THIN BLACK LINE(S)

Sutapa Biswas
Sonia Boyce
Lubaina Himid
Claudette Johnson
Ingrid Pollard
Veronica Ryan
Maud Sulter

A Making Histories Visible Project
University of Central Lancashire

TATE BRITAIN 2011/2012
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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
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 Women's 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 on e: An Exhibition of work by Young Black Artists Wolverhampton Art Gallery in 1981, The Pan African 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 African 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 Brewster’s 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 Women’s 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 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, its 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. 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.

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. Maud’s 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 children’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 girls 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/inking 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 willfully 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-asses, 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.”

Sonja 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 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.

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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 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
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.

The downstairs gallery I would like to see given over entirely to the work of the sculptor Keronics 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.

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 and the Festival Hall last year, it has been reviewed in Time Out and the I.C.A. in the last couple of years.

Sonia Boyce has just taken part in a show at the Bluecoat and before that at Nicole Jacobs. Sokari is still at the I.C.A. On the concourse gallery and up the stairs I would put the work of 12 black women artists working at the moment. They are all from the British Isles. There is also a scattering of black sculpture and video just to confuse the issue. I would like to use the space, the whole space to make visible the black women in Britain today, the black woman as seen by black women that is. I would like to challenge our image of the black woman as a whole and give a voice to some of the black visual artists who are trying to redress the imbalance created by the media in 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.
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; Craige Horsetfield; 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

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

Monographs Published

Monographs Published

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

Monographs Published

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

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

Monographs Published

Selected Group Exhibitions
2012 Narratives of the Self: A Group Show of Autobiographies
2011 Thin Black Line(s)
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 vigilence (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: Aicon Gallery, London, UK
The Other Story Re-visited Curated by Niru Ratnam
PINTA London – represented by Nara Roesler Gallery, Sao Paulo, Brazil

2009
Lo Real Maravillosa / Marvellous Reality
Curated by Lalit Kala Akademi (Indian Government Museum), New Delhi, India

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


2002-3
From Tarzan to Rambo
Sutapa Biswas, exhibiting: Untitled (The Trials and Tribulations of Mickey Baker)

2001
Art Through the Eye of A Needle
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 MAPP A
Amos Anderson Gallery, Helsinki, Finland (Supported by the British Council)

1996
The Visible and the Invisible:
Curated by Tom Trevor and Zoe Shearman, in collaboration with inIVA, London, UK
representing the body in contemporary art and society
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 International De Galerias De Arte Contemporaneo, Guadalajara, 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 Kunstlerwrkstatt, 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
Biswas exhibiting: Sacred Space Supported by the British Council
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)
Disputed Identities Camerawork, San Francisco, USA
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

1989 Critical Realism Camden Arts Centre, London, UK
Touring exhibition
Sutapa Biswas: Pied Piper of Hamlyn – Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is

Curated by Sandy Naime, 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
Co-curated with Clare Slattery and Sarah Jane Edge. Touring exhibition
1987 Along the Lines of Resistance Cooper Gallery, Barnsley, UK
Co-curated with Clare Slattery and Sarah Jane Edge. Touring exhibition

Solo Exhibition Catalogues


Conference Contributions (published)

2001 Biswas, S., Shades of Black: Assembling the Eighties, Duke University, North Carolina
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.


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
Group Five Black Women
Black Woman Time Now
Africa Centre, London
Battersea Arts Centre, London

1984
Strip Language*
Into the Open*
Heroes and Heroines
Gimpel Fils, London
Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield
Black Art Gallery, London

1985
Room at the Top*
Blackskis/Bluecoat
Celebration/Demonstration
No More Little White Lies
Reflections
The Thin Black Line*
From Generation to Generation
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
Group Some of Us Are Brave
Unrecorded Truths*
From Two Worlds
Caribbean Expressions in Britain*
Basel Art Fair (with Gimpel Fils)
State of the Art*
A Cabinet of Drawings
Black Art Gallery, London
Elbow Room, London
Whitechapel Art Gallery, London
Leicestershire Museum & Art Gallery,
and tour
Switzerland
ICA, London and tour
Gimpel Fils, London
Cornerhouse, Manchester

1987
The Image Employed: The Use of Narrative in Black Art*
Critical Realism*
Basel Art Fair (with Gimpel Fils)
Royal Overseas League*
Nottingham Castle Museum & Art Gallery,
and tour
Switzerland
ICA, London
Gimpel Fils, London

1988
The Essential Black Art*
The Impossible Self*
The Thatcher Years
Fashioning Feminine Identities
Along the Lines of Resistance*
The Wedding*
The Other Story:
Afro-Asian Art in Post-War Britain*
The Havana Biennale*
The Image Employed: The Use of Narrative in Black Art*
Critical Realism*
Basel Art Fair (with Gimpel Fils)
Royal Overseas League*
Nottingham Castle Museum & Art Gallery,
and tour
Switzerland
London

1989
The Wedding*
The Other Story:
Afro-Asian Art in Post-War Britain*
The Havana Biennale*
Wilfredo Lam Cultural Centre, Havana
McLellan Galleries, Glasgow and tour
University of London
Photographers Gallery, London
Cornerhouse, Manchester and tour

Black Markets

1990
The British Art Show*
Distinguishing Marks*
The Invisible City*
Black Markets
1991 Delfina Open Studios
Shocks to the System*
Delfina Annual Summer Show*
An English Summer
Photo Video*

1992 Delfina Annual Summer Show*
White Noise*
Northern Adventures*
Nosepaint Artist Club
Innocence and Experience:
Images of Children in British Art
1600 to the Present*

1993 New England Purpose Built:
Long Distance Information

1994 Thinking Aloud
Wish You Were Here*
Glass Vitrine

1995 Free Stories*
Portable Fabric Shelters*
Fetishism: Visualising Power*
Mirage: Enigmas of Race, Difference
and Desire*
Photogenetic
Cottage Industry*

1996 Picturing Blackness in British Art*
Kiss This
Join the Dots
Interzones*

1997 Transforming the Crown:
African, Asian & Caribbean Artists
in Britain 1966-1996*

1998 Eastenders
The Unmapped Body:
Three Black British Artists*

1999 Plain Magic
Sonia Boyce/Hermione Wiltshire
From Where to Here*

2000 Video Positive: The Other Side of Zero*
Licked
A Poster Show
London
Southbank Centre, London and tour
London
Palazzo della Crepadona, Belluna
Photographers Gallery, London and tour
London
IKON Gallery, Birmingham
Caledon Arts Centre and St Pancras
Station, London
London
Manchester City Art Gallery
Manchester and tour

2001 Century City: Art and Culture in the
Modern Metropolis*
Slipstream
The Whitechapel Art Gallery
Centenary Review*
It's a Wonderful Life

2002 Travelogue*
Self Evident*
In Focus: From Tarzan to Rambo

2003 Out of Place
Strangers to Ourselves*
Belongings

2004 Stranger than Fiction*
SV04
Lilith

2005 Sharjah International Biennial: 7*
Seeing is Believing: Faith in the
Tate Collection
Radical and Modest
London in 6 Easy Steps: The Real Me*
The Flag Project
Preview Berlin
Don't Be Afraid
Video Festival

2006 For One Night Only
BOOK
One Nation Funk'd
(performance with Barby Asante – Funk Chorus)

2007 Review
Triple Echo*
Crossing the Waters
Portrait of the Artist as a Researcher
Menschen und Orte*
The Local
Femmes 'R' Us
Present*

2009 Praxis: Art in Times of Uncertainty*
2009
Afro Modern: Journeys Through the Black Atlantic*
Walls Are Talking: Wallpaper, Art and Culture*
Griot Girlz Feminist Art and the Black Atlantic*
A Missing History:
The Other Story Revisited
(Aluera! Art in Public Spaces*)

2011
What the Folk Say*
The Future is Social: the work that was not mine
Black Sound White Cube*
In – and outside – writing
Ask Yo Mama *
Coming Ashore
The Impossible Community*
The Imagination of Children
Tate Liverpool
Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester
Kunstlerhaus Büchsenhausen, Innsbruck
Aicon Gallery, London
Centro Cultural España - Cordóba, Argentina
Compton Verney, Warwickshire
Wimbledon Space, University of the Arts London
Kunstquartier Bethanien, Berlin
Voorkamer, Lier Belgium
Kunsttraum Niederoesterreich, Wein
Berardo Collection Museum/P-28 Container Project, Lisbon
Moscow Museum of Modern Art
Museum of Childhood, London

Solo Exhibitions
1986 Conversations
Sonia Boyce*
1988 Recent Work*
1991 Something Else
1993 Do You Want To Touch?
1995 PEEP*
Sonia Boyce: Performance*
2001 Recent Sonia Boyce: La, La, La*
Ponte Futura
2004 Mm
Sonia Boyce
2007 For you, only you (performance with Alamire, David Skinner and Mikhail Karikis)*
Devotional*
Crop Over
2008 For you, only you*
2009 Like Love: Part One
2010 Like Love: Part Two
Like Love: Part Three*
Oh Adelaide:
a collaboration with Ain Bailey
2011 Crop Over
Network

* denotes publication

Black Art Gallery, London
Air Gallery, London
Whitechapel Art Gallery, London
Vanessa Devereux Gallery, London
181 Gallery, London
Brighton Museum
Cornerhouse, Manchester
Douglas F Cooley Memorial Art Gallery, Reed College, Portland, Oregon
Fortezza Girifalco, Cortona
Droit House, Turner Contemporary, Margate
The Agency, London
Magdalen College Chapel, University of Oxford
National Portrait Gallery, London
Harewood House, Leeds and tour
Castle Keep, Locus Plus, Newcastle
Stowe House, Milton Keynes Gallery
Offsite Castle House, Model Arts Offsite, Sligo
Spike Island, Bristol
Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool
The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke on Trent
Wimbledon Space, University of the Arts, London
John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute, Duke University, Durham
Peckham Space, London
### Awards, Collections, etc.

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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 last 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.

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’Ouverture.

The reality of being too visible and too invisible in the small cities, towns and villages of the north of England in the 1980s 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 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 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.

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**Solo Exhibitions**

- **2011** Tailor Striker Singer Dandy
- **2010** Jelly Mould Pavilion
- **2008** Kangas and Other Stories
- **2007** Talking On Corners Speaking In Tongues
- **2007** Swallow Hard
- **2006** Swallow
- **2004** Naming The Money
- **2001** Double Life Inside The Invisible
- **1999** Plan B Zanzibar
- **1997** Venetian Maps
- **1996** Portraits & Heroes
- **1995** Beach House
- **1994** Vernets Studio Vernets Studio
- **1993** African Gardens
- **1992** Revenge
- **1989** The Ballad of the Wing
- **1987** New Robes for MaShulan
- **1986** A Fashionable Marriage

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**Solo Exhibitions**

- Platt Hall, Manchester Museums
- Sudley House, Liverpool and Liverpool Museums
- Peg Alston Gallery, New York
- Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston
- Judges Lodgings, Lancaster
- Judges Lodgings, Lancaster
- Hatton Gallery, Newcastle
- Bolton Museum & Art Gallery
- St. Jorgens Museum, Bergen, Norway
- Tate St Ives
- Oriel Mostyn, Llandudno
- Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston
- Wrexham Arts Centre & Tour
- 5th Havana Bienniale, Cuba
- Transmission Gallery, Glasgow
- Black Art Gallery, London
- Rochdale Art Gallery + South Bank Centre, London
- Chisenhale Gallery, London
- Rochdale Art Gallery
- Pentonville Gallery, London
**Group Exhibitions**

2011  Hunter Gatherer  
Jelly Pavilions - Northern Art Prize  

2009  Myth + History  

2007  Uncomfortable Truths  

2006  Migratory Aesthetics  

2004/5  Distance No Object  

2002  Fabrications  
Games People Play  

2001  Nothing But Facts  
Representing Britain  

1999  1980s Figurative Painting  

1998  Memory Walking  

1997-98  Transforming the Crown  

1997-99  Crossings  

1997  M.A.G. Collection  
Representing Women  
Hogarth on Hogarth  

1995  Word Not Found  
Photogenetic  

1994  Group Show  
Memories of Childhood  
Seen/Unseen  
Verner’s Studio  

1993  Greetings  

1992  Columbus Drowning  
Women’s Art At New Hall  

1991  Treatise on The Sublime  

1990  The Transformation of the Object  

1990-91  Heritage  

1989-90  The Other Story  

1988-89  Along The Lines of Resistance  

1988  Passion  
Blackwomen's song  
Gold Blooded Warrior  
Depicting History For Today  

1987  Palaces of Culture  
The State of the Art  

1986  From Two Worlds  

1985  The Thin Black Line  

1984  Heroes and Heroines  
Into The Open  

1983  Black Woman Time Now  
Five Black Women  

**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  Critical, Donald Rodney  
Touchstones, Rochdale  

1986  Unrecorded Truths  
Elbow Room, London  

1985  The Thin Black Line  
ICA, London  

1984  Into The Open  
Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield  

1984  Black Woman Time Now  
Battersea Arts Centre, London  

1983  Five Black Women  
Africa Centre, London  

Stoke Art Gallery & British Tour  
ICA, London  
Whitechapel Art Gallery, London  
ICA, London  
Black Art Gallery, London  
Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield  
Battersea Arts Centre, London  
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: Crea-
tivity, 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 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 lived, vital time. Lubaina Himid had single-handedly, 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 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, I was thinking of my life as a creative being, 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 Studio Show
1995 Portraits from a Small Room
1992 In This Skin
1990 Pushing Against the Boundaries
1986 Claudette Johnson – Recent Works
1984 Claudette Johnson – Drawings

Exhibitions (Selected Group Shows)

2011 Thin Black Line(s) Black Art Group
1998 Transforming the Crown
1994-95 Reclaiming the Madonna
1988 Out There Fighting The Image Employed
1986 Some Of Us Are Brave
1985 The Thin Black Line
1984 Into the Open
1983 Five Black Women The Pan-African Connection Black Woman Time Now
1982 The Pan-African Connection
1981 First National Black Art Convention Open Exhibition

Publicly owned works

1986 See and Know
1984 And I have my own business in this skin and on this planet 1983 and Untitled 1982

Deborah House Studios, London
198 Gallery, London
The Black Art Gallery, London
Rochdale Art Gallery
The Tom Allen Centre
The City Art Gallery, Manchester
The Drill Hall, London

Tate Britain, London
Graves Gallery Museum, Sheffield
Caribbean Cultural Center, Bronx
Museum of the Arts and Studio
Museum, Harlem, New York
Usher Gallery, Lincoln and touring
Elbow Room Gallery, London
Cornerhouse Gallery, Manchester
The Black Art Gallery
ICA, London
Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield
The Africa Centre, London
The Africa Centre, London
Battersea Arts Centre, London
Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Sheffield, The Africa Centre, London
Black Art Gallery, Bristol
Wolverhampton Polytechnic

Arts Council Collection
Graves Gallery Museum, Sheffield

Claudette Johnson
### 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Exhibition</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Residency 3</td>
<td>Parfitt Gallery Croydon College</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>A Field of Sheep</td>
<td>Chenderit School/Visual Arts College</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Belonging in Britain</td>
<td>National Museum Bridgetown Barbados*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Near &amp; Far</td>
<td>Sunderland Glass Centre Sunderland*</td>
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<td>Spectre of the Black Boy</td>
<td>Kingsway Gallery Goldsmith College</td>
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<td>2006/07</td>
<td>Landscape Trauma 2</td>
<td>Bath University Bath</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Working images</td>
<td>Wall Space Gallery LaDanza Studio London*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Paper boats and Canvas</td>
<td>London South Bank University London</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Points of View</td>
<td>Project Row Houses Texas USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Near and Far</td>
<td>Hastings Museum &amp; Art Gallery Sussex</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Selective Yield</td>
<td>Kendal Museum Cumbria &amp; Touring*</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>Hidden Histories</td>
<td>Wysing Arts Gallery Cambridge</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Heritage Stories</td>
<td>3 Mills Island London</td>
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<td>University of Central Lancashire</td>
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### Group Exhibitions selected

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

2007  Leverhulme Individual Artists Award  
2007  Arts Council England – Artists Award  
2006  Arts Council England – Artists award  
2001  AHRC Fellowship in Creative & Performing Arts

**Publications**

*Hidden in a Public Place* IMP Press, 2008 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  
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  Compartments Apartments  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
1995  Six Sculptors  Third Eye Centre, Glasgow
1993  The Thin Black Line  Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA)

Selected Group Exhibitions

2011  Factory Installed  The Mattress Factory, PA
2009/10  Infinite Islands...  Henry Moore Institute, Drawings
2007/08  Site Specifics’06  The Carriage House Museum, Islip LI
2006  Open Studios  Tate Modern, London
2000  Confluence Five Myles  Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, New York
1999  Five Myles  Curated by Marian Griffith’s, Brooklyn, New York
1998  Artists’ Projects  Tate Gallery, St. Ives, Cornwall,
1998 (May)  Caribbean Contemporary Art  MEIAC, Badajoz
1997 (Oct)  Transforming the Crown  Bronx Museum, Studio Museum
1997  Drawing Exhibition  Selena Gallery, Brooklyn
1997  Rush Arts
1996/97  Landscape Reclaimed  Aldrich Museum, Connecticut
1996  British Abstract Art, Part 3: Works on paper  Flowers East Gallery
1995  Sculpture  Jesus College, Cambridge
1994  Swinging the Lead  Lead Works, Bristol
1993  Two Sculptors  The Bronx Museum, New York
1992  Bodys as Metaphors  Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus
1991  Natural Settings  Weltkunst Foundation, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin
1990  Trophies from the Civil Wars  Bard College, New York
1990  Sculpture Triennale  Chelsea Physic Garden, London
1990  Sculptors’ Drawing Exhibition  Flowers East Gallery, London
1990  River, selected by John Maine  Memorial Arch, Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn
1990  Garden Festival: A New Necessity  Tate Gallery, Liverpool
1989  Contemporary Art Fair  England Arts Council Touring Exhibition
1989  Sculpture in the Close  Tate Gallery, London
1988  Dislocations  Paula Cooper Gallery, New York
1988  Vessels  Rochdale Arts Gallery
1987  Garden Festival: A New Necessity  Scottish Arts Council Touring Exhibition
1987  Goldsmiths’ College Centenary Exhibition, London
1986  Vessels  Budapest
1986  A System for Support  The New York Studio School
1986  Gateshead  Gateshead
1986  Mclellan Galleries, Glasgow  Mclellan Galleries, Glasgow
1985  Vessels  Covent Garden, London
1985  The British Art Show  Jesus College, Cambridge
1985  Kettle’s Yard, Cambridge  Kettle’s Yard, Cambridge
1985  Body as Metaphor  Serpentine Gallery, London
1985  Natural Settings  Kettle’s Yard, Cambridge

VERONICA RYAN

76 77
1986 Blond Fine Art
From Two Worlds
Interim Art
The Minories
Caribbean Expressions in Britain
Garden Festival
Coloured Sculpture
1985 Manna in the Wilderness
Whitechapel Open
Beyond Appearances
1984 Sculptures and Modellers
Christmas Show
Black Women Artists
6th Cleveland (UK) International Drawing Biennale and tour
Creation for Liberation
1983 Fine Art Staff Show
Third World Show
1981 Coloured Sculpture
Stoke-on-Trent Museum and Art Gallery
1985 Manna in the Wilderness
Whitechapel Art Gallery, London
Beyond Appearances
1984 Sculptures and Modellers
Christmas Show
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6th Cleveland (UK) International Drawing Biennale and tour
Creation for Liberation
1983 Fine Art Staff Show
Third World Show
1981 Coloured Sculpture
Stoke-on-Trent Museum and Art Gallery

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
1980 Prize Winner, Cleveland (UK) International Drawing Biennale

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

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 Salisbury Collection
1987 The Arts Council of Great Britain
1986 Irvin Joffe Collection, London
1983 Cleveland County Museum
1981 The Boise Scholarship Collection

1986 Blond Fine Art
From Two Worlds
Interim Art
The Minories
Caribbean Expressions in Britain
Garden Festival
Coloured Sculpture
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Collections
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1993 Mellon Bank, Pittsburgh
1991-97 Tate Gallery, London
1990 Contemporary Arts Society, London
1989 Weltkunst Foundation, London
1988 Salisbury Collection
1987 The Arts Council of Great Britain
1986 Irvin Joffe Collection, London
1983 Cleveland County Museum
1981 The Boise Scholarship Collection
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; Syrca(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”.
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>The Thin Black Line</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>Blackwomenprint project</td>
<td>Tom Allen Centre</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>Gold Blooded Warrior</td>
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<td>Blackwomansong</td>
<td>Sisterwrite</td>
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<td>1988/89</td>
<td>Along the lines of resistance</td>
<td>Cooper Gallery, Barnsley</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>Zabat</td>
<td>Victoria &amp; Albert Museum</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>BT Young Contemporaries</td>
<td>ICA, London</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>Treatise on the Sublime</td>
<td>University of California Stanislaus, USA</td>
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<td>1991</td>
<td>Hysteria</td>
<td>Tate Liverpool</td>
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<td>1991</td>
<td>Studies for a National Postage Stamp</td>
<td>Bluecoat, Liverpool</td>
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<td>1991</td>
<td>Zabat</td>
<td>Camerawork</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Sycas</td>
<td>Wrexham Arts Centre &amp; Manchester Art Gallery</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Memories of Childhood</td>
<td>Bernice Steinbaum Gallery, USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Alba</td>
<td>Harris Museum &amp; Art Gallery</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Word not Found</td>
<td>University of Trier, Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Africus: Johannesburg Biennale</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Picture Britannica</td>
<td>Sydney Museum of Contemporary Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Transforming the Crown</td>
<td>Studio Museum, New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>MAG collection</td>
<td>Ferens Gallery, Hull</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Memory Walking</td>
<td>City Art Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Beatrix Potter to Harry Potter: Portraits of Children’s Authors</td>
<td>National Portrait Gallery</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Jeanne Duval: A melodrama</td>
<td>Scottish National Portrait Gallery</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Sekhmet</td>
<td>Gracefield Arts Centre, Dumfries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**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
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.
AN EXHIBITION OF PASTELS AND PAINTINGS
BY HOURIA NIATI (ALGERIA)
1 March - 2 April 1988

AFRICA CENTRE
in association with
Allez Marie eel Arts
34 King Street, WC2

ARCHE
88 ARCHIVE 89
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

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

Marlene Smith
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
INSTALLATION IN PROGRESS
THIN BLACK LINE(S)

INSTALLATION IN PROGRESS
THIN BLACK LINE(S)

LINKS AND CONNECTIONS
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**

**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**

**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.

Lubaina Himid would like to thank the Thin Black Line(s) artists for their support and belief in the project.

Paul Goodwin for his idea and determination to make the display happen from before the beginning.

Susan Walsh (Research Fellow) Making Histories Visible Project at University of Central Lancashire, for the Thin Black Line(s) Images and Conversations from the 1980s video showreel screened as part of the display at Tate Britain and for the Moments and Connections leaflet. For the sourcing, gathering and co-ordinating of all the archive materials for the project and display, for her key role as part of the Colourcode team and for the photographs of the installation-in-progress on pages 75 and 98-102.

Arts Council England Collection for the loan of works by Sutapa Biswas, Claudette Johnson and Ingrid Pollard.

Cartwright Hall Bradford for the loan of works by Sutapa Biswas.

Dr Robert Walsh and Dr Rod Dubrow-Marshall at University of Central Lancashire for their continuous support and enthusiasm for the project from the beginning.

Glenda Brindle, Dean of the School of Art, Design and Performance University of Central Lancashire for the time to work on this project.

Paul Rea of Red Square Design for his design of this publication.

Denise Swanson for her photographs on pages 28-34, 37, 39, 47, 49, 59, 65, 68, 71, 73, 83, 87-96 of the display installed.

Illuminations for permission to show extracts from *The State of the Art* dir. Sandy Nairne.

Finally thanks to Dr Penelope Curtis, Dr Chris Stephens and Jennifer Batchelor and the installation, conservation and interpretation teams at Tate Britain for their tremendous expertise and support.