Institute of Contemporary Art
University of Pennsylvania

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

NEWS RELEASE

ICA, Penn Live Arts, and BlackStar Projects present *Poetic Cinema* a new programmatic series this summer with films by renowned artist and filmmaker Isaac Julien

In conjunction with city-wide celebration of the Barnes Foundation's centennial, Philadelphia cultural partners organize screenings and exhibitions of Isaac Julien's work through 2023

June 8, 2022

Looking for Langston, 1989

The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) at the University of Pennsylvania is pleased to present a new programmatic series, developed in concert with renowned artist and filmmaker Isaac Julien, from the Sankofa Film and Video Collective. Curated by the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania, Penn Live Arts at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, and BlackStar Projects, this series is organized in conjunction with multiple cultural partners across Philadelphia on the occasion of the Barnes Foundation's centennial. This series of three free screenings (June 13, July 11, and August 3) will take place at the Harold Prince and Harold L. Zellerbach Theaters at Penn Live Arts, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts. Each event is preceded by a conversation between scholars, artists and filmmakers providing context and building on the works presented.

Programming kicks off **Monday, June 13, at 6pm,** with a screening of Isaac Julien's landmark 1989 film ***Looking for Langston*** (1989, 46 minutes). Shot in sumptuous monochrome, this film is a lyrical exploration and recreation of the private world of poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist Langston Hughes (1902–1967) and his fellow Black artists and writers who formed the Harlem Renaissance during the 1920s.

Looking for Langston, 1989

Directed by Julien while he was a member of Sankofa Film and Video Collective, and assisted by the film critic and curator Mark Nash, who worked on the original archival and film research, the 1989 film is a landmark in the exploration of artistic expression, the nature of desire and the reciprocity of the gaze. The film has become the hallmark of what scholar and critic B. Ruby Rich named New Queer Cinema. *Looking for Langston* is also regarded as a touchstone for African American Studies and has been taught widely in North American universities, colleges and art schools for nearly 30 years.

This program is preceded by a conversation with guest speakers: **Isaac Julien**, **Kaja Silverman**, Katherine Stein Sachs CW'69 and Keith L. Sachs W'67 Professor Emerita of Art History at the University of Pennsylvania, and **Ja'Tovia Gary**, artist and filmmaker.

On **Monday, July 11, at 6pm**, Julien's ***Territories*** (1984, 26 minutes), will be featured with ***Who Killed Colin Roach?*** (1983, 34 minutes). *Territories* uses experimental forms to look at life in Britain in 1984, focusing on the experience of the Black British. The film recognizes different power dynamics that determine this experience as difficult to reduce to straightforward explanations. Instead, it uses the term 'territories' to reflect the multiple agendas and experiences at work. These agendas –or 'territories'– involve race, class and sexuality.

Territories, 1984

Who Killed Colin Roach? (1983, 34 minutes) is Julien's first film, which reflects upon the death of Colin Roach, a 23-year-old who was shot at the entrance of a police station in East London, in 1982. Even though the police claimed Roach had died by suicide, evidence showed otherwise. Julien has said this work is essentially a response to the riots, an answer to certain fixed ways of looking at Black cultures and ourselves.

This evening's guest speakers include **Maori Karmael Holmes**, CEO & Artistic Director of BlackStar Projects, and **Thomas Allen Harris**, Senior Lecturer, African American Studies & Film and Media Studies, Yale University.

Who Killed Colin Roach?, 1983

On **Wednesday, August 3, at 2pm** is the newly restored ***The Passion of Remembrance*** (1986, 1 hr 23 min), in conjunction with the 2022 BlackStar Film Festival. Shifting between real and mystic landscapes, Maureen Blackwood and Julien create a visual mosaic to signify the complexity of the Black British experience and the often-overlooked intersections between race, class, gender and sexuality.

Guest speakers include **Karen Alexander**, independent curator and writer, and **Louis Massiah**, Documentary Filmmaker and Founder/Director of Scribe Video Center.

All programs are held at Penn Live Arts, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts and are free and open to the public. Registration is required at www.icaphila.org.

The Passion of Remembrance, 1986

Captioning will be available through AccessKit, as well as ASL interpretation for each program.

Cultural partners across Philadelphia, in addition to ICA, include: The Barnes Foundation; Penn Live Arts Performing Arts Center; BlackStar Projects; The Fabric Workshop and Museum, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, who will present exhibitions and additional screenings by Julien through 2023. A full list of city-wide programming can be found here.

ABOUT ISAAC JULIEN

Isaac Julien (b. London, 1960), is a filmmaker and installation artist who currently lives and works between London and California. His multiscreen film installations and photographs incorporate different artistic disciplines to create a poetic and unique visual language. His 1989 documentary-drama exploring author Langston Hughes and the Harlem Renaissance, titled *Looking for Langston*, garnered Julien a cult following, while his 1991 debut feature, *Young Soul Rebels*, won the Semaine de la Critique prize at the Cannes Film Festival. Julien has participated in the Venice Biennale; the Gwangju Biennale, South Korea; Prospect 1, New Orleans; Performa 07, New York; and documenta 11, Kassel, Germany. His work is held in significant collections around the world. Julien has taught extensively, holding posts such as Chair of Global Art at University of the Arts London (2014–16) and Professor of Media Art at Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung, Karlsruhe, Germany (2008–16). He is the recipient of the James Robert Brudner '83 Memorial Prize and Lectures at Yale University (2016). He received the Charles Wollaston Award in 2017 for most distinguished work at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, and in 2018 he was made a Royal Academician. Julien was awarded the title Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the Queen's birthday honors, 2017. In 2022, he was awarded the prestigious Goslarer Kaiserring Award.

Isaac Julien is Distinguished Professor of the Arts at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where he leads the Isaac Julien Lab together with critic and curator Mark Nash. The Isaac Julien Lab was designed to mirror the Isaac Julien Studio in London and is a platform where students learn about the strategies behind the production of moving images, photographic works, exhibitions, and publications. The Lab aims to create innovative pedagogical methodologies, visual and sonic languages for production, exhibition, and installation while examining the various aspects that concern contemporary artists and curators working in the field of media art and moving image, in relationship to current modes of research, development, exhibition, production, and scenography of moving image artworks.

ABOUT SANKOFA FILM AND VIDEO COLLECTIVE

Sankofa Film and Video Collective was founded in 1983 by Isaac Julien, Martina Attille, Maureen Blackwood, Nadine Marsh-

.

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

ICA IS LOCATED AT:
118 SOUTH 36TH STREET AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
(215) 898-7108 WWW.ICAPHILA.ORG
FACEBOOK.COM/ICAPHILADELPHIA
@ICAPHILADELPHIA

ICA IS TEMPORARILY CLOSED FOR INSTALLATION OF OUR NEW SEASON. WE WILL REOPEN TO THE PUBLIC FALL 2022 ON SEPTEMBER 16.

ICA IS ALWAYS FREE. FOR ALL.

FREE ADMISSION IS COURTESY OF AMANDA AND GLENN FUHRMAN.

Edwards and Robert Crusz, who all graduated from various art colleges in London. Supported by the Greater London Council, the British Film Institute and Channel 4, among others, Sankofa was "dedicated to developing an independent black film culture in the areas of production, exhibition and audience". The name and the logo of the collective derive from the Akan word sankofa from Ghana, meaning "return and fetch it". Represented figuratively, the logo appears as a bird turning its head back towards its tail, to signify "going back into the past and discovering knowledge that will be of benefit to the people in the future."

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

The Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia was founded to champion new and underrecognized artists and ideas. That same spirit of experimentation and possibility continues to guide our work today. ICA has for almost 60 years been the region's premier hub of contemporary art. We develop projects at the intersection of interdisciplinary artistic practice that encourage an exchange of ideas on art and society. Through exhibitions, commissions, events, publications, and special projects we support international and local artists across disciplines in making ambitious projects and furthering new directions in their practices and in the field. We are committed to our audiences having access to impactful experiences and supporting meaningful connections with art and artists. Issues of equity, inclusion and social justice are core to our mission and we advocate for artists, research, and dialogues that contextualize and resonate with the socio-political conditions of our time. Located within the University of Pennsylvania, we share the university's history and commitment to experimental research and discovery and believe in supporting the next generation of imaginative and creative thinkers through student-led projects, career development opportunities, and collaborations across fields of inquiry at Penn and beyond. We care about building relationships with our community that contribute to and strengthen the cultural life of the University of Pennsylvania and our city.