



**EXPO CHICAGO AND THE MAGNIFICENT MILE® ASSOCIATION,  
WITH KAVI GUPTA GALLERY, TO PRESENT THIRD ITERATION  
OF *SKIN + MASKS*, CURATED BY ACCLAIMED ARTIST VIC  
MENSA**

Centering on Work by Emerging Chicago-Based Contemporary Artists, *SKIN + MASKS* Seeks to Explore the Meaning of Identity and Will Be on View through April 2023 at 535 N Michigan Ave

CHICAGO (Dec. 12, 2022) — **EXPO CHICAGO**, the international exposition of contemporary and modern art, and **The Magnificent Mile® Association**, with **Kavi Gupta Gallery**, announce the presentation of the third iteration of ***SKIN + MASKS***, curated by **Vic Mensa** and **Chanelle Lacy**. The group show will feature a variety of emerging and established Chicago-based contemporary artists and will be on view through April 2023 at 535 N Michigan Avenue on Chicago's iconic Magnificent Mile.

As part of a continued effort to bring invigorating visual art to Michigan Avenue that included Nick Cave and Bob Faust's *Rapt on the Mile* installation last Fall, The Magnificent Mile Association has again partnered with EXPO CHICAGO to expand art offerings for residents and consumers in a new collaboration brought to life with Kavi Gupta Gallery.

For his curatorial debut, Vic Mensa deploys a seminal text by Antilles-born author Frantz Fanon (b. 1925 — d. 1961) as a foundation for a group art exhibition aimed at decolonizing art beyond the politics of visibility. In his 1952 book *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon presented a psychoanalytical tour-de-force, exposing how colonization weaponized skin as an agent of alienation, imposing an existential divide on people. *SKIN + MASKS* features work by a range of Chicago-based contemporary artists who, like Fanon, are striving to understand and express the meaning of identity not from the vantage point of White gaze, but from the perspective of individual realities.

Mensa, a Grammy-nominated rapper, author, singer, visual artist, activist and NAACP Image Awards nominee, is also the founder of SaveMoneySaveLife, a Chicago-based, philanthropic non-profit organization operating at the intersection of art, entertainment and sustainable social change.

"*SKIN + MASKS* is a cultural conversation spanning bandwidth of race, identity and art, created in collaboration with Kavi Gupta Gallery," said **Vic Mensa**. "Since its launch in July, it has seen multiple different iterations, and we are ecstatic to expand it into its next existence as a limited engagement installation on Michigan Avenue. With this new moment in the life of *SKIN +*



*MASKS*, we look to develop the show's conceptual framework while spotlighting even more brilliant work from some of the same, and some different, Chicago creators."

"*SKIN + MASKS* has served as a community centered incubator of expansive conversation and radical performance since its debut this summer. The gallery prides itself on amplifying diverse voices and partnering with Vic Mensa on this show has not only brought more seats to the table, but broadened the table itself," said **Chanelle Lacy**. "I could not be more thrilled to join as co-curator of this next iteration of *SKIN + MASKS* in ongoing support of our mission to provide elevated platforms, such as the Magnificent Mile, for diverse communities of artists both emerging and established that are often overlooked or marginalized."

"We are proud to be collaborating with the Magnificent Mile Association, Kavi Gupta Gallery and the curators, Vic Mensa and Chanelle Lacy, to present this groundbreaking contemporary art exhibition," said **Tony Karman**, President | Director, EXPO CHICAGO. "This limited engagement installation on Michigan Avenue is a wonderful addition to Chicago's great Magnificent Mile, showcasing to the world the work of emerging Chicago-based artists and the rich artistic talent that is active in our great city today."

"Art, architecture, and engaging experiences contribute to the magic that is created daily on The Magnificent Mile," said **Kimberly Bares**, President and CEO of The Magnificent Mile Association. "We are thrilled that this group art exhibition will be on display for Chicago residents and visitors to enjoy, and that the works are available for people to add to their own collections."

Acclaimed established and emerging artists featured in the show include AFRICOBRA co-founder Gerald Williams, Nikko Washington, Mia Lee, Thelonious Stokes, Lola Ayisha Ogbara and more.

The exhibition will run through the tenth anniversary edition of EXPO CHICAGO (April 13 – 16) and present programming during EXPO ART WEEK to engage artists featured in *SKIN + MASKS*. The exposition's tenth anniversary edition will celebrate a decade of bringing leading modern and contemporary art from around the world to Chicago, solidifying the city's place as an international art hub and a convener for global perspectives and creativity. The 2023 edition of the fair will feature more than 140 exhibitors, in addition to bringing more than 80 curators and countless artists, collectors and creatives from around the world to Navy Pier's Festival Hall.

*SKIN + MASKS* is made possible through the collaboration by EXPO CHICAGO and The Magnificent Mile Association with Kavi Gupta Gallery. Special thanks to the City of Chicago for sponsorship. This program is also sponsored by the American Rescue Plan.

For more information on *SKIN + MASKS*, please [click here](#).

### **About EXPO CHICAGO**

[EXPO CHICAGO](#), the international exposition of contemporary and modern art, features leading international galleries alongside a leading platform for contemporary art and cultural



programming. The 10th anniversary edition of EXPO CHICAGO will take place within Navy Pier's historic Festival Hall April 13 - 16, 2023. EXPO CHICAGO presents a diverse and inventive program, including [/Dialogues](#) (presented in partnership with the School of the Art Institute of Chicago) and Exchange by Northern Trust: An Interactive Conversation Around the Art of Collecting, unrivaled programs for both public and VIP audiences; [IN/SITU](#), dynamic on-site installations highlighting large-scale sculpture, film, and site-specific work; and major public art initiatives, including [IN/SITU Outside](#), with works installed throughout Chicago Park District locations, and [OVERRIDE | A Billboard Project](#), a curated selection of work by international artists displayed throughout the city's digital billboard network. The EXPO CHICAGO program also features an unprecedented commitment to host curatorial initiatives during the exposition, including the [Curatorial Forum](#) in partnership with Independent Curators International (ICI), and the [Curatorial Exchange](#), which partners with foreign agencies and consulates to expand the exposition's global reach; and the [Directors Summit](#), which brings together emerging art museum leaders for a three-day program addressing the shifting dynamics of museum leadership today.

EXPO CHICAGO is presented by Art Expositions, LLC. Under the leadership of President and Director Tony Karman, EXPO CHICAGO draws upon the city's rich history as a vibrant international cultural destination, while highlighting the region's contemporary arts community and inspiring its collector base. For more information on EXPO CHICAGO visit [expo-chicago.com](http://expo-chicago.com).

### **About The Magnificent Mile® Association**

The Magnificent Mile® Association was founded in 1912 and is a private, nonprofit membership organization with a mission of preserving, promoting, and enhancing one of Chicago's most unique, multi-use neighborhoods. In addition to international marketing and planning popular consumer activations programming year-round, The Association also serves its members with district planning and beautification and incomparable networking opportunities. Members include real estate properties, retail shops, hotels, restaurants, entertainment establishments, institutional and residential properties, and various professional services.

### **About Kavi Gupta Gallery**

Kavi Gupta is a leading contemporary art gallery headquartered in the West Loop neighborhood of Chicago. The gallery operates multiple exhibition spaces hosting museum quality exhibitions each year, as well as Kavi Gupta Editions, a publishing imprint and bookstore.

In addition to hosting more than a dozen major exhibitions each year, and participating in vital international art fairs such as Frieze New York and London, Frieze Masters, Art Basel Miami Beach, Art Basel Hong Kong, EXPO CHICAGO, and the New York Armory Show, the gallery hosts artist talks, and facilitates ambitious special programming in support of philanthropic causes, and fosters intellectual discourse by regularly bringing artists, curators, and collectors together with academics and experts in the contemporary art field.



Kavi Gupta's participation in the global art community is anchored in their mission to amplify the voices of diverse and underrepresented artists to expand the canon of art history. Through innovative and ambitious exhibitions, multimedia programming, and rigorous publications, they foster an evolving conversation among international communities about art and ideas.

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