

PRESS RELEASE

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Iniva and Manchester Art Gallery commission Jade Montserrat as the first artist for *Future Collect*

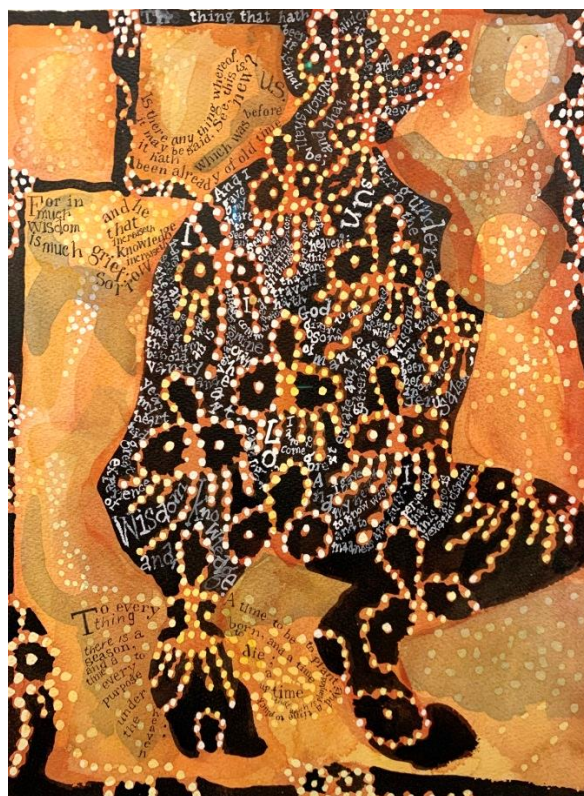


Photo caption: “Shadowing/Revue: Ecclesiastes v” by Jade Montserrat, 2017

London, 26/02/20

Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts) and Manchester Art Gallery name Jade Montserrat as the first artist to be commissioned for *Future Collect* – a dynamic new partnership to transform the culture of collecting to better reflect contemporary British society.

Future Collect is a three-year programme which partners with national and regional museums and galleries to commission artists of African and/or Asian descent, British born or based. Crucially these commissions give an opportunity for an artist to be collected and exhibited by a major British institution – as well as contributing to a

wider public debate on collections and whose heritage is being preserved. The project is funded by Art Fund and Arts Council England.

Jade Montserrat is an artist based in the North of England whose research-led work explores the interplay of art and activism through performance, drawing, painting, film, installation, sculpture, print and text. Her *Future Collect* commission will go on display at Manchester Art Gallery in autumn 2020, and will investigate the existing collection at the gallery to open up conversation with other practitioners.

A public education programme will run alongside the exhibited commission, including conversations, study days, workshops and a major conference. The conference will revisit the urgent call that Professor Stuart Hall, founding chair of Iniva, made in his keynote speech at a national conference, *Whose Heritage? The Impact of Cultural Diversity on Britain's Living*, held in Manchester in November 1999. Hall called for a re-imagined Britain, reinvented for all who refuse to become 'other' in order to belong, and the *Future Collect* conference will ask whether these questions are still relevant to raise when thinking about today's museums.

As well as wide-ranging events for the general public, the inaugural *Future Collect* will also feature a number of professional network opportunities for curators and artists, organised by *Future Collect* Project Manager, Rohini Malik Okon and Curatorial Trainee Nikita Gill.

On the selection of the first commission **Sepake Angiama**, Artistic Director of Iniva said: 'We are delighted to announce Jade Montserrat as the first artist to be chosen for *Future Collect*. Commissioning artists is a rare and yet such a vital part of the livelihood for artists. This commission creates the space for artists to engage with the collection but also to bring the public along with them and create a meaningful context to engage with the commission and to create new relations with collections. We are extremely grateful for the support from the Art Fund and Arts Council England to make this project possible as well as our first partnering museum, Manchester Art Gallery.'

Jade Montserrat said of her appointment: 'Prompted by readings of Ira Aldridge's African American diasporic career and life, the polyphonic work I have proposed for *Future Collect* reflects an emphasis on care: care for the collection and care for art and artists, encouraging collective intergenerational transnational solidarities. I am excited for the opportunity to develop my practice, and this extraordinary commission promises a year of learning and, wonderfully, making art and exploring collections.'

Alistair Hudson, Director of the Whitworth and Manchester Art Gallery said, 'All of us at Manchester Art Gallery are so happy to be working with Iniva and Jade Montserrat for the first *Future Collect* project. The Gallery has been at the heart of the development of the city from its beginnings in the early 19th century and our collections have always reflected the complexities of Manchester's involvement in industrialisation, modernisation, colonialism and capital. At the same time our story is also one of people striving for equity and human rights locally and globally, through diplomacy and protest alike. It is with this history in mind that we want to continue to interrogate our inherited culture with artists, and to propose positive action for the future. Of late the gallery has forged a new vision as an 'Art School for Everybody' and a 'Civic Think Tank,' with artists and residents playing an active role in shaping a new kind of museum. Jade is an artist who belongs in this story, deeply rooted in the

North of England context yet equipped to come up with surprising challenges that will shake things up in a generative way. We cannot wait to see what she will contribute to the city's collections and voice.'

ENDS

Notes to editors

About Jade Montserrat

Jade Montserrat is a research-led artist and writer who studied the History of Art at the Courtauld Institute of Art and Drawing (2003) and at Norwich University of the Arts (2010).

Montserrat works at the intersection of art and activism through drawing, painting, performance, film, installation, sculpture, print and text. The artist interrogates these mediums with the aim to expose gaps in our visual and linguistic habits.

Jade is the recipient of the Stuart Hall Foundation Scholarship which supports her PhD (via MPhil) at The Institute for Black Atlantic Research, University of Central Lancashire, (Race and Representation in Northern Britain in the context of the Black Atlantic: A Creative Practice Project) and the development of her work from her black diasporic perspective in the North of England. She was also awarded one of two Jerwood Student Drawing Prizes in 2017 for 'No Need for Clothing', a documentary photograph of a drawing installation at Cooper Gallery DJCAD by Jacquetta Clark. Jade's 'Rainbow Tribe' project – a combination of historical and contemporary manifestations of Black Culture from the perspective of the Black Diaspora is central to the ways she is producing a body of work, including 'No Need For Clothing' and its iterations, as well as her performance work 'Revue.' Jade was commissioned to present Revue as a 24 hour live performance at SPILL Festival of Performance, (2018), a solo exhibition at The Bluecoat, Liverpool, (2019) and was commissioned by Art on the Underground to create the 2018 Winter Night Tube cover. www.jademontserrat.com

Art Fund

Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art. It provides millions of pounds every year to help museums to acquire and share works of art across the UK, further the professional development of their curators, and inspire more people to visit and enjoy their public programmes. Art Fund is independently funded, supported by the 159,000 members who buy the National Art Pass, who enjoy free entry to over 240 museums, galleries and historic places, 50% off major exhibitions, and receive Art Quarterly magazine. Art Fund also supports museums through its annual prize, Art Fund Museum of the Year, which was won by St Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff, in 2019, and through a range of digital platforms. www.artfund.org

Arts Council England is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to visual art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2018 and 2022, we will invest £1.45 billion of public money from

government and an estimated £860 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. www.artscouncil.org.uk

About Iniva

Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts) is an evolving, radical visual arts organisation whose artistic programme reflects the social and political impact of globalisation. Through engaging a wide audience, particularly young people, its work encourages discourse and debate on issues surrounding the politics of race, class and gender.

With the Stuart Hall Library operating as a critical hub, Iniva uses collaboration to challenge conventional notions of diversity and difference. Since its inception Iniva has been fortunate to work with a wide range of talented and internationally-respected artists, curators, writers, researchers and cultural producers including: David A Bailey MBE, Sonia Boyce OBE RA, Sheela Gowda, NS Harsha, Isaac Julien CBE, Steve McQueen CBE, Chris Ofili CBE, Yinka Shonibare CBE RA, Kobena Mercer, Okwui Enwezor, and Guy Brett.

The library plays an important role in documenting marginalised art histories including the UK Black Arts Movement of the 1980s, which is under-represented in other collections and national institutions. The collection includes over 4,000 exhibition catalogues and 1,000 monographs, covering culture, politics, gender and media studies, and over 140 periodicals.

Founded in 1994, under the leadership of renowned academic Professor Stuart Hall, Iniva is a non-profit organisation based in London. It has established itself as a pioneering arts organisation in the artistic environment in the UK and beyond. Now Iniva looks towards the future whilst acknowledging its extensive history and legacy.

Iniva is an Arts Council England, National Portfolio Organisation.

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