



Maggie Bridger  
*Scale*

Saturday, May 13, 2023  
6:00 pm

Sunday, May 14, 2023  
4:00 pm

High Concept Labs  
Mana Contemporary  
2233 S Throop Street  
Studio #401  
Chicago, IL 60608



# Maggie Bridger *Scale*

Presented by HCL in Joint Residency with Monira Foundation at Mana Contemporary Chicago

Directed and choreographed by Maggie Bridger with movement generation by the performers

**Performers:** Maggie Bridger, Jordan Brown, Joán Joel, Alex Neil-Sevier, Robby Lee Williams

**Costumes  
& Visual Art:** Reveca Torres

**Sound Design:** Shireen Hamza  
**Crafters:** Margaret Fink, Sandy Guttman, Alison Kopit, Ashley Miller

**Production  
Assistant:** Amartya Sinha

**ASL  
interpretation:** Bronwyn Schlaefer, Kristin Schmitz

**CART  
providers:** Zeke Alicea, Debby Thompson

Special thanks to Rachel Damon/Synapse Arts, Sydney Erlikh, The High Concept Labs Team, The Inclusive Dance Workshops community, Alison Kopit, Stefanie Piatkiewicz, Carrie Sandahl, Lauren Sheely, Andy Slater, and all others who contributed to the development of this work in ways big and small. An enormous hug and endless “thank yous” to Paul Krause and my family, without whom this project would not have been possible.

Access copies of all  
non-improvised text and audio  
description used in *Scale*  
available here:  
[tinyurl.com/ScaleAccessCopy](https://tinyurl.com/ScaleAccessCopy)





## FROM THE ARTIST

Using the pain scale as a primary source material, Scale places medicalized methods of quantifying pain in conversation with alternative ways of reading and attending to pain emerging from the disability community, ultimately proposing new ways of caring for the bodymind in dance. We explore these complex interactions between medicalization, care, and community through movement and video, and the use of access tools for both performers and audience members.

Scale is an invitation for you, audience members, to attend to your embodied experience of the work. The pillows, blankets, and other care objects are offered as tools for curating your way to engage with and experience the work. The performance itself aims to raise questions around the ways that we perceive pain, ultimately reaching toward a more compassionate and disability-informed way of creating and performing dance.

Immediately following the performance, we welcome you to stay for Crafting Care, an event which serves as a sort of informal “talk back” with some of the artists, as well as an opportunity to join in the crafting practice that informed much of the work of Scale. Everyone is encouraged to bring their own crafting projects, participate in a group embroidery project, or simply share space and chat about Scale in community with the artists and other audience members.

—Maggie Bridger

## **LEARN MORE!**

The premiere of Scale is part of a year-long Fellow Artist in Residency at HCL, which supports Maggie as the first curator of LabE.

An initiative of HCL, LabE supports a disabled artist in residency each year interested in organizing programs to address the particular needs of the community. For its 2023 inaugural year, Maggie is organizing LabE by and for disabled dance artists. Activities take place monthly at Experimental Station in Woodlawn and range from in-progress showings to disability pedagogy training, grant writing, and social events. Visit <https://highconceptlabs.org/news-2/labe-launches-at-experimental-station> for details.

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

Access is central to the creative process for Maggie; audio description, captioning, and other access tools are an essential aesthetic part of her making dance. HCL extends thanks and gratitude to Carrie Sandahl and many individuals at Bodies of Work, a program of the Department of Disability Art, Culture and Humanities at University of Illinois-Chicago, for collectively providing crucial support for the final work development of Scale and launch of LabE.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Maggie Bridger** (director and performer) is a sick and disabled dance artist, scholar, and educator. She is a 2023 Fellow Artist in Residence at HCL and a 2022 City of Chicago Individual Artist Program grantee. As a PhD candidate at the University of Illinois at Chicago in the Department of Disability and Human Development, her research explores experiences of pain in dance through a disability studies lens. Maggie is a co-founder of the Inclusive Dance Workshop Series, for which she and her project partner Sydney Erlikh received a 2021 Chicago Area Albert Schweitzer Fellowship. She was part of the inaugural cohort of the Dancing Disability Lab at UCLA in 2019 and serves on the planning committee for CounterBalance, Chicago's annual integrated dance concert. Her short film, titled Radiate and produced through Synapse Arts' New Works program, was recently presented as part of Elevate Chicago Dance 2022. Her writing has been published in the Canadian Journal of Disability Studies and she currently serves as an administrative fellow for the Dance Studies Association.

**Jordan Brown** (performer and Artistic Sign Language) is pumped to be returning to the world of dance with Scale after a decade-long break. As an actor and performer, he earned his degree from Brandeis University, and has worked in various regional and off-Broadway theatres including Berkshire Theatre Group and National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene. He is currently completing the final year of a second Bachelor's Degree program in ASL-English Interpretation at Columbia College

Chicago. He hopes to continue making performance spaces more accessible, and collaborating with disabled artists to share our stories.

**Shireen Hamza** (sound design) likes to sing and dance in the sun. She is an historian and artist living in Chicago, where she teaches with the Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Education Project (PNAP), a visual arts and education project that connects teaching artists and scholars to incarcerated students at Stateville Prison through classes, workshops, a policy think tank, and guest lectures. Her historical research focuses on the history of science beyond the modern West. At Harvard's History of Science department, she works on the history of medicine, bodies, and sexuality in the medieval Islamic world. Shireen also draws on premodern medical texts to create poetic scores for dance and movement. Recently, she has facilitated intimate workshops for dancers and non-dancers to explore experiences of illness and therapeutics through her scores. Shireen is joining the 2023 cohort of the Dancing Disability Lab at UCLA this summer. She starts a postdoctoral fellow at the Science in Human Culture Program at Northwestern University in fall 2023.

**Joán Joel** (performer and Artistic Sign Language) is a Deaf artist, Chicago native and Gallaudet/Rochester Institute of Technology alumni. He attributes his inspiration and growth as an artist to the Keith Haring and Frida Kahlo. He began studying ballet and modern dance at the age of thirteen, and is a former member of NTID Performing Arts (National Tech Institute for the Deaf

at RIT) and Gallaudet Dance Company in Rochester. In New York City, Joán Joel was in the performing arts in various capacities as part of the Deaf community, including with New York Deaf Theatre and Broadway Signs! Since moving back to Chicago in 2022, he is working on a new production, titled Deaf Rebel, in which he hopes to premiere later this year. He is currently a media consultant for Quiet Mile Pictures, Inc., Deaf-owned business in Denver, Colorado. In his free time, Joán Joel enjoys jogging, doing ASL covers, and reading books.

**Alex Neil-Sevier** (performer) a dance artist and educator based in Chicago. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Dancemaking from Columbia College Chicago and a Masters in Public Policy from DePaul University. Her graduate work explored using existing social infrastructure as incubators for creative placemaking. As a dance maker, Alex is interested in the ways arts and policy can intersect and support one another. She has performed with Unfolding Disability Futures and is a guest facilitator with Inclusive Dance Workshops Chicago. Alex's passion is working with young people to help them find their voices through movement. She is proud to have worked with movers of all ages in both traditional and nontraditional dance settings all across the city of Chicago.

**Reveca Torres** (costumes and visual art) was paralyzed in a car accident as a teenager. After completing degrees in Fashion Design and Theatre Arts, Reveca worked as a costume designer and simultaneously with organizations doing disability work in health, advocacy, recreation, and peer

support. She started the nonprofit BACKBONES, which provides information and other resource support for people newly living with spinal injuries (SCI), after realizing that years of interaction and friendship with others living with (SCI) made a significant impact in her own life.

She is co-director of ReelAbilities Film Festival Chicago and has curated touring photography and art exhibitions that showcase work of people with disabilities and bring awareness to disability rights. Reveca received Creative Access Fellowships at Vermont Studio Center (2014) and Santa Fe Art Institute (2017). She was selected as a fellow for Kartemquin Films Diverse Voices in Docs program (2017) and Hulu+Kartemquin Accelerator Program (2020). She received a 3Arts Residency Fellowship at the University of Illinois Chicago in 2018 and is a 2020 3Arts Awardees and 2022 Next Level Awardee. In 2020 she was awarded the Craig Neilsen Visionary Award for her art and advocacy work. Reveca uses painting, illustration, photography, film, movement, and other media as a form of expression and a tool for advocacy and social justice.

**Robby Williams** (performer) is a Black, Latiné, disabled dancer in the Chicago area. His current focus is on works that foster and lift up other artists in disabled and unified spaces, in hopes to continue the momentum that his peers and predecessors have built up. He dances with MOMENTA Dance Company and Tango 21 Dance Theatre. He is a teaching artist with ReInventability, a 3Arts|Bodies of Work fellow, and a member of Unfolding Disability Futures.

# CREDITS



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High Concept Labs and Monira Foundation are in Joint Residency at Mana Contemporary. HCL is also proud to be in Residency at Experimental Station, and a Resident Company at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance.

**For more information, visit [highconceptlabs.org](http://highconceptlabs.org)**

