

## Innovators and Influencers

FROM REAL ESTATE AND HOSPITALITY TO MUSIC, ART AND CULTURE, THESE SIX CHICAGO MEN ARE FINDING BIG SUCCESS BY BLAZING THEIR OWN TRAILS.

BY HEIDI MITCHELL AND STEPHEN OSTROWSKI

### **6. BRENDAN FERNANDES**

VISUAL & PERFORMANCE ARTIST/PROFESSOR NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

When Brendan Fernandes left his adopted home of New York City for Chicago, he wasn't sure what to expect—maybe that his art career was over. Flash forward two years, and the Northwestern Art Theory and Practice prof has earned a solo show at DePaul (through December 16), a 2019 show at the MCA and collabs with the Jo rey, the Graham Foundation and EXPO Chicago. "Chicago allows me to take ideas I've been pondering and make them happen through my new community," says the 38-year-old trained dancer, whose latest work, *The Living Mask*, explores post-colonial history. His performance pieces are interdisciplinary and hard to define. "I'm a fifth generation Kenyan Indian raised in Toronto who lives in the US. You can't look at me and put me in a box." [brendanfernandes.ca](http://brendanfernandes.ca)