

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pulitzer Presents *In Two*, A Series of Performances and Sculptural Work By Brendan Fernandes

Commissioned in Conjunction with Scott Burton Retrospective

Sept 6, 2024 – Feb 2, 2025

Performance weekends — Sep 7; Nov 8 & 9; and Jan 17 & 18



Brendan Fernandes with *Rock Settee* (Scott Burton, 1988-1990), 2024

ST. LOUIS, MO, July 11, 2024 — This fall the Pulitzer Arts Foundation presents *In Two*, an installation of site-specific sculptures and a series of performances choreographed by the internationally recognized, Chicago-based artist Brendan Fernandes (b. 1979, Kenya). Organized in conjunction with the exhibition *Scott Burton: Shape Shift*, on view from September 6, 2024 to February 2, 2025, the project highlights the legacy of Burton's work on artists working today.

Fernandes, who identifies as multinational and queer, has written a set of four choreographic scores taking the furniture sculptures of the late Scott Burton (1939-1979) as an affective backdrop from which to explore the duality of display and concealment in gay cruising culture. Scott Burton had pursued these and related ideas in his own work. Fernandes integrates specific gestures—flip the wrist, clasp

arm to the breast—from Burton’s choreographic notes for *Individual Behavior Tableaux* which are on display for the first time in history.

A set of soft sculptures designed by Fernandes compliment and contrast with the hard materials of the Burton works. Dancers engage with the curtains installed in the upper and lower levels of the main gallery, and a set of pillows are used as props during performances.

In Two will be performed on three weekends at multiple times each day: September 7th, 2024; November 8th and 9th, 2024; and January 17th and 18th, 2025.

“We at the Pulitzer are proud to be presenting the work of these two artists in dialogue,” says Cara Starke, Pulitzer’s Executive Director. “It is stunning to gaze across a divide of 40 years and see through the eyes of a vanguard artist and thinker like Brendan how revelatory Scott Burton’s work was and is.”

Jess Wilcox, independent curator and organizer of *Shape Shift*, notes that, “While the movement of Fernandes’ improvisational sensual choreography could not feel more distinct than Burton’s early controlled, slow, alienating proscenium tableaux performances, both directly engage with queer signaling. *In Two* has greater affinity with Burton’s more accessible later public furniture sculptures and environments that explored notions of invitation, touch, coupling, and coded meaning, while using sculptural means to shape human movements through space.”

“*In Two* is like a duet between Scott Burton and me. I am choreographing a kind of call and response between the dancers in movement and the sculpture that leads me deeper into ideas I’m interested in: two becoming one, one becoming two, and the invisible and visible in queerness,” says Brendan Fernandes.

In Two: The Sculptures & Performance

In Two, duets choreographed for four dancers, has been conceived for a particular visual and spatial experience: the temporary exhibition of Scott Burton’s furniture sculptures inside the upper and lower levels of the Tadao Ando-designed museum.

Dancers will wear white t-shirts, jeans, and slightly elevated platform shoes, just as Burton dressed the dancers for his performance piece *Pair Behavior Tableaux* at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in 1976. Their movements—passing or confronting one another, entwining, looking directly at one another or looking away—draw on gay cruising codes and engage movement with sculpture.

Fernandes has designed two sets of large subtly translucent curtains to delineate a theatrical stage and suggest an unmarked site for gay cruising. The curtains are patterned with tan and blush-colored scattered marks, resembling a dance score, but inspired by the marks left on a phone screen from swiping on dating apps. Pillows covered in a faux rock pattern project a sly delight in doubleness akin to that of Burton’s, yet their soft tactility contrasts with Burton’s stone sculptures nearby. Dual impulses towards both transparency and obfuscation have long figured in Fernandes’s work, as for Burton’s before him.

The curtains and pillow sculptures in *In Two* were made in collaboration with The Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia, where Burton produced *Window Curtains* in 1978. A companion set of curtains and pillows by Fernandes are on view at The Fabric Workshop as part of their exhibition *Soft/Cover*, later this year through late 2025.

The project is organized by Kristin Fleischmann Brewer, Deputy Director, Public Engagement and independent curator Jess Wilcox for the Pulitzer.

Brendan Fernandes

Brendan Fernandes works at the intersection of dance and visual arts to address issues of queer culture, race, immigration, protest, and other forms of collective movement.

The pairing of non-gender conforming dancer personas in *In Two* extends Fernandes' previous exploration of the dynamics of two male performers with direct reference to male romantic relationships. In 2011, Fernandes made a project entitled *Encomium*, which referenced Plato's Phaedrus and the culture of ancient Greek pederasty, a relationship between an older and younger male.

The artist is a graduate of the Whitney Independent Study Program and a recipient of a Robert Rauschenberg Fellowship. His projects have shown at the 2019 Whitney Biennial (New York); the Guggenheim (New York); Museum of Modern Art (New York); The Getty (Los Angeles); National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), Munch Museum (Oslo); and The Barnes Foundation (Philadelphia), among other sites. He is based in Chicago where he is Associate Professor at Northwestern University in the Department of Art Theory and Practice.

About the Pulitzer Arts Foundation

The Pulitzer Arts Foundation is an art museum devoted to presenting the art of today and works from the past within a global context. Located in the heart of St. Louis for more than 20 years, its home is an architectural landmark designed by celebrated architect Tadao Ando. Open and free to all, the Pulitzer is a cultural and civic asset to the St. Louis community and a popular destination for visitors from around the world.

The Pulitzer campus is located in the Grand Center Arts District of St. Louis, Missouri, and includes the museum, the Park-Like garden, a tree grove, and the Spring Church. The museum is open Thursday through Sunday, 10am–5pm, with evening hours until 8pm on Friday. Admission is free. For more information, visit pulitzerarts.org.

###

MEDIA CONTACTS

National:

Ennis O'Brien

Betsy Ennis: betsy@ennisobrien.com | +1 917-783-6553

Stephanie Markovic: [stephanie@ennisobrien](mailto:stephanie@ennisobrien.com) | +1 347.628.4688

St. Louis:

Pulitzer Arts Foundation

Kristin Fleischmann Brewer: kfleischmann@pulitzerarts.org | 314-754-1850 ext. 207

Image Caption

Brendan Fernandes with *Rock Settee* (Scott Burton, 1988-1990), 2024. Photography by Virginia Harold. © Pulitzer Arts Foundation