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COCA ANNOUNCES 2023-2024 COCAPRESENTS SEASON

Productions offer thought-provoking, innovative programming fit for multigenerational audiences

ST. LOUIS (June 8, 2023)—[COCA](https://www.cocastl.org), the fourth largest multidisciplinary community arts center in the U.S. and a leader in innovative arts education, announced its 2023-2024 COCAPresents Season. COCAPresents, COCA's signature performance season, is comprised of thought-provoking, innovative programming for multigenerational audiences. The season runs October 29, 2023–July 21, 2024.

The productions chosen for the season are centered on the theme of "Power in Belonging." COCA believes the arts are for everyone and creates a space for every family, performer, and student—past, present, and future. This sense of acceptance and belonging powers COCA's work and is seen throughout every performance in the upcoming season.

"It is our desire that our COCA kids and our community audiences really see and connect to the numerous references each show broadcasts around this season's theme of 'Power in Belonging,'" said Orlando Graves Bolaños, COCA Senior Director of Arts Programming. "Our new season lineup abundantly welcomes everyone with something special for each age group and performing arts discipline, and we can't wait to share that with our audiences."

Kicking off the COCAPresents season is ***The Carp Who Would Not Quit***, a travelling production by Honolulu Theatre for Youth. This interactive performance brings to life traditional fable tellings from Japan and Okinawa to teach important lessons of persistence, respect, and kindness. Introducing live original music, language, and performance traditions from these cultures, *The Carp Who Would Not Quit* is specifically developed for our youngest audiences.

In November, two of COCA's Pre-Professional Division companies come together for the **COCA New Works Festival**. Young creatives will showcase new work developed as part of COCA's Choreographic Lab Project with choreographer Audrey Johnston and a public reading of new plays by COCAwrites playwrights. Performers in ***Improv Troupe: COCA Ignites!*** practice long-form and short-form improvisation, sketch comedy, and activities that involve audience participation.

COCA Associate Director of Dance Kirven Douthit-Boyd's new work, ***MOTHer***, centers a family who uses the power of dance to elevate their existence. This production encompasses alchemy, robust original sound, vibrant imagery inspired by the cultural aesthetic of Afrofuturism, and movement vocabulary that blends cultural and contemporary dance, to tell the story of five women who will stop at nothing to protect the prosperity of their children.

Joyful features COCA's premiere vocal talents in Allegro Vocal Company in a performance to celebrate the winter season. Allegro Vocal Company is under the direction of inaugural COCA Artistic Director of Voice Dr. Philip A. Woodmore.

The Kid at the Edge of Everything features a cast of professional adults and COCA student actors in an imaginative adventure about friendship. Written by internationally acclaimed playwright Finegan Kruckmeyer, the play has been described as "Interstellar surrealism," yet children will relate to the real-world struggles of the characters to find balance and connection.

In May, **Triumphant** returns to unite COCA's Pre-Professional Division dance companies for their season-ending bows. *Triumphant* highlights the versatility of our young artists as they present 12 works by guest artists across three unique programs. *Triumphant* recognizes the work of men in dance with guest choreographers, including Justin Conte, Tom Gold, My'Kal Stromile, and Omari Wiles. Allegro Vocal Company ends their season with **Harmonious**, featuring COCA's top voices and focusing on different genres of music to celebrate a broad range of prominent musical styles spanning the past century. COCA's Improv Troupe also returns for a spring performance of **Improv Troupe: COCA Ignites!**

The COCApresents season concludes with COCA's annual summer musical production of **Ragtime**, a sweeping musical portrait of early 20th century America told through the stories of three families in the pursuit of the American Dream. It explores ideas of family, justice, success, and art through the experiences of different races in this country. Notable, professional COCA alumni from all 20 years of the COCA musical theatre program join current students on and off the stage to bring this important story to life.

Tickets go on sale to the general public on Thursday, July 20, 2023. For more information, visit cocastl.org/coca-presents or contact the COCA Box Office at 314.561.4873 or boxoffice@cocastl.org.

2023-2024 COCApresents Season Productions

The Carp Who Would Not Quit | OCT 29, 2023

COCA New Works Festival | NOV 10, 2023

Improv Troupe: COCA Ignites! | NOV 19, 2023

MOTheR | DEC 8-10, 2023

Joyful | DEC 16, 2023

The Kid at the Edge of Everything | APR 19-21

Triumphant | MAY 10-12, 2024

Harmonious | MAY 17-18, 2024

Improv Troupe: COCA Ignites! | MAY 19, 2024

Ragtime | JUL 20-21, 2024

2023-2024 Millstone Gallery Exhibitions

COCA's Millstone Gallery season opens with *Animated*, a collective exhibition by women artists in St. Louis who worked through the different modalities of illustration, from traditional American comics to lithographs and cartoon activism. *Eternal Jungle*, a solo exhibition by Jasmine Raskas, is an immersive installation that explores sentience and questions our relationship to non-animal forms of life (both real and imagined). Douglas Dale's solo exhibition investigates how our identity differs from our exterior presentation and how our history of gendered materials applies to a transgender landscape.

Animated by Rockette Fox, Sam Gaitsch, Jodi Kolpakov, and Amy Travis | SEP 1-OCT 8, 2023

Eternal Jungle by Jasmine Raskas | OCT 27-DEC 10, 2023

Douglas Dale Exhibition | JAN 26-APR 7, 2024

All exhibitions are free and open to the public during building hours.

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ABOUT COCA

COCA's mission is to *enrich lives and build community through the arts*. With a commitment to equity and access, COCA serves as a regional hub for learning in and through the arts for all ages from all backgrounds. One of the most diverse cultural institutions in St. Louis, COCA serves more than 50,000 students, audience members, artists, and families from more than 200 zip codes across the St. Louis region every year. The fourth largest multi-disciplinary arts organization in the country, COCA is committed to supporting the vitality and creativity of more than 200 artists at the heart of their work in schools, community centers, local business, cultural organizations, and onsite at its campus in University City.