Institute of Contemporary Art
University of Pennsylvania

118 S. 36th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104
www.icaphila.org

NEWS RELEASE

Portrait of Ulysses Jenkins. Date and photographer unknown. Courtesy of the artist.

ICA Announces New Exhibitions and Partnerships for Its 2021-2022 Seasons

Major retrospective on the work of groundbreaking video/performance artist **Ulysses Jenkins**, a pivotal influence on contemporary art for over 50 years

Innovative institutional exchange with Dakar-based Raw Académie, led by artist, writer, filmmaker and activist **Linda Goode Bryant** reimagining infrastructure for art in the 21st century

New partnership with **Maharam** on large-scale installation by graphic designer **Na Kim**

First museum survey on the work of artist/researcher **Sissel Tolaas**

JUNE 15, 2021

PHILADELPHIA, PA

For its fall 2021 and spring 2022 seasons, the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia mounts a series of exhibitions interrogating critical social and cultural issues of our time. ICA continues to challenge and explore the definition of a contemporary art institute, fostering bold and innovative programming, along with international partnerships—this year with Dakar and Oslo—that provide a platform for established and emerging artists, create groundbreaking curatorial exchange, and further the conversation around ideas about art and society.

RAW Material Company, a center for art, knowledge and society based in Dakar, Senegal.

Exhibitions in the upcoming seasons include the first major retrospective on the groundbreaking and prescient work of video/performance artist Ulysses Jenkins in *Without Your Interpretation; RAW Académie Session 9: Infrastructure*, an international collaboration led by Linda Goode Bryant, with Dakar-based Raw Material Company, which proposes a radical rethinking of the infrastructure and value systems in contemporary art and pedagogy; and *Re_*, presenting the work of artist Sissel Tolaas, who uses olfactory sense to educate the body, and to create poetic and deeply researched works; and a new partnership with Maharam to produce graphic wallcoverings to activate ICA's 36th Street façade.

"For almost 60 years, ICA has amplified the work of artists deserving of recognition, offering alternative perspectives that change how art, design, and architectural history is told," says Zoë Ryan, Director of ICA. "Our Ulysses Jenkins exhibition, which exudes a sense of joy while addressing critical social and cultural issues has afforded us the possibility of furthering the legacy of this groundbreaking figure in video and performance art. Our forthcoming curatorial project with RAW Académie in Dakar, directed by the visionary Linda Goode Bryant, comes at a particularly strategic time for us, as we rethink our role and responsibilities as an institution. *RE_*, with Berlin-based artist Sissel Tolaas, resonates in this moment when many have lost their sense of smell and taste as a side effect of COVID-19, making the artist's research ever more relevant." Ryan continues "By inviting audiences to share in a conversation on art and society, we advance our mission and purpose and further an exchange of ideas."

FALL 2021 SEASON

Ulysses Jenkins: Without Your Interpretation

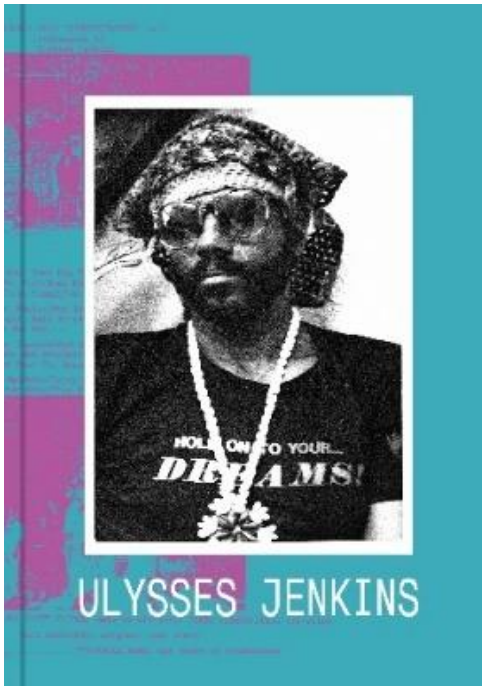
ICA: September 17—December 30, 2021
Hammer: February 6—May 15, 2022

Ulysses Jenkins, *Just Another Rendering of the Same Old Problem*, 1979. Performance at Otis College of Art and Design. Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Nancy Buchanan.

Ulysses Jenkins: Without Your Interpretation, co-organized by the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, is the first major retrospective on the work of groundbreaking video/performance artist Ulysses Jenkins, and premieres at ICA in fall 2021.

A pivotal influence on contemporary art for over 50 years, Jenkins (born 1946, Los Angeles, lives in Los Angeles) has produced video and media work that is remarkable for its fusion of forms to conjure vibrant expressions of how image, sound, and cultural iconography inform representation. Using archival footage,

Uylsses Jenkins, *Two Zone Transfer*, 1979. Still of video transferred to DVD, color, sound, 23:52 minutes. Courtesy of the artist and Electronic Arts Intermix.



Publication for the exhibition *Ulysses Jenkins: Without Your Interpretation*. Design by ELLA.

photographs, and elegiac soundtracks, Jenkins pulls together various strands of thought to interrogate questions of race and gender as they relate to ritual, history, and the power of the state.

Beginning as a painter and muralist, Jenkins was introduced to video just as the first consumer-grade cameras were becoming available, and he quickly seized upon television as a means to broadcast alternative and critical depictions of multiculturalism—citing the catalyst of Melvin Van Peeble's *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971) and its call to Black filmmakers to control their subject-hood by controlling the media depicting them. Adopting the role of a "video griot," Jenkins draws upon the inspiration of oral traditions in videos that are often structured around music and poetic recitation, as well as dynamic performances.

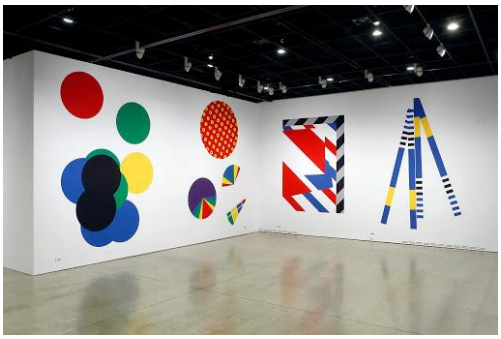
From his work with Video Venice News, an L.A. media collective he founded in the early 1970s, to his involvement with the artist group Studio Z (alongside David Hammons, Senga Nengudi, and Maren Hassinger), to his individual video and performance works with Othervisions Studio, Jenkins explicitly comments 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 a plethora of artists in his work, among them Kerry James Marshall, who performed in *Two-Zone Transfer* (1979); Hammons, who was the subject of *King David* (1978); and Nengudi and Hassinger, both of whom appeared in many works including *Dream City* (1981).

Requiring three years of intensive curatorial research—including studio visits, the digitization of a sprawling archive, and conversations with Jenkins and his collaborators—the exhibition, which has been organized closely with the artist, encompasses a broad range of Jenkins's video, collaborative works, mural paintings, photography, and performances highlighting the scope of the artist's practice.

The exhibition is accompanied by the first publication devoted to Jenkins's work, jointly produced by ICA and the Hammer, and designed by LA-based design studio ELLA. The publication features essays by exhibition curators Erin Christovale and Meg Onli, and Ikechúkwú Onyewuenyi, along with a roundtable conversation featuring scholars Michael Gillespie, Alessandra Raengo, and curator Chrissie Iles. Also included are reprinted articles by artist Aria Dean ("Written and Bitten: Ulysses Jenkins and the NonOntology of Blackness") and artist Kerry James Marshall ("Higher Learning"), as well as contributions from Hassinger, Nengudi, Cauleen Smith, and art historian and curator Kellie Jones.

The exhibition is organized by Meg Onli, Andrea B. Laporte Associate Curator, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, and Erin Christovale, Associate Curator, Hammer Museum with Ikechúkwú Onyewuenyi, Curatorial Assistant.

Na Kim. Photo by LESS.



Na Kim, *Design N Art*, SET v.2: cover, pages, 2016, installation view, Daegu Art Museum, Daegu, KR.

Image of fellows, part of *Raw Académie Session 2: Angazi, but I'm sure by Chimurenga*. Photo by Alex Klein.

ICA X Na Kim by Maharam
September 17—December 30, 2021

ICA announces a new collaboration with Maharam, a forward-thinking textile company based in New York known for innovative graphic wall installations and commitment to design. The project will visually transform ICA's 36th Street façade—a space that has a distinct presence—to be experienced both from the street and within the galleries.

Maharam Digital Projects, a division that produces large-scale wall installations and more recently developed a technology to cover glass, works in close collaboration with artists such as Spencer Finch, Sarah Sze, Marilyn Minter, Liam Gillick, Teresita Fernández, Polly Apfelbaum, designers such as Hella Jongerius and Karel Martens, and fashion designers such as Paul Smith.

To launch this new ongoing collaboration with ICA and Maharam is conceptually-driven graphic designer Na Kim who works between Seoul and Berlin. Known for her use of bold colors, shapes, and patterns inspired by everyday life, her work often expands beyond the page and into the creation of dynamic installations and environments. Na Kim studied with legendary Dutch designer Karel Martens at the Werkplaats Typografie and since 2016 has been a member of the Alliance Graphique Internationale (AGI). From 2009—2011 she was responsible for the concept and design of *GRAPHIC* magazine and has exhibited her work at venues including MMCA and SeMA, Seoul; the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; MoMA, New York, and the Triennale Milano, Milan.

SPRING 2022 SEASON

RAW Académie Session 9: Infrastructure
Directed by Linda Goode Bryant

Session: March 14—April 29, 2022
On view February 11—July 10, 2022

Based in Dakar, Senegal, RAW Académie is a residential program for the research and study of artistic and curatorial practice and thought that is rooted in the question: "How do we learn from each other?" For the ninth session of its Académie, RAW will relocate its staff and organization to Philadelphia in an experiment in institutional exchange, alternative pedagogy, and hospitality. The session, *Infrastructure*, is directed by artist, curator, activist, and filmmaker Linda Goode Bryant.

Over the course of seven weeks, Goode Bryant will work with a group of international fellows and an interdisciplinary roster of visiting faculty—, including Gudskul, Rujeko Hockley, Arthur Jafa, Thomas Lax, Louis Massiah, Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, and Greg Tate. Running parallel to the inquiries of the fellows, ICA has

Linda Goode Bryant.
Photo by Oresti Tsonopoulos.

taken up infrastructural questions within its own organization and will respond to the desires and infrastructural needs of local partners and its immediate neighbors at Penn and in West Philadelphia. The session's investigations will be shared through a series of public-facing events, an evolving exhibition, and exchanges that extend beyond the walls of the ICA's galleries.

In her prompt for the session, Goode Bryant writes:

"For centuries, the infrastructure that props up today's global production and market for art has been based on a business model that adheres to the fundamental principles and values of material gain and worth. Despite changes in the ways cultures and art have evolved during that same period, this infrastructure has essentially remained the same. What if a different type of infrastructure were to be envisioned?

Using the public art museum as both a point of connection and departure from art's current infrastructure, and situated at ICA, Session 9 fellows will engage with and begin to answer these questions as they envision and conceive of an infrastructure that supports and expands the level and degree to which artists pursue a perpetual need to create and create anew. A structure that diversifies the ways and means for making artists more self-sufficient in meeting their living and creative needs, drawing on knowledge born from the artists and their works themselves. An infrastructure that can exist as creative hubs within local communities and that expands ongoing access and direct engagement with art as a natural, daily part of life."

The institutional collaboration with RAW grew out of the ICA initiative *I is for Institute* (2016–present), which examines the perceptions and parameters of contemporary arts organizations as a way to create a space for dialogue about how we might reimagine them. To date the project has unfolded through a series of exhibition exchanges and over 50 conversations with curators and directors reflecting on their work within their specific institutional and local contexts. The conversations are archived online at iisforinstitute.icaphila.org.

RAW Académie Session 9: Infrastructure is a collaboration between Linda Goode Bryant; RAW Material Company, founded by Koyo Kouoh in 2008; Alex Klein, ICA Dorothy and Stephen R. Weber (CHE'60) Curator; and James Britt, ICA DAJ Director of Public Engagement; with support from Ali Mohsen, Digital Content Editor. *I is for Institute* is organized by Alex Klein with Tausif Noor and Gee Wesley, Spiegel-Wilks Curatorial Fellows.

Sissel Tolaas in the Smell Re_search Lab, Berlin-Wilmersdorf, 2009. Photo by Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg.

Sissel Tolaas: Re_
February 11—July 10, 2022

This first museum survey of the decades-long practice of artist/researcher Sissel Tolaas is created in collaboration with

Sissel Tolaas. Courtesy of the artist.

JILL KATZ
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING &
COMMUNICATIONS
(215) 573-9975,
KATZJ@ICA.UPENN.EDU
INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
118 SOUTH 36TH STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19104-3289
WWW.ICAPHILA.ORG

GENERAL INFORMATION
ICA IS LOCATED AT:
118 SOUTH 36TH STREET AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
(215) 898-7108
WWW.ICAPHILA.ORG
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the Astrup Fearnley Museum in Oslo. Tolaas (born 1963 Stavanger, Norway; lives in Berlin) has a background in chemistry, mathematics, languages, and art. Her unique output focuses on the importance of our senses, especially smell as a way to navigate the world. Internationally recognized for her projects, she has developed collaborations with institutions and companies, including Science NASA, IEEE Aerospace Research, BBC London,

and Sony Computer Science Lab. In 2004, she established the Berlin SMELL RE_search Lab for smell & communication / language, supported by IFF (International Flavors & Fragrances Inc.), and has amassed a studio archive of over six thousand smells from across the globe.

Tolaas, who says that her “nose is more advanced than her eyes,” uses her acute sense of smell—rather than more conventional anthropological research—to interpret the many layers of places and spaces, emphasizing the importance of smell as a way to trigger memory, share experiences, and understand the nuances of daily existence.

The exhibition builds on ICA’s long history of celebrating experimental approaches to artistic practice that offer new readings and understandings of our relationships with everyday life.

This exhibition is organized by Solveig Øvstebø, Director, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, and Anthony Elms, Daniel and Brett Sundheim Chief Curator, Institute of Contemporary Art.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART | UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, PHILADELPHIA

The Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania is a non-collecting institution presenting exhibitions at the forefront of contemporary practice and culture that provoke our multiple audiences to think in new ways. ICA is free for all to engage and connect with the art of our time. Since our inception in 1963, we have welcomed the challenge of the current moment to continually evolve as a responsive institution. We are committed to and advocate for the artists, research, and dialogues that resonate today.

Over our nearly 60-year history, ICA has worked collaboratively with artists on the production of urgent and important contemporary art. Beginning with our inaugural show of paintings by Abstract Expressionist Clyfford Still, milestones in our exhibition history include—in addition to the first museum show of works by Andy Warhol in 1965—Laurie Anderson, Richard Artschwager, Vija Celmins, Glenn Ligon, Robert Mapplethorpe, Agnes Martin, and Paul Thek. In recent years, ICA curators have worked with artists including Deborah Anzinger, Alex Da Corte, Matthew Angelo Harrison, Suki Seokyeong Kang, Barbara Kasten, Carolyn Lazard, Rodney McMillian, Ree Morton, Sondra Perry, and Cauleen Smith.