in Twelfth Night, Electra in Gypsy and Russell T Davis' Christmas Star (Royal Exchange Theatre).

mandla rae is a Black, Zimbabwean, agender & queer writer and performer. Obsessed with archives and storytelling, they make work that draws from their personal experiences and heritage, to prove that they exist and create connections with their audiences. mandla has performed their work at Contact, the Royal Exchange, HOME and Leeds Playhouse. They are also an Associate Artist with Outbox Theatre.

Chester Tenneson is a visual artist, curator and educator, based in Manchester. Chester's artist and curatorial practices explores the absurd norms within commonplace gendered gestures and objects, through a trans masculine lens, culminating in sculpture, print and performance works.



Chester has also been recently awarded the PIVOT mid-career development grant, led by Bluecoat and Castlefield Gallery.

Campbell X is a writer/director who directed the award-winning queer urban romantic comedy feature film, *Stud Life* (2012), voted by the Guardian as one of the top 10 Black British feature films ever made. Campbell is co-founder with Neelu Bhuman of Wahala Film Fund, a completion film for short films by and about Queer, Trans, Intersex People of Colour, to combat their marginalisation within film and film industries.

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