

High Concept Lab  
Sponsored Artist Program 2018  
Cat Mahari

Artist Bio: (2000 character limit)

Describe your personal history and artistic influences.

Cat Mahari creates work with personal and collective transformational possibilities. She is the founder/director of 31st&Brklyn, a platform for performance art and community engagement. In 2017 Mahari received a Charlotte Street Foundation Generative Artist Fellowship, won Jit Vs House, House 1 v1 in Detroit, MI; premiered the solo mixtape series Violent/Break: Vol II - a semi-autobiographic performance exploring the ontology of violence, and directed Imprints&Traces a dance film commissioned by the KC Museum. She is a 2x SEARCH grant awardee, 2008 Fulbright/Gilman Scholar, for her performance-as-research series on inter-connectivity between Merce Cunningham and breaking, presented at University of Missouri at Kansas City's Conservatory of Music and Dance, as part of the SEARCH Symposium (2007, 2009). The series explored street dance, chance procedure, film and movement technologies. She received a KC Arts Inspiration Award for the interdisciplinary work The Projects (2010) which drew on the heterogeneity of city life at a business mall. the solo mixtape series Violent/Break: Vol I premiered in London at Brink Festival (2011). Vol I has been shown in London, Carei, and Toronto. Vol II received 2016 Lighton International Artist Exchange funding for travel and study of Chen tai chi chuan in China. She is a recipient of St. Louis Regional Arts Commission Artist Support Grant (2013) and Andy Warhol Rocket Grant (2016) for The Floor, a site-specific performance and trans media study into traditions of partnered dance, Great Black Migration of WWII, and folk lore. The BAM! series began with Expectation of Violence/Rites due Spring: B-BAM! (2015) an immersive multi-media performance work, focusing on Blackness, America, and violence in Kansas City. Ms. Mahari, is a member of Gool, a Krump family, and Gateway City Breakers, a hip hop crew, has a BFA in dance from UMKC, and a MA in Performance, Practice and Research from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Artist Statement: (2000 character limit)

Please address the concept and direction of your proposed work and its relation to your art making practice as a whole.

My performances build on my richly layered body history, stemming from my archive of research, physical training and intent of manifesting an intellectual and informal legacy through documentation. I explore the connectivity between behavior and aesthetic process. In the solo mixtape series Violent/Break: Vol II, for which I am applying; I articulate attempts of death, reconciliation and re-birth of my experiences being educated in the lie of the black-body-as-violent, and as a site for a range of violence to be enacted/and acts - gender/sexuality, culture, capital, ancient history, and race. Violent/Break: Vol II situates the complexity, strength, and fragility of this

communication as a search for wholeness. My projects are devised in a spectrum of exploration, and integrates video projection to re-define the capacity of humans to create resonance embedded in Black cultural emergence, technologies, exploitation, and hyper-dominance. Thru Violent/Break: Vol II I usurp resolutions on violence via street dance and martial arts. I am a member of Gool, a krump family, and study tai chi chuan under 12th-In-Room Disciple Chen Huixian. Krump, is a street dance, in which the sacrilegious is the social and personal lack caused by dishonest interaction and false self-projection. Chen tai chi chuan, a martial art, known for its focus on inner well-being has a historiography including its translated name as Ultimate Supreme Pugilism. My work is series based, exploring specific themes, meanings and multimedia. The recurring paradigm of materials are intricately tied to the subject matter - thus my work is a mixtape. As a mixtape Violent/Break: Vol II (the second in the series) materials serve for Afrofuturist activation, to act as an emancipatory mode of mobilization - including semiotics of media. I resource the fecundity and meaning of language signs operations contextually to affect future realities. At my core is the presentation of liminal takes on the making-of-the-world.

Project Proposal: (3000 characters)

Please provide a brief overview on the project you intend to begin, develop, or present during the season of Sponsorship, including details about how you will realize your work. High Concept Labs' staff supports the growth of a single project proposed by an individual or group of artists over the time period of four months. Each season is curated to represent emerging and established artists from a range of artistic disciplines.

the solo mixtape series Violent/Break: Vol II is an interdisciplinary solo performance, first workshopped during a 2017 residency at 31st&Brklyn, supported by a M-AAA Artist Innovations grant. It involves the soundscapes of Kerwin Young and direction, choreography, text, and scenography of Cat Mahari. Vol II explores violence as an ontological relational process containing spiritual, martial, and transcendental points of revelation. It centralizes African diaspora cultural technology of krump and chen tai chi chuan, a Chinese martial art. Krump, a style of street dance is also an acronym standing for Kingdom Radically Uplifted Praise, positioning it as a form of spiritual praise dancing. Krump and chen tai chi forms bear resemblance in their wide legged stance, control, power, and inner path focus on transcendence, while flowing through and carving space. This space includes the mental, material and sociopolitical. The foundations of krump are explicitly embedded in personal freedoms and storytelling. As krump developed from professional clown artists (clown as in the street dance), its originators fought for a means to access a fuller spectrum of their emotional, mental, and physical truths within hip hop, which dominates street dance. While researching historical origins of tai chi chuan, the story of Bodhi Dharma, took on politicized, mythic, and personal resonance. The story posits Bodhi Dharma as a south Indian Buddhist monk, credited with founding martial arts in China. In modernity dark south Indian people are systematically oppressed, which led to the formation of a chapter of the Black Panther

Party in India. Just like a mixtape Violent/Break: Vol II physical, social, and political materials are an Afrofuturist performance on reconstituting cultural and cross-technological influence.

Using 12'x6" architectural foam blocks, round table cloths, and video projected imagery, a world within this reality rife with anti-blackness, is created. Wherein cultural and personal symbols are powerful waves that navigate us to the worth of living. The process begins in the mid-life of Ms. Mahari, at the end of long held lies, in order to apprehend a transcendental acceptance of the full spectrum of her reckoning of violence. All media, dance, and martial arts is by Mahari, an artist with a growing capacity for designing movement and media integrated work. Prolific composer, conductor, recording producer, member of Public Enemy production team: Bomb Squad, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee, cultural ambassador, multi-musician, and educator, Kerwin Young collaborates on the soundtrack. Mr. Young is also well versed in Chinese classical composition, having studied under Dr. Chen Yi at the UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance. Vol II is a part of the Violent/Break series, and upon its completion, opportunities for national and international presentation and production support of the entire series will be sought.

Project Timeline: (1500 characters)

Briefly describe the timeline for your project. The timeline may exceed the four months of sponsorship, but please give details about how you intend it to develop while at HCL. Bullet points and dates are particularly helpful.

Process and performance residency at HCL: February 1st - MAY 18th, 2018

Video Media Creation/Choreo Blocking: February 12th - March 15th, 2018

Music Mixing/Mastering with Kerwin Young: March 23rd - 28th, 2018

Tech/Rehearsal dates: March 26th - May 14th, 2018

Invite-only showing: May 9th, 2018

Public Presentation: May 18th, 2018 \*ticketed

Project Budget: (1500 characters)

If your project involves financial expenditure (i.e. paying musicians, equipment rental, material supplies, etc), please provide a bulleted list of all project costs and expected revenue and sources of support. If not applicable, please write "N/A".

HCL does not offer direct financial support to Sponsored Artists. Strong applications will include details about how project costs will be met.

\*N/A

Currently all financial expenditures for this project have already been met, due to remaining funds from Cat Mahari's 2017 M-AAA Artist Innovations grant, including artist materials (foam, software, cloths), guest artist fees, accommodation, and travel.

How will Sponsorship by HCL help you achieve your project goals?: (2000 characters)

Please list the specific ways in which Sponsorship by HCL will assist in the development of your project and help you achieve your stated goals. This can include developing the work through rehearsals in the HCL studio; holding classes or workshops; presenting works-in-progress showings; participating in artist critiques; presenting an artist talk; growing your audience base through increased marketing presence; hosting a premiere performance of your work; and more.

The inclusion of the solo mixtape series Violent/Break: Vol II as part of the Sponsorship program of HCL seeks five-fold goals: 1) to leverage HCL's network of presenters and producers of performance art for future presentation support of the project series; 2) to strengthen the positionality of krump as a seismic facet of avant garde performance and physical theatre exploration and technical movement; 3) to considerably increase the qualitative effectiveness of the projects goal of transforming social and personal values through much needed critical and community feedback; 4) to embolden Cat Mahari's creation of immersive choreographic performances linked with video mediated work; and 5) to springboard an effort in the creation of a street dance event that explicitly focuses conversations and actions on gendered and sexualized violence.

All of the above can be successfully facilitated with this projects proposed timeline in partnership with committed resource support of High Concept Lab. High Concept Lab provides the necessary responsibilities of stabilizing time, space/place, professional marketing and documentation, enlarged professional community networks and audience base - that can significantly springboard this project. HCL support provisions the solo mixtape series Violent/Break: Vol II and lead artist, Cat Mahari, with visceral positive energy. The energy to challenge, re-direct, and commit to the creation of compelling theatre. Utilizing HCL's studio the project gains a dedicated temporary home in which to rehearse, experiment, host public community engagements, invite-only showings and a public performance. Chicago is a major hub of arts innovation, and as such, if this project were chosen as a Sponsored artist project of High Concept Labs, it would considerably increase the attention to the lead artist processes, questions and the scope of her production skills. HCL support catalyzes the artist livelihood.