

# ISAAC JULIEN PLAYTIME

24 January – 1 March 2014



Isaac Julien, HORIZON/ELSEWHERE (PLAYTIME), 2013

**Victoria Miro is delighted to announce Isaac Julien's PLAYTIME, an ambitious new body of work exploring the dramatic and nuanced subject of capital.**

**The exhibition coincides with the UK publication by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, of Isaac Julien: RIOT, the first publication to span the artist's trail-blazing career over the past three decades.**

The exhibition is situated across Victoria Miro's Wharf Road and Mayfair galleries and features the world premiere of the eponymous seven-screen installation, which stars an international roster of actors including Maggie Cheung, Mercedes Cabral, James Franco, Colin Salmon and Ingvar Eggert Sigurðsson, with Simon de Pury. Also on view is KAPITAL, a two-screen work documenting the artist in conversation with leading academics such as David Harvey and Stuart Hall. At Victoria Miro's Mayfair location, a suite of large-scale photographic works are exhibited together with ENIGMA, a time-lapse city-scape video of Dubai, comprised of 2500 still images.

What drives people to cross continents in search of a "better life" is a question that has underpinned much of Julien's work over the past decade, and in responding to the question he repeatedly returns to the same answer: capital. PLAYTIME thus follows on from Julien's acclaimed nine screen installation Ten Thousand Waves (2010) – on view through 17 February at MoMA, New York – which offers a response to the Morecambe Bay tragedy of 2004, where twenty-three Chinese cockle pickers were lost at sea, and Western Union: small boats (2007), which explores the perilous voyages of those attempting to cross the Mediterranean from Africa to gain entry into "fortress Europe," a story that has tragically dominated the news headlines once again in recent months.

PLAYTIME is set across three cities defined by their role in relation to capital: London, a city transformed by the deregulation of the banks; Reykjavik, where the 2008 global financial crisis began; and Dubai, one of the Middle East's burgeoning financial markets. Part documentary and part fiction, the work follows six main protagonists – the Artist, the Hedge Fund Manager, the Auctioneer, the House Worker, the Art Dealer, and the Reporter - interconnecting figures in the world of art and finance with the real stories of individuals deeply affected by the crisis and the global flow of capital.

Exhibited for the first time as a seven-screen work, PLAYTIME transforms the whole of Victoria Miro's upstairs Wharf Road gallery into a striking and immersive installation, montaging the work's protagonists and locations across multiple screens in reference to capital's potential to both facilitate global movement and to create its own barriers.

The two-screen KAPITAL, installed in the lower gallery, creates an intellectual framework for PLAYTIME, centering around a conversation at the Hayward Gallery, London between Julien and renowned Marxist academic David Harvey (author of the book "The Enigma of Capital"). Julien opens the film by asking why capital is so difficult to depict, to which Harvey deftly replies: "in the same way you can only really intuit gravity exists by its effects, you can really only intuit that capital exists by its effects." Staged as part of a seminar entitled Choreographing Capital organised by the artist at the Hayward Gallery in 2012, the event saw notable interventions from theorists, critics and curators such as Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, Irit Rogoff and Colin MacCabe. Julien has always made work in collaboration, conversation and exchange but this is the first time he has opened up the complex and rigorous research processes that lie behind his working methods.



### **Isaac Julien: RIOT, published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York**

*Riot* is the first book to offer an overview of Julien's work over the past three decades and to set it in the context of his personal and intellectual path: the friendships, mentors, films, politics and artworks that have informed his thinking. *Isaac Julien: Riot* by Isaac Julien with Cynthia Rose and contributions by Paul Gilroy, Kobena Mercer, B. Ruby Rich, bell hooks, Mark Nash, Giuliana Bruno, Christine van Assche, Laura Mulvey and Stuart Hall, is published on Monday 27th January by The Museum of Modern Art, New York and distributed in Britain by Thames & Hudson. Price £35.

Isaac Julien's acclaimed, immersive film installation *Ten Thousand Waves* is projected onto nine double-sided screens arranged in a dynamic structure especially conceived for The Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium at **The Museum of Modern Art, New York**, until 17 February 2014.



### **ISAAC JULIEN: PLAYTIME**

24 January to 1 March 2014

Open Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 6pm. Admission free.

PLAYTIME: the seven screen installation and KAPITAL: the two-screen documentary

Victoria Miro, 16 Wharf Road, London, N1 7RW

PLAYTIME: accompanying photographic works

Victoria Miro Mayfair, 14 St George Street, London W1S 1FE

### **ISAAC JULIEN IN CONVERSATION WITH DR. SARAH THORNTON AT TATE MODERN**

Starr Auditorium, Tuesday 4 February, 19.00 – 21.00. Tickets £5

Isaac Julien will discuss his work, from *Vagabondia* to *PLAYTIME* with Dr. Sarah Thornton. Dr. Sarah Thornton, author of *Seven Days in the Art World*. This event takes place in conjunction with Film and Video Umbrella's anniversary programme, 25 Frames.

### **BIOGRAPHY**

Isaac Julien is a British artist and filmmaker (b. 1960) whose work incorporates different artistic disciplines, drawing from and commenting on film, dance, photography, music, theatre, painting and sculpture, and uniting them to create a unique poetic visual language in audio visual film installations. His 1991 film *Young Soul Rebels* won the *Semaine de la Critique* prize at the Cannes Film Festival.

Julien was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2001 for his works *The Long Road to Mazatlán* (1999) and *Vagabondia* (2000), and has received wide acclaim for works including *Western Union (Small Boats)* (2007), *Fantôme Afrique* (2005), *True North* (2004), *Baltimore* (2003) and *Paradise Omeros* (2002). In 2008 Julien collaborated with Tilda Swinton on a biopic about Derek Jarman which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival the same year. In recent years, Julien has had solo exhibitions at the Art Institute of Chicago (2013), Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego (2012), Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo (2012), Bass Museum, Miami, Florida (2010), Museum Brandhorst, Munich (2009), Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea - Museu do Chiado, Lisbon, Portugal (2008), Kestnergesellschaft, Hanover (2006), Centre Pompidou, Paris (2005), and MoCA, North Miami (2005). His 2010 installation *Ten Thousand Waves* has been on display in over fifteen international cities so far, including Shanghai, Sydney, Madrid, Helsinki, São Paulo, Gwangju, Moscow, Miami and London. *Ten Thousand Waves* is currently on view at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, through 17 February, projected onto nine double-sided screens in a dynamic arrangement specially conceived for The Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium.

Julien is represented in museum and private collections throughout the world, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Tate, the UK Government Art Collection, Centre Pompidou, the Guggenheim Museum, the Hirshhorn Museum and the Brandhorst Museum.

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