



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COCA ANNOUNCES 30th ANNIVERSARY SEASON

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- *Outside In: Paint for Peace*, a community collaboration, displays a selection of the original, salvaged large-scale works made on boarded-up storefronts following the 2014 protests in Ferguson and on South Grand.
- *Uptown*, a multidisciplinary journey about the Harlem Renaissance directed by Antonio and Kirven Douthit-Boyd, features all five COCA dance, theatre and voice student companies, plus alumni on one stage for the first time ever.
- *Momentum* features an unprecedented choreographic collaboration between Kirven Douthit-Boyd and Anthony “Redd” Williams.

(ST. LOUIS, MO) – Kelly Pollock, COCA Executive Director, announced the 2016-2017 COCA Presents season today. Celebrating the organization’s 30th Anniversary, the season is comprised of bold, cross-disciplinary productions created by COCA and some of the best touring companies from around the world, as well as compelling contemporary art exhibitions. Subscription packages of three and six shows are now available.

The production season opens October 22, with an electric production *The Ugly Duckling and The Tortoise and The Hare* from Lightwire Theater, specifically for early childhood audiences. Also part of the season for those early theatre-goers is *Elephant and Piggie: We are in a Play* based on the beloved Mo Willems’ books, the COCA holiday tradition *The Little Dancer*, and the classic tale *Disney’s Beauty and the Beast*.

Rounding out the performance season is *Uptown*, a multidisciplinary journey depicting the rise of the Harlem Renaissance, which will, for the first time ever, feature all five COCA dance, theatre and voice companies, plus COCA alumni on one stage, and *Momentum*, with a blend of the best COCA has to offer in hip-hop, modern and jazz dance, including an unprecedented choreographic collaboration between Kirven Douthit-Boyd and Anthony “Redd” Williams.

Outside In: Paint for Peace, a powerful community collaboration, kicks off the exhibition season in the Millstone Gallery. Guest curated by Jacquelyn Lewis-Harris, the exhibition will feature a selection of the original, salvaged large-scale works made on the boarded-up storefronts by amateur and professional artists in the days and weeks following the 2014 protests in Ferguson. An anniversary exhibition tracing COCA’s first 30 years, a complementary collection to *Uptown* – about the Harlem Renaissance, and the annual display of AIGA design award nominees complete the 2016-2017 Millstone Gallery offerings.

“This season, we are excited to celebrate 30 years of connecting St. Louisans to the arts – be it through a class in one of our state-of-the-art studios, a contemporary art exhibit in our Millstone Gallery, a workshop in a St. Louis elementary school classroom, or powerful live performances,” said Pollock.

WHAT: COCA Presents 2016-2017, presented by Wells Fargo Advisors

WHERE: COCA, 524 Trinity Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63130

WHEN: August 2016 – July 2017

PRICES: Subscription packages (Pick 3 or Take All 6) are currently on sale. Subscribe in person at COCA during box office hours, by phone at 314.561.4877 or online at www.cocastl.org/subscribe. Single tickets for all shows go on sale on Monday, August 29, 2016.

PHOTOS: High-resolution photos available here: <http://www.cocastl.org/about/media-resources/>

THE SEASON: PERFORMANCES:

The Ugly Duckling and The Tortoise and The Hare
Lightwire Theater
October 22 – 23, 2016

Saturday at 1:00pm and 5:00pm; Sunday at 1:00pm and 5:00pm
New Orleans-based Lightwire Theater brings two classic tales to the modern stage in an unforgettable theatrical experience. Lined with electroluminescent wire, beloved stories play out through a cutting edge blend of full-body puppetry, technology and dance. Recommended for ages 4 and up.

The Little Dancer
COCA's Ballet Eclectica
December 9 – 11, 2016

Friday at 7:00pm; Saturday at 1:00pm and 5:00pm; Sunday at 1:00pm
The COCA holiday tradition returns! *The Little Dancer* is graciously supported by Mary Strauss. Recommended for ages 4 and up.

Momentum
COCAdance and the COCA Hip-Hop Crew
January 28 – 29, 2017

Saturday at 1:00pm and 5:00pm; Sunday at 1:00pm and 5:00pm
An unprecedented choreographic collaboration between Kirven Douthit-Boyd and Anthony "Redd" Williams creates a not-to-be-missed performance. Audiences will be left breathless after this high-energy performance in honor of COCA's 30th Anniversary. Recommended for ages 6 and up.

Elephant and Piggie: We are in a Play
Kennedy Center on Tour
February 25 – 26, 2017

Saturday at 1:00pm and 5:00pm; Sunday at 1:00pm and 5:00pm
Based on Mo Willems's beloved, award-winning children's books, Elephant Gerald and Piggie sing and dance their way through solutions to fundamental questions like: What do you wear to a fancy pool costume party? Should you share your ice cream? And how can two friends play with one toy? Recommended for ages 4 and up.

Uptown
COCA's 30th Anniversary Celebration
April 7 – 9, 2017

Friday at 7:00pm; Saturday at 1:00pm and 5:00pm; Sunday at 1:00pm and 5:00pm
Marking our 30th Anniversary, COCA brings celebrated Alvin Ailey dancer/choreographer Matthew Rushing's *Uptown* to life in a collaborative production between its five pre-professional student companies and musicians from Jazz St. Louis in a showcase celebration of the power of the arts. The audience encounters characters both real and fictional from 1920s Harlem, and scenes – a busy street, a rent party, a night at the Savoy ballroom – that highlight major historic moments. Recommended for all ages.

Disney's Beauty and the Beast
COCA Theatre Company
July 21 – 23, 2017

Friday at 7:00pm; Saturday at 1:00pm and 5:00pm; Sunday at 1:00pm and 5:00pm
A classic story of a young woman and a prince trapped under an enchantress' spell, which only needs the power of love to break. Recommended for ages 5 and up.

EXHIBITIONS:

Outside In: Paint for Peace
August 27 – October 30, 2016

Guest curated by Jacquelyn Lewis-Harris, COCA presents a selection of the original, salvaged large-scale works made on the boarded-up storefronts by amateur and professional artists in the days and weeks following the 2014 protests in Ferguson, MO, showcasing the power of art in our community. *OUTSIDE IN - Painting for Peace* is presented in collaboration with the Sheldon Art Galleries, Gallery Visio at University of Missouri St. Louis, and Carol Swartout Klein, author of the award-winning children's book *Painting for Peace in Ferguson*. Additional presenting and program partners include the Ferguson Youth Initiative, Missouri History Museum, and the Urban League.

Tracing COCA 1986–2016

January 6 – March 5, 2017

In honor of our 30th anniversary, COCA takes a look back to recognize the key individuals and moments that have helped COCA achieve its mission: to enrich lives and build community through the arts.

Spring Exhibition

March 24 – May 14, 2017

COCA's 30th Anniversary celebration continues with this exhibit which complements the production of *Uptown* and highlights the influences and contributions of the artists and art of the Harlem Renaissance.

AIGA Annual Design Showcase

JUNE 2 – 25, 2017

COCA welcomes this annual showcase of award-winning regional design representing the best work across disciplines.

SEASON ADD-ONS:

Akeelah and the Bee

COCA Theatre Company

November 4 – 5, 2016

Friday at 7:00pm; Saturday at 5:00pm

Akeelah has a crazy passion for words: the more abstruse and labyrinthine, the better. But this gift is almost overwhelmed by the challenge of her daily life in a tough, Chicago neighborhood. Akeelah's aptitude earns her a spot in the National Spelling Bee, which inspires the people in her neighborhood with her courage and tenacity. Recommended for ages 8 and up.

The Little Dancer Tea

December 11, 2016

Sunday at 2:00pm

A delightful tea party with *The Little Dancer* performers, which begins immediately following the Sunday, 1pm performance.

Allegro Winter Concert

December 17, 2016

Saturday at 5:00pm

Allegro, COCA's vocal music company brings an energizing repertoire of musical theatre, pop and winter classics to the stage. Solo performances by alumni including Christina Ramirez, recipient of the 2016 Distinguished Alumni Award, as well as dancers highlight this year's concert. Recommended for all ages.

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ABOUT COCA

Founded in 1986, COCA is the fourth largest multidisciplinary community arts center in the country and a national leader in innovative arts education. With a mission to enrich lives and build community through the arts, COCA serves 50,000 people of all ages and skill levels, from enthusiastic amateurs to emerging professionals — all taught by a faculty of distinguished arts educators. We provide meaningful arts experiences in our own studios, gallery and theatres as well as in schools, community centers and corporate settings in order to build a vibrant St. Louis that is creative, connected and inclusive. To ensure diversity and inclusion in all of our programs we are committed to eliminating economic and social barriers to participation in the arts.