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isaac julien

lina bo bardi – a marvellous entanglement – photographs & collages

nara roesler são paulo

opening march 29, 11am

exhibition march 29 – may 24, 2025



Isaac Julien, *Um Maravilhoso Emaranhado / A Marvellous Entanglement (Lina Bo Bardi - A Marvellous Entanglement)*, 2019. © Courtesy of the artist and Victoria Miro, London

Nara Roesler São Paulo is pleased to present *Lina Bo Bardi – A Marvellous Entanglement – Photographs & Collages*, the third solo exhibition by British filmmaker and artist Sir Isaac Julien (b. 1960) at the gallery. The show will feature photographs and collages—many of them previously unseen—that stem from the film *Lina*

Bo Bardi – A Marvellous Entanglement (2019), which poetically explores the life, work, and legacy of the Italian-born Brazilian architect Lina Bo Bardi (1914–1992). Isaac Julien’s new collages – exhibited for the first time – use singular choice of colours to allude to different poetic and ecological motifs in Lina Bo Bardi’s work.

Simultaneously with the gallery exhibition, MASP – Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, will present the nine-screen video installation in its new annex, the Pietro Maria Bardi building for the first time in Brazil. This way, the audience can delve deeper into complementary aspects of Julien’s work. Both in the film and in the photographs and collages, Bo Bardi is portrayed at different stages of her life by acclaimed Brazilian actresses Fernanda Montenegro and her daughter Fernanda Torres.

The work travels through some of Lina Bo Bardi’s most iconic buildings, offering a meditation on her architectural legacy. The film is inspired by official histories and anecdotes about Bo Bardi’s life, where the actresses read texts adapted from her writings, immersing viewers in a narrative based on a quote by the architect: “Time is not linear, it is a marvellous entanglement where, at any moment, ends can be chosen and solutions invented, without beginning or end.”

Lina arrived in Brazil after marrying Pietro Maria Bardi in the post-war period, where she encountered elements that profoundly shaped her professional practice and worldview, feeling compelled to apply the creative spirit of Brazilian popular cultures in her prolific and sophisticated production, which includes buildings, furniture, jewellery, and theatrical sets, as well as a powerful theoretical reflection.

The filming took place in seven locations designed by the architect: four in Salvador (Museu de Arte Moderna da Bahia, Coati Restaurant, Casa do Benin, and Teatro Gregório de Matos) and three in São Paulo (Museu de Arte de São Paulo [MASP], Sesc Pompeia, and Teatro Oficina). In the film, each of these places becomes a space for performances, interventions, reenactments, or reinventions of scenes that may have shaped the history and myths surrounding Lina Bo Bardi’s architecture.

The production also features dancers from the Balé Folclórico da Bahia, who perform a dance by choreographer Zebrinha in front of the iconic wooden staircase of the Museu de Arte Moderna da Bahia. Additionally, the Araká collective performs in the building that briefly housed the Coaty restaurant, located on Ladeira da Misericórdia, also in

Salvador, and which will eventually host the headquarters of the cultural association Pivô in the city.

In April 2025, a book on this work will be published by Yale University Press as part of the celebration marking the launch of the new Yale Center for British Art building. In this publication, Julien combines elements of the video installation, works from the photographic series, and a rich selection of archival materials, offering a deeper understanding of Bo Bardi and her influence. The book also includes an essay by theorist Giuliana Bruno, an account of the project’s behind-the-scenes by curator and scholar Mark Nash, and a conversation between Julien and members of the Araká collective.

Lina Bo Bardi – A Marvellous Entanglement nine-screen installation has been exhibited on several occasions worldwide, including at Victoria Miro in London, UK (2019); MAXXI – National Museum of 21st Century Arts, Rome, Italy (2021); Bechtler Museum of Modern Art, Charlotte, North Carolina, USA (2022); Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, USA (2023); Yale Architecture Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, USA (2023); and in 2023, the video installation was presented at Tate Britain in London, UK, as part of the retrospective exhibition dedicated to the artist, *Isaac Julien: What Freedom Is To Me* which later travelled to K21 Museum in Düsseldorf, Germany and Bonnefanten Museum in Maastricht, Netherlands.

Although this is the first time the nine-screen video installation *A Marvellous Entanglement* is being shown in Brazil, Isaac Julien has previously had several solo exhibitions in the country. More recently, in 2022, *Looking for Langston* was exhibited at the Instituto de Arte Contemporânea de Inhotim in Brumadinho; *Ten Thousand Waves* was presented at the Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Niterói (MAC-Niterói) in 2016; and *Playtime* and *Scopic Landscapes* were both shown at Nara Roesler São Paulo in 2014 and 2012, respectively.

about isaac julien

Born in 1960, Isaac Julien lives and works in London and Santa Cruz, California. He has been making films and producing film installations for over forty years, including *Once Again... (Statues Never Die)* (2022), *Lina Bo Bardi – A Marvellous Entanglement* (2019), *Lessons of the Hour – Frederick Douglass*

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(2019), *Stones Against Diamonds* (2015), *PLAYTIME* (2014), *Ten Thousand Waves* (2010), *Western Union: Small Boats* (2007), *Fantôme Afrique* (2005), *True North* (2004), *Baltimore* (2003), *Paradise Omeros* (2002), *Vagabondia* (2000), and *Long Road to Mazatlan* (1999).

Recent international solo and group exhibitions include: *Isaac Julien: Lessons of the Hour*, MoMA, New York, USA; *Isaac Julien: Once Again... (Statues Never Die)*, Whitney Biennale, Whitney Museum of American Art, USA; *Isaac Julien: Ten Thousand Waves*, Espace Louis Vuitton Osaka, Japan; *Entangled Pasts, 1768–now*, Royal Academy, London, UK; *Isaac Julien: Lessons of the Hour - Frederick Douglass*, Tang Teaching Museum, New York, USA; *A Model, Mudam – The Contemporary Art Museum of Luxembourg*; *Soulscapes*, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, UK (2024); *Isaac Julien: What Freedom Is To Me*, Tate Britain, London, UK; *touring to K21*, Germany; *Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht*, Netherlands (2023-2024); *Isaac Julien: Lessons of the Hour - Frederick Douglass*, National Portrait Gallery and Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. USA; *Isaac Julien: Lessons of the Hour - Frederick Douglass*, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Oregon, USA; *I Am Seen... Therefore, I Am: Isaac Julien and Frederick Douglass*, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Connecticut, USA; *Isaac Julien: PLAYTIME*, PalaisPopulaire, Germany; *Isaac Julien: Lina Bo Bardi – A Marvellous Entanglement*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, USA; *Isaac Julien: Lina Bo Bardi – A Marvellous Entanglement*, Yale School of Architecture, Connecticut, USA (2023); *Isaac Julien: Once Again... (Statues Never Die)*, Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, USA; *Isaac Julien: Lessons of the Hour - Frederick Douglass*, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, USA; *Isaac Julien*, Goslar Kaiserring, Mönchehaus Museum, Goslar, Germany; *Details of Regeneration: Black Cinema 1898 – 1971*, Academy Museum, Los Angeles, USA; *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art 1950s-Now*, Tate Britain, London, UK, touring to the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada (2022-2023); *Isaac Julien: Lessons of the Hour*, Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, USA; *Isaac Julien: Lessons of the Hour*, McEvoy Foundation for the Arts, San Francisco, USA (2021); *Isaac Julien: Lina Bo Bardi – A Marvellous Entanglement*, MAXXI, Rome, Italy (2020) touring to Bechtler Museum of Modern Art, Charlotte NC, USA; *Galeria Helga de Alvear*, Madrid, Spain; *Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery*, Sydney, Australia (2021-2022); *Isaac Julien: Western Union: Small Boats*,

Neuberger Museum, New York; *Masculinities: Liberation through Photography*, Barbican Art Gallery, London, UK, travelling to Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, among others (2020); *Baltimore* at the Baltimore Museum of Art (2019-2020); *Isaac Julien: Frederick Douglass: Lessons of the Hour*, SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, USA (2019); *Looking for Langston*, Tate Britain, London, UK (2019); *PLAYTIME* at LACMA, Los Angeles, USA (2019); *Black Refractions: Highlights from the Studio Museum in Harlem*, Gibbes Museum, Charleston, USA (2019). Also in 2019, Julien's *PLAYTIME* was featured as part of Ruby City's inaugural programme, Texas, USA.

Previously, Julien has had solo exhibitions at venues including ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Denmark (2018); The Whitworth, Manchester (2018); The Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (2017); MAC Niterói, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2016), MUAC (Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo), Mexico City (2016); the De Pont Museum, Netherlands (2015); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2013), Art Institute of Chicago (2013), Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego (2012), Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo (2012), Bass Museum, Miami, Florida, USA (2010), Museum Brandhorst, Munich (2009), Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea - Museu do Chiado, Lisbon, Portugal (2008), Kestnergesellschaft Hanover (2006), Pompidou Centre Paris (2005), and MoCA Miami (2005).

In 2023, Julien was ranked fifth in the Art Review 'Power 100' list.

In 2022, Julien received a Knighthood in the Queen's Birthday Honours for the Platinum Jubilee year and was honoured with the esteemed Kaiserring Goslar Award.

In 2019, Julien was appointed to the faculty of the University of California, Santa Cruz. Julien and independent curator and writer Mark Nash, the former head of contemporary art at the Royal College of Art in London, developed the Isaac Julien Lab at the UC Santa Cruz campus, which provides students with the opportunity to assist Julien and Nash with project research and the production of moving image and photographic works in California and London.

In 2017, Julien was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for services to the Arts in the Queen's

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Birthday Honours List and was the recipient of The Royal Academy of Arts Charles Wollaston Award.

about nara roesler

Nara Roesler is a leading Brazilian contemporary art gallery, representing seminal Brazilian and international artists who emerged in the 1950s as well as preeminent mid-career and emerging artists who dialogue with the currents put forth by these historical figures. Founded by Nara Roesler in 1989, the gallery has consistently fomented curatorial practice while upholding the utmost quality in art production. This has actively been put into practice through a select and rigorous exhibitions program created in close collaboration with its artists; the implementation and fostering of the Roesler Curatorial Project, a platform for curatorial projects; and continued support to artists beyond the gallery space, working with institutions and curators in offsite shows. In 2012, the gallery doubled its São Paulo exhibition space, in 2014 it expanded to Rio, and in 2015 it opened in New York City, continuing its mission to provide the best platform for its artists to show their work.

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