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Mayor Emanuel Interviews Artist Nick Cave on "Chicago Stories" Podcast

On this week's episode of "[Chicago Stories](#)" podcast, Mayor Emanuel was joined by renowned visual and performance artist Nick Cave to talk about how he approached his immersive new work at the CTA's Garfield Green Line "L" Station. They also looked back at the origins of his iconic "Soundsuits," how failure continues to be a necessary feature to his artistic process, and much more.

If you take Green Line to Washington Park in Chicago's South Side, you will disembark into a mesmerizing space of color, pattern and movement designed by Cave as part of the historic station's transformation.

"I look at space as I would look at the way in which one choreographs a work," Cave said. "How does the audience enter the space, what does that encounter, what are they surrounded by, what is the rhythm of how things fit and flow together. And so it all becomes part of this vernacular of this experience."

In the case of his work at the Garfield Green Line station, Cave sought to create something more than simply a work of art in a train stop, and instead approached the piece as a collaboration of sorts by incorporating his vision within the station's own architecture, not to mention having it interact with Frederick Olmstead's own vision of Washington Park, and the station's historic role as the entry point to the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893.

"That was a real interesting way of working," Cave said. "I love the idea that this is an immersive installation, and that once you come off the train you're in this experience."

It was that same contextual immersion that informed Cave's process when he created his iconic Soundsuits.

As Cave told Mayor Emanuel, his Soundsuits were borne out in response to the Rodney King verdict in 1992, and evolved through a series of inspirations, first while sitting in Grant Park.

"I looked down on the ground and there was a twig," Cave said. "I started to collect all the twigs in the park because that twig represented what does it feel like to feel discarded, less-than, dismissed."

The inspiration didn't end there. Cave's famous Soundsuits actually started as a single sculpture, and stayed that way until he realized he could put it on.

"The moment I put it on and started to move it made sound," Cave said, "and then when I made sound I started to think about the role of protest and in order to be heard you have to speak louder."

Be sure to listen to the rest of the episode as Cave tells Mayor Emanuel about the Chicago's strength as a cultural center, how he teaches his students to trust themselves, and talks about creating art as a form of service.

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