

## Press Release

### Arthur Jafa

*nativemanson*

September 14–December 14, 2024

Public Reception: September 13, 6–8pm

Sprüth Magers, Los Angeles

**Sprüth Magers**

Across three decades, Jafa has developed a dynamic practice comprising films, artefacts and happenings that reference and question the universal and specific articulations of Black being. Monika Sprüth and Philomene Magers are honored to present the LA-based artist's first solo gallery exhibition in Los Angeles, featuring recent wall works, sculptures and moving images, including Jafa's latest film, *BG*, his deft remix of Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*, in which Jafa performs an exorcism on the film (and by extension the American unconsciousness) to foreground the Spook that Haunts the American Psyche.

---

One way into Arthur Jafa's creative process is to understand he loves Michael Jackson – performer, visionary, iconoclast; jokester whose laughing sleights-of-hand have been submerged beneath tales of heartache, abuse, exploitation, untimely death... that wholly true grim narrative that's not the whole truth. He (correctly) thinks *Off the Wall* is Jackson's masterwork, that the spirit (and Spirit) captured through that album's peerless pop are a kaleidoscope capture of Blackness that distills, redefines and catapults-into-the-stratosphere Black creativity. The Afros (surrealists, futurists, pessimists ) are all correct in seeing themselves in Jafa's work, but what we all forget sometimes when we engage his films, photos, sculptures, and installations is there's a wicked sense of play in play, and beneath the exhumation and presentation of Black pain struggle and genocide is a boundless love of Black people & culture that cannot disentangle the flawless spin / crotch grab / moonwalk / laughing eyes / child prodigy / adult genius / hee HEE from the strange fruit / bombed churches / stolen land / rapes & castrations / forced labor & unacknowledged creativity / geniuses driven mad by the endless repetition of it all. It's the falling in love with Blackness that makes Jafa high; it's the being in love that makes him cry, cry, cry...

– Ernest Hardy

Arthur Jafa (\*1960, Tupelo, Mississippi) lives and works in Los Angeles. Jafa's films have been presented at the Los Angeles, New York and Black Star Film Festivals, and

recent solo exhibitions of his artwork include Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2024), LUMA Foundation, Arles (2023), Louisiana Museum, Humblebæk and Glenstone, Potomac, MD (both 2021), Fundação Serralves, Porto and Musée d'art contemporain de Montreal (both 2020), Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2019), Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver and Julia Stoschek Foundation, Berlin (both 2018), and Serpentine Gallery, London (2017). Selected group exhibitions include Fondation Beyeler, Riehen, The Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth and Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt am Main (all 2024), Smithsonian American Art Museum, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Baltimore Museum of Art and 14th Gwangju Biennale (all 2023), Musée national des beaux-arts, Québec, Aspen Art Museum and Bangkok Art Biennale (all 2022), and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Brooklyn Museum, New York, New Museum, New York and Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (all 2021). In 2019, he received the Golden Lion at the 58th Venice Biennale.

**Sprüth Magers**