

## Arthur Jafa: Space and rhythm

APEX

[https://youtu.be/TUBm2\\_v5RUw?feature=shared&t=4593](https://youtu.be/TUBm2_v5RUw?feature=shared&t=4593)

"I've always understood [*APEX*] as akin to Tatlin's Monument to the Third International [1919–20], which of course was never built. I've come to understand it as a model for both a film—a \$100 million sci-fi epic—and as a kind of preor anti-cinema'. *APEX* is a set of image elements arranged and edited by Arthur Jafa over the course of five years. This fast-paced sequence of 841 images mines what the artist calls 'black potentation' as an emblem of the very absence of any condition of possibility. Jafa has said, "There is no blackness without the horror." The images fluctuate between seemingly innocuous pop culture and the aftermath of violent trauma. In speaking about the included image of "Ex-slave Gordon," Jafa explained, "I was forced to articulate the complexity of an image that is both horrifying and attractive." MacArthur Fellow pianist and composer Jason Moran described the juxtapositions in *APEX* as "the relationship to joy and violence that comes about in African-American existence in America...it was like some kind of meditation, but a hard meditation, a difficult one. And you have to face it. The music demands that you face it. The images in their rapid succession demand that you face it."

Almost entirely composed of still images, *APEX* pulses with a commissioned soundtrack by the musician Robert Hood, a founding member of Underground Resistance (UR). A group formed in the Detroit techno scene in 1989, UR sought to link the aesthetics of techno to developing awareness and facilitating political change. The phase pattern of Hood's soundtrack varies its syncopation with the rhythm of the images. This gives a feeling of motion without any progression which in turn destabilizes each image with a discomforting urgency. Instead of regurgitating either of Modernism's dueling promises, utopia or assured destruction, *APEX* opens up a present tense held in stasis between the two. Itself existing as a proposal for a much longer work, it both defers and delivers on Jafa's oft-mentioned mantra, "a cinema capable of matching the power, beauty, and alienation of Black music."

On *APEX* at Luma (french subs) : <https://youtu.be/9KliK5o5Uho?feature=shared>

Other Jafa videos and talks:

Jay-Z, 4:44

Video Arthur Jafa

[https://youtu.be/zSkA61esq\\_c?feature=shared](https://youtu.be/zSkA61esq_c?feature=shared)

Arthur Jafa: LOVE IS THE MESSAGE, THE MESSAGE IS DEATH

Main track: Ultralight Beam by Kanye West:

<https://youtu.be/lKWmx0JNmQY?feature=shared>

Arthur Jafa DIE ALTA, Trailer Pitch for movie based on Robert Johnson, the first Rock n Roll artist.

<https://youtu.be/kD6DsfrdZew?feature=shared>

Jafa about collage and assemblage, alienation, gap, rhythm, improvisation, necessity:

<https://youtu.be/XAk0dk0IAWw?feature=shared&t=216>