

# ARTHUR JAJA

## RHAMESJAFACOSEYJAFADRAYTON

/reɪmz 'dʒeɪfə 'kzi 'dʒeɪfə 'drɪtən/

An exhibition commissioned and produced by OGR Torino, in collaboration with Serpentine curated by Claude Adjil, Judith Waldmann with Hans Ulrich Obrist

Until 12 February 2023 | Binario 1

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It is a peculiar **title** to be pronounced as a single word, **RHAMESJAFACOSEYJAFADRAYTON** are the names of three prominent black musicians, guitarists, interspersed with the name of the artist “Jafa”. The title is **Rhames** as **Arthur Rhames** (1957-1989), Jafa, **Cosey** as **Pete Cosey** (1943-2012) and Jafa, **Drayton** as **Ronny Drayton** (1953-2020).

A recurring question guides **Arthur Jafa’s** artistic practice: how can visual media, objects, static and moving images convey the power, beauty, and alienation that is embedded within **Black music** in the United States?

An investigation to which the title of the exhibition also alludes.



Credit: Giorgio Perottino for OGR Torino

Arthur Jafa’s dynamic practice comprises **films, artefacts, and happenings**, which tackle Black culture and experience in the US with unprecedented intensity and complexity. With a career spanning three decades, his multidisciplinary works challenge and question prevailing cultural assumptions about **identity and race** through his immersive and experimental cinematic experiences. At the 58th Venice Biennale (2019), his outstanding work *The White Album*, featured in the central exhibition *May You Live in Interesting Times*, was awarded the **Golden Lion** for best presentation.

RHAMESJAFACOSEYJAFADRAYTON focuses on Arthur Jafa’s latest video work **AGHDRA** (2021). AGHDRA (85 min.) wraps the visitor in computer-generated imagery of opulent and mesmerizing black waves, which **evolve constantly** under an **eternal sunset**.

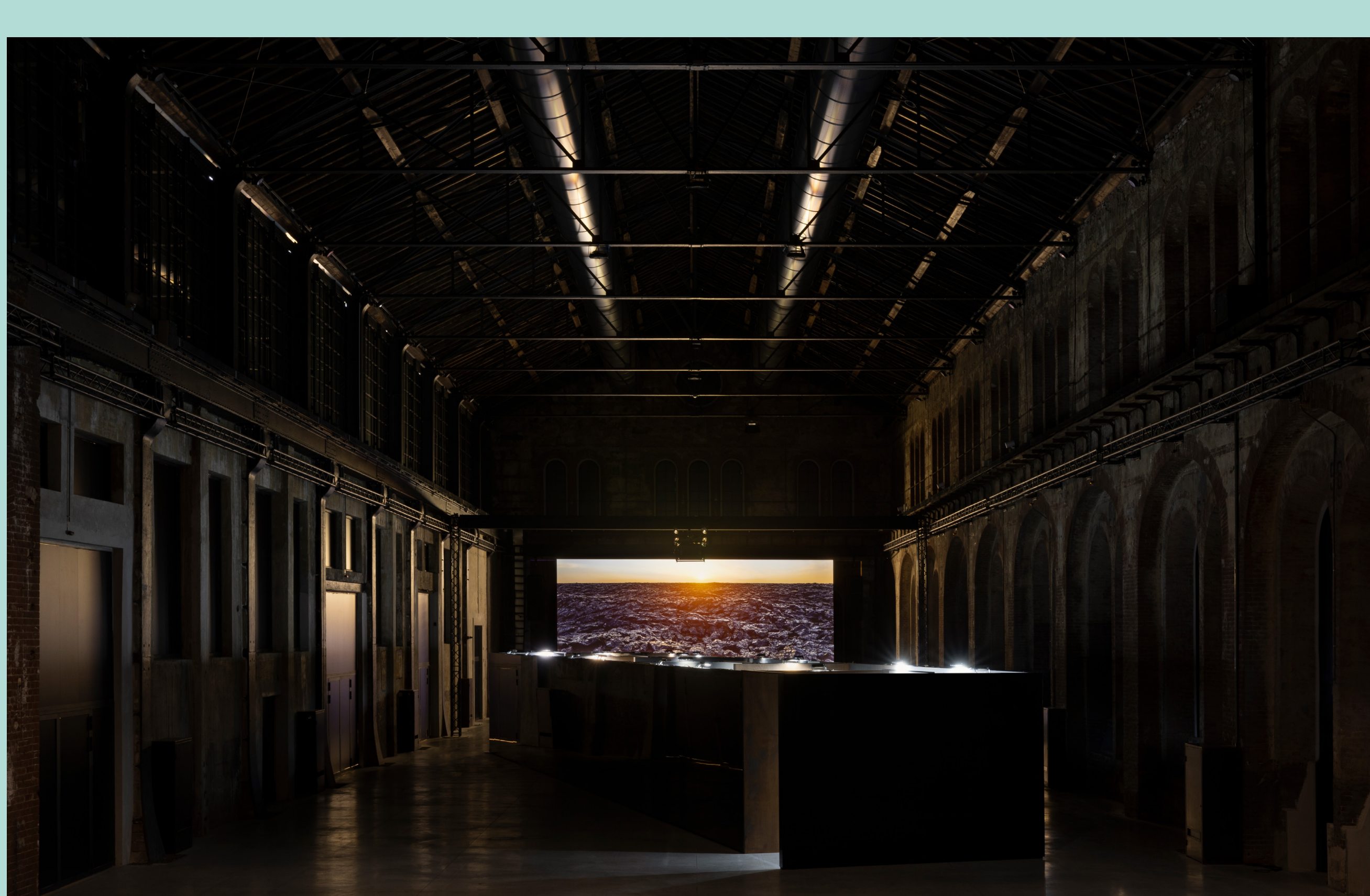
A state-of-the-art sound system makes it possible to not only hear the immersive installation’s **sound**, but to **experience it physically through vibrations**. The sound simultaneously supports and interrupts this stream of consciousness viewer response. Lyrics from mostly Black **popular songs** like *Love don’t live here, live here no more* (Rose Royce, Love don’t live here anymore, 1978) amplify an evoked apocalyptic scenario.



Credit: Andrea Rossetti for OGR Torino

Demanding multisensory engagement, AGHDRA is contextualized through a **series of wallpapers** and prints, reflecting Arthur Jafa’s ongoing research into Blackness. A section presents a selection of images deriving from his *Picture Books* – collections of found imagery that the artist started in the mid 80’s, driven by the “obsessive” impulse “to push towards things that disturb me” and “not to pull back from them”. These source books contain **intense, beautiful, raw, surprising, terrifying, and thought-provoking** imagery, which has found its way into Arthur Jafa’s now iconic video works like *Love is the Message, The Message is Death* (2016), *APEX* (2013) and more recently Kanye West’s (Ye) music video *Wash Us In The Blood* feat. Travis Scott (2020).

The exhibition was originally developed with Amira Gad and the new iteration is part of Serpentine’s tour of Arthur Jafa’s exhibition *A Series of Utterly Improbable, Yet Extraordinary Renditions*, and is specially **conceived by the artist** for the cathedral-like space of **OGR Torino**.



Credit: Andrea Rossetti for OGR Torino

**EXTRA CONTENT**