

THIN BLACK LINE(S)

Sutapa Biswas

Sonia Boyce

Lubaina Himid

Claudette Johnson

Ingrid Pollard

Veronica Ryan

Maud Sulter

TATE BRITAIN 2011/2012

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CONTENTS

TATE INTRODUCTION

LETTERS TO SUSAN

THIN BLACK LINE(S) AT TATE BRITAIN

ARTISTS

SUTAPA BISWAS

SONIA BOYCE

LUBAINA HIMID

CLAUDETTE JOHNSON

INGRID POLLARD

VERONICA RYAN

MAUD SULTER

ARCHIVE

INSTALLATION IN PROGRESS

LINKS AND CONNECTIONS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INSERT

MOMENTS AND CONNECTIONS – MAP

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TATE INTRODUCTION

Thin Black Line(s) Tate Britain 2011/12

In the early 1980s three exhibitions in London curated by Lubaina Himid *Five Black Women at the Africa Centre* (1983) *Black Women Time Now* at Battersea Arts Centre (1983-4) and *The Thin Black Line* at the Institute for Contemporary Arts in (1985) marked the arrival on the British art scene of a radical generation of young Black and Asian women artists. They challenged their collective invisibility in the art world and engaged with the social, cultural, political and aesthetic issues of the time.

This display features a selection of key works by some of these artists. At their core is a conceptual reframing of the image of Black and Asian women themselves. Drawing on multiple artistic languages and media, these works repositioned the black female presence from the margins to the centre of debates about representation and art making.

Most of the works on display have been lent by the Arts Council and from artists' private collections. They and local museums were more proactive at the time than national museums such as Tate in collecting these works.

The participants in the three exhibitions were: Brenda Agard, Sutapa Biswas, Sonia Boyce, Chila Burman, Jean Campbell, Jennifer Comrie, Margaret Cooper, Elizabeth Eugene, Lubaina Himid, Claudette Johnson, Mumtaz Karimjee, Cherry Lawrence, Leslee Wills, Houria Niati, Ingrid Pollard, Veronica Ryan, Marlene Smith, Maud Sulter and Andrea Telman.

This display has been devised by artist Lubaina Himid MBE, Professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Central Lancashire, with curator Paul Goodwin.

On display until 18 March 2012, admission is free.

BP British Art Displays 1500-2011

LETTERS TO SUSAN

Dear Susan

Thank you for asking such interesting questions, the business of answering all of them is going to be a test of my resolve, my memory and my pride. The best way for me to begin to discuss any strategy for exhibiting visual art is always to list the artists. I could describe the objects or make clear my philosophy and illustrate the theoretical underpinning which supports the whole project; this will unfold soon but a list of names has to come first.

5 Black Women at the Africa Centre (1983) Covent Garden London

Sonia Boyce
Veronica Ryan
Houria Niati
Claudette Johnson
Lubaina Himid

Black Woman Time Now (1983/4) Battersea Arts Centre London

Ingrid Pollard
Veronica Ryan
Claudette Johnson
Sonia Boyce
Lubaina Himid
Chila Burman
Mumtaz Karimjee
Houria Niati
Jean Campbell
Andrea Telman
Margaret Cooper
Elizabeth Eugene
Leslee Wills
Cherry Lawrence
Brenda Agard

The Thin Black Line (1985) Institute of Contemporary Art London

Marlene Smith
Veronica Ryan
Sonia Boyce
Claudette Johnson
Maud Sulter
Chila Burman
Brenda Agard
Sutapa Biswas
Jennifer Comrie
Lubaina Himid
Ingrid Pollard

You don't often see all the artists listed together especially the line up for *Black Woman Time Now*, its not in *Passion: Discourses on Black Womens Creativity* (1990) and its not in *The Companion to Contemporary Black British Culture* (2002) even though the exhibition is mentioned, or *Shades of Black* (2005), or the catalogue for *Transforming the Crown* (2007). Our names along with much other very useful information can however be found in the publication *Recordings: A select bibliography of Contemporary African, Afro Caribbean and Asian British Art*. It was published by inIVA and Chelsea College of Art & Design in 1996.

If you want to track the creative and cultural shifts that have happened during the past twenty five or so years since the idea for these three shows came into my head you have to hear the names to be able to assess the influence these then young and emerging artists had on the visual art landscape of the following decades and to adequately either navigate the terrain or map the course you must remember who was (and wasn't) in the exhibitions.

The whole story started for me when I was accepted as an unfunded student without a bursary for an M.A. in Cultural History at the Royal College of Art in 1982. Sir Christopher Frayling and Paul Overy took me on then both encouraged and supported chivvied and parried with me for two years. It was Paul Gough who helped me to apply for the money to pay part of the fees and Lady Bridget Astor who gave me several hundred pounds for the remainder. Marlowe Russell allowed me to live in her house virtually free in exchange for nothing but heartache. I was single minded and did not hesitate to ask for help and demanded total support for my plan to tip the British art world up-side down.

Looking back and piecing together the tapestry of it now it really was easy to stage these shows because Eddie Chambers, Keith Piper, Claudette Johnson and Donald Rodney had already surmounted huge amounts of diffidence, prejudice, hostility and hatred by staging *Black Art an done: An Exhibition of work by Young Black Artists* Wolverhampton Art Gallery in 1981, *The Pan Afrikan Connection: An Exhibition by Young Black Artists* Ikon Gallery 1982, and by staging The First National Black Art Convention Open Exhibition of Black Art at the Faculty of Art and Design Gallery at Wolverhampton Polytechnic. All the tour venues of The Pan Afrikan connection exhibition including 35 King Street Gallery Bristol, Midland Group Gallery Birmingham, Herbert Museum and Art Gallery Coventry, The Africa Centre London and the Black-Art Gallery in London had staged work curated by Eddie Chambers and his colleagues before any of my shows had reached the walls of anywhere.

I was writing about them in my M.A. thesis at the R.C.A.(1982-1984) the underlying challenge was how to articulate the idea that black women had a voice and a creative energy which needed nurturing, each paragraph tapped out very slowly as i struggled on a portable typewriter in the converted kitchen/studio in south London.

Keep going with your film

Love Lubaina

Dear Susan

I hope the Parisian comedy circuit is keeping you amused. I am tempted to be glib in answer to the question Why did you stage these exhibitions? There are many reasons not all of them thoroughly thought through, none of them financially sound and only a few strategically efficient.

Women artists were not being recognised as having a place in the visual arts generally and even the Feminist art movement had not given us enough room to manoeuvre within the discussions they were having in the art school and around the kitchen table. Black women artists were not getting the grants they deserved because they did not know the right avenues to follow. I was hungry to show with other black women to see whether there was a conversation to be had amongst ourselves around showing space, political place and visual art histories, how to develop ideas around making, visual representation, belonging and identity. What were the global realities of black sisterhood?

Almost all of the time the exhibitions came about because I responded to other peoples urgent desire for a physical and tangible proof of our creative activity.

The Africa Centre was a familiar venue; I worked in a restaurant I had helped to design on the opposite side of Covent Garden Piazza. The curators there knew me as an artist/organiser of small exhibitions by emerging artists on the walls of eating places in London. We promoted shows of drawings and paintings by Theatre Design graduates with whom I had completed a B.A. at Wimbledon School of Art.

Battersea Arts Centre was around the corner from where I lived at the time, the space was rough and ready, friendly and loud. Working with Yvonne Brewsters Talawa Theatre Company as a designer led us to working with a group of Black women activists who had been asked to stage a festival of Black Womens Creativity they asked me to join them to organise a large exhibition of women's work, the opportunity was too tempting to ignore.

I had visited the ICA at least once a month for the previous decade or more, either to see films, eat salads, and watch new plays or to engage blissfully with exhibitions, the place

was part of my life and central for everyone interested in contemporary culture. A curatorial post was advertised and because I was a naive and yet ferociously ambitious black woman with an M.A. and a few exhibitions on my CV I applied for the job. Did everyone else know at the time that the people who planned to become pivotal to the contemporary art world in Britain and Europe usually started their careers at the ICA. As a theatre design graduate I knew about British theatre and loathed it, could not penetrate it and had abandoned it. The secret human machine, enabling British art galleries and collections to invent, produce and develop the exhibitions I had been visiting with my mother since the age of 9 or 10 at the Tate on Millbank, the Hayward on the South Bank and the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square, was completely unknown to me.

I didn't get the job, I don't think there was a job, but the director Bill McAllister called me on the telephone and asked me to put forward some ideas for a Black Arts Festival for the ICA. I wrote some energetic ideas for a cinema, theatre and exhibitions programme but cannot now remember any significant details. I went to a meeting and discovered that there had been pressure (funding pressure) from the Greater London Council for much more evidence of a black cultural contribution to the programme at the ICA I was the best or actually the worst the ICA could come up with. Unsurprisingly the festival programme never materialised and I was offered the full length of the 20 metre corridor to present an exhibition. The very experienced Declan McGonagle (84-86) oversaw the project and Andrea Schlieker (85-88) was his assistant, Sandy Nairne (80-84) had just left, Iwona Blazwick his assistant was later that decade to return to take over the visual arts post herself (86-93).

In his article *Mainstream Capers: Black Artists White Institutions* written for *Artrage* (Autumn 1986) Eddie Chambers wrote "It is my view that no persons (least of all Black artists) have the right to determine what Black artists (other than themselves) which are represented in white galleries". It would be foolish of me to pretend that his remarks were not influential once I understood his disgust.

Dear Susan

I hope you are getting time to wander around the hidden museums we talked about, have you found that brilliant ice cream parlour?

The contents of this letter could be the answer to why much of what I set out to do did not make the rapid changes to artists lives we all envisaged and yet unleashed a torrent of energetic and optimistic women into the exhibiting world who would go on to influence the way museums, collections and educators think about creative communication with audiences.

Why make exhibitions containing the work of young black women in that way, as an artist/selector, in those particular spaces?

I have only put together four or five such shows in thirty four years but at the time it seemed right to showcase this huge variety of voices with visual stories to share. Rules were being broken all across the landscape of British gallery spaces by young artists who were not aware of the underlying strategies in which they were being manipulated. Shows emerged in response to strategically friendly requests by organisations, politically obliged, for funding reasons, to be seen to shift their way of defining who could be an artist; In tandem with this understand that we wanted to exhibit the work we were making in our kitchens and back bedrooms, and were determined to be as inclusive as possible. It suited us to show alongside each other, presenting a whole variety of beliefs, life choices and philosophical narratives. We exhibited in this way to make visible our richness of vision. We did not all think about audiences in the same way or use materials the same way. We prioritised differently in relation to politics, money or faith and were brave enough to expose this. We were not a movement or a group or a sisterhood or even close friends but instead a fluid set of women who were not prepared to be herded into a single way of expressing ourselves. We were happy to liaise with anyone in almost any busy space and encourage our friends and families to participate in the looking experience.

In 1986 Eddie Chambers thought that none of the 11 artists in *The Thin Black Line* would be represented in the ICA for quite some time, if ever. He was also convinced that the curators had herded us into this small space against our will. This ground-breaking curator was right about the first and wrong about the second.

Good decisions about place and space were and still are often determined by footfall; offer me a space to show in the middle of a city where there is the chance that hundreds of people may happen upon us while engaged in another activity and I will consider it above a secluded space for a pre-selected audience, especially when the creative output is by artists starting out. They need to have the chance to be seen by as many people as possible then grow their own audiences over time.

My initial letter/leaflet sent out across Britain to art schools community centres women's groups and friends was a simple but effective, totally random typed and copied slip of paper, it attracted a particular kind of artist; optimistic and determined, ambitious and young with no fear of failure. The other four artists in *5 Black Women* were women who had responded quickly and with clear images of art work coupled with a passionate desire to be exhibited. I made a decision to select 11 artists including myself, for the then 20 x 2 metre corridor of the ICA essentially and absolutely to illustrate that there was not enough room for the amount of visual endeavour being produced.

Dear Susan

I do hope the screening went well and you are enjoying the deliciousness of Rome now that the work is done.

It seems an odd exercise to chronicle in 2010 what the artists who were working with me in 1983/4/5 are doing now. This is not meant to sound like a pop quiz or friends reunited, nor is it proof of success or failure.

I still remember and re imagine those three exhibitions in terms of artists and what they were trying to achieve, rather than a gathering or juxtaposition of aesthetically interesting objects displayed for pleasure or analysis. This could be why conversations with mainstream curators have often faltered in the years since as they tried to fit our activity into the landscape of the time. They explain to me that their tendency to think about how ideas can be conveyed in terms of objects, arranged and displayed. It is normal for some of them to try to communicate over a period of time with an artist then to be part of the development of the pieces gradually so that it becomes part of the overall curatorial vision. I have never worked in quite that way. The process with which artists invent and devise is endlessly interesting to me. I want to facilitate space and time for them to make and think for themselves. We sometimes discuss the impact of the ideas during the months before they emerge into the public space but I am a sounding board not a midwife.

Success largely depends on what each artist decides success actually is.

I have included this list for you so that it can act as a starting point for further discussion and just in case we want to make some commitment to an archive/collection project or an article for *Colourcode*.

Sonia Boyce has an MBE and two works in the Tate collection. She exhibits all over the place and her latest exhibition *Like Love Parts One and Two* was shown at Bluecoat Liverpool in 2010.

Maud Sulter died in 2008; her work is in the collections at the V&A, the Arts Council and the National Portrait Gallery.

Jean Campbell and **Cherry Lawrence** have both practiced as art therapists in medical, community and educational settings each has written articles on the subject and been part of the Art therapy, Race and Culture group.

Leslee Wills is a history teacher in a secondary school and organises events for Black History month.

Veronica Ryan has seven works in the Tate collection including one she showed in *The Thin Black Line*. She works in America and the last show I can find her work included in was at the Brooklyn Museum in 2007. She exhibited a piece called *Between Spaces* 2003 to the present, in a show called *Infinite Island: Contemporary Caribbean Art*.

Ingrid Pollard received a Leverhulme Individual award, has work in the Arts Council collection and is associate research fellow at the Centre for Urban and Community Research at Goldsmiths.

Brenda Agard is a storyteller and works with the North London Partnership has written plays and worked as a photographer.

Sutapa Biswas is a Reader in Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art & Design University of the Arts and works within TrAIN the Research Centre for Transnational Art, Identity and Nation.

Houria Niati works in performance and has been represented by Janet Rady. Jennifer Comrie, Elizabeth Eugene, Andrea Telman, Mumtaz Karimgee and Margaret Cooper have fallen off my radar and I have fallen off theirs.

Chila Kumari Burman was most recently Leverhulme artist in residence at the University of East London, shows frequently in a wide variety of venues.

Marlene Smith was director of The Public when it opened in West Bromwich in 2008

Claudette Johnson does not exhibit widely but still contributes to discussions about visual art and works with groups to develop their visual skills. She may work with us at UCLan in the Print room soon.

I have an MBE, am Professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Central Lancashire, have work in numerous collections including three paintings in Tate, several in the V&A and a series in the Arts Council collection. My exhibitions in recent years in the museums; The Bowes, The V&A, The Judges Lodgings Lancaster, The Merseyside Maritime, Lady Lever, The Williamson, Sudley House and in 2011 Platt Hall, Manchester, have interrogated important issues around audiences and are central to my practice.

It seems rather slight, a string of words about collections awards and careers, written here without reference to the families these women have nurtured and the places they have visited or the music they have listened to or the conversations they have had with each other during the past twenty five years but it is obvious that in between the stark lines there nestle some very deep, significant, dramatic, scandalous and even tragic narratives, all of which we could bring to the surface with hundreds of drawings and photographs stories and illustrations to link the multiple developments and influences. Its a story waiting to be told. Each woman could tell it.

Dear Susan

I'm glad the trip is going well and the set up at the screenings is as good as they promised. It will be so fabulous to meet up with you in Berlin next week.

In the meantime I will try to unpack the whole funding thing around the exhibitions, it's important to make things clear about how the finances worked because to some degree the projects seemed well supported, two of the venues were well used and well known and were in receipt of fair amounts of public money. On the whole the money in circulation was very modest, I received modest expenses for *Black Woman Time Now* in line with the other women in the creative steering group, I received a small fee of £100 for the 6 months work on *The Thin Black Line* which covered some of my expenses and no fee at all for the exhibition at the Africa Centre. I realised at the time that not very many people could ever have afforded to work on these shows but it is only during the past decades that I have wondered whether the fact that I agreed to do this work for nothing meant that it was difficult for other artist/selectors to develop relationships with the venues, the ICA or Battersea Arts Centre because they had to support themselves without help from friends.

I received a huge amount of help from Marlowe Russell she had been a good friend of mine since the age of 15, she was an artist and I lived in her house. She was always there for me to exchange ideas with, she would listen to the endless worries I brought home. She agreed to hire and then drive large unwieldy old transit vans to transport the work from all over London to the various exhibiting spaces. It did not seem so important at the time but not having to be at work at 9 am every day, not having to pay much rent to her and not having to commit to a job for 5 days a week meant that I was able to work part time, near to home, earning small amounts of money as a youth worker. This privilege allowed me to work with all three venues, virtually free.

The artists received nothing at all from the Africa Centre but some of us sold work. They were not paid for showing at the Battersea Arts Centre and at the ICA we had to share £250 between 11 of us to speak at a public event. Maud Sulter cleverly had the sense and nerve to ask for her own fee for speaking. It sounds utterly naive now but these opportunities to work with other women on projects resulted in a huge increase in our ability to communicate ideas to people in a way we truly believed in. It was a privilege for me but the other artists might want to develop and unpack that notion of working for nothing and tell you what it meant for them.

There was money to produce leaflets, invitations and the launch parties at all the venues but at the ICA there was also technical help to hang the exhibitions and a catalogue.

Dear Susan

You want to know about the nitty gritty of the actual installation of these shows, is it because you have already solved all the hassles of the presentation of your film in Berlin? What a freezing city it can be how did we ever think it was going to be easy there?

It does help when the technical staff are willing to take their time and give you experienced advice without being patronising.

At the Africa Centre we did it ourselves. My contribution of 5 naked life sized painted cut out men with one metre long erections, raised some sceptical eyebrows but all I had to do was decide on an order, position the figures and then lean them against the wall. I placed them early in the audience experience of the exhibition; the worst space of course but I understood that it takes some time to acclimatise to the environment.

It was a disconcerting space to hang, essentially the gallery is an actual gallery hovering high around a large hall with a vast, ornate and elaborate ceiling. Standing back to look at the placing meant walking around the room at its edge and looking at what you had placed across a yawning chasm beneath you.

The layout dictated that it was inevitable that an audience would see the work at very close quarters or from nine metres away; nothing was ever quite seen in the comfortable medium distance. Claudette Johnson's deeply sensuous large scale richly coloured almost life sized pastel drawings of women, were light and easy to hang. They could hold the space and were so beautifully rendered that it was a joy to be close to them and to see the crafted marks and blended colours.

Veronica Ryan chose to contribute a series of fascinating small objects, gourds, fruits, strange shaped things, dark mud brown and matt gun metal grey rubbed and scratched, with pitted surfaces. A series of twisted curved and familiar yet uncanny creatures; all in rows on a metal three tiered display device. They looked like something abandoned by an unknown force displayed as products for sale in the corner shop. We simply had to fix the shelving and then place the objects in the order according to the plan. There was never a question that anyone would steal or move the pieces, it wasn't necessary to engage in long conversations with the visual art team there about securing the sculptures or invigilation, insurance or health and safety.

It was an arts centre predominantly a performance venue and meeting place for people from all over the continent, it was famous in London for the lovely crowded restaurant in the basement which served delicious West African food, almost unheard of at the time. People came and went from the building in between meetings, meals, dance performances and visits to the shop all day and late into the night. It was unpretentious, low key yet challenging because every minute we were there either arranging the work or visiting during the run, we would be intellectually stretched by audiences demanding answers to their questions about our unfailing commitment to being aspiring contemporary artists making work with personal and political narratives. We were feminists, two African women and three Caribbean women working together as artists. We were seen as a formidable group.

Houria Niati exhibited her extraordinary re-imaginings of Delacroix paintings in which using every colour imaginable, she questioned and argued with his interpretation of how North African women think and feel look and behave. They were bold, active and rude paintings which refused to unnecessarily respect the masterworks yet acknowledged their significance. They could hold the distance and were able to shout loudly at you from across the massive airiness of the space.

In those far off days Sonia Boyce made large scale pastel drawings, full of pattern and portrait, seductive autobiographical narratives revealing absolutely everything about real life and young love, secret conversations, working peoples aspirations, difficult relationships and childhood memories. Many people wanted to buy this work, after all who told these stories in the wider public then? Sonia later stated in print in a leaflet produced for a display she had at the Whitechapel Gallery, that she was not altogether happy to be exhibited in this show, confessing that she felt she was not ready for the attention, the praise, of critics, collectors and audiences. She was not happy either with the venue, feeling The Africa Centre was too far away from the homes of the people to whom the work was directed; the people with whom she had grown up.

It only took a day to make the installation work but it was dizzyfying, either because we had to go round and round the gallery to see what the show looked like from every angle or because to look down instead of across the space brought on terrible vertigo.

Dear Susan

I still remember snatches from the events of the installation at each of those shows every time I complete an exhibition hang now. It is still a nerve racking business, fraught with anxiety about the technical details and full of excitement for the possibilities of the project.

Just trying to ensure that all the work actually arrived at the ICA was a challenge, one which occupied many hours prior to the opening date.

Maud Sulter had happily agreed to be part of *The Thin Black Line* but as we neared the dates for collection and delivery of the work we kept missing each others calls. In the end I tracked her down to her office at a women's education project and picked up her collages from there. She had had the brilliant idea of remaking Salvador Dali's *Christ of St John on the Cross*; a strange depiction with vertiginous, smooth, kitch, slippery blue grey forms. Mauds painting designed for the walls of the staircase was to be the Dali work remade as a black woman crucified. Unfortunately she never did make the piece nor did she come to the opening of the exhibition.

Sonia Boyce arrived with her work when everyone else's was almost fixed to the walls, I was slightly upset but only because I had not actually seen the work she had been working on. It was a new piece, a work on paper called *Mr Close Friend of the Family* (1985) a most extraordinary and powerful black and white pastel drawing about 4x3 foot. All around the edge as a border is a pattern of small life sized child's hands; each with fingers spread wide. Layered on top is a short text. At the centre of this intense work is a young black girl looking out of the frame at the viewer. She seems numb and silent but is trying to be strong. She is dressed in a plain top and is depicted from the waist up. Standing close to her is the figure of a black man with a slight paunch, in shirt and trousers whose head we do not see, depicted from his groin to his chin. The man reaches across the heavily scalloped patterned surface towards the young girl's breasts; his hand is millimetres away from her. The border text read *Mr Close friend of the family pays a visit whilst everyone else is out.*

Chila Burman had a typically wild and funny idea for the staircase as well as installing paperwork in the main corridor display area. Her project was a whole body print for the venue; to facilitate her making the piece we had to clear the area as she removed all her clothes, smeared herself in paint/printing ink and pressed herself repeatedly against the wall in a kind of body kiss. Veronica Ryan was chosen by me to exhibit for just two weeks in the beautiful Nash room on the first floor of the ICA as well as in the main corridor with everyone else. The room was available to us, in between other projects and it seemed like a superb opportunity to display the work of an artist who was at the time very prolific and serious about her ambitions to work as a professional contemporary artist. One of the pieces was later purchased by Charles Saatchi before he donated to the Tate collection.

Sutapa Biswas *Housewife with Steak Knives* was an astonishing almost larger than life sized pastel drawing in deep red black and brown, a contemporary translation of the multi armed goddess Kali brandishing knives, flowers and flags. The installation of it was smooth as it took its place at the end of the corridor near the bar and restaurant. Later in the run some idiot spat on the piece and we began to understand the power of what we had achieved.

Since then I have realised that all exhibitions have elements of danger shifting and shimmering amongst the ghosts of past lives, plenty of my own work has been wilfully broken or damaged with knives, boots and screwdrivers in the gallery setting. Considering the energy flashing and flying around the space at the ICA the rest of the work in *The Thin Black Line* emerged at the end of the run, unscathed.

Dear Susan

Thanks for asking about the impact of these shows. There were all sorts of reactions and responses from other artists, critics and curators, family and friends, largely unarchived and off the record. The work was made in the main for other black women to engage with. We made it so that we could communicate, so that we could swell the ranks of active, creative and political artists. We made it for young women like ourselves and also for the thousands of older black women in Britain who had supported the system for decades. We each brought favourite family photos and pictures of singers, dancers and musicians to adorn the space and make it feel like home.

Some of what we wanted to express in a very direct way was also revealed in the catalogue for *The Thin Black Line*, it contained some extraordinary texts; the following extracts may give you some idea of the determined opinions we were happy to share.

Sutapa Biswas said *"All art forms are political and must be read within a socio-historical context. Much of my work is satirical and insists upon the multiplicity of meaning. One of its intentions is to re-assess, question and re-write that history which belongs to imperialism."*

Jennifer Comrie wrote *"My blackness and spiritual awareness are important elements within the work. With a sense of black consciousness, I am able to speak as a black woman who feels that her sexuality within this society is reduced to rabidity whose intelligence, confidence in herself is still being reduced to inefficiency. Though others of a different racial group may be able to intellectualise and rationalise the problems I face as a black person, experiencing similar problems one is only truly comforted when ones own kind states I understand, I have been there myself."*

Marlene Smith said *"As Black women artists our work revolves around and evolves out of an experience which is our own. As a Black woman I feel a responsibility to address that experience, to embrace it, to explore it. In so doing many of my images deal with brutality and violence. It is important to point out here that such work is about the continued attempt to dehumanise us. My work is not about a dejected people nor does it portray a degraded black womanhood. I seek to contribute to the building of a material culture that might have been denied were it not for the struggles of my people."*

"I was called a cultural terrorist by one free-lance curator, who worked in the commercial sector, it hurt then, but she simply could not deal with the apparent speed and strength of our progress nor our disregard for the market."

Claudette Johnson said *"The black women in my drawings are monoliths. Larger than life versions of women, invisible to white eyes and naked to our own. They are women who have been close to me all my life – with different stories. They are not objects. Every black woman who survives art college fairy tales and a repressive society to make images of her reality-deserves the name artist."*

Sonia Boyce wrote *"A child's curiosity and fear of the adult world, religion and personal relationships: these have been my main themes. The familiar/sensual, the familiar/uncomfortable. I work mainly on paper with paper and crayons."*

The pastel work she produced for this show, that I described in some other letter to you, was among the last of its kind she made for public showing.

Maud Sulter's text was long in comparison to most of the other artists; she was after all a poet. She didn't include images at all in her contribution; one section read, The primary area of my creative production is my writing. Poetry, prose, articles. Covering a range of subjects; personal/political.

"The images I produce incorporate photography, drawing, newspaper cuttings and texts; both my own and by others. Within this context the significance of the image modulating the text fascinates me. Later in the text towards the end she says, Yes being visible can be dangerous. But being invisible eats away at your soul. Night and Day."

Veronica Ryan really wanted to talk about her practice and allow the political to emerge. *"In my studio I have a collection of natural objects. The collection started when I became aware of the fact that more and more the sculptures resembled particular kinds of land and sea structures. These objects I have decided have their origins in a primal past. More specifically they are partly reminiscent of the very unlikely way these objects grow. Their relationship to the ground or bulging out of a tree trunk continually arrests my imagination. They are ridiculous and wonderful at the same time."*

"I am trying to establish a sense of place both historically, culturally and psychologically. The word heritage conveys a rich sense of tradition and security. But there is a sense in which I use sculptural language to make and explore boundaries in a contemporary context. The sculpture could be described as having a direct parallel with the diverse ways in which human behaviour communicates, or remains alienated."

Ingrid Pollard submitted 41 simple words of biographical text which held within them such a rich tapestry of experience it still moves me when I read it today. She said, *"Born in Georgetown Guyana I came to England when I was 4 years old and have lived in London since then. I have spent recent years as a photographer and as a printer in a Community Arts Project in Hackney."*

This short narrative illustrates exactly what was in different ways central to all of us; our families had come from somewhere else, at some point, we were all educated in Britain and knew we had a great deal to contribute to the cultural landscape. None of us has ever given up being creative and all of us who are still alive continue to attempt to share what we know.

See you soon

Love Lubaina

Dear Susan

I cannot believe that we really have managed to bring together seven of the artists from the 1980s shows in such a beautiful room at Tate Britain. I am convinced that my letters to you have galvanised the goddess of exhibitions into action. I love the sensation of being in the room with the work itself, the selection of archive material and your video show reel with its footage from *The State of the Art*.

Paul Goodwin and I would have loved to have been allocated two or three rooms in which to make this In-Focus Display, but strangely it might have developed into being one of those over-packed, end of an era, block buster monsters with too much information and too many images reading across one another. He and I spent many hours discussing which work would speak about a woman's experience and which would clearly place the black woman artists' contribution firmly at the centre and in the history of British Art. We wanted to show pieces that might connect a contemplative and scholarly audience, wide open for bold visual dialogues, with these artists who in the 1980s used their work to actually have real conversations with each other using paper, pastels, paint, plaster, bronze and photographs.

It might have been amazing to have transformed one gallery into a loud room full of music and laughter; I saw dozens of wall texts, heard entire play lists and imagined visitors being able to leaf their way through long lost archive material. Working within the space of one room and the very strict Tate rules about 200 word introductory wall texts and 100 word artist biographies, completely shocked me and nearly drove me to the brink. Discussions about space and these rules ended any hopes of a lively, mixed media context filled ante-room jostling for attention next to a gallery of artwork.

The display had to fit seamlessly into the BP British Art In-Focus format and amazingly, because of this, has taken on a sense of belonging and been transformed into a series of magical and fantastical moments, of glimpsed looks and overheard whispers as the women in the artworks meet again. Audiences are somehow held in the space and yet are still taken from the kitchen to the living room, from the street to sleep, from the dream to the beach and from history to family.

The map, *Moments and Connections* (2011) replaces the text we might have installed all over the walls in the space, to make clear the numerous links, relationships and partnerships and cultural strategies hidden below the more visible records of the 1980s. It is there to be used like a map of course to understand something of the past, but it also works if people want to go on to make connections, write texts and make work of their own. The artists on the map who are in this Tate display are obviously up for and open to discussions about commissions, publications and acquisitions but the map illustrates that there are many more avenues available to follow and develop.

Now that we are all agreed that this work is indeed a part of the central narrative in the story of British Art, the map is my gift to curators, academics, artists, interested collectors and scholars to take the information offered and do something with it (to be spoken in a loud voice).

My exhibitions and displays are always an invitation to develop any ideas an audience might have to take up the challenge and build upon whatever it is the art in the space has initiated. It is a strategy that sometimes works in this competitive bear-pit in which venue attempts to outwit venue and academics are squeezed into leading double lives by having to communicate effectively within and without the institution. Unfortunately artists' histories can still easily disappear amidst all this and often only a few re-emerge as awareness surges then fades, seemingly for no reason. Many are still making very good work indeed. It causes pain.

If people ask you, as they often do, tell them to use the *Moments and Connections* (2011) map in any way at all but that it exists, like everything else we do, as part of our embattled research project to bring neglected histories back into the visible where they belong. American collectors, curators and historians understand why what these artists have achieved is important, but here in Britain there is still a fear of the politics embedded deep inside the making of this sometimes astonishing work.

In earlier letters to you I recounted the scenario of how these 1980s exhibitions came into being there was an assumption on my part and I assume yours of truth telling but recently while at an event in the Heiman Kreitman Archive at Tate Britain, Fiona Baker showed me a letter (Courtney J Martin had read it years ago of course). It is a letter I wrote in 1984/5? to Declan McGonagle in which I boldly state exactly what I want from him at the ICA. I don't remember writing the letter (conveniently) and it's very irritating to have contradicted myself in this way and to have carelessly left the evidence of this in the public domain.

I have scanned it for you (see overleaf), look at what he's underlined and numbered.

There are several fabulously direct/supportive/'missing' and opaque e mails in our files now relating directly to this project but it's too soon to work out what they all mean and whether they matter.

The occasion of this piece of history, nestling as it does amongst the British displays, is not the end of something and it isn't the beginning either, but maybe you could mark it as the middle of the middle of a strategy for the future – at last.

Thanks for all the work you did to make it happen

Lubaina

44 Elspeth Rd
London S.W.11.

Dear Declan,

Thanks very much for your note, I am sorry not to have spoken to you sooner but you too are difficult to find on the telephone. I have several proposals some of which I feel the I.C.A. is not the right venue for yet but the idea I would like to talk to you about is huge, suited to the place and I think would be a first for a major gallery in Britain.

I would use the downstairs gallery, the concourse and the upper galleries. The staircase would be an extra bonus but as the images would stay longer than the exhibition you might have objections/other ideas.

③ The downstairs gallery I would like to see given over entirely to the work of the sculptor Veronica Ryan, both her 3 dimensional work and her drawings, possibly she could work in the gallery on a piece as well during the course of the exhibition. You may know her work, she was part of the Tate show of sculptors on the front lawn last summer.

② The upper galleries I would like to use to show the work of four women, myself, Sokari Douglas Camp, Sonia Boyce and a woman who used to work with Eddie and Keith called Claudette Johnson. My work you may have seen at the Africa Centre, the Battersea Arts Centre, the Festival Hall or the Mappin, it has been reviewed in T.O. and C.L. in the last couple of years. Sonia Boyce has just taken part in a show at the Bluecoat and before that at Nicola Jacobs. Sokari is still at the R.C.A.

① In the concourse gallery and up the stairs I would put the work of 12 black women artists working at the moment they are photographers, printmakers and painters, there is also a smattering of cloth sculpture and video just to confuse the issue. I would like to use the space, the whole space, to make visible the black woman in Britain today, the black woman as seen by black women that is. I would like to challenge our image, our stereotyped image and give a voice to some of the women visual artists who are trying to redress the imbalance created by the media the art world and yes even the government.

This proposal is really what I would like to see in the I.C.A. I have not made any allowances for what you might want to see or what the press would want to see.

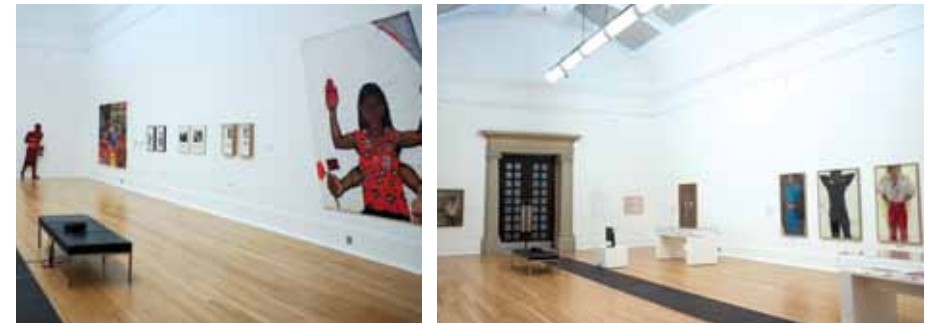
I can provide visuals if you do not know any of the work I can draw and describe what I would hope to see happen in the concourse although this would depend upon which artists took part. I have not provided you with any of this here because I am not at all sure how serious the I.C.A. is about moving over a bit at the water trough. Once again thank you for the trouble you have gone to to contact me, I hope to hear from you soon.

Lubaina.

**THIN BLACK LINE(S)
AT TATE BRITAIN**









THE ARTISTS

Sutapa Biswas

Like a compass, art sits on the line of horizon.

I was born in India, and have lived in England from a very young age. Growing up in London, I felt the impact of a country deeply entrenched in a colonial history and slowly (in different ways) coming to terms with a shifting demographic and the loss of its colonial dominion.

On the flip side of the same coin, I witnessed the deep sense of loss felt by my parents, who forced by the political circumstances in India at the time, had reluctantly left. My father, whilst living in India, had been an academic, teaching at Bharati University, Santinikethan, in West Bengal – an institution well known primarily because of its associations with the Nobel Prize Winner, Rabindranath Tagore. Although this was an era of a post-independent India, liberated from its former British colonial rule, its recent history, compounded by the partition of India and together with the dynamics of Cold War politics, meant that as a nation, India was still a country profoundly affected in all regards. Particular regions within the subcontinent, remained volatile, and presented difficult circumstances for many Indians, including those outspoken within a seemingly ‘safe’ academic context. As with my father, such circumstances were, in some cases, life threatening.

It’s hard to know when exactly, I first decided to become an artist, but I do recall, my love of drawing from a very early age. It was perhaps the act of watching my mother silhouetted against the light from her bedroom window, as she read the letters received from those she loved but had left behind in her beloved India, that first captured my imagination. Unawares that I was watching, my mother immersed in the written sentiments, quietly wept. Some time later, but still a young child, I came across a small reproduction image of Jan Vermeer’s, *Woman in Blue Reading a Letter* (1663 - 64). Poignant and beautiful, the colour (blue) of this painting, took me back to the experience and moment of seeing my mother, draped in an ocean blue sari, reading letters of her own from far distant lands.

Later in adult life, studying fine art and art history in the Department of Fine Art and Art History at the University of Leeds (1981-1985), I fell in love with the visual imagery, archival histories / critiques, and literature, in which as an undergraduate student, I was privileged to be immersed. Coupled with my also studying the History and Philosophy of Science at Leeds University, I believe that I developed a thirst and skill, for engaging with the world about me, in a very particular way. Thereafter, I undertook a postgraduate degree at the Slade School of Fine Art, and subsequently began my practice-based doctoral research at the Royal College of Art London, where I became further immersed in the process of making art. Whilst studying at the RCA, an already established artist, I also became a mother, and this simple fact, without doubt, awakened my senses in untold ways (see my work *Birdsong*, 2004).

Those whom I have studied under at ‘art school’, include: Fred Orton; Griselda Pollock; Terry Atkinson; John Tagg; Art and Language; Laura Mulvey; Mary Kelly; Lubaina Himid; Helen Chadwick; Stuart Brisely; Jose Froufe; Susan Hiller; Craigie Horsefield; Pavel Buchler; Lis Rhodes; Phyllida Barlow; Paul Huxley; Alan Miller.



It is a combination of all of these different contexts (from which I happily draw) that has informed the language of my work as an artist. My art is both simple and complex. It is conditioned by my experience, but not necessarily determined by it.

Books, boats, birds, line, form...

My works are conceptually driven, but their formal aesthetic is always a determining presence. I work across a range of media, including drawing, painting, film, video, and photography, allowing the nature of my subject with which I engage to guide the final outcome. Gladstone Thompson, an artist friend of mine, once said, that in the process of making a painting or work, there comes a point at which the work (if successful) takes over in its making, and I think that this is very true. A starting point within the context of making my art is always the drawing. As a process, drawing for me, engages the psychic as well as the physical space – at once, profound in its simplicity, and beautiful in its articulation.

There are many themes explored in the context of my works: questions of subjectivity or the subjective experience in relation to gender, class and race (identity), to history and to time. It is the concept of time itself (including its relation to histories) that is the underlying and determining factor in all of my works. Of the different medium I use, in particular, it is my use of drawing and film (the moving image) from which I derive the most pleasure, because for me they are formal and temporal opposites - specifically connected in the act of making, through the context of time. With this in mind, some of the things that have been key influences within my works so far, have been the work of: Marcel Proust (specifically, *In Search of Lost Time* – see my film work, *Remembrance of Things Past*, 2006); Frantz Fanon; Jorge Luis Borges; Virginia Woolf; Sigmund Freud; Gilles Deleuze; Jacques Ranciere; Jean Cocteau; Frederico Fellini; Agnes Martin; Louise Bourgeois; Robert Rauschenberg's series of White and Black Paintings; the English landscapes of George Stubbs; Ralph Ellison; Ellen Gallagher; Adrian Piper; Jan Vermeer; Artemesia Gentileschi; David Medalla; Weather Report, and Ingmar Bergman.

The curator and writer Guy Brett, says that my work observes, 'the human condition', and this, I think is true. I am interested in the often quiet, every day narratives of human life and encounters – often those hitherto undocumented and 'forgotten' – oral histories, which are frequently 'mapped out' in different ways and using different medium in the context of my artwork. See: *To Kill Two Birds with One Stone*, 1994, commissioned by Locus+ Newcastle upon Tyne, UK and *Plug In Art Gallery*, Winnipeg, Canada; *Untitled (Trials and Tribulations of Mickey Baker)*, 1997 – exhibited at Whitechapel Gallery, London (1997), and at Tate Modern, London (2002 - 2003). Histories, therefore (personal and otherwise), are an important presence within my works. They are as significant a presence for me, as are the different seasons.

I live and work in London, and am a Reader (part-time) at Chelsea College of Art and Design, UAL.

Sutapa Biswas, November 2011



Honours and Awards

- 2009 Yale Centre For British Art, Yale University, Visiting Artist and Fellow
- 2008 Present Member of Board of Directors, Film and Video Umbrella, UK
- 2008 LAFVA 2008 Award (London Artists Film and Video Award), UK
- 2004 Member of Senate, University of Southampton, UK
- 1998 Visiting Artist and Fellow, Calhoun College, Yale University, New Haven, USA
- 1997 Visiting Artist, Visiting Artists Series, Stanford University. Annual prestigious public lecture series, inviting 6 international artists to speak at Stanford University in 1997
- 1997 Artist, representing Britain, 6th Havana Biennial, Cuba
- 1996-8 Member of Board of Directors, Institute of International Visual Arts, London, UK
- 1994 Recipient, The National Endowment for the Arts Award, Visiting Artist, Mills College, California, USA
- 1994 Recipient, new commission, Locus +, Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK
- 1992 Nominee, European Photography Award
- 1990-2 Member of the Board of Advisors, Visual Arts, Arts Council of England
- 1992 Fellow, The Banff Centre for the Arts, Banff, Alberta, Canada
- 1992 Recipient Charlotte Townsend Award, Canada
- 1990 Fellow, The Banff Centre for the Arts, Banff, Alberta, Canada
- 1990 Recipient Mark Turner Award, Canada

Collections

Artist Pension Trust, APT Global, New York, USA
 Reed College, Portland, Oregon, USA
 Graves Art Gallery, Museums Sheffield, UK
 Cartwright Hall, Museums Bradford, UK
 Leicester Museums, UK
 Arts Council England, UK

Works also held in numerous international private collections.

Monographs Published

- 2004 *SUTAPA BISWAS, an anthology of essays*. Published by inIVA, London, and The Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery, Reed College, USA, pp 1-96. ISBN 1-899846-39-5.

Forthcoming Solo Exhibitions

- 2012 Solo Exhibition, Gallery Espace, New Delhi, India

Solo and Two-Person Exhibitions

- 2008 *Sutapa Biswas and Anna Linneman* Nara Roesler, Sao Paolo, Brazil
- 2006 *SUTAPA BISWAS, Recent Works* Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery, Reed College, Portland, Oregon, USA
Touring exhibition

Magnesium Dreams

Performance work

Sutapa Biswas

TBA:2006, Portland, Oregon, USA

commissioned by TBA : 2006

Elizabeth Leach Gallery,
Portland, Oregon, USA

- 2004 *SUTAPA BISWAS, Recent Works by Sutapa Biswas*

Café Gallery Projects (London), UK
 Angel Row Gallery, Nottingham;
 Leeds City Art Gallery, Leeds;
 Terrace Gallery, Harewood House,
 Yorkshire, UK

SUTAPA BISWAS, Recent works by Sutapa Biswas, and drawings by Joseph Turner and Edward Lear

Harewood House, Yorkshire, UK

- 2000 *Sutapa Biswas, Untitled (Woman in Blue, Weeping), 1996*

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada

- 1994 *Murmur*

Atlas Studio Space, London, UK

Synapse / To Kill Two Birds With One Stone

Plug In Gallery, Winnipeg, Canada

Co-commissioned new installation + performance work

Commissioned by Locus +,
Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK

Murmur

The Western Front, Vancouver, Canada

- 1993 *Synapse, Sutapa Biswas*

Gallerie OBORO, Montreal, Canada

- 1992 *Synapse*

The Photographer's Gallery, London
 and City Art Gallery, Leeds, UK

Synapse

Or Gallery, Vancouver, Canada

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2012 *Narratives of the Self: A Group Show of Autobiographies*
- 2011 *Thin Black Line(s)*

Gallery Espace, New Delhi, India
 In collaboration with India Art Fair 2012
 Tate Britain, London, UK – BP British Art Displays 1500 - 2011

Magnesium Bird, in Art Now: Identity in Contemporary Art

Permanent Collections display,
 Graves Gallery, Museums Sheffield, UK
 Acquisition made possible with generous support from the Contemporary Art Society, UK

Crossing the Line

Tashkeel, Nad Al Sheba, Dubai
 Curated by Stephen Farthing

- SCOPE New Photographic Practices Visual Art Centre Gallery, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China
Curated by Martin Newth
- Sutapa Biswas exhibiting: *The price of freedom is eternal vigilance* (2010) and *Magnesium Bird* (2004).
- 2010 *Twenty One* Celebrating 21 years of Art at the Terrace Gallery and 200 years of art at Harewood House, Yorkshire, UK.
- A Missing History: The Other Story Re-visited* Aicon Gallery, London, UK
Curated by Niru Ratnam
- PINTA London – represented by Nara Roesler Gallery, Sao Paulo, Brazil
- 2009 *Lo Real Maravillosa / Marvellous Reality* Curated by Gallery Espace (New Delhi) Lalit Kala Akademi (Indian Government Museum), New Delhi, India
- British Subjects: Identity and Self-fashioning 1967-2009* Neuberger Museum, Purchase College, State University of New York, USA
(September - December)
Curated by Louise Yelin
- From TrAIN to Bad Ems* Galerie Nord, Berlin, Germany
- ARCO Madrid, Spain – represented by Gallery Espace (India) and Nara Roesler, Sao Paulo, Brazil
- 2008 PINTA New York, USA – represented by Nara Roesler, Sao Paulo, Brazil
Gallery Espace, New Delhi, India
- 2006 Melbourne International Arts Festival Melbourne, Australia
- Aqua Miami* Miami Basel, USA – represented by Elizabeth Leach Gallery, USA
- Migratory Aesthetics* The University of Leeds, Parkinson Gallery, UK
Curated by Griselda Pollock and Judith Tucker
- Sutapa Biswas, exhibiting: *Magnesium Bird*
- 2005 3rd Clerkenwell Film & Video Festival London, UK
Curated by Mahony, Emma
(Hayward Gallery, London)
- Sutapa Biswas, exhibiting: *Magnesium Bird*
- Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK Launch of Contemporary Patrons Group, March 17
- Sutapa Biswas, exhibiting: *Birdsong* (2004)

- 2002-3 *From Tarzan to Rambo* Tate Modern, London, UK
Sutapa Biswas, exhibiting: *Untitled (The Trials and Tribulations of Mickey Baker)*
- 2001 *Art Through the Eye of A Needle* Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo, Norway
Curated by Selene Wendt. Sutapa Biswas, exhibiting: *To Kill Two Birds with One Stone*
- 1999 *Crown Jewels* Kampnagel, Hamburg, Germany – supported by the British Council
- Identity and Environment* Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest – supported by The British Council
- 1998 *The Unmapped Body: 3 Black British Artists* Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, USA
Curated by Daphne Deeds and Ian Baucom (supported by the British Council). Artists: Sutapa Biswas, Sonia Boyce and Keith Piper
- 1997 *Admissions of Identity* Sheffield Museums and Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield, UK
- 6th Havana Biennial / Sexta Bienal de La Habana – el individuo y su memoria, mayo, junio, Havana, Cuba
- Krishna The Devine Lover* Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, UK
Sutapa Biswas, exhibiting: *Untitled (The Trials and Tribulations of Mickey Baker)*, 1997
- Transforming the Crown, 1966-1996* Franklin H. Williams Cultural Centre, Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA
Touring exhibition, USA
- Cross-Currents / Krysinger* University of Ethnography, Oslo, Norway
Realised with support from the British Council. Touring exhibition
- MAPPA Amos Anderson Gallery, Helsinki, Finland
(Supported by the British Council)
- 1996 *The Visible and the Invisible: representing the body in contemporary art and society* Curated by Tom Trevor and Zoe Shearman, in collaboration with inIVA, London, UK
5 sites in the London: St. Pancras Church; Euston Station; Wellcome Trust; University College, London, and Marylebone Road, London. Sutapa Biswas, exhibiting: *Untitled (Woman in Blue Weeping)* – new commission by inIVA
- Diver's Memories* Manchester Museum, Manchester, UK
Sutapa Biswas exhibiting: *Strange view* (1996)
- National Gallery, Botswana
Sutapa Biswas exhibiting: *Through Rose Coloured Windows*

- 1994 EXPO ARTE Feria Internacional De Galerías De Arte Contemporáneo, Guadalupe, Mexico
Beyond Destination Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK
 Sutapa Biswas, exhibiting *Murmur* (commissioned by Ikon Gallery and The Western Front, Vancouver, Canada)
Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor, Richman, Poorman, Beggarman... Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK
 (installation projection)
- 1992 The European Photography Award Kunstlerwerkstatt, Berlin, West Germany
 Touring exhibition, West Germany
The Body Politic Herter Art Gallery, University of Massachusetts, USA
 Sutapa Biswas, exhibiting *Synapse*
Who do You Take Me For? Museum of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia
 Major touring exhibition, supported by the British Council
Memory and Desire Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada
 Curated by Sutapa Biswas
 Supported by the British Council
- 1991 *Fabled Territories* Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada
 Supported by the British Council
The Circular Dance Arnolfini, Bristol, UK
 Sutapa Biswas exhibiting: *To Touch Stone* (1991)
- 1990 *Disputed Identities* Camerawork, San Francisco, USA
- 1989 *Images of Woman* Leeds City Art Gallery, UK
 Curated by Corinne Miller
 Sutapa Biswas – *Housewives with Steak-knives* (1985)
Intimate Distance The Photographer's Gallery, London, UK
 Sutapa Biswas, exhibiting: *Infestations of the Aorta-Shrine to A Distant Relative*
The Essential Black Art Chisenhale Art Gallery, London, UK
 Curated by Rasheed Araeen
 Sutapa Biswas exhibiting: *Housewives with Steak-knives* (1985)
British Artists Abroad Usher Gallery, Lincoln, UK
 Sutapa Biswas exhibiting: *Pied Piper of Hamlyn – Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is* (1997)
- 1988 *Critical Realism* Camden Arts Centre, London, UK
 Touring exhibition
 Sutapa Biswas: *Pied Piper of Hamlyn – Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is*

- 1986-7 *State of The Art: Ideas and Images in the 1980s* ICA (Institute of Contemporary Art) London, UK
 Curated by Sandy Nairne, and shown as Channel 4 television series
 Sutapa Biswas exhibiting: *The Only Good Indian...*
- 1986 *Unrecorded Truths* The Elbow Room, London, UK
 Curated by Lubaina Himid
 Sutapa Biswas exhibiting: *Blind Man's Bluff* (1986)
The Issue of Painting Air Gallery, London, UK
 Curated by Iwona Blazwick
 Touring exhibition
 Sutapa Biswas exhibiting: five large-scale drawings. 3 Women Artists: Sutapa Biswas, Glenys Johnson and Margaret Harrison
- 1985-6 *The Thin Black Line* ICA (Institute of Contemporary Art), London, UK
 Curated by Lubaina Himid
 Sutapa Biswas exhibiting: *Housewives with Steak-knives*, and *The Only Good Indian...* and *Story in The Thin Black Line*

Exhibitions Curated

- 2000-1 *Private Thoughts / Public Moments* Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada
 Site-specific works historical galleries, AGO
- 1990 *Memory and Desire* Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada
- 1987 *Along the Lines of Resistance* Cooper Gallery, Barnsley, UK
 Co-curated with Clare Slattery and Sarah Jane Edge. Touring exhibition

Solo Exhibition Catalogues

- 1992 Tawadros, G., *Remembrance of Things Past and Present*, and Pollock, G., *Tracing Figures of Presence: Naming Ciphers of Absence. Feminism, Imperialism and Postmodernity: the Work of Sutapa Biswas*, in Walsh, N. *Synapse*. Published by The Photographers' Gallery, London, and Leeds City Art Gallery, UK. Essays by Towadros, G., and Pollock, G., edited by Walsh, N. pp 1-31
- 1991 *Synapse, an Artist's Book*. Limited edition (20), published by Sutapa Biswas, Canada. Essays by Pollock, G. and Towadros, G. pp 1-26

Conference Contributions (published)

- 2001 Biswas, S., *Shades of Black: Assembling the Eighties*, Duke University, North Carolina
- 1996 Biswas, S., 1996. *The Awakening Conscience*, in Steyn, J. and Gange, J, Act 2, *Art Criticism and Theory: Beautiful Translations*, Pluto Press, pp 121-128. ISBN 0-7453-1139-3

Sonia Boyce

Sonia Boyce came to prominence in the early 1980s as one of the key figures in the burgeoning black British art-scene of that time – becoming one of the youngest artists of her generation to have her work purchased by the Tate Gallery, with paintings that spoke about racial identity and gender in Britain.

Since the 1990s Boyce's practice has relied on working with other people in collaborative and participatory ways, often demanding of those collaborators spontaneity and unrehearsed performative actions. In these encounters Boyce nestles in and amongst other people's activities, which has provided a marvellous opportunity for her to explore the dynamics of exchange, interpretation, authorship, and the ability of sound – often the human voice – to pierce and locate social relationships.

Working across media: mainly drawing, print, photography, video and sound, she 'recoups the remains' of these performative gestures, thus using the documentation as a starting point to produce the artworks.

Since 1983, Boyce has exhibited extensively throughout the UK and internationally. Exhibitions and monographs include: *Sonia Boyce: Speaking in Tongues*, (Gilane Tawadros, Kala Press 1997); *Annotations 2/Sonia Boyce: Performance*, (Mark Crinson, InIVA – the Institute of International Visual Arts 1998); *Video Positive: the other side of zero*, Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool (2000); *Recent Sonia Boyce: la, la, la*, Reed College, Portland – Oregon (2001); *Century City: art and culture in the modern metropolis*, Tate Modern, London (2001); *Sharjah International Biennial 7*, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (2005); *Devotional*, National Portrait Gallery, London (2007); *Crop Over*, Harewood House, Leeds and Barbados Museum & Historical Society (2007/2008); *For you, only you* (Paul Bonaventura, Ruskin School of Drawing & Fine Art, Oxford University and tour 2007/2008); *Praxis: Art in Times of Uncertainty*, Thessaloniki Biennial 2, Greece (2009); *Like Love*, Spike Island, Bristol and tour (publication by the Green Box Press, Berlin, 2010); *Afro Modern*, Tate Liverpool and tour (2010); and, *The Impossible Community*, Moscow Museum of Modern Art (2011).

In 2007, David A Bailey, Ian Baucom and Sonia Boyce jointly received the History of British Art Book Prize (USA) for the edited volume *Shades of Black: Assembling Black Art in 1980s Britain*, published by Duke University Press in collaboration with Iniva (the Institute of International Visual Arts) and AAVAA (the African and Asian Visual Artists Archive). In the same year she was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List, for her services to art. Boyce has just completed an AHRC Research Fellowship at Wimbledon College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London, and holds a Visiting Professorship at Middlesex University, in the Department of Fine Art.



Group Exhibitions

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| 1983 | <i>Group Five Black Women</i>
<i>Black Woman Time Now</i> | Africa Centre, London
Battersea Arts Centre, London |
| 1984 | <i>Strip Language*</i>
<i>Into the Open*</i>
<i>Heroes and Heroines</i> | Gimpel Fils, London
Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield
Black Art Gallery, London |
| 1985 | <i>Room at the Top*</i>
<i>Blackskins/Bluecoat</i>
<i>Celebration/Demonstration</i>
<i>No More Little White Lies</i>
<i>Reflections</i>
<i>The Thin Black Line*</i>
<i>From Generation to Generation</i> | Nicola Jacob's Gallery, London
Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool
St Matthews Meeting Place, London
Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff
Riverside Studios, London
ICA, London
Black Art Gallery, London |
| 1986 | <i>Group Some of Us Are Brave</i>
<i>Unrecorded Truths*</i>
<i>From Two Worlds</i>
<i>Caribbean Expressions in Britain*</i> | Black Art Gallery, London
Elbow Room, London
Whitechapel Art Gallery, London
Leicestershire Museum & Art Gallery,
and tour |
| | Basel Art Fair (with Gimpel Fils)
<i>State of the Art*</i>
<i>A Cabinet of Drawings</i> | Switzerland
ICA, London and tour
Gimpel Fils, London |
| 1987 | <i>The Image Employed: The Use of</i>
<i>Narrative in Black Art*</i>
<i>Critical Realism*</i> | Cornerhouse, Manchester |
| | Basel Art Fair (with Gimpel Fils)
<i>Royal Overseas League*</i> | Nottingham Castle Museum & Art Gallery,
and tour
Switzerland
London |
| 1988 | <i>The Essential Black Art*</i>
<i>The Impossible Self*</i> | Chisenhale Gallery, London and tour
Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, USA
and tour |
| | <i>The Thatcher Years</i>
<i>Fashioning Feminine Identities</i>
<i>Along the Lines of Resistance*</i> | Angela Flowers Gallery, London
University of Essex, Colchester
Cooper Art Gallery, Barnsley and tour |
| 1989 | <i>The Wedding*</i>
<i>The Other Story:</i>
<i>Afro-Asian Art in Post-War Britain*</i>
<i>The Havana Biennale*</i> | Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield
Hayward Gallery, London and tour |
| 1990 | <i>The British Art Show*</i>
<i>Distinguishing Marks*</i>
<i>The Invisible City*</i>
<i>Black Markets</i> | Wilfredo Lam Cultural Centre, Havana
McLellan Galleries, Glasgow and tour
University of London
Photographers Gallery, London
Cornerhouse, Manchester and tour |



1991	<i>Delfina Open Studios</i> <i>Shocks to the System*</i> <i>Delfina Annual Summer Show*</i> <i>An English Summer</i> <i>Photo Video*</i>	London Southbank Centre, London and tour London Palazza della Crepadona, Belluna Photographers Gallery, London and tour	<i>New Woman Narratives*</i>	Gate Foundation/World-Wide Video Festival, Amsterdam National Portrait Gallery, London Tate Modern, London
1992	<i>Delfina Annual Summer Show*</i> <i>White Noise*</i> <i>Northern Adventures*</i> <i>Nosepaint Artist Club</i> <i>Innocence and Experience:</i> <i>Images of Children in British Art</i> <i>1600 to the Present*</i>	London IKON Gallery, Birmingham Camden Arts Centre and St Pancras Station, London London Manchester City Art Gallery Manchester and tour	2001 <i>Painting the Century*</i> <i>Century City: Art and Culture in the</i> <i>Modern Metropolis*</i> <i>Slipstream</i> <i>The Whitechapel Art Gallery</i> <i>Centenary Review*</i> <i>It's a Wonderful Life</i>	Film and Video Umbrella, London Whitechapel Art Gallery, London The Apartment, Athens
1993	<i>New England Purpose Built:</i> <i>Long Distance Information</i>	Real Art Ways, Hartford, Connecticut	2002 <i>Travelogue*</i> <i>Self Evident*</i> <i>In Focus: From Tarzan to Rambo</i>	Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester Tate Britain, London Tate Modern, London
1994	<i>Thinking Aloud</i> <i>Wish You Were Here*</i> <i>Glass Vitrine</i>	Small Mansions Art Centre, London BANK, London and tour Iniva Launch, London	2003 <i>Out of Place</i> <i>Strangers to Ourselves*</i> <i>Belongings</i>	Harewood House, Leeds and tour Hastings Museum and tour Hastings Museum
1995	<i>Free Stories*</i> <i>Portable Fabric Shelters*</i> <i>Fetishism: Visualising Power*</i> <i>Mirage: Enigmas of Race, Difference</i> <i>and Desire*</i> <i>Photogenetic</i> <i>Cottage Industry*</i>	L A Galerie, Frankfurt London Printworks Trust, London Brighton Museum, Brighton and tour ICA, London and tour Street Level, Glasgow and tour Beaconsfield, London	2004 <i>Stranger than Fiction*</i> <i>SV04</i> <i>Lilith</i>	City Art Gallery, Leeds and tour Studio Voltaire, London MOT, London
1996	<i>Picturing Blackness in British Art*</i> <i>Kiss This</i> <i>Join the Dots</i> <i>Interzones*</i>	Tate Gallery, London Focalpoint Gallery, Southend 5020 Gallery, Salzburg Kunstforeningen, Copenhagen and tour	2005 <i>Sharjah International Biennial: 7*</i> <i>Seeing is Believing: Faith in the</i> <i>Tate Collection</i> <i>Radical and Modest</i> <i>London in 6 Easy Steps: The Real Me*</i> <i>The Flag Project</i> <i>Preview Berlin</i> <i>Don't Be Afraid</i> <i>Video Festival</i>	Sharjah Tate Liverpool Ben Uri Gallery, London ICA, London 254 Bethnal Green Road, London Back Fabrik, Berlin University of Central Lancaster, Preston La Llama, Caracas
1997	<i>Transforming the Crown:</i> <i>African, Asian & Caribbean Artists</i> <i>in Britain 1966-1996*</i>	The Franklin H Williams Caribbean Cultural Center, New York	2006 <i>For One Night Only</i> 2006 <i>BOOK</i> <i>One Nation Funk'd</i> (performance with Barby Asante and Andrea Encinas – Funk Chorus)	Camden Arts Centre, London Mortimer Road, London Diversity Arts Forum/Victoria Miro Gallery, London
1998	<i>Eastenders</i> <i>The Unmapped Body:</i> <i>Three Black British Artists*</i>	Annual Programme, Manchester Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut	2007 <i>Review</i> <i>Triple Echo*</i> <i>Crossing the Waters</i> <i>Portrait of the Artist as a Researcher</i> <i>Menschen und Orte*</i> <i>The Local</i> <i>Femmes 'R' Us</i> <i>Present*</i>	Axel Lapp Projects, Berlin De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill on Sea Cartwright Hall Art Gallery Beursschouwburg, Brussels Kunstverein Konstanz, Konstanz Glasgow International, Glasgow Radialsystem V, Berlin Garcia Gallery, New York
1999	<i>Plain Magic</i> <i>Sonia Boyce/Hermione Wiltshire</i> <i>From Where to Here*</i>	Royal Festival Hall, London Wigmore Fine Art, London Konsthallen Göteborg, Göteborg	2009 <i>Praxis: Art in Times of Uncertainty*</i>	Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art: 2, Thessaloniki
2000	<i>Video Positive: The Other Side of Zero*</i> <i>Licked</i> <i>A Poster Show</i>	Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool Gasworks Gallery, London Cabinet Gallery, London		

- 2009 *Afro Modern: Journeys Through the Black Atlantic** Tate Liverpool
*Walls Are Talking: Wallpaper, Art and Culture** Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester
*Griot Girlz Feminist Art and the Black Atlantic** Künstlerhaus Büchsenhausen, Innsbruck
A Missing History: The Other Story Revisited Aicon Gallery, London
*iAfuera! Art in Public Spaces** Centro Cultural España - Córdoba, Argentina
- 2011 *What the Folk Say** Compton Verney, Warwickshire
The Future is Social: the work that was not mine Wimbledon Space, University of the Arts London
*Black Sound White Cube** Kunstquartier Bethanien, Berlin
In – and outside – writing Voorkamer, Lier Belgium
*Ask Yo Mama ** Kunstraum Niederoesterreich, Wein
Coming Ashore Berardo Collection Museum/P-28
 Container Project, Lisbon
*The Impossible Community** Moscow Museum of Modern Art
The Imagination of Children Museum of Childhood, London

Solo Exhibitions

- 1986 *Conversations* Black Art Gallery, London
*Sonia Boyce** Air Gallery, London
- 1988 *Recent Work** Whitechapel Art Gallery, London
- 1991 *Something Else* Vanessa Devereux Gallery, London
- 1993 *Do You Want To Touch?* 181 Gallery, London
- 1995 *PEEP** Brighton Museum
*Sonia Boyce: Performance** Cornerhouse, Manchester
- 2001 *Recent Sonia Boyce: La, La, La** Douglas F Cooley Memorial Art Gallery, Reed College, Portland, Oregon
Ponte Futura Fortezza Girifalco, Cortona
- 2004 *Mm* Droit House, Turner Contemporary, Margate
Sonia Boyce The Agency, London
- 2007 *For you, only you* (performance with Alamire, David Skinner and Mikhail Karikis)* Magdalen College Chapel, University of Oxford
*Devotional** National Portrait Gallery, London
Crop Over Harewood House, Leeds and tour
- 2008 *For you, only you** Castle Keep, Locus Plus, Newcastle
 Stowe House, Milton Keynes Gallery
 Offsite Castle House, Model Arts
 Offsite, Sligo
- 2009 *Like Love: Part One* Spike Island, Bristol
- 2010 *Like Love: Part Two* Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool
*Like Love: Part Three** The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke on Trent
Oh Adelaide: Wimbledon Space, University of the Arts, London
 a collaboration with Ain Bailey
- 2011 *Crop Over* John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute, Duke University, Durham
Network Peckham Space, London

* denotes publication

Awards, Collections, etc.

1983	Artist Residency	Skinner's Company's Girls School, London
1986	Public Collection	<i>She Ain't Holding Them Up, She's Holding On – Some English Rose</i> (1986) Cleveland Museum, Middlesbrough
1987	Public Collection	<i>Missionary Position II</i> (1985), <i>From Tarzan to Rambo</i> (1987) Tate Gallery, London
	Commission	Set Designer <i>Dreaming Rivers</i> , Written & Dir. Martina Atille, Sankofa Films
1988	Artist Residency	Simon Fraser University Downtown Studios and Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver
1989	Artist Residency Public Collection	Amhurst Junior School, London <i>Mr-Close-Friend-of-the-Family-Pays-a-Visit-Whilst- Everyone Else-is-Out</i> (1986), <i>Lay Back, Keep Quiet, and Think of What Made Britain so Great</i> (1986) Arts Council of Great Britain
1990	Artist Residency Travel Award Artist Residency	University of California – San Diego Arts Faculty, San Diego Anglo-American Arts Association Delfina Studios Trust, London
1992	Artist Residency Public Collection	Department of Art and Art History, Duke University, North Carolina <i>Pillowcase</i> (1990) British Council
1993	Artist Residency Travel Award Commission	Pachipamwe Artists' Workshop, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe Triangle Arts Trust British Council Set Designer <i>Birthrights: Reunion</i> Written and Dir. Frances Anne Solomon, BBC Television
1995	Artist Residency Travel Award	Brighton Museum British Council
1996	Individual Artist Award Public Collection	London Arts Board <i>Clapping Wallpaper</i> (1994) V&A, London
1997	Artist Residency Travel Award Artist Residency	Department of Art History and Archaeology, University of Manchester British Council Soroa Artists' Workshop, Cuba, Triangle Arts Trust
1998	Artist Residency Award	Department of Art History and Archaeology, University of Manchester Moving Image Development Agency (MIDA) Artist Film Fund, North West Arts Board

1999	Public Collection	<i>Lover's Rock wallpaper</i> (1998) Victoria and Albert Museum, London
2001	Artist Residency Artist Residency	Department of Art and Art History, Duke University, North Carolina Department of Art, Reed College, Portland, Oregon
2002	Award Artist Residency	Individual Artists Bursary, Artsadmin Multi-sensory Artwork, London Print Studios
2003	Artist Fellowship Artist Residency	NESTA LiJiang Artists' Workshop, China, Triangle Arts Trust
2004	Artist Fellowship Artist Residency and Commission	NESTA Margate Mementoes, Turner Contemporary, Margate
2005	Artist Fellowship Public Collection Participant Public Collection Public Commission	NESTA <i>Devotional Chronology</i> (1999-2004) Government Art Collection Guillermo Gomez-Pena and La Pocha Nostra Performance Workshop La Luz Talleres, Oaxaca <i>Devotional: Joan Armatrading</i> (2005) University of Central Lancashire, Works on Paper Collection <i>Devotional: Chronology</i> (1999-2005) Berlaymont European Commission, Brussels
2006	Portfolio Artist Residency and Commission	Rutgers Center for Innovation in Paper and Print Rutgers University, New Jersey The Meriton School/Spike Island, Bristol
2007	Book Prize MBE for services to Art	<i>Shades of Black: Assembling Black Art in 1980s Britain</i> Historians of British Art, USA Queen's Birthday Honours List
2008	Artist Fellowship	<i>Second-Hand</i> , AHRC/Centre for Drawing Wimbledon College of Art and Design University of the arts London
2009	Public Collection	<i>Clapping Wallpaper</i> (1994/2009); <i>Lovers Rock</i> (1997); and, <i>Devotional Wallpaper</i> (2008) Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester

Lubaina Himid

This text maps the crowded journey of my painting and constructing, experimenting and improvising, drawing and archiving. My own making has woven its way through a dogged and bizarrely determined 30 year effort to bring the work of other artists to the notice of interested audiences.

An engagement with paintings and sculpture, drawings and prints, photographs and films has always occupied the centre ground of my life from the age of four or five. I was brought up on a weekly diet of luxurious department stores alternating with grand art galleries and museums; indistinguishable palaces of culture in which my mother and I looked until our eyes ached but never thought that being unable to buy was a punishment.

In the four years spent training to be a theatre designer at Wimbledon Art School in the 1970s I learned to build, to dye and to use a sewing machine. I learned how to control both manual and power tools and how to keep my nerve and survive. I learned to make theatre models, to understand technical drawings and to design and place lighting rigs high above the stage. I was trained for the making of props, costumes, furniture, interconnecting rooms, cobbled streets, sparkling ballrooms and magic forests in the service of theatre, ballet and opera.

The hours spent looking for ideas in books about Inigo Jones, Stanley Spencer, The Sun King, Peter Brook, Bakst, Diaghilev, eccentric hotels, masks, Hogarth, European Puppets, Fortuny, Hollywood, the Renaissance, the Baroque and Shakespeare together filled my head with a cacophony of pictorial richness constantly fuelled by a generous mother and a personal hunger for every magazine, event and exhibition I could consume.

The velvet and gold world of theatre spat me out early on and even the scruffy land of fringe held no refuge. This propelled me towards a messy London revolution in eating out; the brasserie. I could already handle the imagining of vast spaces and was able to design an 'atmosphere' including furniture and menus for an eating place in the fast and wild surroundings of early 1980s Covent Garden. I made large scale painted wooden cut out people and animals at this time using an electric jig saw as if it was a butter knife and any kind of paint found lying around, these figures decorated restaurants and bars and were placed in the street as advertising furniture. Everything was put together quickly on the spot and for the amusement of transient distracted audiences.

As the 1980s gathered speed and I wrote my M.A. thesis *Young Black Artists in Britain Today* at the Royal College of Art my political and still creative brain started to remember the pain of being invisible and miserable at art school and the frankly predictable humiliation of not being able to handle the tiny world of applause and greasepaint that is the British theatre.

While selecting and facilitating exhibitions like *Five Black Women*, *The Thin Black Line* and *Black Woman Time Now* and designing a production for Talawa theatre by Paulette Randall called *Fishing* I began to make large scale collages, using cardboard, wood, cloth, paint, wool, printed cards and drawing pins to replace outrageous painted life-sized wooden cut-out men with either long amusing and pictorial penises or bicycles and carrots; they were all accompanied by pen and ink drawings or detailed watercolour paintings. Most of these loud bright and satirical artworks and the M.A. thesis itself were made in a slightly bleak back bedroom that had been converted into a kitchen in south London and was in a state of transition between the two.

I painted a 24 foot mural using gallons of glorious acrylic on 8x4 foot plywood panels in a beautiful borrowed studio overlooking the Thames during a peculiar summer in between a short foray into feminist theatre and an angry confrontation with disgruntled politicians.

In a freezing warehouse studio complex in another borrowed space near the Geffrye museum in 1987 I completed a furious and vulgar critique of both the Thatcher government and the hypocritical arena of contemporary art; a ten piece painted and collaged cut-out installation a pastiche of one of Hogarth's paintings for *A Fashionable Marriage*. I used the remains of the gallons of Liquitex acrylic, the last of the large sheets of best quality plywood, some found furniture, some cardboard boxes and a huge pile of newspaper cuttings. The figures were larger than life sized and made to be walked around, so were constructed using theatre methods for propping up scenery. This solo show was met with fury, tears, much shouting and fainting so I left London 'never to return'.

Any ideas about making large cut out installations again faded away as a result of staying in tiny places in a part of the country I didn't know well (hoping it was temporary) and having a studio/gallery in London at the same time. Instead concentrating on what might have been a way of working for years to come I started to make a couple of series of small works on paper including scenes from the *Life of Toussaint L' Overture*.

The reality of being too visible and too invisible in the small cities, towns and villages of the north of England in the late 1980 s affected the way I worked and the ideas and issues that emerged as a consequence, but once the owners of my Acme studio/gallery in London had allowed a new set of artists to throw away many of my paintings, much of my archive material, stacks of photographs and books even some precious objects and tools, it was time to leave London for good, really this time.

Once properly established in two places Yorkshire (living) Lancashire (working) and after a year or so of life in a small village, making work in the tiny sitting room of a house that nestled in between a river and a canal, large paintings developed depicting the missing objects and neglected histories in the great museums. I began to be acutely aware of what

the great northern philanthropist's palaces could do for me by not only replacing the huge and glamorous department stores of London and Paris I so missed but also as possible places for debate and display.

My funding and support of an amazing book about the creative work of black women in the 1980s meant that as well as moving from working as an exhibition officer to properly starting a career as a full time university lecturer the early 1990s were full of financial turmoil, challenging my ability to make my own work.

However for years all through the 1990s I continued to paint several large series of narrative figurative politically motivated operatic calls for help and deliverance; these were displayed all across Britain. The new studio space in a large house in a large town changed some things. The feeling that some audiences and some of my students were responding to the ideas inspired fierce and bold work, depicting women in conflict, destroying evidence; patterned versions of the historic battles for gold and free labour or portraits of anonymous fragile houses perched on shifting coastal strips.

It was the miraculous offer of a residency and exhibition at Tate St Ives and a long put off visit home to Zanzibar that really changed everything. The opportunity to work all day every day from 8 in the morning until 8 at night in the lifeguards hut on the beach in front of Tate for two separate month long periods, allowed me to realize that I had something more to offer. The experience of intensely watching as the sun, the sea and the sand shifts, churns, appears and vanishes while I mix new purples, blues, greens, yellows and pinks. Trying to catch this break-neck movement on paper seemed like living a life and dying in the same day - day after day. I made a couple of hundred works on paper as preparation pieces for the ten paintings on canvas, later to be completed in the dark north of England in my studio at home in Preston. *Plan B* was shown as a solo show in 1999/2000 at Tate St Ives. Everything shifted; the safe ideas became more dangerous and the risky strategy became the blueprint.

Having funded and supported the running of a commercial gallery in London (not mine) and lost many hours of week-end time and thousands of pounds in the process it was necessary to change gear again.

As the century turned I started to make much smaller paintings but in large series, it was the beginning of a strategy to work with small museums on several series of 100 small works which could be fabricated in temporary/borrowed spaces in case everything else went belly-up.



In 2001 100 paintings with texts in Norwegian for a leprosy museum in Bergen, in 2002 100 paintings in black and white as a monument to the cotton industry in Manchester, in 2005 100 paintings of boats disguised as museums, in 2007 100 dinner plates, tureens and jugs for a response to the slave trade in Lancaster.

In the midst of this intense output and in between teaching full time, probably the most important (to me) work I have ever made came into being. In 2004 a small team of artists helped me to make *Naming the Money*; an installation for the Hatton Gallery consisting of 100 life-sized painted wooden cut-out figures of slave servants accompanied by 100 poems and a musical score. The whole house was filled for nearly two years with 100 people waiting for me to paint them. They stood in stacks in the hall, the kitchen, the dining room and the studio(s) unpainted, half-finished and then completed, ready to be matched with their own poem and real name.

The actual process of writing texts, thinking about and painting or collaging of complex patterns, clothes, birds, shoes, instruments, toys, ceramics and plants took place every single day of that period before I went out to teach, then after work and every minute of nearly a hundred weekends. A beautiful catalogue marks the achievement.

The constant obsession to work in hundreds came to an end when 'punishment for past mistakes' seemed unnecessary. The interest in working with museums rather than galleries continued at National Museums Liverpool and Manchester Museums; that desire to communicate with people I wanted to see 'written' into the histories for their contribution to the culture of Britain fanned the flames for this later work. Monuments, Collections and Archives continue to distract me from the easy life.

A desire to steadily, day by day, 'over-paint' objects and newspaper articles with text and pattern, developed through the fabrication of *The Lancaster Dinner Service* and the *Guardian Archive*, a way of obliterating institutionalised racism in the case of the *Guardian* or creating an angry dialogue with the 18th century through mixing floral patterns in lusterware, on expensive meat plates, with vicious caricature in acrylic.

Its usual now in 2011 for me to be in the studio for only 12 hours every week, very early mornings and weekends, making painted responses to extraordinary collections such as that of Platt Hall Costume Gallery or the Textile Collection at the Whitworth, while gathering thousands of pages from the *Guardian* to over-paint later. All this is informed and enriched by spending 5 days a week, collaborating with other artists, writing texts, curating small exhibitions, teaching at the University of Central Lancashire, leading the research team in the School of Art, Design and Performance or sometimes giving a keynote lecture at a small symposium somewhere in America or mainland Europe.

Solo Exhibitions

2011	<i>Tailor Striker Singer Dandy</i>	Platt Hall, Manchester Museums
2010	<i>Jelly Mould Pavilion</i>	Sudley House, Liverpool and Liverpool Museums
2008	<i>Kangas and Other Stories</i>	Peg Alston Gallery, New York
2007	<i>Talking On Corners Speaking In Tongues</i>	Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston
2007	<i>Swallow Hard</i>	Judges Lodgings, Lancaster
2006	<i>Swallow</i>	Judges Lodgings, Lancaster
2004	<i>Naming The Money</i>	Hatton Gallery, Newcastle
2001	<i>Double Life</i> <i>Inside The Invisible</i>	Bolton Museum & Art Gallery St. Jorgens Museum, Bergen, Norway
1999	<i>Plan B</i> <i>Zanzibar</i>	Tate St Ives Oriel Mostyn, Llandudno
1997	<i>Venetian Maps</i>	Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston
1996	<i>Portraits & Heroes</i>	Peg Alston Gallery, New York
1995	<i>Beach House</i>	Wrexham Arts Centre & Tour
1994	<i>Vernets Studio</i> <i>Vernets Studio</i>	5th Havana Biennale, Cuba Transmission Gallery, Glasgow
1993	<i>African Gardens</i>	Black Art Gallery, London
1992	<i>Revenge</i>	Rochdale Art Gallery + South Bank Centre, London
1989	<i>The Ballad of the Wing</i>	Chisenhale Gallery, London
1987	<i>New Robes for MaShulan</i>	Rochdale Art Gallery
1986	<i>A Fashionable Marriage</i>	Pentonville Gallery, London

Group Exhibitions

2011	<i>Hunter Gatherer</i> <i>Jelly Pavilions - Northern Art Prize</i>	Project Space, Leeds Leeds Art Gallery
2009	<i>Myth + History</i>	The Bristol Gallery
2007	<i>Uncomfortable Truths</i>	Victoria & Albert Museum, London
2006	<i>Migratory Aesthetics</i>	Leeds University, Yorkshire
2004/5	<i>Distance No Object</i>	Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle
2002	<i>Fabrications</i> <i>Games People Play</i>	CUBE, Manchester Castlefield Gallery, Manchester
2001	<i>Nothing But Facts</i> <i>Representing Britain</i>	Lavatoio Contumaciale, Rome Tate Britain, London
1999	<i>1980s Figurative Painting</i>	Birmingham City Art Gallery
1998	<i>Memory Walking</i>	City Art Gallery, Wellington, NZ
1997-98	<i>Transforming the Crown</i>	Studio Museum, New York
1997-99	<i>Crossings</i>	Track 17 & USA Tour Los Angeles
1997	<i>M.A.G. Collection</i> <i>Representing Women</i> <i>Hogarth on Hogarth</i>	Ferens Gallery, Hull & Touring Nottingham Trent University Victoria & Albert Museum, London
1995	<i>Word Not Found</i> <i>Photogenetic</i>	Trier, Germany Streetlevel Gallery, Glasgow & Tour
1994	<i>Group Show</i> <i>Memories of Childhood</i> <i>Seen / Unseen</i> <i>Vernet's Studio</i>	Corr Contemporary Art, London Steinbaum Kraus Gallery, New York Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool 5th Havana Biennale, Cuba
1993	<i>Greetings</i>	Steinbaum Kraus Gallery, New York
1992	<i>Columbus Drowning</i> <i>Women's Art At New Hall</i>	Rochdale Art Gallery New Hall College, Cambridge
1991	<i>Treatise on The Sublime</i>	University of California, USA
1990	<i>The Transformation of the Object</i>	Grazer Kunstverein & Vienna Fine Art Academy
1990-91	<i>Heritage</i>	Impressions Gallery, York & British Tour
1989-90	<i>The Other Story</i>	Hayward Gallery, London & British Tour
1988-89	<i>Along The Lines of Resistance</i>	Cooper Art Gallery, Barnsley & British Tour
1988	<i>Passion</i> <i>Blackwomansong</i> <i>Gold Blooded Warrior</i> <i>Depicting History For Today</i>	The Elbow Room, London Sisterwrite Gallery, London Tom Allen Centre, London. Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield & British Tour

1987	<i>Palaces of Culture</i> <i>The State of the Art</i>	Stoke Art Gallery & British Tour ICA, London
1986	<i>From Two Worlds</i>	Whitechapel Art Gallery, London
1985	<i>The Thin Black Line</i>	ICA, London
1984	<i>Heroes and Heroines</i> <i>Into The Open</i>	Black Art Gallery, London Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield
1983	<i>Black Woman Time Now</i> <i>Five Black Women</i>	Battersea Arts Centre, London Africa Centre, London

Work in Public Collections

Tate Britain
Victoria & Albert Museum Collection
Arts Council Collection
Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
Harris Museum & Art Gallery Preston
Manchester Art Gallery
Bolton Museum & Art Gallery
Rochdale Museum & Art Gallery
Leeds Art Gallery
Murray Edwards College Cambridge
Lancaster Maritime Museum
New Hall Art Collection
Murray Edwards College Cambridge

**Selected Curatorial Work
includes work as Director Elbow Room 1986 - 1990**

1990	Claudette Johnson	Touchstones, Rochdale
1989	<i>Critical</i> , Donald Rodney	Touchstones, Rochdale
1986	<i>Unrecorded Truths</i>	Elbow Room, London
1985	<i>The Thin Black Line</i>	ICA, London
1984	<i>Into The Open</i>	Mappin Gallery, Sheffield
1984	<i>Black Woman Time Now</i>	Battersea Arts Centre, London
1983	<i>Five Black Women</i>	Africa Centre, London

Claudette Johnson

I made the work in this exhibition during a period that spanned the final year of my degree course in Wolverhampton and the birth of my first child two years later. The sitter was a friend who I'd met the year before. I wanted to look at how women occupy space, I'd made a series of semi abstract works featuring the figure in which I'd become more and more interested in how the figure could reach out to the boundaries of the frame, sometimes contained, sometimes existing beyond the frame. I asked the sitter to stand in a way that allowed her to occupy as much space as possible. I recall that she stood behind me – because that seemed the best practical arrangement given the narrow dimensions of the studio.

Arriving in Wolverhampton in 1979 to begin my degree course, I scoured the library for images of black people and signs of a prehistory of black cultural practice in Britain. I found Makonde Art, African Art, African-American art, but no signs of Black British Art. Excited and inspired by the Black Power movement, the writings of Malcolm X, George Jackson and Angela Davis, I decided to immerse myself in black imagery; films, literature, art, music. I had a profound sense of our absence in art history both as creators and subjects. Too often we were in the margins, servants of the protagonists. Even within the women's movement. Lubaina Himid has said that black women artists have too often been presented as "a footnote in the chronicling of the Feminist Art Movement."

From the moment that I read *The Bluest Eye* – Toni Morrison – I knew that I wanted to focus on black women as subject and form. In the novel Morrison writes about black people in a way that I could not recall ever having experienced before. It felt revelatory. Until that point I had felt an absence where black people should have been because the familiar caricatures in media, films and literature represented a kind of absence. In Morrison's novels we had our own lives; we were not caricatures, neither angels nor demons, flawed, heroic, human... I found many other African American writers sustaining, amongst them James Baldwin, Toni Cade Bambara and Alice Walker but Morrison's work crystallised something about the paradox of being both highly visible (black people in a predominantly white society) and yet invisible (not being represented, in any significant sense in key parts of society). Morrison expresses this brilliantly through her character Pecola's encounter with a shop keeper.

My contact with Morrison's writing seemed to release my stored experiences of racism growing up in Manchester which included being spat on in the street and called 'nigger' in the classroom. I felt that the figure could express everything; through figuration, abstraction and invention I could tell personal and in its widest sense political truths.

I had been reading Gail Murray's poem which ends with the line 'and I have my own business in this skin and on this planet.' This became the text surrounding an image of a crouching figure with teeth bared and fingers clawed. In quite a concrete way I wanted to look at the 'business' black women had in their skins – how they take space, what their ways of presenting themselves say about the place they occupy in the world. In 1982 images of black women in the media were few and far between. I like to think that the women in *Trilogy* are telling their own stories through the way they inhabit their allotted spaces.

The works in this show are made in pastels and gouache. I begin with semi tonal pastel drawing then work in blocks of paint over the pastel. In parts, I work over the paint with



pastels again. I like the way the paint gives tooth to the pastels, enriches and intensifies the colour, whilst the pastels under the paint give weight and grit to the gouache. The works are on heavy watercolour paper, which has a wonderful rippled texture that seems to grip the pastels and hold them in ever deepening layers.

In 2001 a short piece that I wrote reflecting on the experience of being an artist and a mother entitled 'How many do you have now?' was included in *The Fruits of Labour: Creativity, Self-Expression and Motherhood* edited by Penny Sumner published by The Women's Press. The book explored how 'motherhood – the whole issue of motherhood-affects women artists, both those who are and those who are not.'

I had written my piece in 1994 when my children were four and seven; jauntily asserting that the demands of motherhood did not and would not conflict with my activities as an artist; even, that it was ridiculous to assert that one identity might have to be sacrificed to the other. At the time I was angered by the implication that I might disappear into motherhood; one artist had commented that she thought I was "brave" another had asked: "How many do you have now?" I can remember sitting in the narrow corridor space at the private view of *The Thin Black Line* at the ICA in 1985 cosseted by friends, celebrating our 'arrival' in this exclusive space, excited, challenged and stimulated by the work of 10 other artists. Here we were, young black women, barely out of art college, yet already showing in one of the most prestigious art galleries in Britain. I felt excited, fulfilled and a little awestruck.

It was an extraordinarily vivid, vital time. Lubaina Himid had singlehandedly, to my mind, brought this show about. She had become the focus for many of the meetings and contacts amongst black women artists that ensued from the The First National Black Artist's Convention where we had met in 1982. The Convention had been organised to gather together black art students from across Britain to discuss the work we were doing, the impetus for and form of the work; to identify whether there were others making what we termed 'black art'.

Offers of solo exhibitions followed, a TV programme was being produced, would I like to take part? A magazine wanted to include me in a feature. To some of the offers I made no response. Is child-rearing a form of creativity? I know I found it completely absorbing, but I know also that I was always trying to find the quiet empty time when I would be able to give reign to the images that I still wanted to make.

For a decade I worked as a part time lecturer in various institutions which included Hackney College, City Lit and Camden Arts Centre. My first real job after leaving art college had been in a community arts project in Hackney. Working in a women's screenprinting workshop gradually evolved into working with women offenders in an education centre and from there to managing community outreach programmes. As the anniversary of the First National Black Artists' Convention approaches, I am preparing to make new work, collaborating with members of the Black Art Group to organise a conference and enjoying having adult sons who are equipped to make their own way in the world.

Exhibitions (One Person Shows)

1999	<i>Studio Show</i>	Deborah House Studios, London
1995	<i>Portraits from a Small Room</i>	198 Gallery, London
1992	<i>In This Skin</i>	The Black Art Gallery, London
1990	<i>Pushing Against the Boundaries</i> <i>Claudette Johnson</i>	Rochdale Art Gallery The Tom Allen Centre
1986	<i>Claudette Johnson – Recent Works</i>	The City Art Gallery, Manchester
1984	<i>Claudette Johnson – Drawings</i>	The Drill Hall, London

Exhibitions (Selected Group Shows)

2011	<i>Thin Black Line(s)</i> <i>Black Art Group</i>	Tate Britain, London Graves Gallery Museum, Sheffield
1998	<i>Transforming the Crown</i>	Caribbean Cultural Center, Bronx Museum of the Arts and Studio Museum, Harlem, New York
1994 -95	<i>Reclaiming the Madonna</i>	Usher Gallery, Lincoln and touring
1988	<i>Out There Fighting</i> <i>The Image Employed</i>	Elbow Room Gallery, London Cornerhouse Gallery, Manchester
1986	<i>Some Of Us Are Brave</i>	The Black Art Gallery
1985	<i>The Thin Black Line</i>	ICA, London
1984	<i>Into the Open</i>	Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield
1983	<i>Five Black Women</i> <i>The Pan-Afrikan Connection</i> <i>Black Woman Time Now</i>	The Africa Centre, London The Africa Centre, London Battersea Arts Centre, London
1982	<i>The Pan-Afrikan Connection</i>	Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Sheffield, The Africa Centre, London Black Art Gallery, Bristol
1981	First National Black Art Convention Open Exhibition	Wolverhampton Polytechnic

Publicly owned works

1987	<i>Trilogy – 1983 - 1986</i>	Arts Council Collection
1986	<i>See and Know</i>	
1984	<i>And I have my own business in this skin</i> <i>and on this planet 1983 and</i> <i>Untitled 1982</i>	Graves Gallery Museum, Sheffield

Ingrid Pollard

She played an important role in early 1980s photography, documenting black people's creativity and presence in Britain. She became known for her photographic series questioning social constructs such as Britishness and racial difference. While investigating race, ethnicity and public spaces she has developed a body of work juxtaposing landscape and portraiture which provide a context for issues of migration, family and home.

Coming from a community arts background, Ingrid has in the past also documented the work of actors, dancers, writers and theatre companies. With a training in film and video, narrative plays an important role in her work as does the materiality of photographic process within image-making, utilising the Victorian photographic process, images on wood and slates, artist books and most recently the use of still image within video.



Solo Exhibitions selected

- 2011 *Residencey 3*
- 2009 *A Field of Sheep*
Belonging in Britain
Near & Far
Spectre of the Black Boy
- 2006/07 *Landscape Trauma 2*

Working images
- 2004 *Paper boats and Canvas*
- 2003 *Points of View*
- 2002 *Near and Far*
- 2001 *Selective Yield*
- 1999 *Hidden Histories*
Heritage Stories

- Parfitt Gallery Croydon College
- Chenderit School/Visual Arts College
- National Museum Bridgetown Barbados*
- Sunderland Glass Centre Sunderland*
- Kingsway Gallery Goldsmith College
- Bath University Bath
- Wall Space Gallery LaDanza Studio London*
- London South Bank University London
- Project Row Houses Texas USA
- Hastings Museum & Art Gallery Sussex
- Kendal Museum Cumbria & Touring*
- Wysing Arts Gallery Cambridge
- 3 Mills Island London
- University of Central Lancashire

Group Exhibitions selected

- 2011 *Thin Black Lines*
 - 2010 *Vous tes ici*
 - 2009 *Belonging in Britain*
LandFall
 - 2007 *TradeWinds 2007* (curator)
Green in Black and White
Crossing Waters
Garden of Eden –
The Garden in Art
 - 2006 *How to improve the World*
Migratory Aesthetics
 - 2005 *Liminal Britain*
Down the Garden Path
Tony RayJones
 - 2003 *Croydon 24-7*
 - 2002 *The Politics of Place*
Travelouge
Location UK:
Croydon on camera
 - 2001 *Where Are We?*
Landscape Trauma
- Tate Britain London
 - Foundation Clément Martinique W Indies *
 - Parliament Building Barbados W Indies *
 - Museum of London Docklands, London
(curator/artist)*
 - Museum in Docklands London
 - Winchester Gallery Winchester
 - Cartwright Hall Art Gallery Bradford*
 - Kunsthalle in Emden Germany *
 - Hayward Gallery London*
 - Leeds University Leeds*
 - University of North Texas Art Gallery Texas USA*
 - Queens Museum of Art New York USA*
 - Nederlands Fotomuseum Rotterdam Netherlands
 - Croydon Clock Tower Croydon Sussex
 - BildMuseet Umea Sweden & touring to Finland*
 - Whitworth Art Gallery Manchester*
 - Gimpel Fils London
 - Croydon Clock Tower Croydon Sussex
 - Victoria & Albert Museum London
 - The Gallery Southwark Park London
 - & Leeds Metropolitan Museum*

Awards

- 2007 Leverhulme Individual Artists Award
- 2007 Arts Council England – Artists Award
- 2006 Arts Council England – Artists award
- 2004 Nominated Royal Photographic Society. John Kobal First book Award.
- 2001 AHRC Fellowship in Creative & Performing Arts

Publications

Hidden in a Public Place IMP Press, 2008 London – monograph

Postcards Home Chris Boot Publishers 2004 London – monograph

Monograph Autograph publications 1995

Central South North Lee Valley Park 1994 (limited edition artists book)

Belonging in Britain: Video Screenings

- 2009 Screening and artists talk. Leeds University Fine Art: October
- Screening Hyde Park Picture House Leeds: October
- Screening & Artist talk. Impressions Gallery. Bradford: October
- Screening and talk inIVA London: October
- Exhibition talk. Urban Edges. Goldsmiths. London: October



Collections

Arts Council England
 Victoria and Albert Museum
 Croydon College of Art 2011
 Chenderit School Visual Arts College 2009
 Cartwright Hall Bradford, 2007
 South Bank University 2005
 Croydon Council 2003
 National Trust 1997
 Virgin Trains 1997
 GNER 1997
 Haringey Council 1989
 National Museum of Film and Photography 1989
 Project Row Houses (Texas USA) 2004
 LightWorks (Syracuse USA) 1999

Broadcasts

2010 The Culture Show Channel 4
 2009 Good Morning Barbados TV
 2005 The Culture Show Channel 4
 2004 Pacifica Radio Huston Texas USA



Veronica Ryan

Accretions of time and space, experience and an examination of one's own paradigms and conversations.

Starting with my most recent work and installation at The Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh, both old and new concerns became focused in the period of a month I spent there.

The site specific work centred essentially around making a group of alcoves, and a new departure relating to and the tracking of, the movement of sunlight impacting the space and wall. Light around The Mattress Factory is quite eventful.

On a formal level, the alcoves were a platform and another context for objects which had to belong in specific spaces. 'The Landscape Inside' referenced both a literal reading of the concrete outside, and a visceral body connection. The architecture of a building, drawing a parallel with the outside as skin, and the landscape as a kind of lateral structure. So the structure is a way of thinking about ways of thinking, be they psychological, historical or archaeological.

On the one hand, the destruction of Plymouth, then the only town in Montserrat, in which I was born but did not grow up, pervades my existence in terms of inheritance and certain cultural paradigms from my parents and subsequent history. Thinking of debris, partial evidence, traces and last moments, are in part parallels to particular events. The grief and loss which in a sense originated from a lost culture, that is, a lost tradition, as in the end of the Jombie dance in the 60's.

The demise of the masquerade around Christmas and the New Year, echoed the loss and tragedy of three siblings to suicide. My parents returned when I was around age ten where I stayed for approximately ten months. The masqueraders were dressed up in elaborate costumes and masks.

Studying West African Art years later at SOAS, for a while, after postgraduate fine art at The Slade and because of the scale and particular small votive things occurring in the work, I started to be clearer myself about some of the connections people were reading in my work. Mary Douglass has written interesting observations in her field research about food in traditional contexts. As part of global culture, it is interesting to see different ways celebrations and festivities occur. Some of the foods I remember were boiled ginger sweets, sugar cakes, similar to macaroons, and guava jelly rather like the French fruit jellies. I am also interested in food as poison, eating disorders and dysfunction; ways in which something good has its opposite in something bad.

Visiting Nigeria after The Slade, I was struck by votive objects near Ife, honouring the dead. Hair, egg, chalk and kola nuts were some of the objects. Assembled objects tied up on trees as a kind of protection were exciting to see.

Traditional social systems and religious practice intrigue me in a contemporary context vis-a-vis the direction of my work. Part of that is recycling and making use of useful things. Essentially using what I have with a view to casting some of the small components whenever possible.



Solo Exhibitions

2005		Salena Gallery, LIU New York
2000/01		Tate St. Ives, Cornwall
1995	<i>Compartments Apartments</i>	Camden Arts Centre, London and Angel Row, Nottingham
1993		Wood Street Gallery Pittsburgh
1988-89		Kettle's Yard Gallery, Cambridge
1988		Riverside Studios, London
1987		Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol Wolverhampton Art Gallery Wolverhampton, Third Eye Centre, Glasgow
1985	<i>The Thin Black Line</i>	Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA)

Selected Group Exhibitions

2011	<i>Factory Installed Thin Black Line[s]</i>	The Mattress Factory, PA Tate Britain, London
2009/10		Henry Moore Institute, Drawings
2007/08	<i>Infinite Islands...</i>	Brooklyn Museum, New York
2006	<i>Site Specifics'06</i>	The Carriage House Museum, Islip LI
2005		Tate Modern, London
2001/05	<i>Open Studios</i>	Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, New York
2000	<i>Confluence Five Myles</i>	Curated by Marian Griffith's, Brooklyn, New York
	<i>Modern British Art</i>	Tate Collection, Tate Gallery, Liverpool
1999	<i>Five Myles</i>	Curated by Marian Griffith's, Brooklyn, New York
1998	<i>Artists' Projects</i>	Tate Gallery, St. Ives, Cornwall,
1998 (May)	<i>Caribbean Contemporary Art</i>	MEIAC, Badajoz Tour to: Madrid, Casa de America Paris, Maison de l'Amerigne Latine Berlin, Hans den Welt
1997 (Oct)	<i>Transforming the Crown</i>	Bronx Museum, Studio Museum
1997	<i>Drawing Exhibition</i>	Selena Gallery, Brooklyn

1997	<i>Rush Arts</i>	The Rotunda Gallery, Brooklyn, New York New York
1996/97	<i>Landscape Reclaimed</i>	Aldrich Museum, Connecticut
1996	<i>British Abstract Art, Part 3: Works on paper Sculpture Swinging the Lead Two Sculptors</i>	Flowers East Gallery Jesus College, Cambridge Lead Works, Bristol The Bronx Museum, New York
1995	<i>Six Sculptors</i>	Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus Weltkunst Foundation, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin Bard College, New York Chelsea Physic Garden, London Flowers East Gallery, London
	<i>Body as Metaphor Natural Settings British Abstract Art Part 2: Sculpture</i>	Memorial Arch, Grand Army Plaza, Bklyn
1994	<i>Trophies from the Civil Wars</i>	Tate Gallery, Liverpool EnglandArts Council Touring Exhibition
1993	<i>Natural Order</i>	Tate Gallery, London Paula Cooper Gallery, New York Rochdale Arts Gallery
1992	<i>Recent Acquisitions Group Show Columbus Drowning</i>	Pietrasanta Fine Arts, Open Studio, New York Scottish Arts Council Touring Exhibition Goldsmiths' College Centenary Exhibition, London
1991	<i>Virtual Realities</i>	Budapest The New York Studio School Goldsmiths', London Gateshead McLellan Galleries, Glasgow Leeds City Gallery, Hayward Gallery, London
1990	<i>Sculpture Triennale Sculptors' Drawing Exhibition River, selected by John Maine Garden Festival: A New Necessity The British Art Show</i>	Covent Garden, London Jesus College, Cambridge Kettle's Yard, Cambridge Serpentine Gallery, London Kettle's Yard, Cambridge
1989	<i>Contemporary Art Fair</i>	
1988	<i>Sculpture in the Close Dislocations</i>	
1987	<i>Vessels A System for Support</i>	

1986	Blond Fine Art <i>From Two Worlds</i> Interim Art The Minorities <i>Caribbean Expressions in Britain</i> Garden Festival <i>Coloured Sculpture</i>	London Whitechapel Art Gallery, London London Colchester, Essex Leicester Museums and Art Galleries Stoke-on-Trent Stoke-on-Tent Museum and Art Gallery
1985	<i>Manna in the Wilderness</i> Whitechapel Open <i>Beyond Appearances</i>	Angela Flowers Gallery, London Whitechapel Art Gallery, London Castle Museum, Nottingham and Arts Touring (sculpture for the blind and sighted to share)
1984	<i>Sculptures and Modellers</i> <i>Christmas Show</i>	The Mappin Gallery, Sheffield and tour Tate Gallery, London Kettle's Yard, Cambridge
1983	<i>Black Women Artists</i> 6th Cleveland (UK) International Drawing Biennale and tour <i>Creation for Liberation</i>	The Africa Centre, London Brixton, London
1982	Fine Art Staff Show	Aspex Gallery, Portsmouth
1981	Third World Show	London School of Economics, London

Collections

2008	The Henry Moore Collection
2003-11	Private Collections
2001	Tate Gallery, London
1996	First-Site, Colchester, Essex
1993	Mellon Bank, Pittsburgh
1991-97	Tate Gallery, London
1990	Contemporary Arts Society, London
1989	Weltkunst Foundation, London
1988	Salsbury Collection
1987	The Arts Council of Great Britain
1986	Irvin Joffe Collection, London
1983	Cleveland County Museum
1981	The Boise Scholarship Collection

Awards

2008	Gottlieb Emergency Grant
2006	Artist Fellowship
2004	Elizabeth Foundation For The Arts
2002	Wheeler Foundation
1987	Henry Moore Foundation
1983	Great London Arts Association Prize Winner, Cleveland (UK) International Drawing Biennale
1980	Boise Travelling Scholarship

Teaching and Residencies

2000	Yaddo, Saratoga Springs, New York
1999	Yaddo, Saratoga Springs, New York
1998	Delfina Studio Trust, London
1998-01	Tate Gallery St. Ives, Cornwall
1993-99	School of Visual Arts, New York
1994	Residency, Camden Arts Centre, London
1982-11	Visiting Lecturer at various colleges, including: Chelsea; Slade; Farnham; Middlesex; Winchester; Newport; Portsmouth; Birmingham; Falmouth; Byam Shaw; Limerick; New York Studio School; Moore College; B.A./MFA. New School, (Parsons) (Ireland); Goldsmiths'; School of Visual Arts
1991	International Symposium, Africa Explores: 20th Century African Art, Centre for African Art, Hunter College, New York
1988	Co-curated <i>Dislocations</i> exhibition, Kettle's Yard, Cambridge
1987-88	Kettle's Yard Residency/Jesus College, Cambridge
1987	Serpentine Gallery Workshops: <i>Air, Earth, Water</i>
1986	Workshops, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London
1984	Workshops with the blind and partially sighted, Castle Museum Christmas Children's Workshops, Kettle's Yard, Cambridge
1984	Summer term Sculpture Residency, Templars Boy's School ESN
1983	Panel Member of the British School of Rome

Maud Sulter

Maud Sulter was born in 1960 and died in 2008. As part of her statement for the catalogue of The Thin Black Line Institute of Contemporary Art 1985 she said “*For our creativity to shimmer golden through the white fog of mediocrity we first have to recognise that for many of us our life will be a constant battle. Inside, we feel the need to fight and for a time, possible for our ever, it is possible to be frozen by fear without recognising why we are afraid or what it is we must fight. Not facing up to the continuing contradictions which face women living globally in the late 1980s and beyond will not make them go away. Strength can be gained by facing up to those factors which conspire to contain us*”. For the exhibition she made three small text based collages about Black women’s creative lives.

During her 47 years she had worked as a journalist, a poet, a cultural historian and a visual artist. She was active in feminist communities in London in the early 1980s and while working with a women’s education group she programmed *Check It* a ground-breaking two week project at the Drill Hall in London showcasing blackwomen’s creativity.

In 1990 she edited *Passion: Discourses on Blackwomen’s Creativity* “a collection of essays, pictures and critiques which illuminated the various strands of practice”. It included many wonderful examples of documentary photography by Ingrid Pollard, it was “a formidable testimony to the continuing momentum of blackwomen’s creativity in the diaspora”.

She was an award winner at the BT New Contemporaries in 1990 at the Institute of Contemporary Art and was a Momart Fellow at Tate Liverpool in the same year, making *Hysteria*; a photographic project with music CD and text charting the life and ‘disappearance’ of Edmonia Lewis.

At the same time in 1991 she was invited by Tate Liverpool to select work from the national collection; she devised *Echo: Work by Women Artists* produced between 1850-1940, bringing a contemporary perspective to historic paintings from the Victorian and Edwardian era and the pre 1940 period.

Most notable amongst her visual art works was *Zabat* (1989) a series of nine photographic portraits of contemporary black women artists, musicians and writers including Alice Walker and Isaye Barnwell, posed theatrically as individual muses; *Syrkas* (1994) a series of tiny collages – photographed then enlarged which subtly hinted at the hidden persecution of Africans in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s; *Jeanne Duval: A melodrama* (2003) a sensuous series of self-portraits as Baudelaire’s muse.

She was commissioned in 2001 by the National Portrait Gallery to photograph, with a large format Polaroid camera, several childrens authors including, Dame Jacqueline Wilson, Majorie Blackman and Michael Bond. She also worked with this camera for her portraits of Scottish writers including Edwin Morgan which were toured to venues in Scotland by The Scottish Poetry Library in 2003/04.

As a curator she was determined to propel Black Women’s work into the commercial art world. She was drawn to curating exhibitions which challenged the British idea of the level to which Black women could aspire in terms of selling and commissions. This strategy led her to introduce artists here in Britain to the work of Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe, Lorna Simpson, Jeane Quick-to-see-Smith and Betye Saar through exhibitions including: *Daufuskie Island* (1989); *Fortune Teller* (1992); *Self Possession* (1993); *Photogenetic* (1995) and her gallery space – *Rich Women of Zurich* in 1998.

As well as her success in her visual art practice and the presence of her work in many British national collections, she also published several collections of poetry: *As A Blackwoman* (1995); *Zabat: Poetics of a Family Tree* (1989); *Sekhmet* (2005) and also a play *Service To Empire* (2002). In 1994 she wrote “*I often address issues of lost and disputed territories, both psychological and physical. The central body of my poetic work is unequivocally the love poetry, which is addressed to both genders*”.

1985	<i>The Thin Black Line</i>	ICA, London
1988	<i>Blackwomenprint project</i>	Tom Allen Centre
	<i>Gold Blooded Warrior</i>	Tom Allen Centre
	<i>Blackwomansong</i>	Sisterwrite
1988/89	<i>Along the lines of resistance</i>	Cooper Gallery, Barnsley
1989	<i>Zabat</i>	Victoria & Albert Museum
1990	<i>BT Young Contemporaries</i>	ICA, London
	<i>Treatise on the Sublime</i>	University of California Stanislaus, USA
1991	<i>Hysteria</i>	Tate Liverpool
	<i>Studies for a National Postage Stamp</i>	Bluecoat, Liverpool
	<i>Zabat</i>	Camerawork
1994	<i>Syrkas</i>	Wrexham Arts Centre & Manchester Art Gallery
	<i>Memories of Childhood</i>	Bernice Steinbaum Gallery, USA
1995	<i>Alba</i>	Harris Museum & Art Gallery
	<i>Word not Found</i>	University of Trier, Germany
1996	<i>Africus : Johannesburg Biennale</i>	South Africa
1997	<i>Picture Britannica</i>	Sydney Museum of Contemporary Art
	<i>Transforming the Crown</i>	Studio Museum, New York
	<i>MAG collection</i>	Ferens Gallery, Hull
1998	<i>Memory Walking</i>	City Art Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand
2002	<i>Beatrix Potter to Harry Potter: Portraits of Children's Authors</i>	National Portrait Gallery
2003	<i>Jeanne Duval: A melodrama</i>	Scottish National Portrait Gallery
2005	<i>Sekhmet</i>	Gracefield Arts Centre, Dumfries
2008	<i>Black Womanhood: Images, Icons & Ideologies</i>	Hood Museum, New Hampshire



Collections

- New Hall Art Collection, Murray Edwards College
- Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery
- Victoria and Albert Museum
- Arts Council Collection
- National Portrait Gallery
- Harris Museum and Art Gallery
- Touchstones Rochdale
- Gallery Oldham
- British Council
- Scottish Arts Council
- National Poetry Library
- Scottish Parliament Collection

This text was compiled by Lubaina Himid in 2011 using some material from the *Herald Scotland Obituary*, March 2008

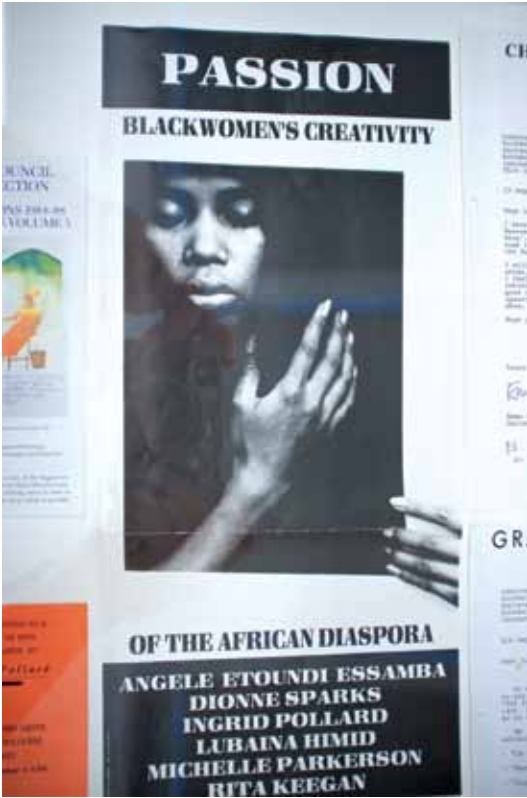
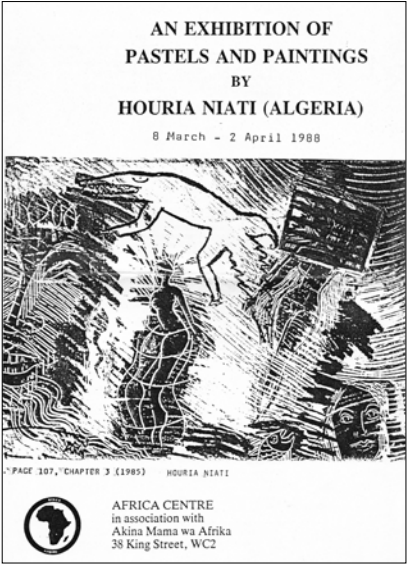
ARCHIVE

Two cases packed with archive materials formed an important part of the *Thin Black Line(s)* display. These in turn form part of a collection of some 1500 or so items from the 1980s and 1990s collected by Lubaina Himid and available to view at the University of Central Lancashire Making Histories Visible Project. This small but interesting collection of books, catalogues, posters, exhibition invitation cards, press releases and letters help to contextualise the creative activity and exhibiting strategies of some Black and Asian artists working in Britain at the time.

Images of work made in the 1980s by many of the women who exhibited in the three original exhibitions; *5 Black Women at the Africa Centre*, *Black Woman Time Now* and *The Thin Black Line* (formerly only available on 25 year old photographic transparencies) could be seen by audiences on a specially made video showreel called *Images and Conversations from the 1980s* by Susan Walsh. She edited this rare visual material together with 12 minutes of footage from the Illuminations Channel 4 series *The State of the Art: Ideas and Images in the 1980s*, directed by Sandy Nairne.

The DVD showreel allowed audiences to view an even wider range of artworks than could be seen in the gallery, while at the same time enabling them to listen to conversations between Lubaina Himid and several artists, including Sonia Boyce and Sutapa Biswas both of whom exhibited at Lubaina's gallery The Elbow Room in London in the mid 1980s.





I made this piece for us.
I am trying to make an image of a
Black woman.
Do you know her ?
This image is not about faces, eyes, lips,
breasts, thighs, hips.....
This is an image about living a life.
Do you know it ?

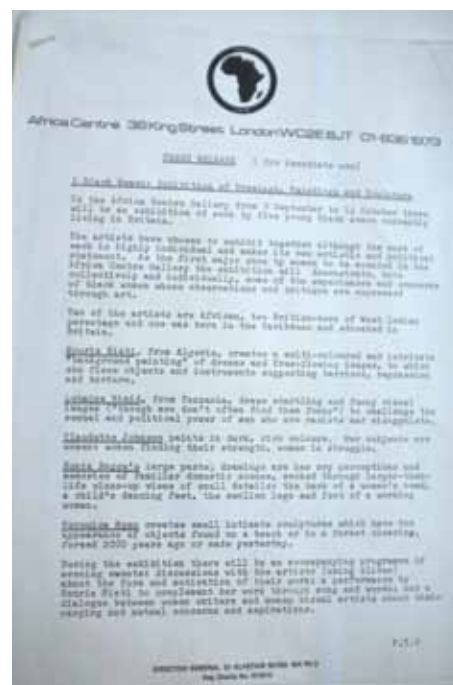
As a child I dusted flowers like the ones in
this piece. Then I hated them.
Today, placing them in this context
I am using them as a vehicle
around which I make images of
ourselves and our struggle.
The hatred is vanquished.
The understanding

is developing

I made this image
of a Black woman for us.
Do you know her ?

Horlene Smith





CHISENHALE GALLERY

64-84 Chisenhale Road, London, E3 5EZ

Telephone: 01-981 4518

Lubaina Himid
Rochdale Art Gallery
Esplanade
Rochdale
Lancashire
OL16 1AH

15 August 1989

Dear Lubaina

I have pleasure in writing to tell you that Stoke on Trent City Museum and Art Gallery have decided to take 'the Ballad of the Wing'. They wish to have the exhibition from November 25 to some time after Christmas, to coincide with National Year of the Museum.

I will get in touch with you to discuss the details over the phone. I hope that you will be pleased at the idea - personally I feel that it is both important and rather amusing that the exhibition goes to Stoke. I am sure that it will have a very good impact there. It will also provide us with a further opportunity to get the Art magazines to take notice of the show.

Hope you are well.

Yours sincerely

Emma Dexter
Gallery Manager

ps. Andrew is sending you some more money on Friday separately.

Handwritten notes and signatures:

- Donald back home
- WIP doodle
- 01-722-2444
- Emma Dexter
- Clubs
- Molly
- Madman
- Man African Art: Sigs

Art Place Trust Ltd.

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INSTALLATION IN PROGRESS









LINKS AND CONNECTIONS

Sutapa Biswas

http://www.iniva.org/library/archive/people/b/biswas_sutapa

<http://www.camberwell.arts.ac.uk/ccwgraduateschool/ccwstaffresearchprofiles/sutapabiswas/>

Sonia Boyce

<http://peckhamspace.com/project/network/sonia-boyce>

http://www.iniva.org/library/archive/people/b/boyce_sonia

Lubaina Himid

<http://makinghistoriesvisible.com/>

<http://www.lubainahimid.info/>

Claudette Johnson

<http://www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk/loadWork.do?id=3554>

Ingrid Pollard

<http://www.mappingspectraltraces.org/members-page.html>

<http://www.uwe.ac.uk/sca/research/place/inresidenceingridpollard.htm>

Veronica Ryan

<http://www.mattress.org/index.cfm?event=ShowArtist&eid=105&id=533&c=upcoming>

<http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/CollectionDisplays?venueid=1&roomid=7237>

Maud Sulter

<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O82944/photograph-clio-portrait-of-dorothea-smart/>

<http://www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk/showExhibition.do?id=58>

Colour Code

<http://www.colourcode.info>

Making Histories Visible

<http://www.makinghistoriesvisible.com>

Tate Britain

<http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/CollectionDisplays?venueid=1&roomid=7237>

<http://www.tate.org.uk/research/researchservices/readingrooms/>

Iniva

<http://www.iniva.org/>

TrAIN

<http://www.transnational.org.uk/>

Arts Council Collection

<http://www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk/gosee.do>

Shades of Black, Assembling Black Arts in 1980s Britain, edited by David A. Bailey, Ian Baucom & Sonia Boyce 2005

Published by Duke University Press ISBN 0-8223 3420-8

Transforming The Crown, African, Asian and Caribbean Artists in Britain, 1966 to 1996 edited by Mora Beauchamp Byrd & Franklin Sirmans

Published by Caribbean Cultural Centre 1997 ISBN 9780965408202

Passion Discourses on Blackwomen's Creativity edited by Maud Sulter

Published by Urban Fox Press 1990

ISBN 1 872124-30-5(hbk), ISBN 1-872124-31-3(pbk)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thin Black Line(s) and Tate Britain are grateful to the Arts Council Collection for the loans of work by:

Sutapa Biswas

The Pied Piper of Hamlyn – Put your money where your mouth is (1987) (p.39)

Claudette Johnson

Trilogy – Part 1 Woman in Blue, Part 2 Woman in Black, Part 3 Women in Red (1982-1986) (p.65)

Trilogy – Part 2 Woman in Black (1982-1986) (p.108)

Ingrid Pollard

Pastoral Interlude No 4, Pastoral Interlude No 5 (1988) (p.71)

Sonia Boyce

Mr Close-friend-of-the-family pays a visit whilst everyone else is out (1985) (p.49)

We would also like to thank Cartwright Hall Art Gallery Bradford for the loan of:

Sutapa Biswas

Housewives with Steak Knives (1985) (p.37)

and Lubaina Himid for the loan of the following :

Sonia Boyce

Rice n Peas (1982) (p.47)

Maud Sulter

Polyhymnia (1989) (p.83)

Lubaina Himid

Moments and Connections (2011) (Insert)

Lubaina Himid

The Carrot Piece (1985) (p.59)

Archive Materials 1980 - 1989

Images and Conversations from the 1980s – Video showreel (2011)

Also thanks to **Ingrid Pollard** for the loan of four works from the two series :

Oceans Apart (1995) (p.73)

and

Seaside Series (Date unknown) (p.68)

Veronica Ryan

Relics in the Pillow of Dreams (1985) is from the Tate Collection (p.75)

Thin Black Line(s) is grateful to all the artists for permissions to reproduce their work here in this publication.

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