



BERLIN

ULYSSES JENKINS: WITHOUT YOUR INTERPRETATION

11 FEBRUARY – 30 JULY 2023



Ulysses Jenkins, *Without Your Interpretation* rehearsal documentation, 1984, photograph, color print, 8.9 × 12.7 cm. Courtesy of the artist.

European premiere of major retrospective *Ulysses Jenkins: Without Your Interpretation* presented by Julia Stoschek Foundation.

The Julia Stoschek Foundation presents the European premiere of *Ulysses Jenkins: Without Your Interpretation*, the first major retrospective of the work of groundbreaking video and performance artist **Ulysses Jenkins**. A pivotal influence on contemporary art for over fifty years, Jenkins—who was born and lives in Los Angeles—has produced video and media work that conjures vital expressions of how image, sound, and cultural iconography inform representation. Using archival footage, photographs, image processing, and soundtracks, Jenkins interrogates questions of race and gender as they relate to ritual, history, and the power of the state. The exhibition is co-curated by **Erin Christovale**, associate curator at the Hammer Museum, L.A., and **Meg Onli**, former Andrea B. Laporte Associate



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Curator at ICA Philadelphia, where the exhibition was previously on view. The Julia Stoschek Foundation presentation is coordinated by Lisa Long with curatorial assistance from Savannah Jade Thümler.

Organized closely with the artist—including the digitization of a sprawling archive and conversations with Ulysses Jenkins and his collaborators—the exhibition encompasses a broad range of over fifteen videos and almost sixty works in total that showcase his collaborations, mural paintings, photography, and performances, revealing the scope of Jenkins's practice.

“Ulysses Jenkins's singular and innovative explorations of Blackness and the American experience through video have had a far-reaching influence on experimental media and generations of artists,” said **Erin Christovale**. “But since his work defies categorization, there has been an absence of scholarship around it. Meg and I are thrilled to be a part of placing his oeuvre in an art historical context, and to share it with the world.”

Meg Onli continues: “Ulysses Jenkins is the forefather of the practices of so many young video artists working today. It feels important to look back and chart that history—especially given the way Black experimental artists have come to the forefront in both art and independent film spaces in recent years, putting forward radically different modalities of moving-image-making. Jenkins's work always feels vibrant and bursting at the seams. I love the textures that he's making visually. I hope audiences will see his incredible practice and feel, as we do, there's just something undeniable about Ulysses.”

“When I saw Ulysses Jenkins's show at the Hammer Museum in February 2022 together with Lisa Long, we both immediately knew that this work and exhibition needed to be presented to an audience in Europe. I'm extremely honored to have such a historically important exhibition by two of today's most compelling curators at the collection,” said **Julia Stoschek**. **Lisa Long** added: “Jenkins's practice is accessible from so many vantage points. Artistic collaboration, alternative distribution networks, examinations of identity, media and performance, the use of new technologies, and a curiosity for formalist experimentation all converge in his practice.”

Beginning as a painter and muralist, Jenkins was introduced to video just as the first consumer cameras were becoming available. He quickly seized upon television technology as a means to broadcast alternative and critical depictions of multiculturalism, citing



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the catalyst of Melvin Van Peebles's *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971) and its call to Black filmmakers to control their subjecthood by controlling in turn the media that depicts them.

From his work with Video Venice News, a Los Angeles media collective he founded in the early 1970s, to his involvement with the artist group Studio Z (alongside David Hammons, Senga Nengudi, and Maren Hassinger), to his individual video and performance works with Othervisions Studio, Jenkins explicitly comments on how white supremacy is embedded in popular culture and its effects on subjectivity. Jenkins studied under Charles White, Gene Youngblood, Chris Burden, and Betye Saar, and has collaborated with many artists, including Kerry James Marshall, who performed in *Two-Zone Transfer* (1979); David Hammons, who was the subject of *King David* (1978); and Senga Nengudi and Maren Hassinger, both of whom appeared in *Dream City* (1983), among other works.

Among the many video works of the exhibition is *Mass of Images* (1978), an innovative video art piece that critiques the media's role in perpetuating racist and harmful images of the African diaspora in the United States. Like other works in the exhibition, it is grounded in issues that remain at the heart of contemporary conversations about inequality and environmental devastation amplified by unchecked capitalism, governmental oppression, and the impact of systemic racism on Black cultural production.

Though many emerging Black video artists who came of age in the 1990s and early 2000s cite Jenkins as a major influence, his groundbreaking and prescient work is only now being revisited by scholars, curators, and a wider group of artists. Particularly relevant for today is the political and social commentary embedded in Jenkins's work, such as his questioning of Black stereotypes in the American entertainment industry in *Mass of Images* (1978) and *Two-Zone Transfer* (1979), or calls to protect the rights of Indigenous groups and promote environmental conservation in *Bay Window* (1991).

Three videos by Ulysses Jenkins have been acquired by Julia Stoschek for the collection: *Mass of Images* (1978), *Two-Zone Transfer* (1979), and *Dream City* (1983). "After decades of creating his own networks of distribution, I wanted to ensure his work becomes a permanent part of this collection," said Julia Stoschek. "Welcome, Ulysses!"



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PUBLICATIONS

The exhibition at the Julia Stoschek Foundation will be accompanied by a publication designed by Bureau Borsche, which is free of charge for all guests. The publication includes reprinted catalogue essays by Erin Christovale and Meg Onli, as well as a reprinted essay by Aria Dean from *X-TRA*. These texts have been translated into German for the first time.

The original exhibition catalogue will also be for sale at the JULIA STOSCHEK COLLECTION in Berlin and on the website www.jsc.art. The catalogue is the first publication devoted to Jenkins's work, jointly produced by ICA Philadelphia and the Hammer Museum, designed by Los Angeles-based design studio ELLA. The publication features essays by exhibition curators Meg Onli and Erin Christovale and curatorial assistant Ikechukwu Onyewuenyi, along with a roundtable conversation between scholars Michael Gillespie and Alessandra Raengo and curators Greg de Cuir Jr. and Chrissie Iles. Also included are reprinted articles by artists Aria Dean ("Written and Bitten: Ulysses Jenkins and the Non-Ontology of Blackness") and Kerry James Marshall ("Higher Learning"), as well as contributions from artists Maren Hassinger, Senga Nengudi, Cauleen Smith, May Sun, David Hammons, and Charles White, and art historian and curator Kellie Jones.

A reprint of Jenkins's 1990 memoir *Doggerel Life: Stories of a Los Angeles Griot* also accompanies the exhibition and will be for sale at the JSC Berlin shop.

Artist list: Ulysses Jenkins, David Hammons, Senga Nengudi, Maren Hassinger, Kerry James Marshall

RELATED PROGRAMS

Conversation: Erin Christovale, Meg Onli and Lisa Long
Sunday, 12 February 2023, 4:00 p.m.

More programming to be announced.



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ABOUT JULIA STOSCHEK COLLECTION & FOUNDATION

Established in 2002, the Julia Stoschek Collection is one of the world's most comprehensive private collections of time-based art with two public exhibition spaces in Berlin and Düsseldorf. With over 870 artworks by 290 artists from around the world, the collection's contemporary focus is rooted in artists' moving-image experiments from the 1960s and '70s. Works in the collection span video, film, single- and multi-channel moving-image installation, multimedia environments, performance, sound, and virtual reality. Photography, sculpture, and painting supplement its time-based emphasis.

Public access to the collection is made possible through the support of the Julia Stoschek Foundation. Established by Julia Stoschek in 2017, the foundation is dedicated to the public presentation, mediation, advancement, conservation, and scholarship of media and performance practices. It is a non-profit organization committed to enabling institutions, researchers, and artists around the globe to produce ambitious programs and pioneering projects in the field of time-based art. The foundation also guarantees the long-term conservation of the collection.

GENERAL INFORMATION

PRESS IMAGES

<https://www.jsc.art/press/>

OPENING

10 February 2023, 6:00 – 10:00 p.m.

DURATION

11 February – 30 July 2023

OPENING HOURS

Saturday & Sunday, 12:00 – 6:00 p.m.

ADMISSION



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EUR 5.00

Admission is free for children and adolescents who are 18 or younger, school pupils, students, occupational trainees, the disabled, pensioners, the unemployed, and recipients of social security on producing valid identification.

PARTIAL DISABLED ACCESS

Only the ground floor offers barrier free access. The first floor is not suitable for visitors using a wheelchair or for children's pushchairs (access by stairs only, no elevator available). We apologize for this situation.

PUBLIC GUIDED TOUR OF THE EXHIBITION IN GERMAN

Sundays, 3:00 p.m.

PUBLIC GUIDED TOUR OF THE EXHIBITION IN ENGLISH

Saturdays, 3:00 p.m.

Price: EUR 10.00 per person (including admission fee)

Register at <https://www.jsc.art/calendar/>

GUIDED TOURS FOR GROUPS

Please inquire for guided tours for groups by email at visit.berlin@jsc.art

Price: EUR 20.00 per person for groups of 10 people or more (including admission fee). Tours for students and school pupils are free of charge.

FACEBOOK /juliastoschekcollection

INSTAGRAM @juliastoschekcollection

#ulyssesjenkins #juliastoschekfoundation #jscberlin #megonli #erinchristovale

PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

JULIA STOSCHEK COLLECTION

JSC DÜSSELDORF | Schanzenstraße 5 | D 40549 Düsseldorf

JSC BERLIN | Leipziger Strasse 60 | D 10117 Berlin

Tel.: +49 (0)30 921062460

press@jsc.art

www.jsc.art