

For immediate release

barbican

Julianknxx: *Chorus in Rememory of Flight*

The Curve, Barbican Centre & online on [WePresent](#)

14 September 2023 – 11 February 2024

Media View: Tuesday 12 September 2023, 10am – 12pm

Free Admission

#Julianknxx @barbicancentre @wepresent

The exhibition has been co-commissioned by the Barbican and WePresent by WeTransfer in partnership with Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.



Julianknxx, Production still of *Chorus in Rememory of Flight*, 2023 © Studioknxx

On 14 September 2023, Barbican and WePresent in partnership with Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation will launch *Julianknxx: Chorus in Rememory of Flight*. This ambitious new commission is the first institutional solo exhibition by poet, artist and filmmaker Julianknxx, and is enriched by supporting content available online on WePresent, the arts platform of WeTransfer.

At the Barbican, visitors will be immersed in a multi-screen film installation borne out of a year in which Julianknxx has travelled to port cities across Europe to collaborate with Black choirs. Acting as a poetic archivist, he has collected their performances, testimonies, and contexts to create a series of films that reflect on choral song as a means of resistance to the eradication of difference. He is inspired in this work by the words of philosopher Édouard Glissant: *'you can change with the Other while being yourself, you are not one, you are multiple, and you are yourself'*.

Filmed in Hamburg, Rotterdam, Antwerp, London, Marseille, Barcelona and Lisbon, the project charts a staggering 4000 kilometres; these vast distances offer a reflection on the many miles traversed by those interviewed and by their ancestors throughout history. A single repeated refrain – 'we are what's left of us' – binds the choral voices together, speaking to the ways in which music can enable the survival of cultural memory across the reaches of time and distance.

Drawing on the writings of scholars including Paule Marshall (*Praisesong for the Widow*, 1983) and Lorna McDaniel (*Praisesongs in Rememory of Flight*, 1998), Julianknxx's films

encourage new perspectives on what it means to be caught between multiple histories and places, offering up the choir as a metaphor for community. Culminating in an area for reading and reflection, the exhibition emphasises the importance of listening and engaging in alternative ways of telling the stories that have shaped our cultural identities.

The polyphonic nature of Julianknxx's commission for *The Curve* is indicative of the artist's broader interdisciplinary practice, which is rooted in poetry but extends into performance, film and music. Born in Freetown, Sierra Leone, Julianknxx uses his personal history as a formative influence for challenging and reimagining dominant perspectives on African art, history and culture. Drawing on oral history traditions and working with a distinctive aesthetic approach, his films attempt to reframe how we construct both local and global narratives, while reflecting on how it feels to exist in liminal spaces.

Julianknxx, Artist, said: *"The Curve is a space that invites both artist and audience to embark on truly transformative journeys. This commission has allowed me to imagine The Curve through the collective dimension of the choir, which brings together diverse voices as a powerful conduit for memory and a testament to resistance. Through Chorus in Rememory of Flight, it is my hope that The Curve will become a place to engage audiences in active listening, continuous learning, and boundless exploration."*

Eleanor Nairne, Senior Curator, Barbican, said: *"Julianknxx is one of the most talented moving image artists working in the UK and it is a great pleasure to bring his poetic, polyvocal vision into the Barbican for visitors to congregate and reflect."*

Holly Fraser, Editor-in-Chief, WePresent, said: *"WePresent has commissioned stories from over 1000 artists from 100 countries, bringing them to a global audience on WeTransfer. In the three years we have collaborated with Julianknxx we have seen his ideas take shape across different media, geographies, and communities. It's exciting to act as co-commissioners with the Barbican to bring the latest iteration to The Curve."*

Julianknxx is resident artist at 180 Studios, London, and has exhibited in the UK and internationally; upcoming exhibitions and performances will be at Tate Modern, London (2023) and Art Basel Conversations: Sonic Performance, Basel (2023). Recent group shows include *Rites of Passage*, Gagosian, London (2023); *To Be Held*, Carl Freedman Gallery, Margate (2023); *Whitechapel Gallery Open*, London (2022); *Nocturnal Creatures*, Whitechapel Gallery (2021); *Lux*, 180 The Strand, London (2021); *The View from There*, Sadie Coles HQ, London (2021); *Contra La Raza [Against Race]*, Matadero, Madrid (2021); *Roots & Roads*, Franklin Street Works, Stamford CT, (2020); and Now Gallery, London (2019). Performances include: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon (2023); Fact Magazine (Online Residency) (2021); OT301 Amsterdam (2020); ICA London, (2019); Jazz Cafe, BBC Radio 5; and London Literature Festival at Southbank Centre (2018).

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Exhibition

The exhibition has been co-commissioned by the Barbican and WePresent by WeTransfer in partnership with Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Alongside *The Curve* exhibition, a shorter version of *Chorus in Rememory of Flight* is available online on [WePresent](#) to view for free. This is accompanied by additional content introducing the project and highlighting some of the cities where Julianknxx worked in the making of the film.

Press Information

For further information, images or to arrange interviews, please contact:

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Press image sheet available online

The image sheet and a pdf version of this release are available on the [Barbican Press Room](#). Please contact the press team for images.

Barbican Press Room

All Barbican Centre press releases, news announcements and the Communication team's contact details are listed on our website at <https://www.barbican.org.uk/our-story/press-room/>

Public Information

The Curve, Barbican
Silk Street, London, EC2Y 8DS

www.barbican.org.uk/artgallery

There will be no entry fee charged for this exhibition.

For more information on Barbican membership please visit:

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/membership>

Detailed visitor information will be available on the Barbican's [website](#).

The Curve opening times

Monday – Sunday: 11am – 7pm

Bank Holidays 12pm – 7pm

The Barbican Centre is closed 24 – 26 December

The Curve

The Curve is the Barbican's free exhibition space that wraps around the back of the Concert Hall. Launched in May 2006, Curve Art is a series of new commissions in which contemporary artists respond to the distinctive architecture of the space. Artists who have previously made new commissions for The Curve include Tomás Saraceno (Argentina); Richard Wilson (Britain); Jeppe Hein (Denmark); Marjetica Potrč (Slovenia); Shirana Shahbazi (Switzerland/Iran); Hans Schabus (Austria); Huang Yong Ping (France/China); Rafael Lozano-Hemmer (Canada/Mexico); Peter Coffin (US); Clemens von Wedemeyer

(Germany); Robert Kusmirowski (Poland); Céleste Boursier-Mougenot (France); John Bock (Germany); Damián Ortega (Mexico); Cory Arcangel (US); Junya Ishigami (Japan); Song Dong (China); rAndom International (Britain); Geoffrey Farmer (Canada); Ayşe Erkmen (Germany/Turkey); United Visual Artists (Britain); Walead Beshty (US/Britain); Roman Signer (Switzerland); Eddie Peake (Britain); Imran Qureshi (Pakistan); Bedwyr Williams (Wales); Richard Mosse (Ireland); John Akomfrah (Britain); Yto Barrada (Morocco), Francis Upritchard (New Zealand) Daria Martin (US), Trevor Paglen (US), Toyin Ojih Odutola (Nigeria/US), Shilpa Gupta (India) and most recently Soheila Sokhanvari (Iran).

Barbican Art Gallery and The Curve

Our visual arts programme embraces art, architecture, design, fashion, photography and film. Many of our exhibitions explore the interconnections between disciplines, periods and cultures, and aim to imagine the world in new ways. Designers, artists and architects are our collaborators in this process.

We invest in the artists of today and tomorrow; The Curve is one of the few galleries in London devoted to the commissioning of new work. Through our activities we aim to inspire more people to discover and love the arts. Entrance to The Curve is free. Through Young Barbican we offer £5 tickets to 14 – 25 year olds for our paid exhibitions, children under 14 attend for free.

Our exhibitions are complemented by comprehensively researched catalogues and a full range of public events. We develop engaging online content for audiences and offer special tours for schools. In partnership with renowned museums and art galleries, many of our exhibitions travel to reach both national and international audiences.

The Barbican believes in creating space for people and ideas to connect through its international arts programme, community events and learning activity. To keep its programme accessible to everyone, and to keep investing in the artists it works with, the Barbican needs to raise more than 60% of its income through ticket sales, commercial activities and fundraising every year. Donations can be made here:

www.barbican.org.uk/join-support/support-us/forindividuals/make-a-donation

About the Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](#) pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Its creative learning programme further underpins everything it does. Over a million people attend events annually, hundreds of artists and performers are featured, and more than 700 [staff](#) work onsite. The architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises the Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, The Pit, Cinemas 1, 2 and 3, Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery The Curve, public spaces, a library, the Lakeside Terrace, [a glasshouse conservatory](#), conference facilities and three restaurants. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre.

The Barbican is home to Resident Orchestra, [London Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Orchestra, [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Ensembles the [Academy of Ancient Music](#) and [Britten Sinfonia](#), Associate Producer [Serious](#), and Artistic Partner [Create](#). Our Artistic Associates include [Boy Blue](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#), Deborah Warner, [Drum Works](#) and [Michael Clark](#). The [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#) are the Barbican's International Orchestral Partner, and [Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble.

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About [WePresent](#)

WePresent is WeTransfer's arts platform, acting as the company's cultural torchbearer to a monthly audience of approximately 3 million in 190 countries. Collaborating with emerging young talent to renowned artists such as Marina Abramović, Riz Ahmed, FKA twigs or David Sedaris, WePresent showcases the best in art, photography, film, music, literature and more, championing diversity in everything it does. The platform's commissions range from editorial features to films, illustrations, photography series, events, and exhibitions, with an aim to offer a fresh take on the magic and mystery of creative ideas. WePresent were the commissioners and Executive Producers of the acclaimed short film "The Long Goodbye" by actor and musician Riz Ahmed and director Aneil Karia, which won an Oscar in 2022 for Best Live Action Short Film.

About WeTransfer

WeTransfer streamlines the workflow process for millions of creative professionals. Its ecosystem of creative productivity tools makes it easy to collaborate, share and deliver work. WeTransfer has more than 80 million monthly active users in 190 countries. As a certified B Corporation™, WeTransfer has long been a champion of using business as a force for good. Since its founding in 2009, WeTransfer has donated up to 30% of its advertising space to support artists and social causes. Last year, WeTransfer also launched its [Supporting Act Foundation](#) to support emerging creative talent through arts education, grants, and an annual prize.

About Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is an international Foundation, set up in 1956, with statutory aims in the fields of the arts, education, science and social development. Operating from its headquarters in Lisbon and its delegations in London and Paris, it is driven by equity and sustainability as the two strategic goals that underpin all areas of activity. In the last years, promoting access to culture and the civic role of the arts has been a key agenda for the Foundation, manifesting in important initiatives such as the Award for Civic Arts Organisations (in the UK) and PARTIS & Art for Change (in Portugal). Furthering this agenda, CAM (Centro de Arte Moderna) will reopen in 2024, following an ambitious capital renovation, with the mission to unlock the transformational power of art to affect personal and societal change.