

BECHTLER
MUSEUM OF
MODERN ART

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BECHTLER MUSEUM OF MODERN ART TO EXHIBIT *ISAAC JULIEN: LINA BO BARDI – A MARVELLOUS ENTANGLEMENT*

- Charlotte's modern art museum first in U.S. to show film installation and exhibition -

OCTOBER 30, 2021 – FEBRUARY 27, 2022



Isaac Julien, *Lina Bo Bardi – A Marvellous Entanglement*, 2019. Nine-screen installation, super-high definition, color, 9.1 surround sound. 39 min 08 se c. © Isaac Julien, courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro, London/Venice

Charlotte, N.C. – The Bechtler Museum of Modern Art is excited to present *Isaac Julien: Lina Bo Bardi – A Marvellous Entanglement*, the exhibition's institutional debut in the United States. In this installation, Julien examines the legendary Italian-Brazilian architect Lina Bo Bardi, telling the story of the architect's life and work through dramatic enactments of her words and ideas performed amid her most prized Modernist buildings. Running from October 30, 2021 through February 27, 2022, Julien's video installation – the beating heart of the exhibition – envelops the viewer and crosses boundaries between artforms, time and continents. Conceived as a multilayered film, the work is projected simultaneously and alternatively on nine screens, resulting in time

losing its chronological feeling.

Julien's passion for Lina Bo Bardi emerged in the 1990s during a trip to Brazil, where he saw several of her fascinating and bold buildings. Since then, his artistic career regularly crossed paths with her creative universe, establishing a fruitful and successful dialogue between their works at Lina Bo Bardi's SESC Pompeia in his solo exhibition *Geopoetics* from 2012. Filmed on several locations in Brazil, including the São Paulo Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art in Bahia, and the Teatro Gregório de Matos in Salvador, Julien's work acts as an open-ended reflection on the architect's Brazilian projects from the 1960s to the 1980s. These locations are exceptional settings that occasionally take on different lives to house events, leisure activities, convivial and cultural initiatives. Bo Bardi's life story is interpreted by Brazilian actresses Fernanda Montenegro and Fernanda Torres, mother and daughter in real life, who portray the mature and the younger version of Bo Bardi.

Isaac Julien, CBE RA, was born in London in 1960. He has pioneered multiple screen installation techniques in the field of contemporary art over the last 25 years. Having risen to fame in the art world in the late 1980s with his cinematic exploration of black gay desire and the Harlem Renaissance in *Looking for Langston*, Julien has remained at the forefront of contemporary art by breaking down the barriers that exist between artistic disciplines and exploring themes such as history, narrative, race, Global South, and migration through the mediums of installation and filmmaking. His works continue to examine the poetics of migrations, black politics, and cultures in the diasporas, researching important cultural and political figures, from Frederick Douglass to Frantz Fanon. His work has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Centre Pompidou, Paris; and MAXXI, Rome, among other leading contemporary museums around the world and is held in the permanent collections of museums worldwide.

The narrative planes throughout the work are superimposed, and both actresses – the younger and the older depictions of Bo Bardi – are often present in the same scene. This doubled presence blurs fiction and reality together, and the linearity of the biographical account is called into question. The title of the work is inspired by a well-known passage from Bo Bardi's correspondence:

"Linear time is a western invention. Time is not linear, it is a marvellous entanglement, where at any moment, points can be chosen and solutions invented, without beginning or end."

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"Lina Bo Bardi's life and her reflections on politics, society and culture are presented both through her architectural vision and through Julien's artistic vision," said Todd D. Smith, Executive Director, Bechtler Museum of Modern Art. "As the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art continues to evolve, working with living artists like Isaac Julien and offering projects like *A Marvellous Entanglement* directly support our dedication to exploring the complex stories of modern art and examining its legacies. We are excited to launch the next chapter of the museum's curatorial program with this significant and meaningful work."

A series of photographic collages created for the Bechtler presentation, biographical and archival material associated with Lina Bo Bardi, and a timeline exploring the genesis and the production of the work by reconstituting the stages of research and the shooting of the film installation accompany the nine-screen installation. On the occasion of the exhibition, the Bechtler Museum will present a rich program of activities

dedicated to focusing on themes present in the exhibition.

Isaac Julien: Lina Bo Bardi – A Marvellous Entanglement is the first exhibition to kick off the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art's 2021-2023 exhibition seasons, which include *Annemarie Schwarzenbach: Departure Without Destination* (April 2 --June 19, 2022) and *Sol LeWitt: All Ideas are Art* (October 15, 2022 – February 19, 2023). For more information, visit Bechtler.org.

About the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art

The Bechtler Museum of Modern Art is the only museum in the Southern United States exclusively dedicated to European and American Modern Art and its legacies. Capturing a remarkable era of art history from the collection of the Zürich-based Bechtler family, the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art collection includes works by some of the most important and influential figures of modernism, including Alexander Calder, Le Corbusier, Edgar Degas, Max Ernst, Alberto Giacometti, Barbara Hepworth, Jasper Johns, Paul Klee, Alfred Manessier, Joan Miró, Kenneth Noland, Pablo Picasso, Bridget Riley, Nicolas de Staël, Andy Warhol and a wealth of other 20th-century notables. The museum, designed by Swiss architect Mario Botta, prominently features the Niki de Saint Phalle's iconic *Le Grand Oiseau de Feu sur l'Arche* on its entrance plaza. Located in the heart of Uptown, the Bechtler is a light-filled community space created to inspire and engage first-time visitors and long-term supporters alike.

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