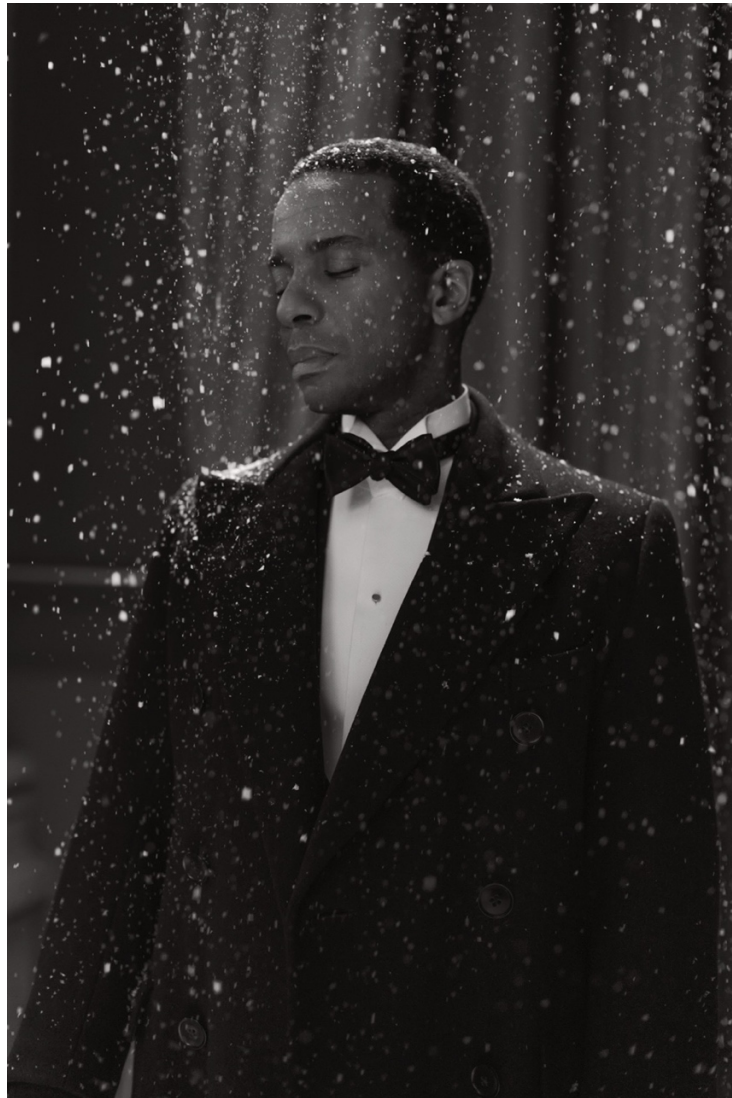


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Isaac Julien: Once Again... (Statues Never Die)
Opening June 1, the US Debut of New Photographs



Isaac Julien, *Freedom / Diasporic Dream-Space No 1 (Once Again... Statues Never Die)*, 2022.
Courtesy of the artist, Jessica Silverman, San Francisco, and Victoria Miro, London.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (May 22, 2023) – Jessica Silverman is pleased to announce *Isaac Julien: Once Again ... (Statues Never Die)*, running from June 1 to July 22, 2023. This is the artist's third solo exhibition with the gallery and the US debut of a new photographic series, based on his five-screen installation of the same name that opened at the Barnes Foundation last summer

and is currently on view at the Sharjah Biennial and Tate Britain. The exhibition is inspired by the historical relationship between Alain Locke, a Harlem Renaissance philosopher, and Albert C. Barnes, a philanthropist known for championing African material and visual culture. Concurrent to the presentation at Jessica Silverman is Julien's first UK retrospective *What Freedom is to Me* at Tate Britain, on view through August 20, 2023.

Julien is a celebrated innovator in the visual poetics of memory. Engaging beauty, and indeed one's capacity to appreciate the beautiful, is a form of political resistance for the artist whose atmospheric tableaus reveal and mythologize spirals of time. Monumentally scaled, stunning black-and-white portraits of Locke and his alter-ego (portrayed by actors André Holland and Alex Part) anchor this body of work. Titled *Freedom / Diasporic Dream-Space No. 1* and *Diasporic Dream-Space No. 2* (both 2022), they form a kind of diptych showing the two men in states of reverie, eyes shut and standing under falling snow. The scene is inspired by the late bell hooks' text *Winter*, which appears in an abridged version of the film. Complicating the act of recollection itself, these moments of surreal opacity rouse the potency of the dream and Julien's fantastical depictions of historical episodes.



Isaac Julien, *Ogun's Return (Once Again... Statues Never Die)*, 2022.
Courtesy of the artist, Jessica Silverman, San Francisco, and Victoria Miro, London.

Holland's portrayal of Alain Locke figures again in *Ogun's Return* (2022), invoking concepts of restitution, diasporic identity and the gaze. Locke's image appears reflected in the glass vitrines

holding African art in the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford, where Locke was the first African American Rhodes Scholar at the University of Oxford in 1907. Clinical and estranged, his reflection echoes the questions he raised with Barnes during their collaboration: what does it mean to interpret Black art, and how does that impact archival memory? One hundred and one years after the Barnes Foundation opened its doors to the public, these queries persist.

Recurrence and spectral repetition are further explored in *Sonata in Red* (2022) showing Locke descending a staircase in the night. Cast on the wall, the scholar's shadow looms over him in this work that returns to the site where Julien's landmark film *Looking for Langston* was filmed. The grand staircase is seen in the earlier photographic work *Film-Noir Staircase* (1989/2016). The reflexive gesture evokes the multiplicity of the Harlem Renaissance and Black creative life, where the power of both Locke's and Hughes' impact exceed their own personal narratives. It also recalls Julien's first exhibition at the gallery in 2016, *Vintage*, that debuted images from the 1989 film *Looking for Langston*.

Deeply introspective and poignant, Julien's photographic works implore dialogues about reappearance, reperformance and excavating the past to construct new futures. Though the Harlem Renaissance lasted until the mid-1930s as a discrete cultural movement, its radical doctrines, questions and demands flourish: once again, to never die.



Isaac Julien, *Statues Never Die (Once Again... Statues Never Die)*, 2022.
Courtesy of the artist, Jessica Silverman, San Francisco, and Victoria Miro, London.

ABOUT ISAAC JULIEN

Sir Isaac Julien, RA (b. London, 1960), is a filmmaker and installation artist who currently lives and works between London and California. His multi-screen film installations and photographs incorporate different artistic disciplines to create a poetic and unique visual language. His 1989 documentary-drama exploring author Langston Hughes and the Harlem Renaissance titled *Looking for Langston* garnered Julien a cult following, while his 1991 debut feature *Young Soul Rebels* won the Semaine de la Critique prize at the Cannes Film Festival. Julien has participated in the Venice Biennale; the Gwangju Biennial, South Korea; Prospect 1, New Orleans; Performa 07, New York; and documenta 11, Kassel. His work is held in significant collections around the world. Julien has taught extensively, holding posts such as Chair of Global Art at University of the Arts London (2014–2016) and Professor of Media Art at Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung, Karlsruhe, Germany (2008–2016). He is the recipient of the James Robert Brudner '83 Memorial Prize and Lectures at Yale University (2016). Most recently he received the Charles Wollaston Award (2017), for most distinguished work at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, and in 2018 he was made a Royal Academician. Julien was awarded the title Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the Queen's birthday honors, 2017. In 2022, he was awarded the prestigious Goslarer Kaiserring Award and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II.

ABOUT JESSICA SILVERMAN

Jessica Silverman is an ambitious, innovative, and internationally renowned contemporary art gallery with a reputation for curating compelling exhibitions, building artists' careers, and collaborating with collectors who are keen on positive provenance.

Silverman founded her eponymous gallery in 2008 after obtaining an MA in Curatorial Practice from San Francisco's California College of the Arts on the heels of a BFA from Otis College in Los Angeles. Silverman sat on the San Francisco Arts Commission for nine years. She is a founding member of 8-bridges and a member of the Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA). The gallery represents prominent Californian and international artists at all stages of their careers. Works by the gallery's artists have been acquired by museums all over the world including Tate (London), Centre Pompidou (Paris), Reina Sofia (Madrid), MoMA (New York), MCA Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, the Dallas Museum of Art, the Nasher Sculpture Center (Dallas), Los Angeles County Museum of Art, National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario, not to mention SFMOMA and the De Young Museum (San Francisco).

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