

Press Release



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Newark Museum Showcases New Media Installation By Kambui Olujimi

Skywriters & Constellations: Full Dome Film and Related Exhibition

NEWARK, NJ – Highlighting the Museum’s longtime mission of aligning visual art and science, on November 4th the Newark Museum will launch *Skywriters & Constellations*, a new exhibition installed in the Alice and Leonard Dreyfuss Planetarium and the Garden Passage. This visually layered, interdisciplinary exhibition will feature a new full dome video commissioned for the Planetarium, as well as a series of 12 lithographic prints that bring to life key characters and scenes from Olujimi’s narrative. The Museum will be screening the film *Skywriters* on a daily basis through the summer of 2019, along with its regular offering of Planetarium programs.

Immersive and unique in its form and process, *Skywriters* (2018) is an animated collage of time and space projected onto the night sky of the Planetarium’s dome. With the full range of the 360 degree dome, Olujimi achieves dramatic shifts of scale and stunning visual effects that animate *Wayward North*. Using the latest in animation and full dome technology, Olujimi creates his figural imagery by stitching together an encyclopedic range of film clips—earth, sky, street scenes, and microscopic views of natural and manmade materials. On view nearby in the Garden Passage, *Constellations* (2013) is a series of 12 lithographs that allows visitors a close-up look at the characters, creatures, and key scenes from Olujimi’s contemporary mythology. Both the film and the prints are drawn from Olujimi’s novella, *Wayward North* (2010).

More than 14 months in development, Olujimi's project for the Planetarium highlights connections between contemporary art and astronomy, mythology, creative writing, and new technologies. "As we continue to explore the intersections of art and science, a unique aspect of this Museum's mission, we were thrilled to have this opportunity to work with Kambui," said Sonnet Takahisa, the Museum's Director of Strategic Education Initiatives.

Olujimi's *Wayward North* project began when the New York gallery Art in General published the novella and presented an exhibition of related art works across a range of media. Calendrical in its structure and illustrated throughout with images of Olujimi's fantastical imagery, the *Wayward North* project was ideally suited for adapting and creating a new work for the Planetarium. While the Museum has been collecting film and video art for decades, utilizing the planetarium as a space for contemporary art is a relatively new initiative. *Skywriters* is the second film by a contemporary artist created specifically for the Planetarium. Saya Woolfalk's *Hybrid Cosmology* (2012) was the first, and both *Hybrid Cosmology* and *Skywriters* are now in the Museum's Permanent Collection.

"It is an exciting time for planetariums as artists and filmmakers realize their potential as unique immersive theaters that can be utilized for music, storytelling, poetry, animation and other creative outlets," said Kevin Conod, the Museum's Planetarium Manager. "To me the fun aspect of *Skywriters & Constellations* is it builds on millennia-old traditions of looking up at the stars and creating new mythological characters."

An interdisciplinary artist who has exhibited widely throughout the United States and internationally, Olujimi is a leading figure in the contemporary field of new media and film installation. Born and raised in Bedford-Stuyvesant Brooklyn, he received his MFA from Columbia University in New York City. His interdisciplinary body of work spans sculpture, installation, photography, writing, video and performance. His works have premiered nationally at The Sundance Film Festival, Museum of Modern Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Lincoln Center for Performing Arts, and Mass MoCA. Olujimi has been awarded residencies from Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture; and the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation; and he is currently an Artist in Residence at Project for Empty Space in Newark.

Skywriters will be screened daily at 4 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday, and is free to visitors with Museum admission.

Kambui Olujimi's novella *Wayward North* will be available for purchase in the Museum's gift shop.

For further information, visit www.newarkmuseum.org.

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Founded in 1909, the Newark Museum is the largest art and education institution in New Jersey and one of the most influential museums in the United States. Its renowned global art collections, supported by significant holdings of science, technology

and natural history, rank 12th among North America's art museums. The Museum is dedicated to artistic excellence, education and community engagement with an overarching commitment to broadening and diversifying arts participation. As it has for over a century, the Museum responds to the evolving needs and interests of the diverse audiences it serves by providing exhibitions, programming and resources designed to improve and enrich people's lives.

The Museum also encompasses the Victoria Hall of Science, the Alice and Leonard Dreyfuss Planetarium, the MakerSPACE, the Billy Johnson Auditorium, the Alice Ransom Dreyfuss Memorial Garden, an authentic Schoolhouse from 1784, and the Newark Fire Museum.

The Newark Museum, a not-for-profit museum of art and science, receives operating support from the City of Newark, the State of New Jersey, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State (a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts), the New Jersey Cultural Trust, the Prudential Foundation, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the Victoria Foundation, the PSEG Foundation, the Phyllis Bolton Administrative Trust, the Wallace Foundation, and other corporations, foundations, and individuals. Funds for acquisitions and activities other than operations are provided by members and other contributors.