

15+16 NOVEMBER 2025

Alexa West's *Jawbreaker Part 1 Part 2*

Co-presented by 99 Canal and PAGEANT

Scenic Design by Charlap Hyman & Herrero

Premiered at PAGEANT September 25–27, 2025, and reimaged for 99 Canal during Nov. 15 + 16, 2025, Alexa West's newest work, *Jawbreaker Part 1 Part 2*, continues the artist's investigation of movement as an expression of patriotism and exhaustion. West merges athletic competition choreography (e.g., gymnastics, cheerleading, and step routines) with ritual Shaker dances and Post-Modern and Contemporary dance dating from the 1970s to today. The blurring of these American dance traditions accentuates a shared use of repetition and geometry, which are put to use by West as a physical inquiry into the limits of exhaustion.

The dreamlike aura is magnified and defined by a set built by CH & Herrero. The dancers in the performance swim in a room covered in translucent aqua plastic. The plastic encases the dancers in a box with a pressurized focus on momentum that seeks to go nowhere. Gabber beats run through the entirety of the piece like an infinite metronome that perpetuates pure depletion.

Part 1 erupts as each dancer individually transitions through moments of boredom, frustration, and vigor. In this section, the dancers form a human pyramid and perform handstands, splits, cheerleading kicks, and step routines, recasting movements typically associated with feats of athleticism as mundane. These coordinated exercises in group fitness are simultaneously symptom and cure, the cause of the exhaustion and the means in which to cope with mental fatigue. Such ambiguities as to where burnout starts and stops—its motives and outcomes—belong to the contemporary psycho-physical malaise queried by West's performances. In other words, the restlessness in the dancers is only overcome by perfection in their movement.

In Part 2 of *Jawbreaker*, ornamental movement and flair are secondary to the building blocks of West's human-spatial composition built on labor and form. Center stage in this section is an aluminum sculpture made by West herself. Its rectangular base resembles a Robert Morris sculpture or a balance beam. Dancers tread on either side of the beam, migrating from one side to the other in some sort of organized ritual reminiscent of both Lucinda Childs and the movement patterns used to weave a maypole.

Written by: Leah Newman

Artist Bios:

Alexa West is based in New York City. She holds a MFA from Bard College, and her work has been presented by SculptureCenter and the 2023 Performa Biennial among others. She was a 23–24 Dance Research Fellow at the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library and is a Movement Research Artist in Residence 24–25. In addition, West is a co-founder of Pageant, a venue in Brooklyn that presents performances by emerging choreographers. In 2026, West and Pageant will be part of the Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Studio at MoMA.

www.alexawest.info

Charlap Hyman & Herrero is a Los Angeles / New York-based architecture and design firm that takes a fully integrated approach to conceptualizing and executing spaces in their totality. Principals Adam Charlap Hyman and Andre Herrero, whose backgrounds are in interior design and architecture, lead a practice that considers all aspects of the built environment, from site plan to furniture. Working in various typologies – including buildings, set designs, stores and houses – CHH endeavors to consider divergent art forms and the experiences of multiple senses. They aim to create spaces that become worlds unto themselves, with *gesamtkunstwerk* at the core of the firm's objective.

www.ch-herrero.com

Performed by

Cayleen Del Rosario, Benin Gardner, Amelia Heintzelman, Molly Ross, and Isa Spector

Lamp Post by

Harrison Milne and Wyatt Accardi

Costume Alterations by

Kate Williams

Special thanks:

Kayhl Cooper, Linda Derschang, Maggie Liu, Louisa Nolte

Press

in conversation Alexa West's Jawbreaker, 99 Canal Substack

Best Dance Performances of 2025, Gia Kourlas, Brian Seibert and Roslyn Sulcas, The New York Times

Sugar High, by Quinn Schoen, Quinn Schoen, Brooklyn Rail

TONO Reveals 2026 Festival Lineup, ARTnews

99 Canal is an artist-run Studio & Public Program. We support Artists with access to professional studios and offer an open format platform for them to curate.

Founded in 2022 by artist Baldassarre Ruspoli, 99 Canal is a multi-disciplinary space for Artists to be in dialogue with Artists, alongside a rigorous, well-documented, free public program, serving a cross-generational community year-round.