

Large Print Guide

Nocturnal Creatures:

Julianknxx

19 July 2021



Whitechapel Gallery

Gallery 2

This guide includes a large print version of interpretation panels included in the space, as well as a transcript of Julianknxx's film 'Black Corporeal (Between This Air)', 2021.

Julianknxx

'Black Corporeal (Between This Air)', 2021

6–11pm continuous film screening

Performance at 9, 9.30 and 10pm (ticket holders only)

The act of breathing is politically and socially charged in 2021 and, for Julianknxx (b.1987, Freetown, Sierra Leone), "The air is different now, we need to think about how we breathe." Alternating video, spoken word and live music, Black Corporeal (Between This Air) examines the physical and metaphysical aspects of breathing, and calls to deconstruct dominant perspectives on African art, history and culture, in order to allow new black structures and realities to breathe, freely.

With a critical engagement with art history and philosophy, Julianknxx uses his personal history as a prism through which to deconstruct the relationship between materiality and the black psyche. Exploring the idea that our ability to breathe – an act that is

continuously challenged by everything, from air pollution, stress and anxiety, to societal prejudice – is more than our lungs' ability to take in air, but a reflection of the way we live individually and together. *Black Corporeal (Between This Air)* engages with both the physical and metaphysical aspects of breathing and explores how we can experience the fullness of our lives through our bodies.

Black Corporeal (Between This Air), 2021

Transcript:

[00:51]

Julian: If I say black bodies and breathing,
what comes to mind?

Ellah: That idea of just how important the
black body is because this is what we
have. You know, people see us and they
see a history, they feel they know
something or understand something that
is not about ourselves as individuals but
about what has been done to us.

[2:55]

Julian: leave and let me breath as though I
work this land
as though the earth is one with my
beating heart

we the generation digging deep for a
breath
leave and let me breath
walk as though every step is alive
as though I wore this flaming heart filled
with a soulful sonnet
and a blues hot tongue to speak with
leave and let me breath as though I was
born
I can speak let my lungs testify to
persuade my soul matters
let me stay visible to live as though a life
is a life is a life
how many lives a Nigger got to give
before you call him a man?
how many depths do you need to dig to
know how deep his soul is?
The revelation is in your chest.

[3:35]

Ellah: Finding those spaces that allow you to
breathe deeply. And to be conscious of

that growth and of how life-giving it is.

[4:05]

Ellah: *Hold on things or the people that allow you that space to breath and as I get old you need to feel safe in order to properly exhale.

[04:26]

Jason: I've always had trouble with the term black bodies. But, I guess, I'm meant to have that problem. As in, you know, we're not just bodies, we're not just this thing that we see. You know, spoke in an objectifying way. So, you know, everytime I hear it I'm slightly challenged or confronted by it. But, again, on reflection I think I need to be challenged by it because in a sense I'm almost seeing it from a perspective of the other. Because we are objectified by

others, so maybe where it kind of plays on that term we're co-opting, you know, we're kind of disempowering their kind of perspective of us.

[06:12]

Ellah: There is something there where he's saying that, you know, this suppression has been about not allowing us to breathe, not allowing us to be. And so a violence as you say, an erasure, that goes beyond the killing of that particular body, a separation of families. Say 'Yes, I am still breathing, I am still here.'

[6:42]

Julian: leave and let me breath as though I
work this land
as though the earth is one with my
beating heart
we the generation digging deep for a
breath
leave and let me breath

walk as though every step is alive
as though I wore this flaming heart filled
with a soulful sonnet
and a blues hot tongue to speak with
leave and let me breath as though I was
born

I can speak let my lungs testify to the
way my soul mutters

let me stay visible to live as though a life
is a life is a life

how many lives a Nigger got to give
before you call him a man?

how many depths do you need to dig to
know how deep his soul is?

how many?

The revelation is in your chest

Call me a flowering mouth spreading
seeds

a party of light

in the dark a cradle cry

we are, we are, we are quintessential to
your future

I say leave and let me play the lucky
hand

As I walk this land not as a Nigger but
as a man

not as a refugee but as one in one earth

I say leave and let me breath

leave and let me breath

I say leave and let me

I say leave and let me

I say leave and let me breath

[8:38]

Jason: Time frames of ourselves, where we can
see the future, we're not afraid of it.
Because we're already there.

[10:13]

Julian: We are what's left
(one life)
what's left
(one life)
what's left

(one life)

what's left of us

a remembrance of the past

(one life)

this air is a remembrance of the past

because each time is the first

time the air has left

for good

[11:07]

Ellah: There is something there where he's saying that, you know, this oppression has been about not allowing us to breathe, not allowing us to be.