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Work-in-Progress Presentation: *Stillness Moves*

Presented by MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology as part of MIT Sounding



Photo by ioulex available in high resolution upon request.

A Collaboration Among:

**Maya Beiser, 2016–18 Mellon Distinguished
Visiting Artist at MIT CAST**
Becca McCharen-Tran, founder of Chromat
Joshua Higgason, MIT Music & Theater Arts
The MIT Self-Assembly Lab

Friday, December 1, 2017 at 7pm & 9pm
Saturday, December 2, 2017 at 6pm

MIT Theater Arts Building, W97
345 Vassar Street | Cambridge, MA
RSVP: sounding.mit.edu

Maya Beiser: www.mayabeiser.com | Self-Assembly Lab: www.selfassemblylab.net

Cambridge, MA — Cellist **Maya Beiser**, the 2016–18 Mellon Distinguished Visiting Artist at the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST), will collaborate with the **MIT Self-Assembly Lab**; New York-based avant-garde designer **Becca McCharen-Tran**, founder of **Chromat**; and **Joshua Higgason** from **MIT Music & Theater Arts**, in work-in-progress presentations of *Stillness Moves* on Friday, **December 1, 2017 at 7pm and 9pm** and Saturday, **December 2, 2017 at 6pm** as part of **MIT Sounding**, curated by **Evan Ziporyn**, faculty director of MIT CAST. The workshop performances take place in the newly opened black box theater space of **MIT Theater Arts Building, W97**, a former warehouse at 345 Vassar Street which has been transformed into a 25,000-square-foot performing arts building. Maya will perform *Three Parts Wisdom*, composed by Glenn Kotche (Wilco) from her album *TranceClassical*, along with music by Bach and Hildegard von Bingen, deconstructed and reimagined in an environment where wearable art designed by Chromat using materials from the Self-Assembly Lab, and Higgason’s lighting design, interact with Maya’s music.

This project is the culmination of Maya’s residency at MIT, in which she has been seeking collaborations with researchers in various disciplines who are expanding what is possible in the arts and sciences. In *Stillness Moves*, music and light are catalysts for movement and change which will make up the immersive and responsive environment of the performance. Maya says, “Creating a space that is alive to the music is a natural evolution in my work. What we can do with these designs is what I search for with music – looking at the edges of things not yet explored, and opening up those boundaries. This is where art begins for me; in the urgent need to reach beyond the predictable, to discover new realms and create a compelling, moving human experience.”

About Maya Beiser: Cellist Maya Beiser defies categories. Passionately forging a career path through uncharted territories, she has captivated audiences worldwide with her virtuosity, eclectic repertoire, and relentless quest to redefine her instrument’s boundaries. *The Boston Globe* declares, “With virtuoso chops, rock-star charisma, and an appetite for pushing her instrument to the edge of avant-garde adventurousness, Maya Beiser is the post-modern diva of the cello,” while *Rolling Stone* calls her a “cello rock star.”

Raised in the Galilee Mountains in Israel, surrounded by the music and rituals of Jews, Muslims, and Christians, while studying classical cello repertoire, Maya has dedicated her work to reinventing solo cello performance in the mainstream

classical arena. A featured performer on the world's most prestigious stages including Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, London's South Bank Centre and the Barbican Centre, Sydney Opera House, Beijing Festival, Big Ears festival and Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival, she has collaborated with a wide range of artists across many disciplines, including Brian Eno, Philip Glass, Shirin Neshat, Steve Reich, David Lang, Tan Dun, Robert Woodruff, Bill Morrison, Evan Ziporyn and Osvaldo Golijov, among many others.

Maya's critically acclaimed multimedia productions *World To Come*, *Almost Human*, *Provenance*, *Elsewhere: A Cello Opera*, and *All Vows* have consistently been chosen for top critics' "Best Of The Year" lists. Her production *All Vows* premiered at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and has since been on tour in the US including performances in Washington, DC; Dallas; Houston; Chicago; and New York. Other recent highlights include featured solo performances as part of the Barbican's Sound Unbound and Kings Place's Cello Unwrapped festivals in London, the Cello Biennale in Amsterdam and Strings for Autumn Festival in Prague; two new cello concerti premieres, Mohammed Fairouz's cello concerto with the Detroit Symphony and Mark Anthony Turnage's cello concerto with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra; and premiere performances with the Boston Ambient Orchestra and the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra of *Blackstar*, a collaboration with Evan Ziporyn, re-imagining David Bowie's complete final album as a cello concerto. Upcoming highlights include *Spinning*, a new production collaboration with composer Julia Wolfe and visual artist Laurie Olinder; *the day*, a music-dance collaboration with Wendy Whelan and David Lang; and performances at 2018 BBC Proms and Edinburgh Festivals.

Highlights of Maya's tours include performances at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago, Celebrity Series in Boston, Ojai Music Festival, International Festival of Arts and Ideas in New Haven, and major venues and festivals in Barcelona, Paris, Amsterdam, Torino, Tokyo, Taipei, Athens, Mexico City, Havana and Bogota. She has appeared with many of the world's top orchestras performing new works for the cello including the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Montreal Symphony, BBC Concert Orchestra, Boston Pops, Sydney Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Nashville Symphony, China Philharmonic, and Shanghai Philharmonic, among many others.

Maya's vast discography includes ten solo albums and many studio recordings and film music collaborations. Her next album, a recording of David Lang's *the day* and *world to come*, will be released in fall 2017 on Cantaloupe Music. Her album, *TranceClassical*, released July 2016, debuted at No. 1 on the Apple Music classical chart. Her 2010 album *Provenance* topped the classical and world music charts on both Amazon and iTunes, and her album *Time Loops* was selected among NPR's top 10 recordings of 2012. Her album *Uncovered*, a collection of re-imagined and re-contextualized classic rock masterpieces, made the top 10 on the Billboard Classical Chart.

Maya Beiser is a 2015 United States Artists (USA) Distinguished Fellow in Music; a 2017 Mellon Distinguished Visiting Artist at MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology; and she was recently a Presenting Artist at the inaugural CultureSummit, held in 2017 in Abu Dhabi. Invited to present at the prestigious TED main stage in Long Beach, CA, Maya's 2011 TED Talk has been watched by close to one million people and translated to 32 languages. In 2013, she was a featured guest alongside such luminaries as Yoko Ono, Marina Abramović, and Isabella Rossellini at ICASTICA, a festival celebrating women working in artistic fields in Arezzo, Italy. Maya is a graduate of Yale University and was a founding member of the Bang on a Can All-Stars.

About the MIT Self-Assembly Lab: The MIT Self-Assembly Lab is a cross-disciplinary research lab at MIT inventing self-assembly and programmable material technologies aimed at reimagining construction, manufacturing, product assembly and performance. Self-Assembly is a process by which disordered parts build an ordered structure through local interaction. The Lab has demonstrated that this phenomenon is scale-independent and can be utilized for self-constructing and manufacturing systems at nearly every scale. It has also identified the key ingredients for self-assembly as a simple set of responsive building blocks, energy and interactions that can be designed within nearly every material and machining process available. Self-assembly promises to enable breakthroughs across every application of biology, material science, software, robotics, manufacturing, transportation, infrastructure, construction, the arts, and even space exploration. The Self-Assembly Lab is working with academic, commercial, nonprofit, and government partners, collaborators, and sponsors to make our self-assembling future a reality.

About Becca McCharen, Chromat: Becca McCharen studied architecture at the University of Virginia where her courses introduced a method of design through technical CAD drawings. Following her graduation in 2006, she worked on everything from construction documents to urban revitalization master plans for several architecture and urban design firms. In 2008, informed by her obsession with scaffolding, McCharen began mapping the joints on the human body through architectural corsetry. Through an architect co-worker, McCharen was able to meet a New York-based fashion designer that was opening a pop-up shop in the Lower East Side. The Chromat cage bras, bustiers, and dresses that were sent to the shop quickly sold out and attracted attention from blogs and stylists. Several re-orders later, McCharen left her urban design job in

Virginia to move to New York City. Chromat was based out of McCharen's bedroom in Brooklyn for its first two years. Now, Chromat now has a larger studio with a team designing, producing, and marketing each new Chromat collection. Chromat has evolved from McCharen's early architectural body cage experiments into womenswear, swimwear, lingerie, footwear, and accessories. Chromat has been included in Milk's MADE Fashion Week, and has continued to grow its stockists including Opening Ceremony, Barneys, and Nordstrom. Through world tours for Beyoncé, Madonna, and Nicki Minaj, McCharen has had the incredible opportunity to work with the strong, powerful women who inspire Chromat. Structures are built to adapt to the climate and its users, and McCharen expects clothing to do the same. Clothing, like good architecture, should sense the wearer's environment and body in order to respond, protect and adapt accordingly. McCharen views each garment as armor or scaffolding for the body, empowering the wearer to become the strongest, most powerful version of herself.

About Joshua Higgason: Joshua Higgason is a video, scenic, lighting, and interactive media designer, creating unique live experiences for theater, concerts, opera, and events. Recent productions include *Control* (Five Landscapes for Orchestra), a new piece by Nico Muhly (video and scenic; Utah Symphony); *Carmen* (video; YoungArts-Miami; Dir. Jay Scheib); Radiolab's *Apocalyptic* (video, scenic, lighting; US Tour), *Mackie Messer-Eine Salzburger Dreigroschenoper* (video; Salzburger Festival; Dir. Julian Crouch), *Aging Magician* (video and lighting; Dir. Julian Crouch), Sufjan Stevens' *Carrie and Lowell* Tour 2015 (video), *Persona* (video and lighting; Dir. Jay Scheib), *Powder her Face* (video; NYC Opera; Dir. Jay Scheib), *The Ambassador* (video; BAM; Dir. John Tiffany), *Swamp is On* (video; Philly Live Arts; Dr. Dog and Pig Iron); *Dream of the Red Chamber* (Times Square Art Alliance; Dir. Jim Findlay), *Platonov; or The Disinherited* (video, scenic, lighting, La Jolla and The Kitchen; Dir. Jay Scheib), *Sontag: Reborn* (scenic; The Builders Association), and *Round-Up* (scenic and projection; BAM; Sufjan Stevens). His recent concert collaborations with CandyStations have included SXSW, Ray Lamontagne, M. Ward, and Sufjan Stevens/Bryce Dessner/Nico Muhly's *Planetarium*. Over the years, he has designed, toured, and consulted for Jay Scheib, The Builders Association, Big Dance Theater, Ira Glass, Bang on a Can, Al Pacino, Theater for One/ Christine Jones, The Windmill Factory (Tours for Metric, Jr Jr, Phantogram), Carrie Mae Weems, Tony Dove, TED, and Technical Artistry. His work has also been seen at venues including Carnegie Hall, BAM, MASS MoCA, Sydney Opera House, Theatre National de Chaillot (Paris), the Planetarium at AMNH, The Atlantic, Sotheby's, The Public, The Box (NYC), The Performing Garage, and many others. He teaches design at MIT and has taught classes and workshops at MIT, The New School, Bennington, NYU, LIU, Princeton, Duke, and BAM.

About MIT Sounding: The 2017–18 season of the innovative annual performance series *MIT Sounding* continues to blur the boundaries between contemporary and world music. Curated by Evan Ziporyn, faculty director of the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST), this season of *MIT Sounding* integrates the avant-garde sounds of ancient instruments and traditional practices with cutting-edge composition and technology to present various visions of a new, evolving music that defies genre. Upcoming concerts include The Marcus Thompson Faculty Recital on Feb 24 and The Great Clarinet Summit on May 11, 2018.

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