

Steve M^cQueen
Sunshine State
31 March – 31 July 2022

Curated by Vicente Todolí
Exhibition organized by Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan, in collaboration with Tate
Modern, London



Steve M^cQueen
Sunshine State, 2022 (still)
A Commission for International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) 2022
Footage from *The Jazz Singer*. Courtesy Warner Bros. Pictures
© Steve McQueen. Courtesy the artist, Thomas Dane Gallery and Marian Goodman Gallery

Turner Prize winning artist and Oscar winning filmmaker Steve M^cQueen will present an exhibition at Pirelli HangarBicocca in Milan from 31 March – 31 July 2022.

Featuring works from across M^cQueen's career, presented across the Navate space and the exterior of Pirelli HangarBicocca, the exhibition will also include the world premiere of the new video installation *Sunshine State* – a work that has been in the artist's mind for more than twenty years, and commissioned by the International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) 2022.

"Sunshine State" is curated by Vicente Todolí, organized in collaboration with Tate Modern London. The exhibition was first presented at Tate Modern in 2020 where it was curated by Clara Kim, The Daskalopoulos Senior Curator, International Art and Fiontan Moran, Assistant Curator, International Art.

Lauded as one of the most important contemporary artists and filmmakers, **Steve McQueen** (London, 1969; lives and works in London and Amsterdam) has had a major influence on the way film is shown and understood. Taking a radical look at the human condition, its dramas and fragility, McQueen's touching and thought-provoking work asks important questions about urgent issues, such as the construction of identity, belonging, and the right to freedom.

"Sunshine State" will present an immersive experience of Steve M^cQueen's unique visual language. His work always aimed at understanding and penetrating reality and the deepest meaning of existence. The six film works in the exhibition are among the most important of M^cQueen's career, representing free narrative models and unexpected points of view on wide-

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ranging, intersectional aspects of historical and contemporary social contexts.

In a career spanning over 25 years, Steve McQueen has created some of the most significant works in the visual arts, using moving image as a sculptural form that moves in space and time. In 1999 he won the prestigious Turner Prize and has also directed four feature films: *Widows* (2018), *12 Years a Slave* (2013), for which he won the Oscar for Best Picture, *Shame* (2010), and *Hunger* (2008), which earned him the Caméra d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. In 2020 he also created *Small Axe*, his first five-episode mini-series and, most recently, a series of documentaries for the BBC, *Uprising* (2021), *Black Power: A British Story of Resistance* (2021) and *Subnormal: A British Scandal* (2021).

In McQueen's work, the language of visual art and cinema combine to explore current, pressing issues such as race and post-colonialism. Starting from the experience and oppression of black and racialized communities, McQueen develops a broader reflection on human beings and their identity. In his experimental films and videos, McQueen poetically projects his own presence onto the subjects represented, emphasizing the close link between bodily existence and subjectivity, between reality and its representation.

Steve McQueen expanded his work within the exhibition spaces, creating a unique audio-visual experience for visitors. As the artist says: "I am not interested in manipulating people. The complete opposite. I am interested in a truth... the most horrific things sometimes happen in the most beautiful places... I cannot put a filter on life. It's about not blinking." In this way, McQueen also addresses the material and physical quality of moving images, raising questions about the ways in which the film medium can shape the surrounding environment and the viewer's look, and in turn be modified by it.

The Exhibition

"Sunshine State" is curated by Vicente Todolí and organized in collaboration with Tate Modern, London, where the artist had presented a first version, titled "Steve McQueen," from 13 February to 6 September 2020. For Pirelli HangarBicocca, McQueen has conceived a site-specific exhibition project and a new selection of works that unfolds in the Navate and Cubo spaces, and on the exterior of the building. Through a non-chronological layout, the exhibition aims to offer a survey of Steve McQueen's career in the visual arts, highlighting the evolution of his practice over the last two decades. Taken together, the six film/video works presented here form a visual narrative, revealing the artist's radical take on reality and offering an opportunity to imagine new readings of McQueen's work.

The title of the exhibition evokes the artist's new work, ***Sunshine State (2022)***, commissioned and produced by the International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) 2022, which will have its world premiere at Pirelli HangarBicocca. The video is a reflection on the beginnings of Hollywood cinema and the influence that it has had on the perception of issues of identity.

The exhibition opens with ***Static (2009)***. Projected on a large, suspended screen at the center of the Piazza, aerial shots of the Statue of Liberty in New York alternate in rapid sequences. The disorienting close-up images of the monument question its symbolic function and capture the sense of instability and precarity of the Western world's idea of individual freedom. The film is a counterpoint to the work presented in the Cubo, ***Western Deep (2002)***, which closes the exhibition. The film leads the viewer into the depths of the Tau Tona gold mine in South Africa, known as "Western Deep" during the apartheid era, and offers a bitter insight into the harsh working conditions of the miners. Shot on Super-8 mm film, the grainy footage shows a claustrophobic, dark setting that contrasts with the more open, allegorical vision of the former work.

The artist created *Western Deep* in conjunction with another film, ***Caribs' Leap (2002)***. It is a two-part work: one part is broadcast on a LED screen of the exterior walls of the Navate, while the other is projected within the exhibition space. The title refers to the dramatic historical

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events of 1651, when the French conquered Grenada, the Caribbean island where M^cQueen's parents are from. Rather than submit to the colonial government, some of the local resistance fighters and rebels threw themselves off a cliff (Caribs' leap), choosing death over captivity and slavery. The film tackles the racialization and dehumanization of the black and native body, colonized and enslaved.

In ***Charlotte* (2004)** and ***Cold Breath* (1999)** Steve M^cQueen explores the body in its deepest intimacy and physicality. The first of the two works, shot on film, features a close-up of actress Charlotte Rampling's eye. The artist's finger enters the shot, momentarily touching the woman's eyelid and pupil. M^cQueen invites viewers to become witnesses to this scene, emphasizing the voyeuristic aspects of the act of watching as a body is transformed from subject to physical, manipulable object. Similarly, *Cold Breath* shows the film-maker stroking, pulling and pinching his own nipple. The obsessive movement of the fingers exposes the thin line between desire and violence, between pleasure and pain.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a new catalogue, designed by Irma Boom, on the artist's production in the past twenty years, including extensive photographic documentation with contributions by Paul Gilroy, Cora Gilroy-Ware, Solveig Nelson and Hamza Walker.

Notes to Editors

About Steve M^cQueen

Steve M^cQueen's works and solo shows have been presented at many institutions of international prominence, including Tate Modern, London (2020); Tate Britain, London (2019-2021); MoMA Museum of Modern Art, New York, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2017); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2016); Schaulager, Basel (2013); Art Institute of Chicago (2012); National Portrait Gallery, London (2010); Baltic Center for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (2008); The Renaissance Society, Chicago (2007); Fondazione Prada, Milan (2005); ARC, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2003); Museu Serralves, Porto, Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona (2002); Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, Kunsthalle Zürich (1999); Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam (1998); Portikus, Frankfurt (1997). M^cQueen has participated in two consecutive editions of documenta in Kassel (2002 and 1997), and four of the Venice Biennale (2015, 2013, 2007, and 2003), where he also represented Great Britain in 2009.

He has received a variety of awards, including the Johannes Vermeer Prize (2016), Harvard University, W.E.B. Du Bois Medal (2014), CBE (Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) (2011), OBE (Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) (2002), and the Turner Prize, Tate Gallery, London (1999). M^cQueen was also awarded the Caméra d'Or for *Hunger* at the Cannes Film Festival (2008) and the Best Picture Oscar for *12 Years a Slave* in 2014.

The Exhibition Program

"Sunshine State" is part of the 2022-2023 exhibition programme, conceived by Artistic Director Vicente Todolí in collaboration with the curatorial department: Roberta Tenconi, Curator; Lucia Aspesi, Assistant Curator; Fiammetta Griccioli, Assistant Curator.

The program continues, in the Navate space, with the exhibitions Bruce Nauman (September 15, 2022 to February 26, 2023); Ann Veronica Janssens (April 6 to July 30, 2023); and James Lee Byars (October 2023 to March 2024). The Shed space hosts Anicka Yi (February 24 to July 24, 2022); Dineo Seshee Bopape (October 6, 2022 to January 29, 2023); Gian Maria Tosatti (February 23 to July 16, 2023); and Thao Nguyen Phan (September 2023 to February 2024).

Pirelli HangarBicocca

Pirelli HangarBicocca an institution founded in 2004, was relaunched in 2012 by Pirelli, which has been a founding partner since its inception. In recent years the exhibition space has consolidated its role as an art center, attracting an international audience with shows that stand out for their high curatorial standards and great visual impact, and thanks to its offer of unique exhibition projects. The spaces of Pirelli HangarBicocca also host the permanent installation / *Sette Palazzi Celesti 2004-2015* by Anselm Kiefer, which has become a reference point for visitors from all over the world, and the sculpture *La sequenza* (1981) by Fausto Melotti.

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Exhibition information

Institution	Pirelli HangarBicocca
Artist	Steve M ^c Queen
Title	"Sunshine State"
Curated by	Vicente Todolí
In collaboration with	Tate Modern, London
Press preview	March 29, 2022
Opening	March 30, 2022
Exhibition Dates	31 March - 31 July 2022
Location	Via Chiese 2, Milan
Opening Hours	Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday 10.30-20.30
Entry	Free, reservation required
Catalogue	Marsilio Editori
Workshop	Information on creative sessions: https://pirellihangarbicocca.org/kids/
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