



Inferno

TACITA DEAN

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The ten-metre print, made in eight parts, shows Dante and Virgil's descent into Hell as described by Dante Alighieri in his Divine Comedy, 1321. The prints show an inverted mountainscape in negative inscribed with text, marks, splashes, and collaged elements. The source is a found image: a series of nineteenth century photographs of a mountainous panorama.

In Sandro Botticelli's epic manuscript interpretation of Divine Comedy, Dante and Virgil are sequentially repeated like cyphers in the singular drawing bringing, to Dean's mind, a sense of cinematic timing to the Map of Hell. Dean has appropriated this idea by using circles to represent the figures: glossy and opaque for the living Dante and translucent for the shade Virgil. Dean has also experimented with embedding collaged elements into the gravure process for the first time.

The vast print project relates to Dean's stage and costume design for Inferno, part of The Dante Project, a commissioned ballet based on the Divine Comedy with music by Thomas Adès and choreography by Wayne McGregor.

As in Dante Alighieri's The Divine Comedy, the ballet took the form of the three stages of Dante's journey through the afterlife: 'Inferno,' 'Purgatorio,' and 'Paradiso.' For each act, Dean made a distinctive artwork explaining: 'The whole concept for this ballet is to go from negative to positive, from upside down to the right way up, from black and white to color, and also from representation to abstraction. And through mediums as well, so beginning with drawing, and then going into photography, and then coming out into film.'¹

Inferno, 2021 was produced with printmaker Niels Borch Jensen and exists in dialogue with the monumental 40-foot blackboard, which was used as the template for the backdrop in the ballet. Inferno, the photogravure, is in eight parts and continues the idea of an 'upside down cold place' through an aesthetic of reversals and opposites. Using collaged elements for the first time, including black dots to represent the figures of Dante and Virgil as they progress through the circles (in reference to Botticelli's repetition of the two figures in his 'Inferno' drawings), Dean signifies upper and lower realms through positives and negatives, blacks and whites, disrupting a received spectrum of perdition with a cool monochrome underworld.

Dean wanted her Purgatory to be a transitional state between negative and positive. Using a large-format 8 x 10 analog camera, she photographed the jacaranda trees that bloom in Los Angeles through April and May each year. She then printed the negatives as positive prints, transforming the distinctive violet blooms into their negative color, an otherworldly green. This strange intermediary state is accentuated by the artist's meticulous hand-coloring in and around the trees with white crayon.

The Ascensions
+ spend 4m ft

H E L L



Inferno, 2021

8 photogravures with screenprint on Somerset

Paper: 85.1 cm x 115.3 cm (each)

Overall: 89.53 cm x 954 cm

Edition of 18

Price on Request



17th century

belemnite

M. ...
2

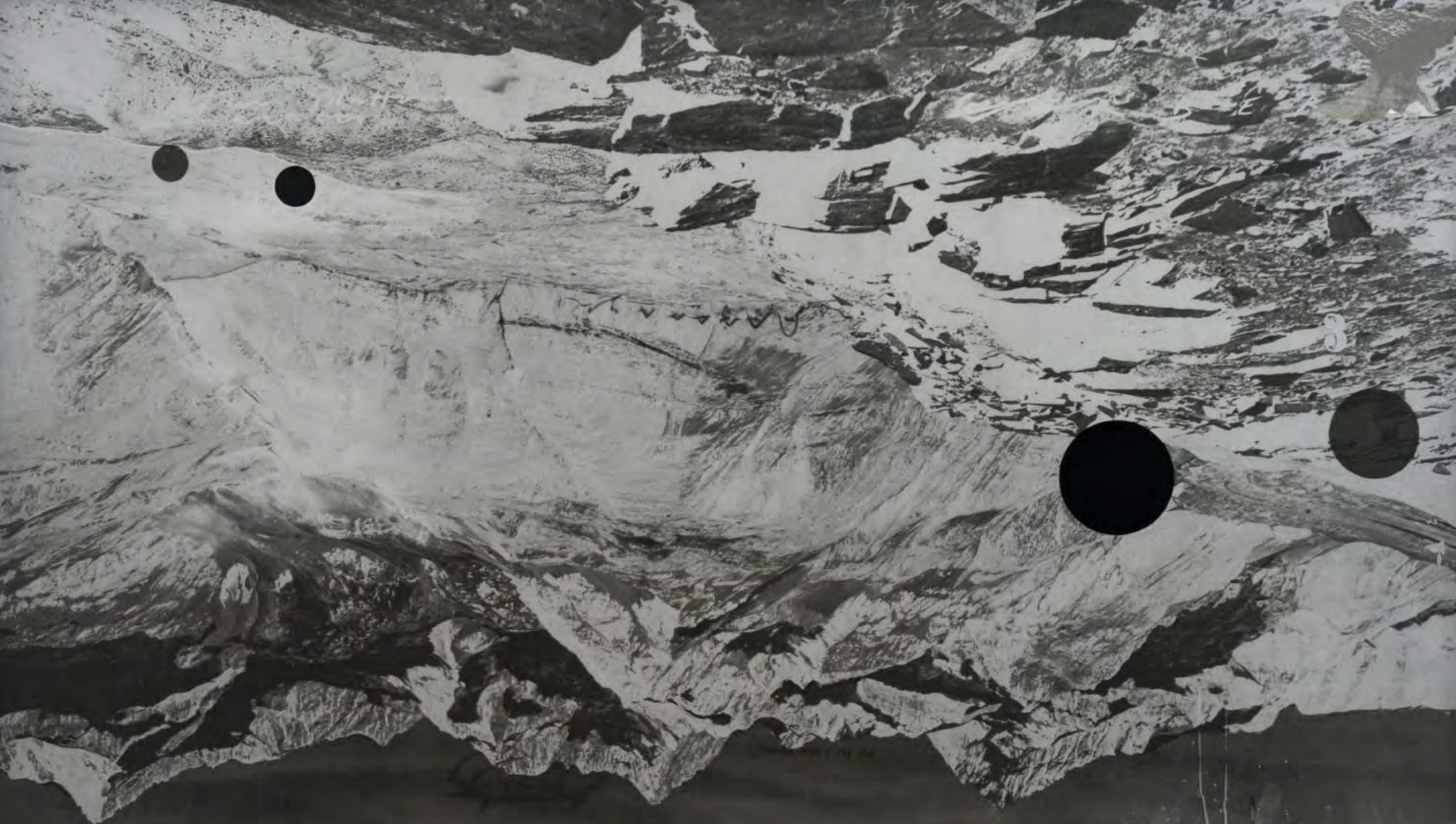
P. ...

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Inferno

UPPER
HELL



3

W. H. ...

From ...

May

sh. 20

1000

The Avaricious
+ spend 400 ft

H E L L



Handwritten notes at the top of the page, including "The faithful" and "A N S R Y".

Handwritten notes on the right side of the page, including "send" and "90".

DIS

5

Handwritten notes on the left side of the page, including "37x" and "11".



Handwritten notes at the bottom of the page, including "HELL" and "D 15".

Life in 45
Hunt (45)

Minotaur

Down

999

Qua m



Lower Hell
getting wider

Antenna 1



Upper view
Heavy support

Handwritten notes on a piece of paper with three hole punches on the left. The text is written in cursive and includes the word "CORRUPT" in all caps. The notes appear to be a list or a set of instructions, possibly related to a technical or scientific process. The paper is partially covered by a dark, textured material, possibly a piece of fabric or a tarp, which is draped over it.

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Handwritten notes on a dark, textured surface, possibly a piece of fabric or a tarp. The text is written in cursive and includes the phrase "getting colder". The notes are scattered across the surface, with some appearing to be part of a larger set of instructions or a list. The background is dark and has a vertical, ribbed texture.

getting colder

1904
04-9-11

The well

SATAN

frozen

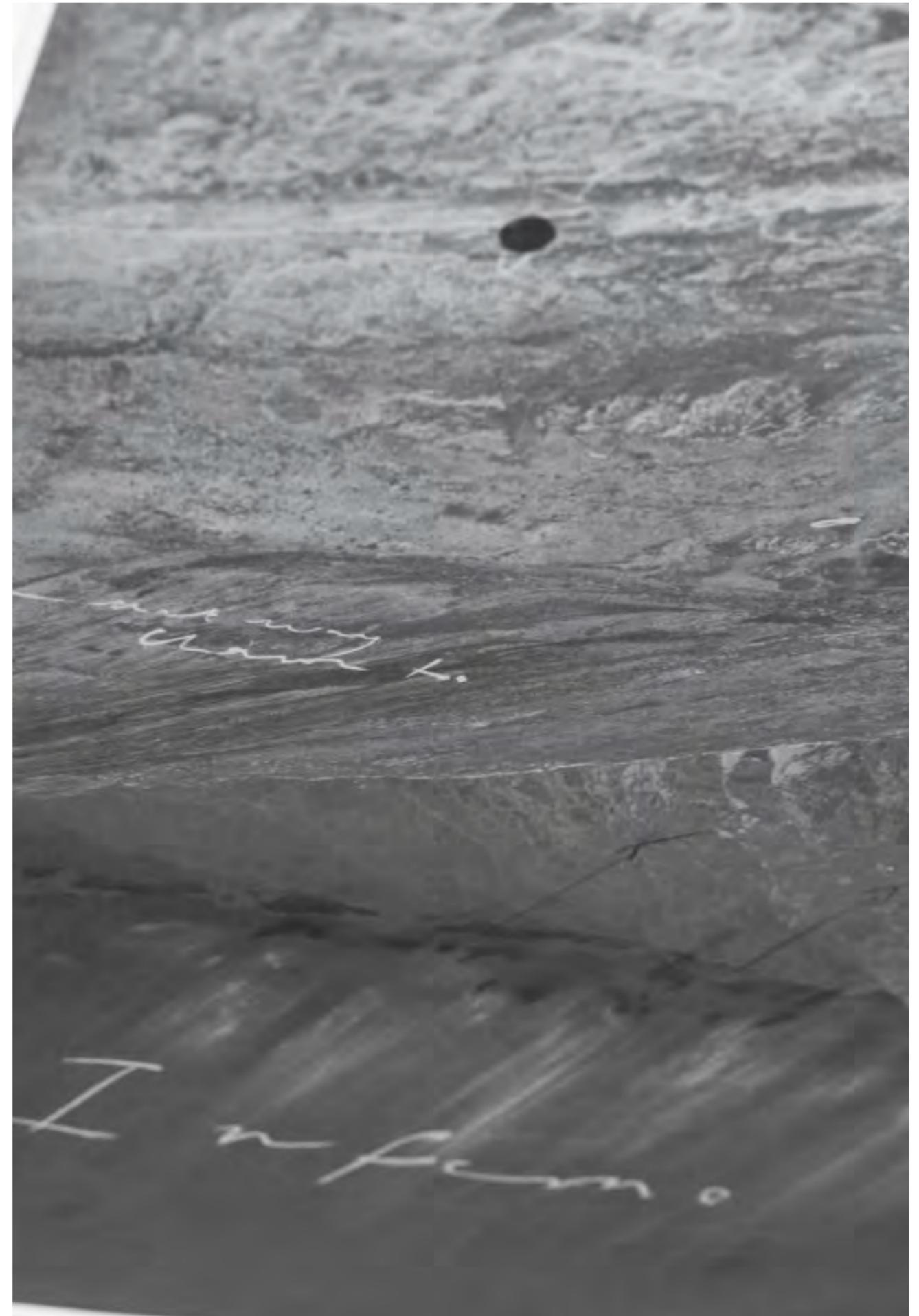


Tacita Dean is a British European artist born in 1965 in Canterbury. She lives and works in Berlin and Los Angeles, where she was the Artist in Residence at the Getty Research Institute in 2014-2015.

Dean has been the recipient of numerous prizes including the Kurt Schwitters Prize in 2009, the Hugo Boss Prize at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, in 2006, and the Sixth Benesse Prize at the 51st Venice Biennale in 2005.

Solo exhibitions were recently held in 2022 at MUDAM, Luxembourg, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; in 2021 at Kunstmuseum Basel; in 2020 at EMMA - Espoo Museum of Modern Art, Espoo; in 2019 at the NY Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen and at the Serralves Museum, Porto; in 2018 at the Kunsthaus Bregenz, The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, as well as The Royal Academy of Arts, London, as part of a trilogy of exhibitions held in conjunction with the city's National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery.

Dean designed the sets and costumes for The Dante Project a collaborative production with the Royal Ballet's resident choreographer Wayne McGregor and conductor-composer Thomas Adés. This new ballet based on Dante's Divine Comedy premiered in October 2021 at the Royal Opera House in London.





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UPPER
~~HELL~~ HELL