THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND THE NEW SCHOOL ART COLLECTION



Celebrate the installation of Alfredo Jaar's Searching for Africa in LIFE (1996/2014) Commissioned for The New School University Center Arnhold Forum, 7th Floor Reading Room Tuesday, 2 December 2014

The New School Art Collection

The university has a longstanding tradition of supporting the creation of new art in public spaces. Beginning in 1931 with the commissioning of works in the landmarked Joseph Urban building by Mexican artist **José Clemente Orozco**, American artist **Thomas Hart Benton**, and Ecuadorian artist **Camilo Egas**,site-specific works by **Gonzalo Fonseca**, **Sol LeWitt**, **Dave Muller**, **Martin Puryear** and **Michael Van Valkenburgh**, **Brian Tolle**, and **Kara Walker** have been commissioned in more recent years.

The New School Art Collection was established in 1960 with a grant from the Albert A. List Foundation. Now grown to approximately 2000+ postwar and contemporary works of art, the collection contains works by some of the most innovative and creative artists of our time. Installed throughout the university campus and transforming the public spaces into lively forums for exploring contemporary art, the collection offers The New School community a rare opportunity to live and engage with art on a daily basis, making it a distinctive component of the educational experience. The New School's University Center, designed by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM), is the first commissioned building for The New School since its landmark Joseph Urban building was erected in 1931 at 66 West 12th Street. The new building houses the Tishman Auditorium, Arnhold Forum, flexible classrooms, study and social spaces, a cafeteria and a dormitory. Newly commissioned work for the university center by Alfredo Jaar, Rita McBride and Glenn Ligon (installed in Spring 2015) extend The New School's tradition of incorporating site-specific works of art in the university's public spaces.

To learn more, please visit www.newschool.edu/artcollection

ALFREDO JAAR

Searching for Africa in LIFE, 1996/2014 Five color transparency, Plexialas, LED lightboxes Commissioned by The New School, 2014

December 2, 2014 12:30-2:00 p.m. **Remarks by Alfredo Jaar** at 12:45 p.m.

Introduction by Tim Marshall, Provost

Searching for Africa in LIFE compiles all 2,128 covers of LIFE Magazine published between 1936 and 1996. For the United States, LIFE was the first and most influential all-photographic news magazine. With over thirteen million weekly readers at its peak, its mission was to provide the country with a window into the world. When LIFE's publisher, Henry Luce, launched the publication, his stated purpose was "To see life; to see the world; to evewitness great events..." However, the scarcity of covers featuring African subjects throughout the magazine's sixty-year circulation provides an opportunity to reevaluate this claim. Searching for Africa in LIFE reflects historical American attitudes about culture and race - attitudes that continue to reverberate today.

Alfredo Jaar conceived this work in 1996, completing a unique lightbox version in 2014 upon an invitation from The New School to house it permanently in the University Center's Arnhold Forum Library. Jaar draws on the archive – a collection of LIFE Magazine covers - to offer an exploration of the politics of representation in mainstream media and to interrogate our own assumptions about culture and ethnicity. More precisely, Jaar points to the formation and distribution of knowledge around these issues. What emerges in Searching for Africa in LIFE is a failure to inform, a failure to represent. The diversity and complexities of a rich culture, in this case, the continent and peoples of Africa, are largely ignored and reduced to a handful of patronizing, aestheticized images.

Searching for Africa in LIFE questions the currency of media constructions by calling attention to the power of material collections to reposition our gaze and to bring to light readings, and mis-readings, of our histories.













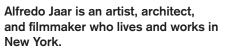












His work has been shown extensively around the world. He has participated in the Biennales of Venice (1986, 2007, 2009, 2013), São Paulo (1985, 1987, 2010) as well as Documenta in Kassel (1987, 2002).

Important individual exhibitions include The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, Whitechapel, London, and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, as well as MACRO, Museum of Contemporary Art. Rome and Moderna Museet, Stockholm,

A major retrospective of his work took place in 2012 at three institutions in Berlin: Berlinische Galerie. Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst e.V. and the Alte Nationalgalerie.

Recently, KIASMA Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki hosted a major retrospective of his work (10.4 - 7.9.2014).

Jaar has realized more than sixty public interventions around the world. More than fifty monographic publications have been published about his work.

