



**BERLIN**

**ARTHUR Jafa – A SERIES OF UTTERLY IMPROBABLE, YET  
EXTRAORDINARY RENDITIONS (FEATURING MING SMITH,  
FRIDA ORUPABO AND MISSYLANYUS)**

(11 February – 25 November 2018)



Arthur Jafa, APEX, 2013, video still, 8'12", Farbe, Ton; Courtesy of the artist and Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York/Rome.

*"How do we imagine things that are lost? What kind of legacy can we imagine despite that loss and despite the absence of things that never were?" Arthur Jafa*

The JULIA STOSCHEK COLLECTION is excited to present the work of the acclaimed US filmmaker, cinematographer and artist **Arthur Jafa** (b. 1960 in Tupelo, Mississippi) in his first exhibition in Germany, featuring Ming Smith, Frida Orupabo, and Missylanyus. The exhibition was developed in partnership with Serpentine Galleries, London and curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Amira Gad. First presented at Serpentine Galleries from 8 June – 10 September 2017.

Across three decades, Jafa has developed a dynamic, multidisciplinary practice ranging from films and installations to lecture-performances and happenings that tackle, challenge and question prevailing cultural assumptions about identity and race. Jafa's work is driven by a recurrent question: how might one identify and develop a specifically Black visual aesthetics equal to the 'power, beauty and alienation' of Black music in US culture?

The title of the exhibition **A SERIES OF UTTERLY IMPROBABLE, YET EXTRAORDINARY RENDITIONS** relates to the sense of absence that Jafa observes as haunting Black life. The word 'rendition' refers to the artist's interpretation of the aesthetics associated with Black being, which are historically-inscribed in images, objects and artefacts. By re-performing these narratives in the present, Jafa imagines and constructs new possibilities for making them visible.

Jafa creates work that approximates the radical alienation of Black life in the West while seeking to make visible – or emancipate – the power embedded in modes of African expression. With reference points ranging from Fang sculpture to Mississippi juke joints, Duchamp's urinal to jazz, he is a filmmaker with a unique understanding of how to cut and juxtapose a sequence to draw out maximum visceral effect. By presenting the content that is historically embedded within an African American understanding of Blackness, Jafa proposes a scenario in which these histories might hold a universal significance if freed from a fixed set of discourses.

Jafa has also collaborated with directors ranging from Spike Lee (CROOKLYN, 1994) to John Akomfrah (SEVEN SONGS FOR MALCOLM X, 1993) and artists including Kara Walker and Fred Moten. He has also been recognized for his work on the Solange Knowles videos DON'T TOUCH MY HAIR and CRANES IN THE SKY (2016).

Explaining his favourite medium, Jafa has said: 'Film is one of the few things, particularly in the theatrical context, that takes up as much space as architecture but like music is fundamentally immaterial.'

**A SERIES OF UTTERLY IMPROBABLE, YET EXTRAORDINARY RENDITIONS** also includes the work of three additional voices: the photographer Ming Smith, @nemiepeba – the Instagram feed of artist Frida Orupabo – and content from the YouTube channel of Missylanyus. Together, these three 'platforms' or 'guests' are integral to Jafa's presentation in the exhibition, and acknowledge the influence of others within his own practice.

Accompanying the exhibition, a catalogue will be published in Spring 2018 with texts by (among others) John Akomfrah, Judith Butler, Jean Baudrillard, Arthur Jafa, Fred Moten and Hans Ulrich Obrist.

In partnership with

**SERP**  **ENTINE**  
GALLERIES

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## **ARTHUR Jafa**

Mississippi-born Arthur Jafa is based in Los Angeles. His first solo exhibition at Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York took place in 2016. He was selected for the 2016 Made in L.A. Biennial at the Hammer Museum, and in 2015, he presented APEX redacted, a public video installation for Flux Night in Atlanta. Additionally, his work was included in Kara Walker's exhibition RUFFNECK CONSTRUCTIVISTS at the ICA Philadelphia and he has shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2001); Media City, Seoul (2000); Black Box, CCAC Institute, Oakland (2000); and Artists Space, New York (1999).

Selected works as a film director include: SLOWLY THIS, SMILE, UNTIL, DESHOTTEN, DREAMS ARE COLDER THAN DEATH, ADRIAN YOUNG. As a cinematographer, he has worked with featured-film directors, John Akomfrah, Julie Dash, Andrew Dosunmu, Haile Gerima, and Spike Lee. Jafa is also a principal member of studio collective TNEG (along with Elissa Blount Moorhead and Malik Hassan Sayeed), a trans-Atlantic university lecturer; and has published a scribe of critical theory manifestos.

## **FRIDA ORUPABO**

Frida Orupabo is a sociologist and artist living and working in Oslo, Norway. Her work consists of digital collages in various forms, which explore questions around race, family relations, gender, sexuality, violence and identity.

## **MING SMITH**

Detroit-born Ming Smith is a New York-based photographer known for her informal, in-action portraits of black cultural figures, from Alvin Ailey to Nina Simone and a wide range of jazz musicians. Smith's career emerged in 1973 with the publication of the BLACK PHOTOGRAPHER'S ANNUAL. Her work was included in PICTURES BY WARNEN: A HISTORY OF MODERN PHOTOGRAPHY at Museum of Modern Art, New York in 2010 and she has had numerous solo exhibitions including The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Alabama (2013); June Kelly Gallery, New York (2010) and the African American Museum in Philadelphia (2003). Smith's work is held in collections at Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York; the Smithsonian Anacostia Museum & Center for African American History and Culture, Washington, DC, and the AT&T Corporation.

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## **SERPENTINE GALLERIES, LONDON**

Championing new ideas in contemporary art since it opened in 1970, the Serpentine has presented pioneering exhibitions of 2,263 artists over 45 years, showing a wide range of work from emerging practitioners to the most internationally recognized artists and architects of our time. Today, the Serpentine is two exhibition spaces situated on either side of The Serpentine Lake in London's Kensington Gardens: the Serpentine Gallery and the Serpentine Sackler Gallery, designed by Zaha Hadid Architects.

In addition to a seasonal exhibitions programme of eight shows per year, the Serpentine presents its annual Serpentine Pavilion during the summer months, the first and most ambitious architecture programme of its kind in the world. These programmes are complemented by a series of outdoor sculpture projects, special artist commissions, digital commissions, public and educational programmes, and major outreach projects including the renowned Edgware Road Project.

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## **JULIA STOSCHEK COLLECTION, DÜSSELDORF / BERLIN**

The JULIA STOSCHEK COLLECTION is a private collection of contemporary international art with a focus on time-based media. Founded in 2007, the private collection has its own exhibition building in Düsseldorf, with a total of 3,000 sq.m. available for public presentations.

At present, the collection boasts over 850 works by around 250 primarily European and US artists. The various substantive aspects covered by the collection are presented and documented in regular temporary exhibitions and publications. The steadily growing collection concentrates conceptually above all on the moving image in art from the 1960s to the present day and straddles various disciplines: video, single and multiple projections of analog and digital film material, multimedia environments as well as computer and Internet-based installations, but also ephemeral art forms, such as performances.

To supplement the main Düsseldorf location, since June 2016 a space is open to the public in Berlin. The exhibition area covers a full 2,500 sq.m. and is to be found in Berlin's Mitte district at Leipziger Straße 60 – in the building complex that formerly housed the Czech Cultural Center in East Germany. Johanna Meyer-Grohbruegge of Berlin architects has masterminded the conversion of the premises into an exhibition space.

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### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **OPENING**

10 February 2018, 7–10 p.m.

#### **DURATION**

11 February–25 November 2018

#### **OPENING HOURS**

11 February–25 November 2018  
Saturdays & Sundays, 12–6 p.m.

#### **ENTRANCE**

EUR 5.00

Entrance is free of charge for children and young people aged 18 or less, school pupils, students, trainees, the disabled, pensioners, the unemployed and those on social security on presentation of a relevant valid ID.

## **PARTLY BARRIER-FREE ACCESS**

Barrier-free access to the ground floor of JSC Berlin. The 1<sup>st</sup> Floor is not suitable for visitors in wheelchairs or for baby strollers (access only via the staircase; no lift).

## **ARTIST TALK**

On the occasion of Arthur Jafa's exhibition at JULIA STOSCHEK COLLECTION, critic Jörg Heiser talks to Jafa about his work, Black visual aesthetics, Science Fiction, and resonances in specific local contexts such as Germany's.

**Monday, 12 February 2018, 7 p.m.**

**Location:** JULIA STOSCHEK COLLECTION, Leipziger Straße 60 / entrance: Jerusalem Straße, 10117 Berlin.

FREE ENTRANCE

In collaboration with the Institute for Art in Context at the University for the Arts, Berlin.

## **PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS OF THE EXHIBITION IN GERMAN**

Sundays, 3 p.m.

Cost: EUR 10.00 per person (incl. entrance)

To register, send an email to [visit@jsc.berlin](mailto:visit@jsc.berlin)

## **PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS OF THE EXHIBITION IN ENGLISH**

Saturdays, 3 p.m.

Cost: EUR 10.00 per person (incl. entrance)

To register, send an email to [visit@jsc.berlin](mailto:visit@jsc.berlin)

**FACEBOOK** /juliastoschekcollection /serpentinegalleries

**INSTAGRAM** @juliastoschekcollection @serpentineuk

#juliastoschekcollection #jscberlin #arthurjafa

**Image material on the exhibition can be downloaded here:**

<https://app.box.com/s/0j5vze1480bsrkk0k50kg973qs00a0qk>

## **Press and public relations**

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