

THE PLACE IS HERE

22 JUN - 10 SEP 2017
MAIN & FIRST FLOOR GALLERIES
ADMISSION FREE

EXHIBITION GUIDE

THE PLACE IS HERE 22 JUN – 10 SEP 2017

The starting-point for *The Place is Here* is the 1980s: a pivotal decade for British culture and politics. Spanning painting, sculpture, photography, film and archives, the exhibition brings together works by 25 artists and collectives across two venues: the South London Gallery and Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. The questions it raises about identity, representation and the purpose of culture remain vital today.

The exhibition traces a number of conversations that took place between black artists, writers and thinkers as revealed through a broad range of creative practice. Against a backdrop of civil unrest and divisive national politics, they were exploring their relationship to Britain's colonial past as well as to art history. Together, they show how a new generation of practitioners were positioning themselves in relation to different discourses and politics – amongst them, Civil Rights-era “Black art” in the US; Pan-Africanism; Margaret Thatcher's anti-immigration policies and the resulting uprisings across the country; apartheid; black feminism; and the burgeoning field of cultural studies. Significantly, artists were addressing these issues by reworking and subverting a range of art-historical references and aesthetic strategies, from William Morris to Pop Art, documentary practices and the introduction of Third Cinema to the UK. As Lubaina Himid – one of the artists in the exhibition and from whose words the title is borrowed – wrote in 1985, “We are claiming what is ours and making ourselves visible”.

At the South London Gallery, where a number of the artists exhibited in the 1980s and 90s, the focus is on how artists drew on myriad forms of representation and storytelling to interrogate race, gender and sexual politics. Different forms of self-portraiture and representations of the body can be seen throughout the show, a recurring device used by artists as a means to explore intersecting questions of identity, belonging and desire. The 1980s saw the emergence of important discussions relating to black feminist and queer positions. Striking representation of the body in works by Claudette Johnson and Isaac Julien for example, as well as documentation relating to significant exhibitions, are included here. Finally, the context of London as a site for political and cultural action emerges across the galleries, whether through documentation of Mona Hatoum's performance *Roadworks* in the streets of Brixton following the 1985 uprisings, or Black Audio Film Collective's video essay *Twilight City* which explores the effects on London of Thatcher's urban regeneration programme.

For many of the artists, montage allowed for identities, histories and narratives to be dismantled and reconfigured according to new terms. This is visible across a range of works, through what art historian Kobena Mercer has described as ‘formal and aesthetic strategies of hybridity’. *The Place is Here* is itself conceived of as a kind of montage: different voices and bodies are assembled to present a portrait of a period that is not tightly defined, finalised or pinned down.

The Place is Here is curated by Nick Aikens. Archival displays are curated in collaboration with June Givanni, Lubaina Himid, Andrew Hurman and Marlene Smith. The exhibition was originally presented at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2016) and recently shown in an expanded version at Nottingham Contemporary where it was co-curated with Sam Thorne (February – April 2017). It runs concurrently at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art until Sunday 8th October.

Artists and archives:

Rasheed Araeen, Martina Attille, Zarina Bhimji, Black Audio Film Collective, Blk Art Group Research Project, Sonia Boyce, Brixton Art Gallery Archive, Ceddo Film and Video Workshop, Eddie Chambers, The June Givanni Pan African Cinema Archive, Joy Gregory, Mona Hatoum, Lubaina Himid, Making Histories Visible Archive, Gavin Jantjes, Claudette Johnson, Isaac Julien, Chila Kumari Burman, Dave Lewis, Pratibha Parmar, Maybelle Peters, Keith Piper, Ingrid Pollard, Donald Rodney, Marlene Smith.



Photography is permitted in the galleries.
Filming of the artworks is not permitted.

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www.southlondongallery.org/ThePlaceisHere

The exhibition is dedicated to the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire, their families and friends.

LIST OF WORKS

MAIN GALLERY

1. Chila Kumari Burman

From The Riot Series, 1982

Lithograph and photo etching on Somerset paper
78 × 190 × 3.5cm

Militant Women, 1982

Lithograph and photo etching on Somerset paper
78 × 190 × 3.5cm

Courtesy the artist

In these two prints, made when the artist was at the Slade School of Art London, Burman layered newspaper images relating to different political struggles in the UK and abroad. In *Militant Women* she drew on images taken from the *Socialist Worker*, which she used to sell in Leeds as a student, showing armed women from the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, highlighting the role they played in opposing the military regime's occupation of Ethiopia in 1980. In *The Riot Series* Burman focused on struggles closer to home, drawing on local British newspaper coverage of the uprisings that swept Britain in 1981. References are made to Chapeltown in Leeds, Toxteth in Liverpool and Brixton in London. Adjacent to these, Burman also alludes to the '5 demands' made by Irish prisoners in 1981, during the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

2. Mona Hatoum

Roadworks, 1985

Performed for 'Roadworks', Brixton Art Gallery, London
Colour video with sound, 6 mins 45 secs

Courtesy the artist and White Cube

This video documents a performance that Hatoum made in Brixton, South London in 1985, where she walked barefoot through the streets dragging a pair of large boots attached to her ankles by their laces. Brixton had witnessed violent race riots in 1985 and 1981 meaning there was a prominent police presence in the area. The boots that Hatoum chose to use were particular: 'Dr. Martens', have traditionally been worn by the British police, but were also adopted at the time by the skinhead movement commonly associated with racist violence. Hatoum's movement was encumbered by the boots that followed her vulnerable steps like a continual, threatening presence or heavy shadow.

3. Pratibha Parmar

Sari Red, 1988

Video with sound, 12 mins

Courtesy the artist

Sari Red was made in memory of Kalbinder Kaur Hayre, a young Indian woman killed in a 1985 racist attack in England. Presented as a visual poem that evocatively

blends word and image, *Sari Red* addresses the threat of violence and abuse Asian women faced in 1980s Britain. *Sari Red* refers to the blood spilt in this and other racist attacks as well as the red of the sari, a symbol of intimacy between Asian women.

4. Gavin Jantjes

A South African Colouring Book, 1974–75

Screenprint and collage

Series of 12. Each print 60.2 × 45cm

Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London

Produced when Jantjes was living in Hamburg, this work was shown in 1976 at the ICA in London. In 1982, Jantjes moved to the UK, where he played an important role as an artist and, later curator championing an internationalist approach to exhibition-making. Adopting the mock-pedagogical format of a colouring book, this series of prints is a critical commentary on South Africa's apartheid regime. It begins with Jantjes' own identity card, which lists him as 'Cape Coloured', one of three racial categorisations used by the government until the system was abolished in 1991. By politicising techniques and motifs associated with pop art, *South African Colouring Book* is as much a call to decolonise modernism as it is a critique of apartheid.

5. Rasheed Araeen

4 Ethnic Drawings, 1982

Pencil and pen on paper

85 × 59.6 × 3.5cm

Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London

In the 1970s and 80s Rasheed Araeen, the artist, writer, curator and founder of the journals *Black Phoenix* and *Third Text*, created a body of work that drew on different forms of self-portraiture to address problematics of identity formation and self-representation within the culture of racism. The four panels of *Ethnic Drawings* incorporate English and Urdu over Araeen's face. In the second panel, we see satirical excerpts from the British children's nursery rhyme *Ba Ba Black Sheep*. Araeen said of the use of Urdu: 'As for western critics, I deliberately prevented them from understanding it as they would only be interested in my identity which they do get but they are not able to penetrate and understand'. Araeen had a solo exhibition at the South London Gallery in 1994.

6. Ingrid Pollard

Photographs from Passion Exhibition, 1984–89

C-prints

Dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist

These photographs were shown as part of the exhibition and publication *Passion: Black Woman's Creativity of the African Diaspora* curated and edited by Maud Sulter (Elbow Rooms, 1989). The documentary photographs by Pollard, a member of the D-Max collective, show different figures and groups associated with black feminism throughout the 1980s. Initiatives such as the *Theatre of Black Women* or the *1st Feminist Book Fair* in 1984 are documented, alongside key feminists who visited London such as the writers Maya Angelou and Audre Lorde.

7. Making Histories Visible

Archive display curated with Lubaina Himid

Making Histories Visible is an interdisciplinary visual art research project based in the Centre for Contemporary Art at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston. The archive was established in 2005 by Lubaina Himid, also a professor at the university, who has played an important role as an artist, archivist, scholar and curator. The Making Histories Visible Archive comprises an ever-expanding collection of books and ephemera on a wide range of topics: from African American and black British politics to novels, poems and plays by black women, as well as an extensive collection of exhibition catalogues by black artists. Ongoing research is undertaken by Himid with Christine Eyene and Susan Walsh. On display here is material from three exhibitions organised by Himid in London in the 1980s that presented the work of black women artists: *Black Woman Time Now* (Battersea Arts Centre, 1983), *5 Black Women* (Africa Centre, 1983) and *The Thin Black Line* (Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1988).

8. The Blk Art Group and the Black Art Gallery

Archive display curated by Marlene Smith with Claudette Johnson and Keith Piper

The Blk Art Group Research Project was established in 2011 by former Blk Art Group members Claudette Johnson, Marlene Smith and Keith Piper. The Blk Art Group was active between 1979–84, and its members included Eddie Chambers and Donald Rodney, amongst others. They exhibited collectively throughout the UK, and organised the touring exhibitions *Pan Afrikan Connection* (1982–83) and *The Blk Art Group* (1983–84). They also organised the First National Black Art Convention in 1982, which aimed to address the 'form, future and function of

black art'. Taking the archives and legacies of the Blk Art Group as its starting point, The Blk Art Group Research Project promotes enquiry, scholarship and understanding of what has become known as the British 'Black Art Movement' of the 80s. Presented here are posters, audio recordings and ephemera from the archive, much of which is available online at www.blkartgroup.info.

The Black Art Gallery 1983–94 was established by OBAALA – the Organisation for Black Arts Advancement and Learning Activities – to show the work of 'Afrikan-Caribbean' artists. Co-founded by Eve-I Kadeena and Shakka Dedi, who was Director until 1990, the gallery's storefront location in Finsbury Park was chosen to encourage local footfall. Themed exhibitions providing rare exhibition opportunities were the mainstay of Dedi's programme. Solo exhibitions included Uzo Egonu, Gavin Jantjes, Vanley Burke, Eddie Chambers, Keith Piper and Donald Rodney. From 1986 OBAALA Poetry Theatre presented live performances by a range of artists including Jean 'Binta' Breeze, Merle Collins and Jayne Cortez. Marlene Smith was Assistant Curator at the Black Art Gallery from 1985–86 and returned as Director in 1991 changing programme policy to address gender and sexuality, concentrate on solo exhibitions and include work by artists from the Asian diaspora. Solo exhibitions included Lubaina Himid, Claudette Johnson, Zarina Bhimji. Poet and activist Essex Hemphill made his last London appearance there.

9. Brixton Art Gallery

Archive display curated with Andrew Hurman

The Brixton Art Gallery opened in 1983 as part of that year's Brixton Festival, a largely music-based event that took place for a couple of years in the early 1980s. Housed in three railway arches in Atlantic Road, the Gallery was run on an entirely voluntary basis by members of the Brixton Artists Collective who were responsible for all aspects of the Gallery, from upkeep and maintenance through to fundraising and programming. The Gallery hosted a wide range of shows and performances, details of which can be found on the website archive at www.brixton50.co.uk. On display here is material relating to three exhibitions which included artists and projects featured in *The Place is Here: Roadworks* (1985) which included Mona Hatoum's performance of the same name, *Reflections of the Black Experience* (1986) which included photography by Sunil Gupta, Dave Lewis and Ingrid Pollard amongst others, and a group exhibition *The Third World Within* (1986), curated by Rasheed Araeen.

10. June Givanni Pan African Cinema Archive

Archive display curated by June Givanni

The June Givanni Pan African Cinema Archive (JGPACA) is a 30-year personal collection of films and film-related materials. Givanni has worked internationally as a film curator since the early 1980s, and her London-based archive is a significant collection on Pan African Cinema. Rarely-exhibited works by Ceddo and Maybelle Peters are shown here, alongside materials that contextualise some of the key events and conversations between filmmakers, artists and writers in the 80s. There is a particular focus on the *Third Eye Festival* in London, coordinated by Givanni in 1983, which brought together a number of black and radical filmmakers, many of whom were from Africa, Asia and Latin America, and were presenting their work in Britain for the first time. This was a formative moment for emergent filmmakers, collectives and workshops.

11. Maybelle Peters

Lesson in History, 1990

Animation, 10 mins

Black Skin White Masks, 1991

Animation, 5 mins

Courtesy the June Givanni Pan African Cinema Archive

Lesson in History, was produced when Peters was a student at the West Surrey School of Art and Design. Having read *The People Could Fly* by Virginia Hamilton she was inspired to make what she describes as 'the stories of black achievement and how stories had not been told'. The piece was subsequently screened on the BBC as part of the series *10X10*. *Black Skin White Masks* was made in response to decolonial positions put forward by Frantz Fanon in his seminal works *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) and *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Both films were shot on 16mm using cutouts, photography and masks.

12. Ceddo Film and Video Workshop

The People's Account, 1985

Video, 52 mins

Courtesy the Ceddo Film and Video Workshop and the June Givanni Pan African Cinema Archive

In 1985, three major uprisings rocked Britain, in Brixton, Handsworth and Tottenham. The most explosive was the latter, on the Broadwater Farm housing estate, which resulted in the death of PC Keith Blakelock as well as in hundreds of arrests and a number of prison sentences. The uprisings in both Brixton and Tottenham were sparked by police shootings of innocent black mothers. *The People's Account* was shot during and after the Tottenham

uprising. The programme was commissioned by Channel 4, but was never shown as the broadcaster objected to its accusations of police racism. Ceddo Film and Video Workshop was one of the principal black film workshops operating in the 1980s, and was funded by Channel 4, the Greater London Council and Haringey Council. Its members included filmmakers Imruh Bakari, Milton Bryan, Lazell Daley, D. Elmina Davis, Glenn Ujebe Masokoane and Menelik Shabazz.

13. Mona Hatoum

Measures of Distance, 1988

Colour video with sound 15 mins 35 secs

A Western Front video production, Vancouver, 1988

Courtesy the artists and White Cube

Measures of Distance is constructed from grainy stills of extreme close-ups of Hatoum's mother in the shower of the family home in Beirut. Over the images is a mesh of Arabic writing, like a curtain or a veil, which represent her mother's letters from Beirut to her in London. On the soundtrack can be heard an animated conversation between Hatoum and her mother overlaid with the artist's voice reading a translation of the letters into English.

The video is concerned with the artist's separation from her Palestinian family and in particular, her relationship with her mother. The personal and political are inextricably bound up in a narrative that explores identity and sexuality against a backdrop of traumatic social rupture, war, exile and displacement.

14. Keith Piper

The Body Politic, 1983

Mixed media, acrylic and card on canvas

129 x 183cm

Museum Sheffield

The Body Politic shows a white female and a black male nude. The accompanying poem, which is repeated across the two panels with variations, examines how the white female and black male bodies are subjected to different gazes and projected desires. Keith Piper was a founding member of the Blk Art Group. *Body Politic* was made when he was a student at Coventry where he met Eddie Chambers.

15. Isaac Julien

After George Platt-Lynes, Looking for Langston
(Vintage series 1989/2016)

Ilford classic silver gelatin fine art paper,
mounted on aluminum and framed
Framed size 58.1 × 74.5 cm

Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro Gallery

Looking for Langston, 1989

Film poster

77 × 101 × 5 cm

Courtesy the artist and Isaac Julien Studio Archive

The film *Looking for Langston* (1989) was directed by Isaac Julien and produced by the Sankofa Film and Video Collective, which Julien co-founded in 1983 with Martina Attille, Maureen Blackwood, Robert Crusz and Nadine Marsh-Edwards. The film is a homage to the writer and social activist Langston Hughes (1902–67) and his fellow black artists and writers who formed the Harlem Renaissance during the 1920s. Combining archival imagery with heavily stylised scenes evoking the jazz and blues era *Looking for Langston* would become the hallmark of what B. Ruby Rich named 'New Queer Cinema'. The film, as in the accompanying photographic series that draws on the work of the fashion photographer George Platt-Lynes, and African American photographer James Van der Zee, explores the nature of black gay desire and the reciprocity of the gaze within the black modernist arts movement of the Harlem Renaissance to late 1980's Britain. Shot in London in the late 1980s this film would become one of the hallmarks of black British cinema. The work was made at the height of the AIDS epidemic and several artists who contributed to the work are now deceased, including the poet and writer Essex Hemphill and the two leading protagonists of the film, Ben Ellison who played Langston Hughes and Matthew Baidoo who played 'Beauty'. Both are pictured in the poster and the accompanying artwork.

16. Claudette Johnson

(from left to right)

(each work) 99 × 128cm

I Came to Dance, 1982

Pastel on paper

Collection of Rebecca Wilson

Untitled (Woman with earring), 1982

Paint and charcoal on paper

Courtesy Lubaina Himid

Untitled, 1982

Paint, wool and leather on paper

Courtesy the artist

In the 1980s Johnson, a member of the Blk Art Group, created a series of striking paintings depicting black women. The absence of black women as subjects and artists in the western canon, was the impetus for making them the central presence in her work.

17. Joy Gregory

Autoportraits, 1989–90

Silver gelatin photographic prints
(each work) 65.5 × 56 × 3.5cm

Courtesy the artist

Autoportraits were originally shown at the exhibition of the same name at Camerawork in London before touring internationally. The prints were made on Ilford Galerie Matt (Double Weight) Fibre Paper processed in a very weak solution of Lith Developer. The development of the images took up 30 minutes in darkness to avoid fogging. This process is what gives the prints their distinct tone and colour range. Throughout the 1980s and 90s Gregory made a series of photographic self-portraits as a means to explore questions of identity.

18. Donald Rodney

The House that Jack Built, 1987

Oil pastel on x-ray, wood, straw and fabric
244 × 244 cm

Museums Sheffield

This work riffs on the famous children's nursery rhyme, dating from the 19th century, in which various animals and characters are connected to 'The House that Jack Built'. In Rodney's version, described by the artist as a self-portrait, this house is Rodney's home; his family tree, we are told, has its roots in the 'souls of 75 million dead black souls'. Rodney's ancestry, his body and his home are, like Jack's house, the result of an interconnected history. Rodney, who was a member of the Blk Art Group, suffered from the debilitating sickle cell disease and in the 1980s began to incorporate X-rays of his own body into his work. He had a solo show at the South London Gallery in 1997 and sadly died in 1998.

19. Marlene Smith

Art History, 1987

Mixed Media

85 × 76 × 45cm

Museums Sheffield

The framed images show; Edmonia Lewis, the American sculptor who left America for Europe in the 19th century; a self-portrait by Simone Alexander, a photograph of the

hands of potter Magdalene Odundo taken by Ingrid Pollard and the work *Portrait of Our Time* by photographer Brenda Agard. Alexander, Odundo, Pollard and Agard were contemporaries of Marlene Smith. Smith was a member of the Blk Art Group. Smith has curated the Blk Art Group research project archive, also on display in the exhibition.

20. Sonia Boyce

Lay Back, Keep Quiet and Think of What Made Britain so Great, 1986
Charcoal, pastel and watercolour on paper
Four parts, 152.5 × 65cm each
Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London

In Boyce's biting four-panel work, the artist gazes out impassively from the right-hand corner. This self-portrait floats on a charged backdrop: a pattern of black roses, evoking the wallpaper designs of William Morris and the late 19th century Arts & Crafts Movement; framed within three crucifixes are caricatures of imperialist propaganda posters from India, Australia and South Africa. The title's satirical accent is underscored by the words 'Missionary Position', which punctuate the piece, conflating missionary work with both conquest and sexual submission. As Boyce recently noted, 'the materials of history are not fixed; we can choose to refashion what we are given to reflect better our understanding of those historical references from our perspective now.'

21. Dave Lewis

Flag of our Ancestors, 1985
Silver gelatin print
58.5 × 44.5 × 3.5cm

Games, 1985
Silver gelatin print
58.5 × 44.5 × 3.5cm
Courtesy the artist

Flag of our Ancestors, like many of Lewis' photographic works during the 1980s, interrogates the veracity of the documentary image as well as the archive. It similarly questions notions of national identity and belonging through the imposing Union Jack that hangs in the background. *Flag of our Ancestors* and the accompanying *Games* which satirically shows the continent of Africa as a site for proxy wars, were shown as part of the significant D-Max collective exhibition at the Photographer's Gallery in 1988, along with works by David A. Bailey and Ingrid Pollard amongst others.

22. Eddie Chambers

Black Civilisation, 1988
Paint, card, metal, and glass on board
152.2 × 122cm
Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London

Black Civilisation, which combines images of African sculptures and masks amongst a quote by the Jamaican reggae singer Burning Spear, was first shown as part of Eddie Chambers' solo exhibition *Marcus Garvey: The Blackest Star* at the Africa Centre in Covent Garden in 1988, which commemorated the birth of Marcus Garvey, activist and political leader, in 1887. Garvey, who was a proponent of both the Black nationalist and Pan-African movements was a key figure for Chambers. The artist was a founding member of the Blk Art Group with Keith Piper and played a key role in the discussion in the 1980s as an artist, curator, writer and organiser.

23. Zarina Bhimji

Untitled, 1989
Polaroid photograph
80 × 60cm
Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London

This work was produced using a Polaroid Land Camera. It is part of a series Bhimji made following two days at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The image includes hair lying on white chiffon from a headscarf, with a torn postcard of an Indian woman. It takes inspiration from T.S. Elliot's poem 'Ash Wednesday', first published in 1930, which explores the search for faith. The second section of the poem includes the lines 'Lady of silences / Calm and distressed / Torn and most whole / Rose of memory / Rose of forgetfulness / Exhausted and life-giving'.

24. Lubaina Himid

We Will Be, 1985
Newsprint, marker pen, paper, drawing pins, watercolour, crayon, pencil, yarn, foil and playing cards on plywood
182 × 89 × 10.5cm
National Museums Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery, presented by Lubaina Himid MBE in 2012

'We will be who we want, where we want, with who we want, in the way we want, when we want and the time is now and the place is here'. This poem, from which the title of the exhibition borrows its name, is defiantly handwritten across Himid's cut out woman who stands firmly with her arms folded. Collaged on to her dress are photographs of black figures from popular culture and history.

LIST OF WORKS

FIRST FLOOR GALLERIES

25. GLC Anti-Racist Mural Posters

1985

(each work) 71.9 × 55.4 × 3.5cm

In 1985 the Greater London Council (GLC) commissioned four anti-racist murals across London (in Brixton, E.1, Notting Hill and Southall). The anti-racist murals were part of a series of significant initiatives and policy directives initiated by the GLC during the 80s before it was dissolved in 1986 by the Conservative government.

26. Martina Attille, Writer and Director / Sankofa Film and Video Collective

Dreaming Rivers, 1988

31 mins 31 secs

Courtesy Martina Attille and the BFI National Archive

Dreaming Rivers is a meditation on migration and dislocation. Attille has said that this allegorical work 'illustrates the spirit of modern families touched by the experience of migration'. The character of Ms T is in part constructed out of research interviews with first-generation female Caribbean migrants, who settled in England in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The positioning of Ms T, the central black female subject is also, in part, informed by the iconic arrangement of the female form in works by British artists Simone Alexander, Claudette Johnson and Marlene Smith.

In the early 1980s, Attille worked with Maureen Blackwood, Robert Crusz, Isaac Julien and Nadine Marsh-Edwards to create Sankofa Film and Video Collective (London), which was founded in 1983.

In 1986 and '87 Sankofa Film and Video Collective and Black Audio Film Collective screened videos and tape-slides during the period of the show, *Sonia Boyce*, at the Air Gallery (formerly located in Rosebery Avenue, London). Soon after, Boyce accepted an invitation to contribute to the development of *Dreaming Rivers*, working closely with Attille to extend the themes of the original script 'Image Imagery'. As a result, Boyce produced for the studio shoot of *Dreaming Rivers*, two sets/installations of meticulously displayed objects, to evoke the contextualising narrative of Ms T and her family. Editing strategies for *Dreaming Rivers* were inspired by a detail in *She ain't holding them up, she's holding on (Some English Rose)* 1986 by Boyce, a work of mixed materials, paper and pastel crayons, currently in the collection of Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art.

Corrine Skinner-Carter
Angela Wynter
Nimmy March
Roderick Hart
Stefan Kalipha

Ms T
Daughter
Sister
Sonny
Sunny Boy

Dionne Desantos Campbell
Leanna Samuel
Darren Leahy
Marie Attille
Rosemary Julien
Peggy Octave

Child Daughter
Child Sister
Child Sonny
Creole Voices
Creole Voices
Creole Voices

Lorna Lee Leslie
Nina Kellgren
Shirley Thompson
Christine Parry
Location

Concept gown for Ms T
Cinematography
Music composition
Production stills
Star Studios, London

27. Black Audio Film Collective

Twilight City, 1989

52 mins 25 secs

Courtesy Smoking Dog Films

Through a fictional letter from a daughter, Olivia, to her mother in Dominica, *Twilight City* (1989), Black Audio Film Collective's third film following *Handsworth Songs* (1986) and *Testament* (1988), addresses the physical and psychic impact of Conservative governance on London's inner cities in the 1980s. *Twilight City* uses film archives, photographs, studio tableau vivants and traveling shots through the city to excavate the changes brought about by Margaret Thatcher's urban renewal project. The voiceover narration, in the form of a letter, is the narrative thread that connects the city's changing landscape and interviews from mostly black and Asian cultural critics, historians and journalists including Gail Lewis, Paul Gilroy, George Shire and Homi Bhaba convey the remapping of the city.

Black Audio Film Collective was founded in 1982 by John Akomfrah, Reece Auguiste, Edward George, Lina Gopaul, Avril Johnson, David Lawson, Claire Joseph and Trevor Mathieson.

Jonathan Collinson
Edward George & John Akomfrah
Brad Thumin
Trevor Mathieson
Reece Auguiste
Avril Johnson

Cinematography
Voiceover script
Editor
Sound design
Directed
Produced

QUOTES AND REFERENCE MATERIALS

“The 1980s [...] remain for us a difficult decade. They seem to be presented as the source of a fully formed and uncontested narrative package [...] Much less common is a presentation of the 1980s as a historical space that has yet to be fully narrativised and appraised by drawing on the multiple remembrances of those who were there and lived the decade. Particularly disturbing for me is the easy and profoundly unreflective use of two grand narrative terms: black art and the Black Arts Movement.”

– Keith Piper, from *Shades of Black: Assembling Black Arts in 1980s Britain* (2005)

“The group believes that Black Art – which is what they call their art – must respond to the realities of the local, national and international Black communities. It must focus its attention on the elements which characterise [...] the existence of Black people. In doing so, they believe that Black Art can make a vital contribution to a unifying Black culture which, in turn, develops the political thinking of Black people.”

– Press release for the exhibition *Black Art An’ Done*, Wolverhampton Art Gallery (1981)

“Our methods vary individually from satire to storytelling, from timely vengeance to careful analysis, from calls to arms to the smashing of stereotypes. We are claiming what is ours and making ourselves visible [...] We are here to stay.”

– Lubaina Himid, exhibition foreword for *The Thin Black Line*, ICA, London (1985)

“I would say much of the work is different because we are presented with the problems of forging, or one could say, synthesising the varying elements of identity – not only in terms of artistic language but also because we have to address ourselves to a historical context within a politicised community.”

– Sonia Boyce, interview with John Roberts, *Third Text*, issue 1 (1987)

“The term ‘black’ is used ‘as a way of referencing the common experience of racism and marginalization in Britain’, which ‘came to provide the category of a new politics of resistance, among groups and communities with, in fact, very different histories, traditions, and ethnic identities.’ It refers to a kind of ‘cultural politics designed to challenge, resist, and, where possible, transform the dominant regimes of representation.”

– Stuart Hall, *New Ethnicities* (1988)

“The recurrence of collage, montage and bricolage as organising aesthetic principles in black visual arts in Britain can be seen to involve similar formal and aesthetic strategies of hybridity that critically appropriate and rearticulate given signifying material in producing new representational strategies.”

– Kobena Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle* (1994)

“The violent rupture enacted by certain works of British Black Art is above all linked to their harsh criticism of the models proposed by art schools in the 1970s–1980s and by extension the canons of art history they support.”

– Sophie Orlando, *British Black Art* (2016)

“It is the main function of the British Art Establishment, particularly its official bodies, to support, encourage and thus promote the art activity of its people. The question now is who does it actually consider its people. The answer to this of course would be the British people. But this does not of course answer everything, because the crucial part of the whole question is: what are the various components that make up British society?”

– Rasheed Araeen, *Notes Towards a Black Manifesto* (1977)

“Being written out of history can happen to you. There is no safety in collusion with those who want to suppress our art and suppress our voices. They will turn their weapons on you and who will be here to help you if your contemporaries no longer exist?”

– Maud Sulter, in *Feminist Art News* (1988)

“Once we have recognised that there are many forms of black representation – all of which have their weaknesses, ideological limits and strengths – then we can also recognise that there can’t be any one right moment, genre or discourse.”

– Stuart Hall and David A. Bailey, from *Ten:8 magazine* (1992)

“The work of contemporary black artists will be seen to be derived from a ‘double consciousness’ which not only affirms the interdependency of the histories of black peoples and Western civilization, but also questions the precepts of Western historiography, that is the ordering of history in terms of the privileged concepts of tradition, evolution, sources, and origin.”

– Gilane Tawadros, *Beyond the Boundary: The Work of Three Black Women Artists in Britain* (1989) *Third Text*, Vol. 3, Issue 8.9

“The word ‘radical’ carries with it connotations of rootedness [...] which have once again become highly significant for British political culture. ‘Race’ must be retained as an analytic category not because it corresponds to any biological or epistemological absolutes, but because it refers investigation to the power that collective identities acquire by means of their roots in tradition. These identities in the forms of white racism and black resistance, are the most volatile political forces in Britain today.”

– Paul Gilroy, *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack* (1987)

Researched by Nick Aikens and Sam Thorne

Special thanks to Miguel Amado, Adelaide Bannerman, Deborah Cherry, Charles Esche, Annie Fletcher, June Givanni, Paul Goodwin, Nicola Guy, Alistair Hudson, Andrew Hurman, Melanie Keen, Claudette Johnson, Lubaina Himid, Amna Malik, Keith Piper, Marlene Smith, Sam Thorne and Grant Watson, as well as all the artists and lenders.

ACCOMPANYING EVENTS

Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts) has devised a public programme for *The Place is Here* in collaboration with curators Adelaide Bannerman and Annie Jael Kwan. The programme explores ideas around history as a fragile construction where 'lessons' of the past, present and future have collapsed one into the other. By focusing on artistic practice, the historical and contemporary critiques of the work, this collision of time and space attempts, in this moment, to reset what is known and how we come to know it.



Articulating British Asian Art Histories:

A Lecture by Dr Alice Correia

Tue 18 Jul, 12.30–2pm, Free,

Seminar Room, Paul Mellon Centre, WC1B 3JA

Dr Alice Correia introduces her research project *Articulating British Asian Art Histories*. The project seeks to document and analyse the contributions made by Asian diaspora artists to British art during the 1980s and 90s.

The Fellows Lunch Series is a series of free lunchtime research talks given by recipients of Paul Mellon Centre Fellowships.

History Lessons: Burning Illusions Part 1 & 2

Part 1: Wed 26 Jul, 4–8pm, Free,

SLG Galleries & Clore Studio

Part 2: Sat 29 Jul, 12–4pm, Free,

Stuart Hall Library, EC2A 3BA

A two-part course and workshop curated by Adelaide Bannerman in association with Iniva introduces a selected overview and participatory review of the visual art practices, independent publishing initiatives and specialist archives promoting and discussing the work of established British artists of African, Caribbean and South Asian descent.

Limited spaces available, priority booking for those who can attend part 1 and 2.

History Lessons: Burning Illusions Part 3

Part 3: Sat 2 Sep, 11am–6pm, Free, Clore Studio

A day of workshops and discussions led by Patchwork Archivists, GLC Story and Adelaide Bannerman. The event will close with a screening of *Burning an Illusion* (1981) directed by Menelik Shabazz.

History Lessons: Fluid Records

Sat 9 Sep, 7–9pm, £5/£3 Conc,

SLG Galleries & Clore Studio

Live programme curated by Annie Jael Kwan in association with Something Human and Iniva, followed by Q&A. Featuring performances by Libita Clayton and Larry Achiampong which take their cue from the idea that the archive can be fluid and transposed into living people, who bear witness thereby willfully reconstructing and passing on meaning in the historical present.

If the ticket charge means you are unable to attend please contact mail@southlondongallery.org

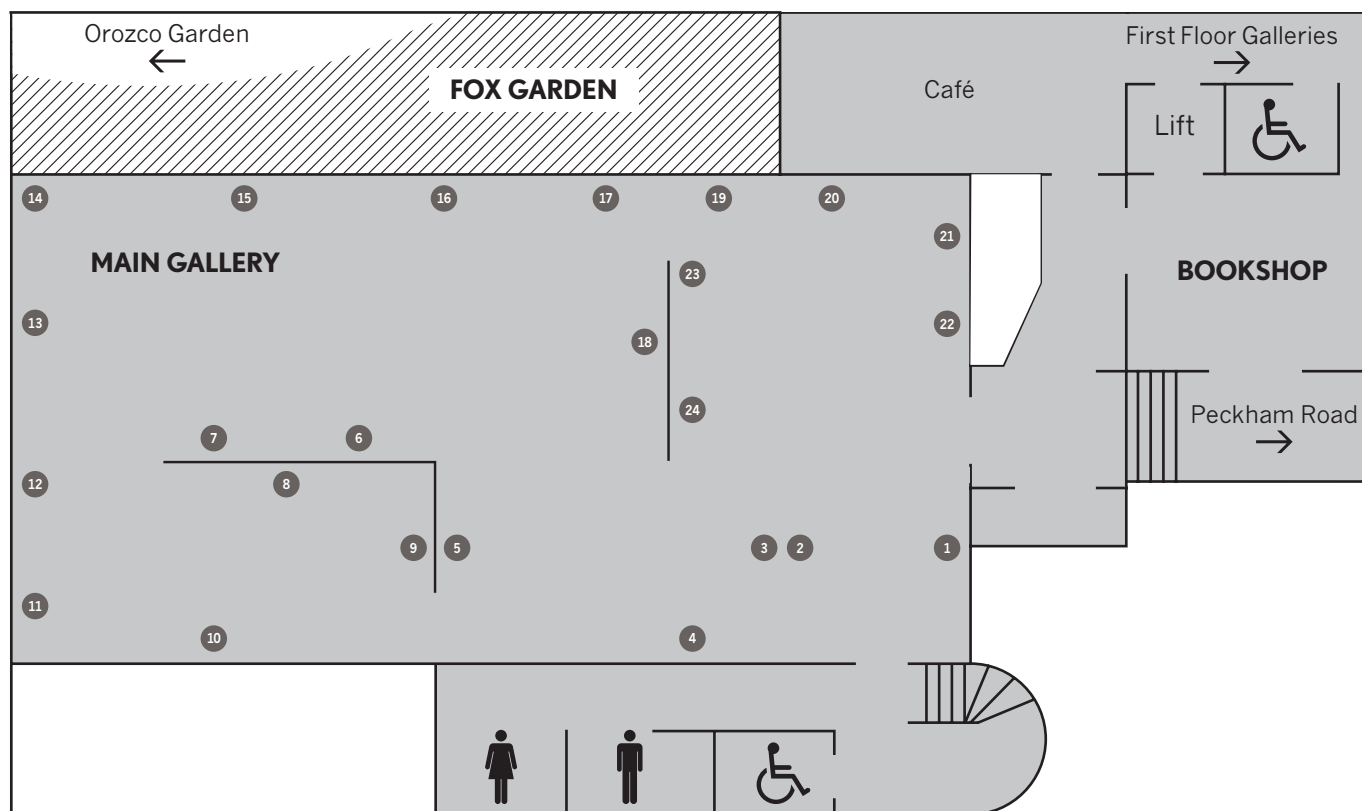
Exhibition Tours

Daily, 1pm & Last Fridays, 7pm, Free

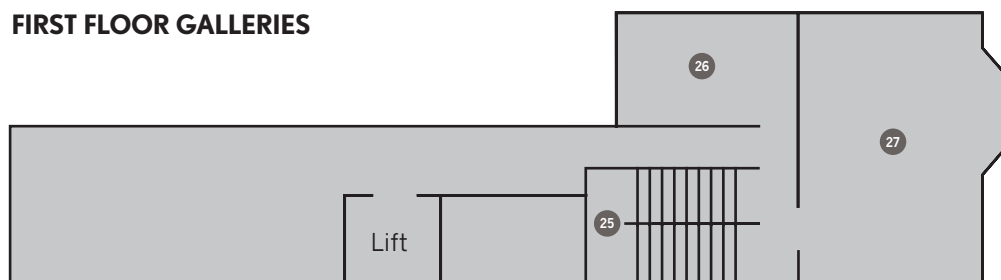
Join the SLG's gallery assistants for an informal, drop-in tour of the current exhibition.

Booking for most events is essential, book online or call 020 7703 6120.

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