Victoria Miro

Isaac Julien: *All That Changes You. Metamorphosis*

Exhibition: 13 February–21 March 2026

16 Wharf Road, London N1 7RW

Victoria Miro is delighted to present the world premiere of the five-screen installation of Isaac Julien's acclaimed film installation *All That Changes You. Metamorphosis*, accompanied by new photographic works.

All That Changes You. Metamorphosis, 2025, is a vivid, sweeping, visual poem about change, what it means to transform, to adapt and to survive. Commissioned to celebrate 500 years of Palazzo Te, Mantua, Italy (where it is currently on view) and exhibited here for the first time as a five-screen installation, Julien's latest work moves between science fiction, philosophy, ecology and art, imagining new forms of life and identity beyond the human.

The work draws inspiration from thinkers who explore how transformation shapes who we are and how we live, including writers Octavia Butler, Naomi Mitchison, Ursula K. Le Guin and philosopher Donna Haraway. Their ideas weave through the film's layered images and lyrical dialogue, beginning with Donna Haraway reading from her provocative thesis, *Staying with the Trouble*, 2016. Haraway's voice, outlining her theory of 'becoming-with' – living with other species rather than seeking to dominate them – grounds and sets the tone for the film. Haraway reminds us that 'trouble' once meant 'disturbance' suggesting that to live we must embrace uncertainty rather than fleeing from it. For Julien, metamorphosis is both survival and an act of imagination, a way of learning to live in a world in flux.

Isaac Julien, *Metamorphosis I (All That Changes You. Metamorphosis)*, 2025. Inkjet Print on Ilford Gold Fibre Gloss mounted on aluminium, 150 x 200 cm, 59 x 78 3/4 in.
© Isaac Julien, courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro

Two protagonists are at the heart of the film, played by internationally acclaimed actors Sheila Atim and Gwendoline Christie. Atim's character, Lilith, is inspired by two of Octavia Butler's heroines, combined into one mythic figure who embodies transformation. Opposite her is Naomi, portrayed by Christie and loosely based on Naomi Mitchison's science fiction novel *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* which Mark Nash first adapted into a screenplay at the beginning of 1990s, and which served as an inspiration for *All That Changes You. Metamorphosis*. While Lilith speaks from a posthuman future, Naomi remains grounded in the human present, searching for new ways to connect. 'We are not in control,' she says. 'Not even of ourselves. Everything is in flux.' Naomi's strength lies in empathy, in listening, adapting, and forming bonds across difference.

All That Changes You. Metamorphosis also draws on contemporary ecological and philosophical thinking from scholars such as Anna Tsing and Carlo Rovelli. Rovelli's conception of time as something that does not flow independently but instead emerges from a web of relationships resonates with Haraway's sense of interconnectedness, her insistence that all beings are entangled in shared processes of becoming. Together, these ideas are felt rather than stated, embodied in the rhythms of the film and in the ways Lilith and Naomi move, speak, and encounter their changing environments.

Celebrating Palazzo Te's 500th anniversary, Julien's work centres on ornate rooms of the palace. Giulio Romano's Renaissance masterpiece becomes the stage for transformation. In Romano's Room of the Giants, frescoes of collapsing Titans set the scene for cosmic rebirth. Both protagonists are time travellers who move across a series of architectural spaces that function not merely as settings but as living environments. These spaces shape and respond to the character's journeys while delineating different times: from Palazzo Te to the postmodern, twentieth-century Charles Jencks's Cosmic House in London, to a futuristic glass 'spaceship' and video art pavilion by Herzog & de Meuron for the Kramlich Collection in Napa Valley, California, and finally Richard Found's glass home in Cotswolds. Each site bears its own signature, a living presence that Lilith and Naomi transform with every encounter. An Apollo space capsule, placed among the California redwood trees transforms over the course of the film from a quiet place for reflection into a symbol of conquest.

Those human-made sites are contrasted with the lush and meditative and the devastating and chaotic, between verdant landscapes and scenes of environmental collapse. Ancient woodland, luminous jellyfish, raging forest fires and solar flares evoke the fragile web that binds all life.

Presented across five screens within a mirrored environment, the installation encourages multiple viewpoints. Scenes overlap, dissolve, are reflected and reappear. Dialogue becomes poetry and time folds in on itself. 'Every moment carries with it a metamorphosis,' Naomi softly speaks, capturing the film's rhythm of renewal. *All That Changes You. Metamorphosis* explores the non-linear and invites the viewer to move and drift between layers of image and its immersive sound, becoming part of the transformation the film depicts.

At its core, *All That Changes You. Metamorphosis* questions the idea that humanity stands at a zenith. Lilith and Naomi embody a new kind of intimacy, one that grows from difference rather than sameness. 'It was from the difference between us […] that love came,' Lilith says. This is posthumanism not as the end of humanity, but as its rebalancing within a shared ecology.

The work does not provide solutions or complete answers, instead asking us to inhabit change, to see transformation as part of what it means to be alive. Time is now measured by the rhythms of earth, air, and fire. Isaac Julien invites us to look at the world in motion, and to imagine how we might change with it.

As Naomi concludes, echoing the words of Octavia Butler's forewarning work: 'Whether you're a human being, an insect, a microbe or a stone, all that you touch, you change, and all that you change, changes you.'

All That Changes You. Metamorphosis is produced by Palazzo Te in partnership with Mantua Films; Isaac Julien Studio; the Rosenkranz Foundation; Canyon; the Linda Pace Foundation; Jessica Silverman; the Jack Weinbaum Family Foundation; Mellon Fund; and the University of California, Santa Cruz.

The script was developed collaboratively by Isaac Julien, Mark Nash and Vladimir Seput.

A site-specific presentation of *All That Changes You. Metamorphosis* will be shown at The Cosmic House, London from April 2026.

About the artist

Born in 1960, Isaac Julien lives and works in London and Santa Cruz, California. Julien 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* (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 exhibitions include Isaac Julien: *I Dream a World*, de Young Museum, San Francisco, USA (2025); Isaac Julien: *A Marvellous Entanglement*, São Paulo Museum of Art, São Paulo, Brazil (2025); Isaac Julien: *Lessons of the Hour*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA (2024); Isaac Julien: *Once Again...(Statues Never Die)*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia (2024); Isaac Julien: *Once Again...(Statues Never Die)*, Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA (2024); Isaac Julien: *What Freedom Is To Me*, Tate Britain, London, UK; touring to K21, Dusseldorf, Germany; Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht, The Netherlands (2023-24); Isaac Julien: *PLAYTIME*, PalaisPopulaire, Berlin, Germany (2023); Isaac Julien: *Lina Bo Bardi – A Marvellous Entanglement*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, USA (2023); 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: *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 (2021–22) and *Looking for Langston*, Tate Britain, London, UK (2019).

Recent international group exhibitions include *Superfine: Tailoring Black Style*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA (2025); *Imagining Black Diasporas: 21st Century Art and Poetics*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, USA (2025); *Entangled Pasts, 1768–now*, Royal Academy, London, UK (2024); *A Model*, Mudam – The Contemporary Art Museum of Luxembourg (2024); *Soulscapes*, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, UK (2024); *Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art 1950s-Now*, Tate Britain, London, UK, touring to the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada (2022–23); *Details of Regeneration: Black Cinema* 1898–1971, Academy Museum, Los Angeles, USA (2022) and *Masculinities: Liberation through Photography*, Barbican Art Gallery, London, UK, travelling to Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, among others (2020).

Julien's work is in the collections of major museums including ARoS, Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Denmark; Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA; Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; De Pont Museum Collection, Tilburg, Netherlands; de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA, USA; Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City; Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian, Washington, USA; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland; LUMA Foundation, Arles, France; M+ Museum, Hong Kong, China; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden; Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA; Pérez Art Museum, Miami, USA; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA, USA; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., USA; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Tate, UK; Towner Eastbourne and The Whitworth, UK (Moving Image Art Fund); Whitney Museum of Art, New York, USA and Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, Cape Town, South Africa.

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.

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