

Map Community Sick
Experience Record
Future Critical Value
Conflict Time Border
KEY
Map Community Sick
Experience Record
WORDS
Future Critical Value
Conflict Time Border
Map Community Sick
Experience Record
Future Critical Value
Conflict Time Border



KEY WORDS

*How do our experiences
shape how we make, talk
about or interpret art?*

Devised by artist

Evan
Ifekoya

In collaboration with
Schools and Teachers
Tate London Learning

I make art because I need to do so to
survive in this world that would rather people
like me not exist,
let alone flourish.



Jacob V Joyce, *Evan*, 2016,
from *Fear Brown Queers* zine

Preface

The framing of this resource takes language as a starting point. More specifically, it draws on five keywords¹ that through an expanded field of research and provocations, explores ideas around culture, ethics and identity in relation to art and pedagogy.

The keywords interrogated within this resource are:

Community
Experience
Map
Record
Sick

These words were considered carefully, with a focus on those that carried a surplus of meaning. It is important that the words imbue a level of ambivalence about how they should be defined. Some of the words that didn't make it into the final selection include: **Border, Conflict, Critical, Future, Time and Value.**

Once the keywords had been decided, the next step was to establish the content for each section. It felt crucial to me that each word explore not only my perspective on unpacking the word, but also include the viewpoints of people I have collaborated with, past and present. These perspectives unfold through a series of conversations, contributions from the archive, lists of references and question-based activities. Key contributions come from members of Collective Creativity.²

The list of keywords and how I have defined them is by no means definitive. Consider how my interpretation differs from your own. There are plenty of opportunities across this resource to develop your own reading of the selected keywords, and more importantly to put forward your own ideas for words that need interrogating and redefining in relation to art, culture and difference.

1

The words are referred to as 'keywords' in relation to Raymond Williams's book, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, New York, 1976.

2

Collective Creativity is an intentionally informal non-hierarchical collective space created to share ideas to reflect on texts/films/art (and more) in a group setting, that inspire, interest or provoke us and/or our practice. Collective Creativity is a group formed out of necessity, to carve collaborative space outside of the institutional framework where a specific QTIPOC (Queer, Trans* Intersex People of Colour) voice and experience could be nurtured. Collective Creativity are Evan Ifekoya, Raisa Kabir, Rudy Loewe and Raju Rage.

KEYWORDS is a unique exploration of the actual language of cultural transformation.

Neither a defining dictionary nor a specialist glossary, it is the record of an inquiry into a vocabulary: a shared body of words and meanings concerned with the practices and institutions described as 'culture' and 'society.'

In a series of connecting essays, Raymond Williams investigates how these 'keywords' have been formed, altered, redefined, influenced, modified, confused and reinforced as the historical contexts in which they were applied changed to give us their current meaning and significance.

This edition includes the essays on an extra twenty-one words which Raymond Williams added to his original text when revising it to take account of fresh research and changes in nuance.

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Raymond Williams, *Keywords:*
A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, 1976

How might art be ——— space to difficult ———

Anecdote 1

In autumn 2013, I was delivering a workshop with a school group at Tate Modern when a young student asked me to pass them a colouring pencil.

‘What colour do you need?’ I asked.
‘That one over there’, he replied, pointing to a pencil one of his classmates was holding.
‘Oh, you mean a black pencil’, I said, with some surprise.
‘I’ve been told not to say that word’, he said.

The child, who was white, blonde and about seven years old, in a class of students from a range of cultural backgrounds had been conditioned, for some reason, not to use the word ‘black’. I continue to think about that day, and those ‘Black Pencil Moments’. —³

—3

‘Black Pencils Moments’ refers to a space that is generated during conversation, where something difficult or challenging is brought up that disrupts the flow of conversation. How do we make space for

—— a vehicle to give —— conversations?

Anecdote 2

In March 2015, I co-facilitated a Study Day for teachers and educators alongside Uvanney Maylor, Professor of Education at the University of Bedfordshire. The Study Day explored the significance of language in relation to discussions around race and cultural difference in the classroom and gallery. During the ice breaker, participants discussed the image or artefact they were asked to bring in that represented their own culture or understanding of cultural difference.

One member of the group responded that the activity was challenging, as they had nothing 'exotic' about themselves to contribute. Uvanney wanted to come back to this word once everyone had shared their responses, so that we could unpack it as a group. We proceeded to have a difficult but productive conversation that expanded our ideas about what culture is, and could be, in relation to questions of difference and otherness. After all, everyone comes from somewhere and every place has something about it that makes it unique.

what is challenging to be addressed? Where all involved can reflect on what is happening without defence, or deeming what is brought up as being unimportant or irrelevant, or without bringing a negative mood to the conversation?

Community

COMMUNITY

Community has been in the language since C14, from fw *comuneté*, oF, *communitatem*, L – community of relations or feelings, from rw *communis*, L – COMMON (q.v.). It became established in English in a range of senses: (i) the commons or common people, as distinguished from those of rank (C14–C17); (ii) a state or organized society, in its later uses relatively small (C14–); (iii) the people of a district (C18–); (iv) the quality of holding something in common, as in **community of interests**, **community of goods** (C16–); (v) a sense of common identity and characteristics (C16–). It will be seen that senses (i) to (iii) indicate actual social groups; senses (iv) and (v) a particular quality of relationship (as in *communitas*). From C17 there are signs of the distinction which became especially important from C19, in which **community** was felt to be more immediate than **SOCIETY** (q.v.), although it must be remembered that *society* itself had this more immediate sense until C18, and *civil society* (see **CIVILIZATION**) was, like *society* and *community* in these uses, originally an attempt to distinguish the body of direct relationships from the organized establishment of *realm* or *state*. From C19 the sense of immediacy or locality was strongly developed in the context of larger and more complex industrial societies. **Community** was the word normally chosen for experiments in an alternative kind of group-living. It is still so used and has been joined, in a more limited sense, by **commune** (the French *commune* – the smallest administrative division – and the German *Gemeinde* – a civil and ecclesiastical division – had interacted with each other and with **community**, and also



Evan Ifekoya,
Okun Song,
2016, video still

[illegible]

Black Audio Film Collective



Black Audio Film Collective,
Handsworth Songs,
1986, film still



Black Audio Film Collective

Black Audio Film Collective was formed by seven undergraduates in Portsmouth in 1982, and was based in Dalston, East London from 1983 to 1998.

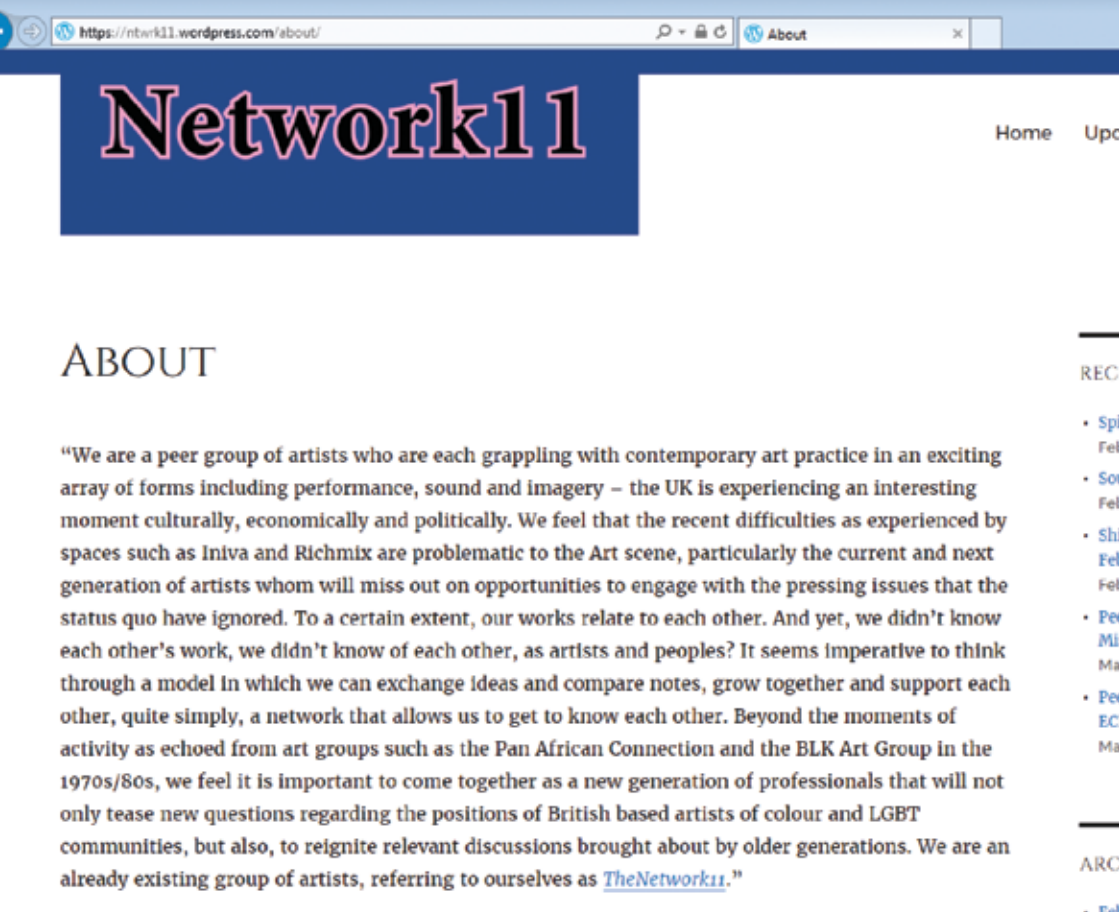
In response to the civil disturbances in Brixton in 1981, there was a concerted effort by Channel Four Television, the local metropolitan councils and the films and television unions collectively to provide financial and structural support to black media and cultural makers, in order to promote a black cultural presence in the British media and arts. One of the workshops that negotiated the workshop agreement between the media institutions and cultural makers was the Black Audio Film Collective and, in the sixteen years in which they worked as an artist's atelier, they produced a roster of groundbreaking and award winning creative documentaries, non-linear feature films, tape-slide installations, film programmes and screenings that examined the diasporic African and Asian experience in Britain's and across the continents.

Characterised by an interest in memory, history and aesthetics, the collective created a series of defiantly experimental works that engaged with black popular and political culture in Britain. The group were also instrumental in bringing an awareness of avant-garde film from Africa, India and South America to the UK.

Artists, filmmakers and writers associated with the group include John Akomfrah, Reece Auguiste, Edward George Lina Gopaul, Avril Johnson, David Lawson, Trevor Mathison .

Network11

Network11 is Larry Achiampong, Beverley Bennett, Junior Boakye-Yiadom, Evan Ifekoya, Shepherd Manyika, Jade Montserrat, Kamile Ofoeme, Ima-Abasi Okon and Nicola Thomas.



ABOUT

"We are a peer group of artists who are each grappling with contemporary art practice in an exciting array of forms including performance, sound and imagery – the UK is experiencing an interesting moment culturally, economically and politically. We feel that the recent difficulties as experienced by spaces such as Iniva and Richmix are problematic to the Art scene, particularly the current and next generation of artists whom will miss out on opportunities to engage with the pressing issues that the status quo have ignored. To a certain extent, our works relate to each other. And yet, we didn't know each other's work, we didn't know of each other, as artists and peoples? It seems imperative to think through a model in which we can exchange ideas and compare notes, grow together and support each other, quite simply, a network that allows us to get to know each other. Beyond the moments of activity as echoed from art groups such as the Pan African Connection and the BLK Art Group in the 1970s/80s, we feel it is important to come together as a new generation of professionals that will not only tease new questions regarding the positions of British based artists of colour and LGBT communities, but also, to reignite relevant discussions brought about by older generations. We are an already existing group of artists, referring to ourselves as [TheNetwork11](https://ntwrk11.wordpress.com/about/)."

<https://ntwrk11.wordpress.com/about/>,
accessed November 2016



Jade Montserrat, *Shadowing Josephine*,
2016, performance. Filmed by Matthew
Noel-Tod, Outpost Gallery

Instructional viewing notes
that relate to the three
photo essays of weavers
in Bangladesh and Mexico
to further engage with the
images and elaborate on
their contextual meaning

Construction

textiles, identity,
gender, race, borders,
woven fabrics, villages,
family units

Languages

weaving languages/
indigenous non-state
languages, non-verbal
languages

Heritage

cloth, fabric, identity,
cultural construction,
defining ethnicity,
connections

Labour

community, endurance,
survival, patience, body,
racialised, gendered

Ceremony

ritual, ceremonial cloths,
generational craft,
physicality, temporal,
traditional, evolving,
metaphysical

Woven histories

textiles carry their own
texts, legibility, recording
gendered histories,
non-western archives,
textiles as archival material

Landscapes

interior, exterior, oasis,
forced movement,
displacement, indigenous,
carved, artificial, authentic

Haptic literacy

touch, feel, fibre, yarn,
cloth, muscle memory,
textile, unspoken
knowledges

Resistance

weaving resistance,
defying cultural
imperialism, cultural and
ethnic dress, political
dressing, re-learning
indigenous languages,
mother tongue

Tools

magical skills-making,
warping, winding, symbols

Conflict

indigenous, occupation,
nation state, nationality,
municipal bureaucracy,
religious hegemony



Raisa Kabir, Jamdani weavers,
Rupganj, Bangladesh, 2016,
photo essay



Raisa Kabir, *Chakma weavers, Rangamati, Bangladesh, 2016*, photo essay



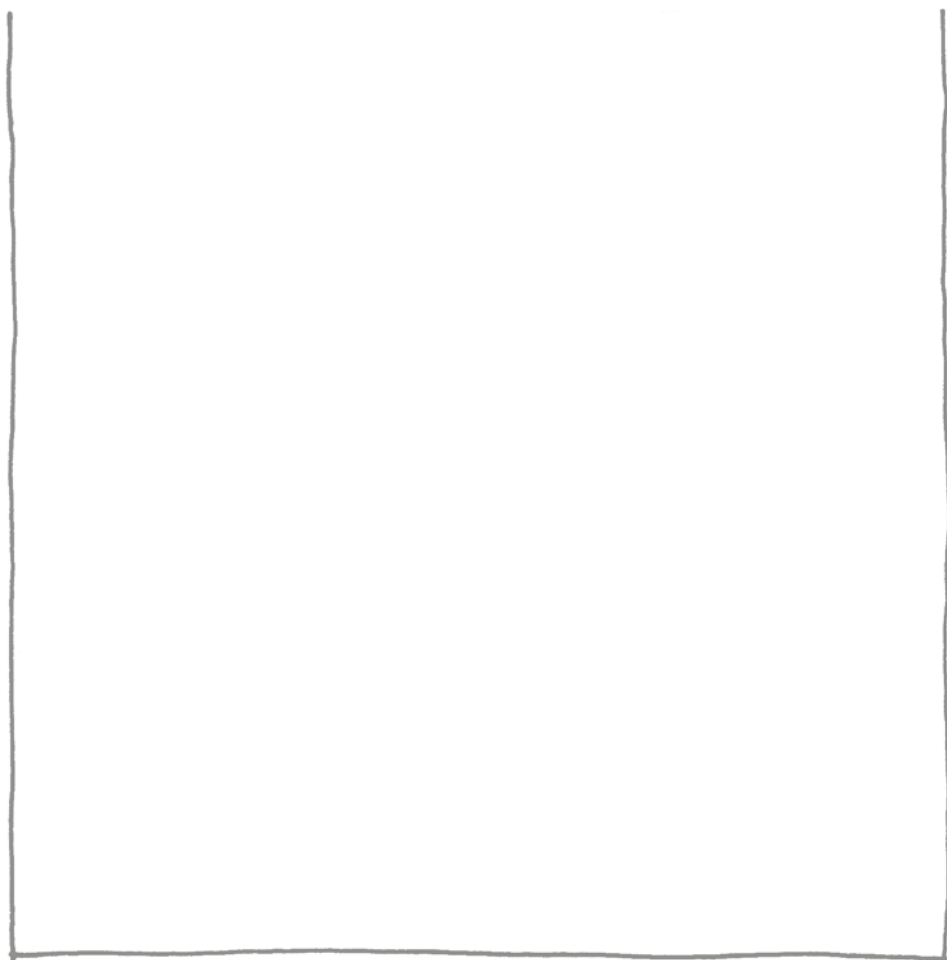
Raisa Kabir, *The Navarro family*,
Santo Tomás Jalieza, Oaxaca,
Mexico, 2016, photo essay

How might you form a new
peer group of your own?...
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What are your reasons for
coming together?
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How might you go about setting
up a regular forum to meet?
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Collective
Collaboration
Family
Peer



Experience

The old association between **experience** and *experiment* can seem, in some of the most important modern uses, merely obsolete. (The relations between the two words, until 1C18, are described under **EMPIRICAL**.) The problem now is to consider the relations between two main senses which have been important since 1C18. These can be summarized as (i) knowledge gathered from past events, whether by conscious observation or by consideration and reflection; and (ii) a particular kind of consciousness, which can in some contexts be distinguished from 'reason' or 'knowledge'. We can give a famous and influential example of each sense.

Burke, in the *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), wrote:

If I might venture to appeal to what is so much out of fashion in Paris, I mean to experience . . .

This is a conservative argument against 'rash' political innovation, stressing the need for 'slow but well-sustained progress', taking each step as it comes and watching its effect. We can see how this developed from the sense of experiment and observation, but what is new is the confident generalization of the 'lessons of experience': particular conclusions as well as particular methods. Someone in Paris might have replied that the Revolution itself was an 'experience', in the sense of putting a new kind of politics to trial and observation, but for all those older implications of the word it seems certain that this would have been overborne, at least in English, by the riper and more gathered sense, then and now, of 'lessons' as against 'innovations' or 'experiments'.

That is **experience** past. We can see **experience** present in T. S. Eliot (*Metaphysical Poets*, 1921):

a thought to Donne was an experience, it modified his sensibility.

It is evident that the grounds for reliance on **experience** past ('lessons') and **experience** present (full and active 'awareness') are radically different, yet there is nevertheless a link between them, in some of the kinds of action and consciousness which they both oppose. This does not have to be the case, but the two distinct senses,

Raymond Williams, *Keywords:
A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*,
1976, pp.126 and 127

CHORUS:

Did you know that you're 40% more likely to get that job if you've got a British surname?
Tests have shown, based on fact, I for one am living proof of that. X2

BRIDGE:

Ifekoya, Adebutu, just a name, what's it to you? Smith is fine, Johnson too.
Singh and Hussein
that just won't do.

CHORUS

Sheba Chhachhi



Sheba Chhachhi,
Sathyarani – Anti Dowry Demonstration,
Delhi from Seven Lives and a Dream, 1980

Sheba Chhachhi → Sathyarani - Anti Dowry Demonstration, Delhi

Chhachhi returned to her home town of Delhi in the early 1980s after studying at the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad. The women's movement in India had been galvanised after a notorious rape case in Delhi in 1978. Chhachhi's sister was a founder-member of an activist group, and Chhachhi herself became involved both as an activist and a chronicler. Chhachhi's images became a record of the struggle and were used for posters and pamphlets on issues such as dowry, as well as for street theatre and protests.

The feminist movement spanned class boundaries, and Chhachhi decided to re-examine her role and the power dynamics involved in her representation of the women whose personal struggles she had witnessed and supported. For *Seven Lives and a Dream*, Chhachhi reshoot individual portraits of a select group of women, asking each to take control of the process and decide how they wanted to be portrayed, and encouraging them to choose objects of personal value to develop a more complex and staged image. Chhachhi has called this 'an invitation to perform the self' (Sheba Chhachhi, unpublished artist's statement sent to Tate curator Nada Raza, June 2013). The power of the gaze, acts of representation and questions of agency or individual choice are central to gender politics. Curators Devika Daulet-Singh and Luisa Ortínez Díez have described how Chhachhi translates these concepts in *Seven Lives and a Dream*, 'wherein the act of looking and the act of posing are negotiated to create a more equitable symmetry of power' (Devika Daulet-Singh and Luisa Ortínez Díez, 'An Introduction', in Ananth, Bartholomew, Daulet-Singh and Ortínez Díez 2009, p.210).

The original invitation was extended to eight women but only seven participated, and the word 'dream' in the title refers to the absence of the eighth woman, although it is also suggestive of the women's collective struggle for emancipation. This selection of nineteen images from the reconfigured portraits is intended for display as a group in a series of clusters, each dedicated to one of the women. Only the sitters' first names are used in the titles – a feminist refusal of markers of patriarchy. Sathyarani carries a graduation photograph of her daughter, who was

PART OF	Seven Lives and a Dream
MEDIUM	Photography, silver print
DIMENSIONS	Image
COLLECTION	Tate
ACQUISITION	Purchased by Tate, provided by Asia and the Pacific Communities Membership
REFERENCE	P81156

www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/chhachhi-sathyarani-anti-dowry-demonstration-delhi-p81156, accessed September 2017

Raju Rage

An Artist's Response to the Question:
How Do Our Experiences Shape How
We Make, Talk About or Interpret Art?

My practice is concerned with intimacy and everyday life and everyday objects as art objects. I'm interested in how objects interact with our bodies and impact the body; how bodies dis/connect to/from each other and how this manifests itself. I use intimate everyday objects in my practice in communicating narratives around gender, race, memory and history, such as sugar, tea, toothpaste, lipstick, beauty and cleaning products. I'm fascinated by space and the gaze; the relationships between artists and 'audience'; art and 'audience'; and art and the gallery space vs. public space; as well as how they all interact with each other. I'm particularly interested in and by the politics of the art industry, art institutions, knowledge production and value, and specifically how they impact on how artists produce work. These are all things I have to personally and professionally navigate and negotiate as an artist. Below is an extract from a recent performative lecture and conversation that creatively summarises my outlook.



Raju Rage performance lecture at Filthy Mouth, Dirty Politics: An Anti-Conference, Framers Framed, Amsterdam 19 August 2016. The table is arranged and installed with beauty products, mirror and unarchived materials: books, postcards, leaflets, zines, patches, lipsticks other memorabilia.

Part 1

[Seated] Hi, my name is Raju Rage and my pronouns are they/them. I am an artist but have always struggled with calling myself one. Not because I don't consider myself to be. Not because I don't consider the creative work I do to be art, but because often being an artist separates you from your people, your communities, your family, your friends and sometimes your everyday life // **pause** – *pick up a beauty product and apply it* // I'm interested in art that relates to and connects to everyday life // **pause** – *pick up make-up and start to apply it* // The kind that brings in knowledge and ideas and thought from my immediate surroundings, from the political queer and trans communities I'm a part of // **pause** – *pick up wig and wear it* // From the organising and work we have been doing for countless years with no acknowledgement from academia or institutions and a constant dismissal and erasure. We are not in their archives. But maybe we actually shouldn't be // **pause** – *open up box file with archival images and documents and a dress* // Some of us don't want to be archived in a box in a stuffy room in an institution. Suffocated. We



want to breathe and be seen, like wearing the latest outfit or dance party // **pause** – *stand and hold up dress and put it on while saying* // I draw from cultures of drag and cabaret of filthy faggots, dirty queers, talented trannies and sassy divas on the club scene and performance circuit. All those DIY and DIT projects I've been a part of for two decades. It's not all fun and glam, there are politics, discussions and complex things to think about, but glitter and glamour are also part of our worlds, a real life cabaret cliché. We aren't dry and white, like the institutions we sometimes find ourselves in that try to keep us out // **pause** – *apply moisturiser and glitter* // We are shiny and moisturised and glowing, in full colour. Our survival is our fight, along with what lipstick we will wear tonight // **pause** – *apply lipstick* // [in feminine drag]

Part 2

I've been part of an arts collective called Collective Creativity // **pause** – *show blog image* // We met at the Stuart Hall Library at InIVA, Rivington Place, a free public space we were using to unarchive our legacy // **pause** – *show Stuart Hall image and quote: 'We must mobilise everything we can find in terms of intellectual resources in order to understand what keeps making the lives we live in, profoundly and deeply inhumane'* // We came together as queer and/or trans people who are creatives either struggling in/with academia and institutions but also mainly desiring a space where we could nurture and grow our creativity and practices. White-washed art schools were letting us down // **pause** – *show surviving the art school publication image* // We came together interested in the legacy of black British artists in the UK, a history and memory that wasn't accessible to us within the art school education we paid for // **pause** – *show images from BAM* // We came together and organised sessions secretly at Tate Modern and then moved around to other locations. These sessions consisted of roundtables and feedback discussions on art and the issues around making art such as 'the politics of getting paid', 'surviving art school', 'negotiating and navigating institutions' as well as sharing each other's practices. These sessions were informal and non-hierarchical, because we believe in an equality of knowledge-sharing and knowledge-production and that knowledge should be shared and accessible to all // **pause** – *show image*

of CC session // We value the knowledge, talents and skills of our creative communities regardless of people's creative paths and not just focusing on those within academic institutions // **pause** – *show image of roundtable BAM* // We had many guests, including some of those artists in legacy that we had been researching and seeking and this led to making connections with these artists outside of a traditional archive and instead in everyday life, at private views of exhibitions or art-related events or in meet ups where we real-talked with them about projects, their histories and their current practices // **pause** – *show video of Lubaina Himid* // One of these artists was Lubaina Himid, who invited us to view her self-made archive from memorabilia she had collected over the years, called the Making Histories Visible archive in Preston, which was based in the Centre for Contemporary Art (School of Art, Design and Performance) at the University of Central Lancashire. An archive created out of a political movement that found itself into institutional space but opened its doors to non-institutional artists who wanted to learn about legacy. Sometimes institutional resources can be instrumentalised for non-institutional benefit. Another artist was Sonia Boyce // **pause** – *show Sonia's work* // A successful artist who has managed to build a career and enter institutional spaces as a lecturer and as a practising artist.

A constant question in my practice and process is what happens when we enter these

institutional spaces? The struggle continues for undervalued staff of colour but our knowledge often gets co-opted while we still suffer and are undermined. Sonia Boyce had taught Fine Art at Goldsmiths University but had left a few years back, onwards to do great things. Sonia wrote a reference for me to apply for the MFA programme there. I never saw the reference but I got into the programme thanks to the support of Sonia Boyce. [un/archiving legacy – handing out the archive]

Part 3

So I'm currently doing a Master's in Fine Art at a renowned university on a renowned programme in London // **pause** – *show image of London and institutions* // When I mention its name, people often gasp in wonder, change the way they have been treating me, give me much more validation without even seeing my work. This stamp of approval, this branding. This is what we pay for. You are worth something now. Just like those make-up advertisements. It's corporate, it's business. It's neoliberalism // **pause** – *show 'I am worth it' image* // The truth is I'm not really feeling it. I'm not sure what I'm getting but I know what they are benefitting from. The money I don't have to spend on fees, the knowledge and experience I've gained from outside of the institution. If you are part of the arts industry there isn't really an outside. We are all in it to win. There is no failure. No failure allowed.

Fees up, content cut. There is no care within these blank walls we endlessly climb. I'm trying to self-care. I'm trying to collectively care. I'm counting the people dropping out. I'm counting myself next in line. I'm in the process of leaving and searching for a safe exit. I hear 'We need to occupy these spaces, change them from the inside.' We are pushed out. But at what cost? Is dissent possible when it is expected and contained? In a cubicle. In a studio. Where is your studio? Inside out – top down. We carve our own spaces, public community spaces and we invite people in to be a

“
A backward
glance that
enacts a
future vision
”

The above quote is by José Esteban Muñoz from the publication *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. *Cruising Utopia* explores the idea of 'queerness' being something that is not here yet ... no one is queer, it is a space to move towards, a way of placing a demand on the present.

What do you know now that
you wish you knew then?

■■■

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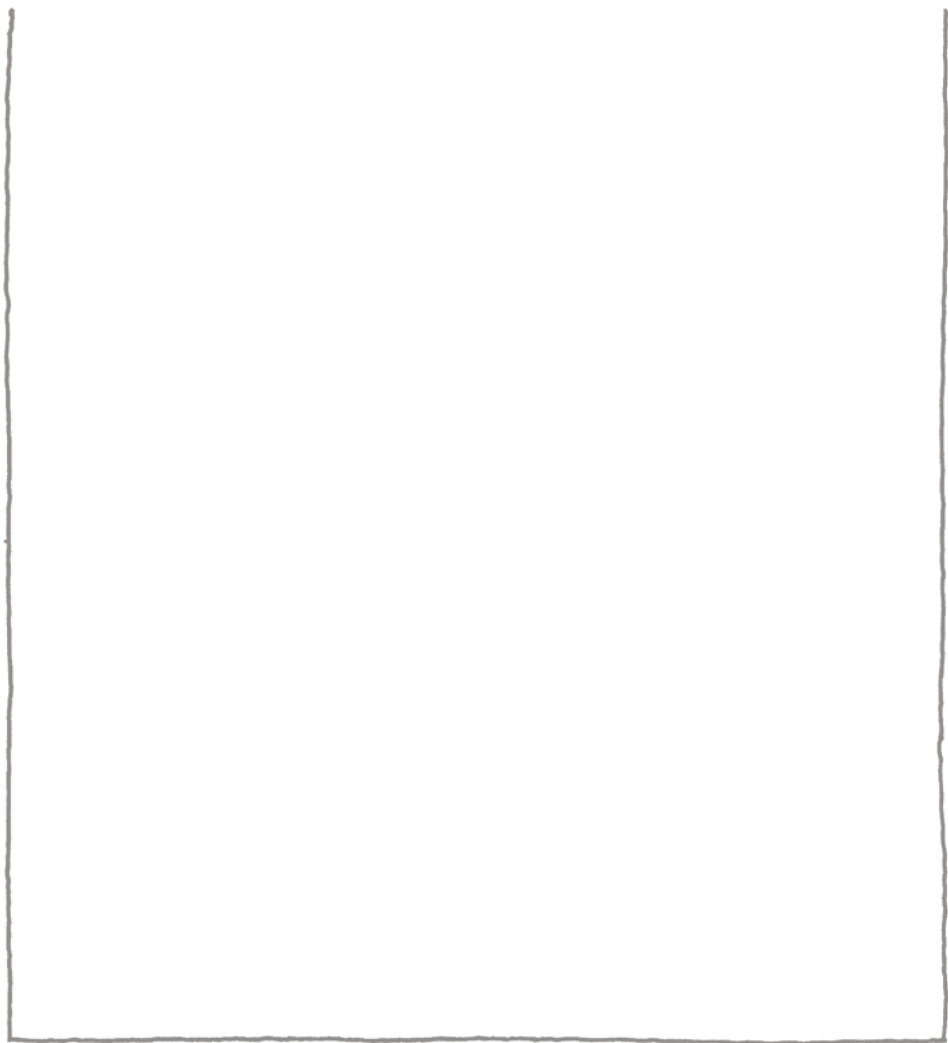
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Write a letter to a future younger
self, exploring something that
was missing from your own
education and think about what
you need to do to implement it
for a future version of yourself.
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Culture Identity Privilege



Map



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The disco ball turns like a relic

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where the Starbucks is now

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Evan Ifekoya, *A Score, A Groove, A Phantom* (detail), 2016

THIN BLAC



MOMENTS AND CONNECTIONS DURING THE 1980S FOR THE WOMEN ARTISTS FROM 5 BLACK W

BLACK LINE(S)



Lubaina Himid, *Thin Black Line(s): Moments and Connections*, 2011, pencil and crayon on graph paper

[illegible]

How does it correspond to your own

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■ ■ ■ *The Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization*, V16 N1 **■ ■ ■**

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Downloaded from <http://ajph.org/> on November 10, 2014

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B

Mapping Our Own Moments and Connections – Redefining the Canon of Art History

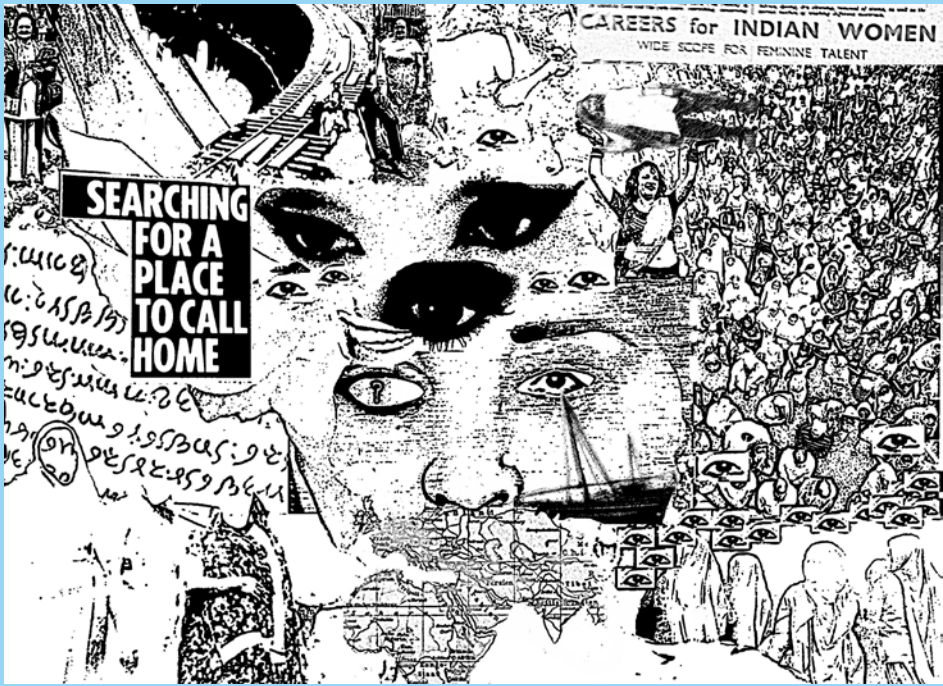
Evan Ifekoya, Raju Rage, Rudy Loewe and Raisa Kabir

In January 2016 Collective Creativity came together to discuss how we would map our own canon of art history. We discussed the existing models available and where the gaps are in our own knowledge. The following are excerpts from our conversations.

Excerpt 1

- EI** Thinking about Lubaina Himid's *Thin Black Line(s): Moments and Connections* map, in relation to Sara Fanelli's Tate Artist Timeline,¹ it is really different because Fanelli's map kind of looks at art movements, but then it's not even just art movements, is it? It's kind of problematic in a way, because even though I guess it's claiming an air of objectivity, it's definitely a subjective map. As somebody pointed out, it kind of ... it states the Black Arts Movement but then only has three names. Then, Sonia Boyce, who was definitely a key figure in the Black Arts Movement, is listed somewhere else underneath the YBAs, the Young

1 Artist and illustrator Sara Fanelli was commissioned in 2006 to create a timeline showing key art movements and artists of the twentieth century. This timeline was originally commissioned as an installation on the concourse walls at Tate Modern.



British Artists. I don't know what choices she made, what choices artists had – if any – in putting this together.

RR It's very clear when you're looking at it. You're thinking: How did you decide that? What made you decide that? There are definitely gaps.

RL It's sort of that thing of something being presented as truth when it is an entirely subjective thing. Yeah, like you can just sort of take it for granted that everything's in the right place, even though once you get down to it it's like, hang on, why did you decide that that person is over there? The categorisation is very personal sometimes.

Raju Rage, *Where Are Our Grandmothers?*, 2015, screen print

EI Thinking about the Tate Artist Timeline map, which is very much art movements but then also mediums, and then Lubaina's map, which is more about seeing connections that she made through exhibition making: What is important for you and us? What is important for us to put on a map of art history, or our own versions of art history? What would you want to include?

RL I guess for me the categorisation is less important than the names just being on there, because I think the categorisation is so personal; for example, I might split it up by medium and someone else might split it up by time or whatever.

What's the thing that you would categorise things by?

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Rudy Loewe, *Loud White Men*, 2015.
Photo: © Rudy Loewe

Excerpt 2

- EI** I like the idea of it being about names, as Rudy said, but also about spaces and events Collective Creativity has organised. I think that's the stuff that can sometimes disappear, that can be quite ephemeral. For me, it's questions like: What was the context? How did these people arrive to be part of something? How did the Surrealist movement start? The Surrealists must have organised an exhibition and then it developed from there. I'm interested in that. Did they write a zine together? What is it that really brought people together?
- RR** So maybe we do something that shows that? But then we're not trying to do something that's completely a whole picture ... maybe from the start we kind of make it clear: this isn't a whole picture, this is part of it. What I'm always worried about is, these things, you're like, that's missing, that's missing, but we can never have everything there. Maybe we're just really clear that it's not the whole picture and that things can be added. Even if we leave space or something so that things can be added to it.



EI It's very much about the people but also about locating ourselves in relation to things that we've been doing. We kind of felt like that's kind of what was missing in the Tate timeline. It was like, okay, yeah, the Surrealist movement. But actually what was it that brought them together?

Because it probably was an exhibition, you know what I mean? So also making that part of this, because some of that stuff can be quite ephemeral, it can really disappear. We didn't make a catalogue for the Guest Project's residency at Shonibare Studio in London, did we? Okay, there's a blog but we need to make sure that the residency is on there because that was an important part of the trajectory of our practices.

Raisa Kabir, *রাইসা কবির* | *Set light to Blackness, in the mirrored Whiteness, reflecting our blind shadows...*, 2013, hand woven cotton and silk textile

Excerpt 3

- RR** You connect with this event or you do this or you're part of this project or you know this person. It's a different insight rather than looking from the outside into this thing. It's like you kind of get an inside view of how things take direction and shape. It might just be our experience but also it's another art experience, isn't it? To show, yeah, the difference and the diversity in different art movements and how they connect to each other.
- RL** I think it would be interesting if there was a way that could show that there was some sort of travelling or movement. I really like Lubaina's map, but there is something that could be considered quite static about the way that it's been done. Then there's something about the way that Fanelli's one is very linear in its movement and I wonder if there's a way that we can do it to suggest there's quite a lot of travelling but in different directions as well, so you can really see the passage of movement in how things happened, but really understanding that there's a moving all at once.

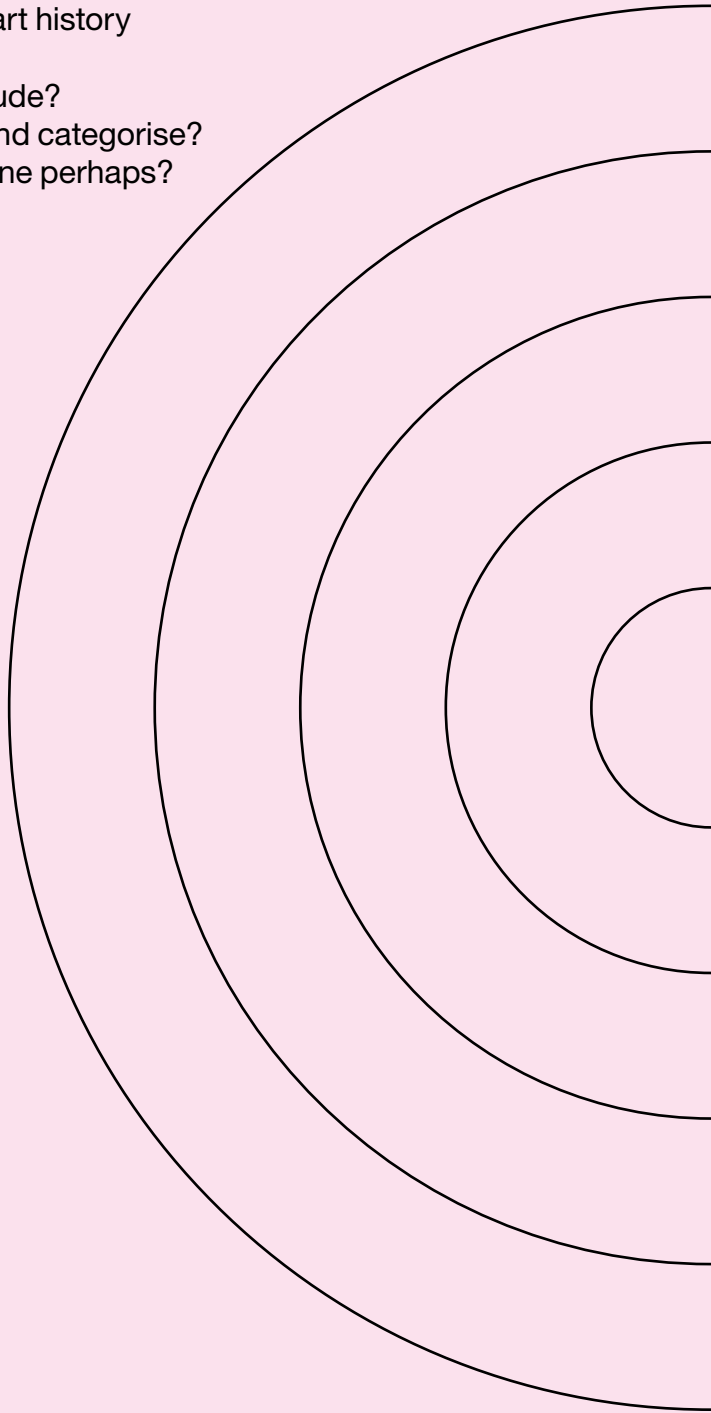
Overleaf: Pull-out poster for the classroom:
*Mapping Our Own Moments and
Connections – Redefining the Canon
of Art History* by Evan Ifekoya, Raju Rage,
Rudy Loewe and Raisa Kabir

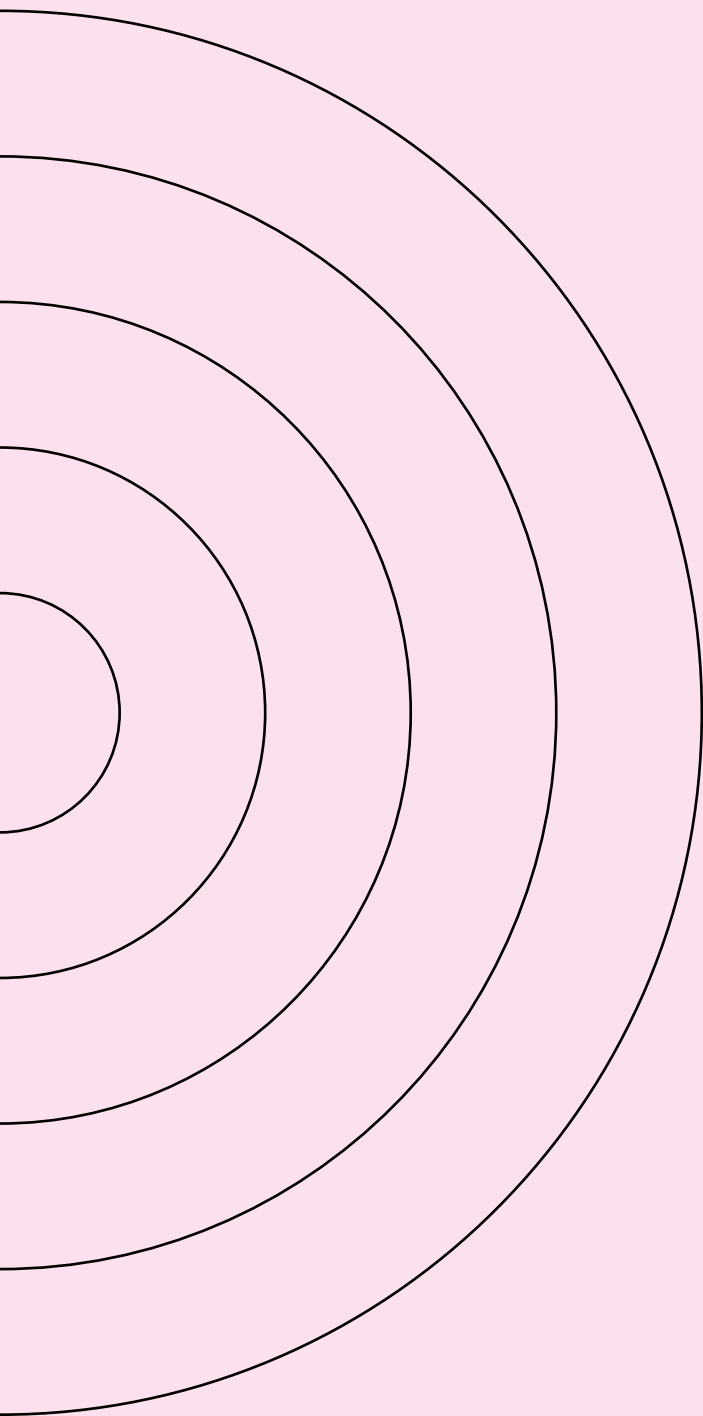
Map your own canon of art history

Who do you need to include?

How should you group and categorise?

By moment or by discipline perhaps?





The background of the page is composed of numerous vertical, overlapping brushstrokes in shades of pink and light blue. The strokes vary in thickness and opacity, creating a textured, layered effect. The word 'Record' is positioned in the upper left corner, partially overlapping the blue strokes.

Record



Evan Ifekoya, *Let the Rhythm Pull You Towards Your Edges* (after Marlon Riggs), 2015, video still



Donald Rodney, *Sketchbook number 15*,
1986-7 © Donald Rodney Estate and
Photographic Rights © Tate (2017)
Available under a CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0
(Unported) licence

A is for Art and Ambush
Action.

B is for Blackness and
Babylon, Bruised and
Bravery.

C is for Creatation and
Contridiction Capitalism
and Crackdown and Cool
calculated Clash Control

D is for Demons and
Devils Dangers and Self
Determination

E is for Enlightenment and
E = m c². Education
and and -- Ever

F is for Freedom in the
light of Hope and the Fine
Art of Fuck up and

G is for Genocide Greed gangs
and Generals and ~~Angels~~
gutters and grime.

In his sketchbook, Donald
Rodney created a glossary of
words and statements important
to his artwork and process: ‘C is
for Creation and Contradiction,
Capitalism and Crackdown and
Cool Calculated Clash Control’

Create your own lexicon,
addressing the words and ideas
that are important to your art
making and/or teaching process.

A is for ...
B is for ...
C is for ...
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[illegible]

Related Titles in Tate Library and Archive

Selection made in response to the content of this publication by Tate Library and Archive

David A Bailey, Ian Baucom and Sonia Boyce (eds.), *Shades of Black: Assembling Black Arts in 1980s Britain*, London and Durham NC 2005. Tate Library call no. (41)7.071-054(=96) SHA

Tim Barringer, Gillian Forrester and Barbaro Martinez-Ruiz (eds.), *Art and Emancipation in Jamaica: Isaac Mendes Belisario and His Worlds*, New Haven 2007. Tate Library call no. BELISA

Bending the Grid: Modernity, Identity and the Vernacular in the Work of Donald Locke, Newark NJ 2004. Tate Library call no. LOCKE

Eddie Chambers, *Black Artists in British Art: A History From the 1950s to the Present*, London 2014. Tate Library call no. (41)7.036*19"-054(=96)

Sarah Edge, David Lovely, Jim Aulich (eds.), *Political, Private, Public: Three Exhibitions on Urban Themes*, Manchester 1986. Tate Library call no. GB-MAN-COR

Hew Locke, Walsall 2005. Tate Library call no. LOCKE

Rachel Kent (ed.), *Yinka Shonibare MBE*, Munich, London and New York NY 2008. Tate Library call no. 7 SHO YIN

Norbert Lynton, *Human Interest: Fifty Years of British Art About People*, Manchester 1985. Tate Library call no. GB-MAN-COR

Kobena Mercer (ed.), *Exiles, Diasporas and Strangers*, London and Cambridge MA 2008. Tate Library call no. 7.036:314-054 EXI

Kobena Mercer (ed.), *Pop Art and Vernacular Cultures*, London and Cambridge MA 2007. Tate Library call no. 7.036.71 POP

Anne McNeill (ed.), Joy Gregory: *Translating Place*, Bradford 2011. Tate Library call no. GREGOR

Deborah Robinson (ed.), *Confrontations*, Walsall 1991. Tate Library call no. GB-WAL-WAL





Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*, London 1987. Tate Library call no. 941"197/198" GIL

Salah M Hassan and Cheryl Finlay (eds.), *Diaspora Memory Place: David Hammons, Marla Magdalena Campos-Pons, Pamela Z*, Munich 2008. Tate Library call no. (617:314.054 DIA

Lubaina Himid at the Elbow Room Presents: *Unrecorded Truths*, London 1986. Tate Library call no. LON-ELB

Lubaina Himid, Susan Walsh, Mark Parkinson and Patricia Walsh, *Distance No Object: New Work Reflecting on Ideas of Collecting, Transporting, Displaying and Preserving*, Barnard Castle 2004. Tate Library call no. GB-BAR-BOW

Lubaina Himid, *Swallow Hard: The Lancaster Dinner Service*, leaflet. Lancaster 2007. Tate Library call no. HIMID (SC)

Tam Joseph, *Observers are Worried: Paintings and Sculpture by Tam Joseph*, London 1986. Tate Library call no. JOSEPH

Rotimi Fani-Kayode, *Black Male / White Male*. London and Boston MA 1988. Tate Library call no. 7 ROTI FAN

Maud Sulter, *Plantation*, Leeds 1995. Tate Library call no. SULTER

The Thin Black Line: An Exhibition Selected by Lubaina Himid, London 1985. Tate Library call no. 7.071-054(=96) HIM

Ten.8: *The Critical Decade: Black British Photography in the 80s*, London 1992. Tate Library call no. SERIAL

Elizabeth Hutton Turner (ed.), *Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series*, Washington DC 1993. Tate Library call no. LAWREN

Reading materials from Tate Library and Archives
Photo: © Tate 2016

This list of exhibitions draws on the histories of black and people of colour artists' presence within arts institutions. It is an attempt to place some (definitely not all) pivotal exhibitions that have taken place since the 1980s in relation to artists I am creating with in the present. It also refers back to the conversation that took place between Collective Creativity on mapping our own canon.

Exhibitions

- 1983 *The Pan-Afrikan Connection: An Exhibition of work by Young Black Artists*, Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Coventry
- 1985 *The Thin Black Line*, Institute for Contemporary Arts, London
- 1989 *The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Post-war Britain*, Hayward Gallery, London
- 1995 *Mirage: Enigmas of Race, Difference and Desire*, Institute for Contemporary Arts, London
- 2002 *Sonia Boyce: From Tarzan to Rambo: Boyce Display*, Tate Modern London
- 2010 *Afro Modern: Journeys Through the Black Atlantic*, Tate Liverpool
- 2012 *Migrations : Journeys into British Art*, Tate Britain London
- 2014 *QTIPOC Arts group*, Guest Projects, Shonibare Studio, London
- 2015 *No Colour Bar: Black British Art in Action 1960–1990*, Guildhall Art Gallery, London
- 2017 *Untitled: Art on the Conditions of Our Time*, New Art Exchange, Nottingham
- 2017 *The Place is Here*, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham

Some Relevant Libraries and Archives in the UK

African-Caribbean, Asian & African Art In Britain Archive,
Chelsea College of Arts, Library, UAL
Black Cultural Archives
Making Histories Visible, Centre for Contemporary Art, UCLAN
June Givanni Pan-Afrikan Cinema Archive
Stuart Hall Library, InIVA
rukus!, London Metropolitan Archives
Women's Art Library/Make, Goldsmiths, Universtiy of London

Contemporary Rites: 15 November, 3-5pm

In Conversation with Collective Creativity: reflections on radical creativity and space



"Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. Like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, would secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned and position ourselves within the narratives of the past." Black Diaspora Artists in Britain: Three 'Moments' in Post-war History - Stuart Hall 2006

In Conversation with Collective Creativity: reflections on radical creativity and space

Join artists **Evan Ifekoya**, **Raju Rage** and **Raisa Kabir** in performing a presentation and recreating conversation in which they explore the reasoning and urgency that later created the radical space: **"Collective Creativity"**. Founded in response to the institutional racism in traditional art spaces, and to specifically

Event details

Type: Talk
Location: Iniva
Date: 15 Nov 2014
Saturday 3-5pm
Admission: Free admission, but places are limited, please book through this page.

Find out more

Links

[Amanprit Sandhu](#)

[SHARE](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Email](#)

http://www.iniva.org/events/2014/in_conversation_with_collective_creativity_reflections_on_radical_creativity_and, accessed 13 June 2017



DE-PRIVILEGING ART SCHOOL: ANTISEXIST AND ANTIRACIST METHODS

27 Sunday, March 12th, 2015 / by scholera + in Allgemein, Kolloquium

Colloquium no. 3

Friday 27th February, 18.00 at HEAD

"Exception is a comfortable situation, allowing elasticity and singularity in our daily work, in our daily institutional management and in our world view." Lylienne Lécho, dean of Studies at Geneva University of Art and Design was clear in her welcome address: notions of exceptionalism are at the heart of art school and

LANGUAGE

- Deutsch
- English
- Français

RECENT POSTS

- Save the date, November 11/12, 2016: Challenging Exclusion 2016!
- Presentations Art.School.Differences (2014-2016)
- (Deutsch) 29.09.2015: Art.School.Differences @ Brown Bag Lunch ZHdK
- Summaries of Co-Research Projects
- Disability, ableism and the body in art schools

<https://blog.zhdk.ch/artschool-differences/2015/03/12/de-privileging-art-school-antiseist-and-antiracist-methods/>, accessed 13 June 2017

Art.School.Differences. Researching Inequalities and Normativities in the Field of Higher Art Education, Colloquium on De-Privileging Art School, February 27/28th 2015. Copyright Art.School. Differences by Maëlle Cornut and Serena Dankwa

THIRD TEXT

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEMPORARY ART AND CULTURE

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[Forum](#)

Artist and Empire at Tate Britain



<http://thirdtext.org/#>,
accessed 13 June 2017

Left: Cover of *Third Text*, vol.29, no. 134, May 2015, caption: Steve McQueen, *Western Deep*, 2002, Super 8 mm colour film, transferred to video, sound, 24 minutes 12 seconds, screened in a cinema-like space, Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung, Gift of the president, 2012, on permanent loan to the Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Installation view, Steve McQueen, Schaulager, Basel, 16 March to 1 September 2013, photo: Tom Bisig, Basel

Right: Image from the *Artist and Empire: Part 1: Tate Britain*, from an article by Jessyca Hutchens: 'Ambiguous Narratives: Artist and Empire at Tate Britain'. Caption: Agostino Brunias, *Dancing Scene in the West Indies*, 1764-96. Oil paint on canvas. 508 x 660 mm. Tate Collection

[illegible]

REMEMBER

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Guilt

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Accountability

'Cultural Ambassador'

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experience family

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I don't know but
I want to understand

° ° Fear passed down.

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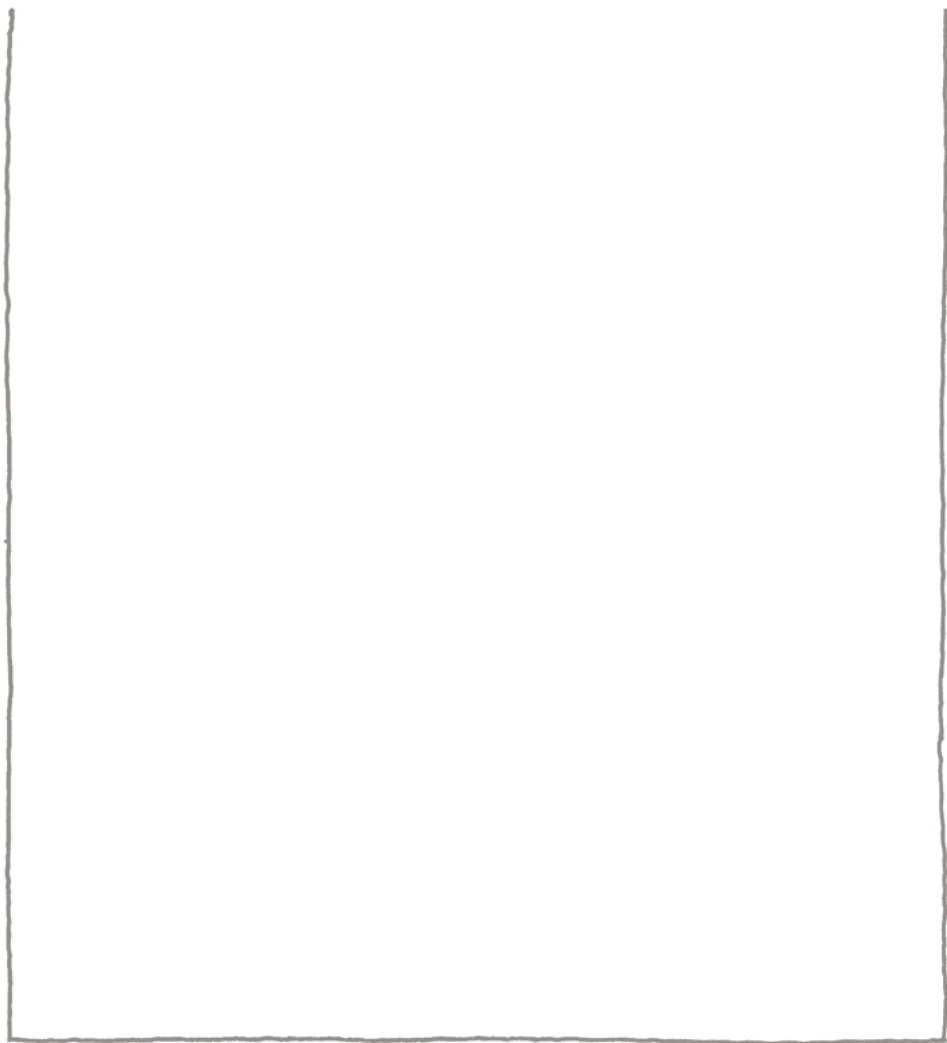
naturalism

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privileged violence

Lexicon produced by Evan Ifekoya as
part of the Art and Language Study Day,
Tate Britain, 2015

Archive Collect Document

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for document collection or archiving. The box occupies the majority of the page below the title.

The background of the page is composed of numerous vertical brushstrokes in two colors: a vibrant pink and a bright blue. The strokes are of varying lengths and thicknesses, creating a textured, layered effect. The pink strokes are more numerous and cover most of the page, while the blue strokes are interspersed, particularly on the left and right sides. The word 'Sick' is printed in a bold, black, sans-serif font in the upper right corner.

Sick

Jo Spence



Jo Spence, *Crisis Project / Picture of Health? (Property of Jo Spence?)*, 1982, photograph, gelatin silver print on paper; a collaboration with Terry Dennett

Like a woman walking through a hall of mirrors, her timely portraits reflect the surreal and the painfully real aspects of identity that remain relevant today.

British Journal of Photography

Jo Spence (1934–92) was a photographer who explored and challenged the way in which women were represented.

Drawing on personal experiences and the use of performance, she commented on broader political issues. The photographs and archival material on view relate to her collaboration with the socialist-feminist collective Hackney Flashers, her involvement in developing a form of photo therapy, and her examination of her experience with breast cancer.

X Marks The Spot is a concerted period of research in conjunction with the *Not Our Class* and *Jo Spence* projects at Studio Voltaire, conducted by Mystique Holloway, Ego Ahaïwe, Louise Shelley, Gina Nembhard, Emma Hedditch, Lauren Craig, Yula Burin and Zoe Holloway.

Taking the focus of Spence's work, on body image, health, and the representation of a life lived, in the most social political form, possible, this research does not stay on the page, or screen but has populated our daily lives and heightened our experience of the present. Through Spence's approach to photography as a transformative process, documentation of her life with breast cancer, and education around alternative therapy and self education through radical sociology, Spence's work has pushed us to the limits of what we can involve ourselves in. We are taking on Spence's ideas, with our selves as subjects, and sharing with our present communities.

www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-britain/display/bp-spotlights/jo-spence, accessed August 2016. View updated page at www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/jo-spence-18272

www.studiovoltaire.org/exhibitions/archive/x-marks-the-spot/, accessed June 2017

Donald Rodney



Donald Rodney,
In the House of My Father, 1996–7,
photograph, colour, on paper mounted
onto aluminium

www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/rodney-in-the-house-of-my-father-p78529,
accessed September 2017

Donald Rodney → In the House of My Father

assembling a comprehensive record of his body on an internet site, culminating in his proposal for his posthumous project *Autoicon* which was realised in 2000.

Rodney's work addresses ideas of identity, family, home and Britishness – particularly with respect to a British, Afro-Caribbean diaspora. While studying at Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham, in the early 1980s, Rodney met and became a close associate of Keith Piper (born 1960) and Eddie Chambers. The work of Piper and Chambers was a revelation to Rodney in that it dealt directly with the experience of being black. Together they formed the Black Art Group. From this point onwards Rodney's work became politically engaged, dealing overtly with the themes of black identity and the position of ethnic minorities in Britain. He became part of a generation of British-born black artists, filmmakers and performers who began to challenge accepted notions of what it meant to be British and contributed to an emergent black British consciousness. Rodney worked in a variety of media. Initially he made paintings but later created photographs, mixed media installations and works incorporating electronic media. Much of Rodney's imagery stems from the fact that he had suffered from sickle cell anaemia from infancy. Rodney developed a highly personal vocabulary, for instance incorporating discarded x-rays as raw materials, though intending these references to medicine and the body to refer metaphorically to social sicknesses, including racism, police brutality or apartheid, as much as to his personal circumstances. In this way his autobiographical approach enabled him to explore wider questions of identity.

Summary

Display caption

In the artist's open hand is a sculpture made from sections of his own skin. These were removed when he was having treatment for sickle cell anaemia.

Rodney uses autobiography to address larger social and political issues from the perspective of a black British man. He also deals with more personal issues of identity, family and home. This small house has been seen as symbolising 'the fragility and the near-futility of Rodney having to live within a structure hopelessly unable to sustain itself'.

ARTIST

Donald Rodney
–1998

MEDIUM

Photography
paper mounted on
aluminium

DIMENSIONS

Image: 100 x 100
mm

COLLECTION

Tate

ACQUISITION

Presented by
Patrons of Tate
(Special Exhibition)
2001

How have artists explored their experiences of sickness or health in their work?
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Why are differently abled bodies rarely included in the discourse of art history?
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What impact does your own health have on your practice?
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Rudy Loewe: A conversation between artists Evan Ifekoya and Rudy Loewe on self-care health, wellness, disability, illness

EI Thanks so much for sending me the images of your work, some of which I hadn't seen before, so that was really exciting.

RL Oh really?

EI Yes. There was one piece in particular that I was like, wow! It really resonated with me in a really big way, but maybe I'll come back to that one a bit later and thanks for sending the article, 'Sick Woman Theory' by Johanna Hedva where she talks about living with chronic illness and develops this 'sick woman theory' for those who were never meant to survive but did and, yes, I'll come back to that as well...¹

I'd like to start with the image of people dancing, *What Remains Unseen* 2015, where people are wearing masks. Some of the masks are coming off, which I felt like really summed up a lot of things for me about the space of dancing or of being in a club or whatever, and it being that moment of release or of completely stripping off all the different layers or masks that we each wear on a day-to-day basis. I've been thinking a lot about nightlife as spaces of both self-care – because it can be about dancing and enjoyment – but then also it can be the spaces of violence and unsafety and actually being interested

¹ Johanna Hedva, 'Sick Woman Theory', *Mask, The Not Again Issue*, no.24, January 2016.

in that tension. But there's something about that image as a space that I really identified with and I wonder what was going through your mind when you produced that image or what you were trying to say with it in relation to this theme?

RL It's really interesting to hear your thoughts on it because I think there's a thread between the work that you've been doing around nightlife and your perspective on the image, which I really liked.

When I first made *What Remains Unseen* I was thinking about the idea of perceptions and mental health, anxiety and how we perceive others sometimes versus how we see ourselves and the dynamics of being around each other. I started off with the idea of people being in a club because when I'm in a club I love dancing. I love dancing so much but then at the same time I feel very anxious being around so many other people and being vulnerable or exposed in a space, so there's something about how you understand other people ... how you view their bodies versus what people are actually trying to portray to the rest of the world and it's funny that you should pick up that one actually because you're in it.

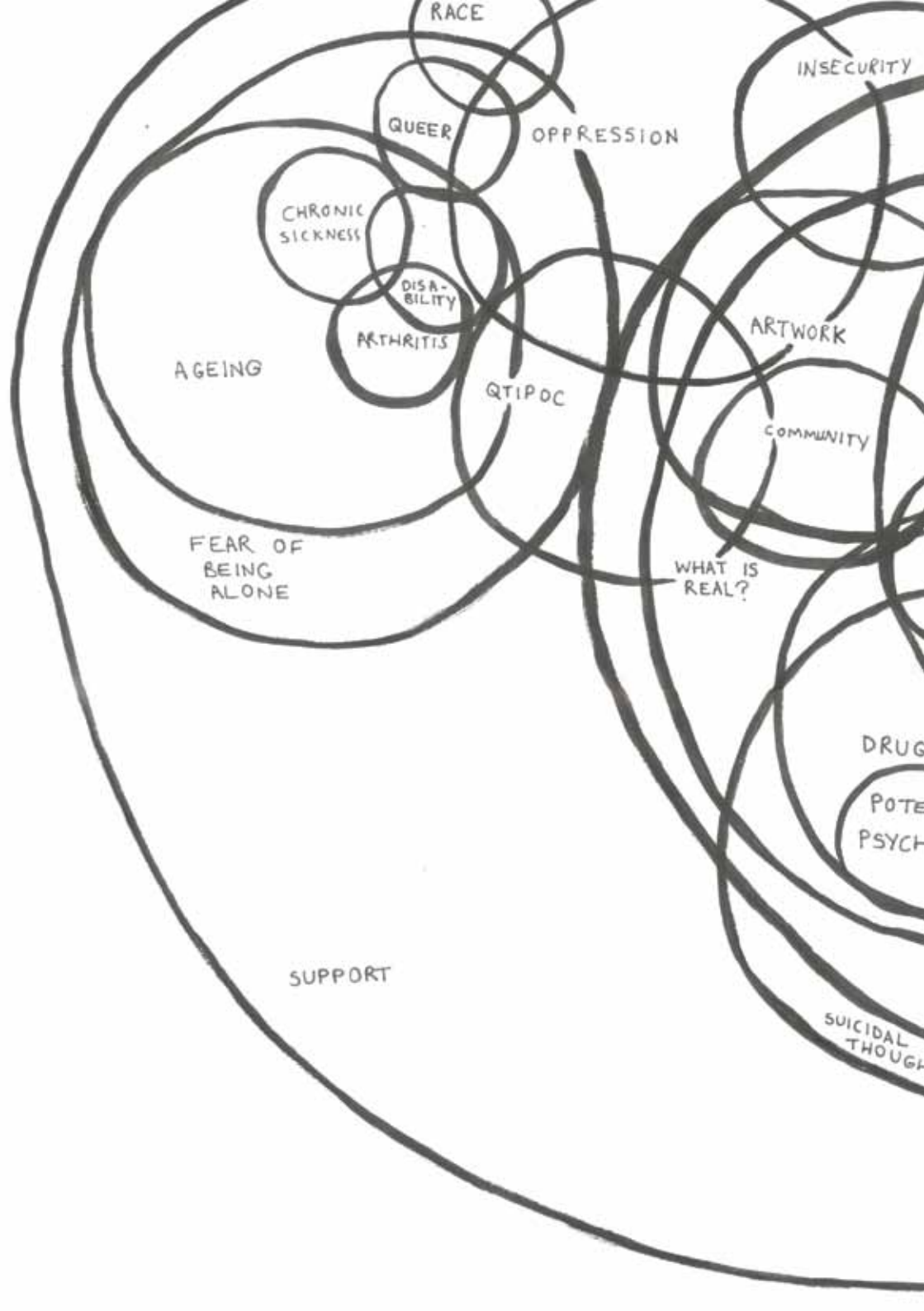
EI Oh. Yes, there was one person, which I thought, oh my god, it seems like me but I didn't want to be presumptuous about it, but that's cool.

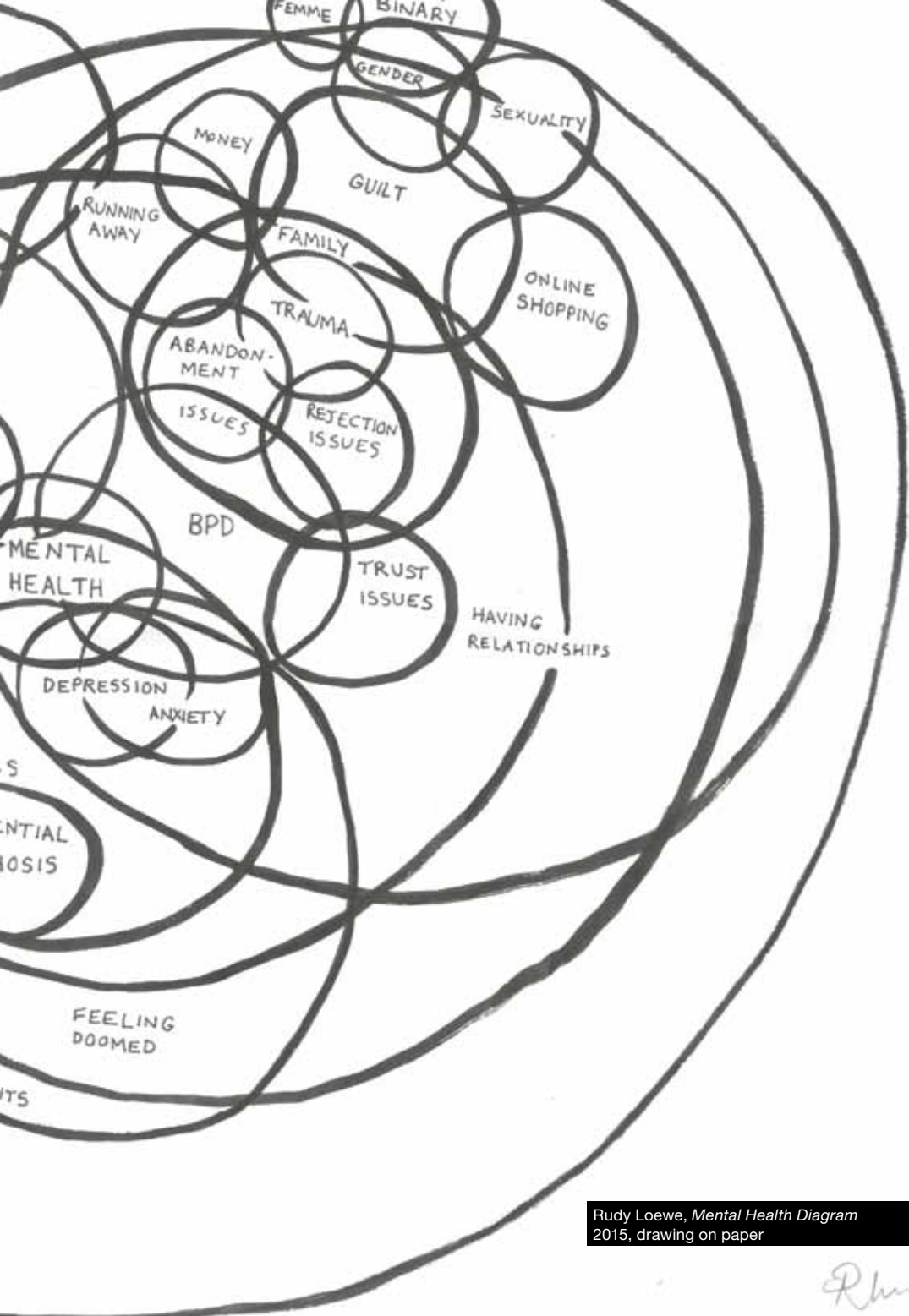
RL I ended up not using that image for the exhibition I originally created it for because I couldn't quite get to the point of putting it together in the way that I wanted to but, yes, there was just something really important to me about this idea of the masks and whether or not people may appear to be friendly or how we interpret people's faces or things like that. Yes, like you said like a lot of different layers to it.

EI I was thinking about the way that you use language. For example, this section of the resource is called 'Sick' and I know there's something problematic in using that word but I was interested in the way that we frame what it means to be well or unwell and thinking about the language around being diagnosed or not being diagnosed and also thinking about the way that you have used language to talk through a personal experience and how you can use language to translate a personal experience into one that reaches into a wider domain. Perhaps you could say something about the way that you use language here.

RL There are some words that are definitely being reclaimed by chronically sick and disabled folk ... like *crip*, and, yes, being sick, mad, crazy, these words, which I think have been used against us, are words that people are now finding some power in. Some of those words are words that I would use myself and I don't necessarily use them in reference to anyone else but myself, but I think, yes, that's probably apparent in some of the language that I use. For example, I will talk about myself being mad and crazy and I think especially for some able-bodied people sometimes they're like, 'why are you using these words?' or 'oh, why did you call yourself crazy?' But I think it's actually really important that those words don't have the stigma that they have had attached to them and that we find another way to navigate the conversation.

One of the most important things that has been happening around disability activism is renegotiating what it means to be disabled because I think that a lot of people experience disability who wouldn't think of themselves as disabled but actually it's really important that people start to rethink what that means in order for us to have a better conversation about disability.





Rudy Loewe, Mental Health Diagram
2015, drawing on paper

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The language that we use is very important to me and I think that the work that I've been doing has been feeding into the communities that I've been part of or the things that I've been reading so, yes, like that article that I sent you about 'sick woman theory', which I think it is about renegotiating what these words mean but with the people who they are describing having the control over being able to renegotiate the terms.

EI Yes, which is really important, as well as what you said about removing the stigma ... it's about making things explicit and being able to be part of a conversation, rather than pretending that these words don't exist or aren't used against people, but to actually confront it and deal with it head on which is so important and also makes me think about the Venn diagram work, which is a strategy that you've used in other aspects of your work. Maybe you could elaborate on that in general but also in relation to the particular work that you shared with me?

RL I started making diagrams, well, especially Venn diagrams, just for my own personal benefit. I would make diagrams for a life plan, so I had one on my wall which was where I am and how I could get to where I wanted to be ... but what was the crossover between those two things to help me get there and that was one of the first ones that I did that was like a significant one. From there I just started doing other things, such as the idea of mapping out my mental health and the one that I've included here in this resource was one that I ended up making for an exhibition about mental health and alongside that I have been making these zines called *Vent* which is about different Venn diagrams and about different issues.²

The funny thing about *Vent* was that it started off as I wanted to make a zine and it took me about a day to do these little diagrams about things that were either silly or things that were really making me annoyed or things that just seemed really relevant to things happening at the time and people really loved it, which was a surprise to me because I just spent no more than a day making this thing. I sold it for a pound, which was how much it cost to make it and people were telling me they'd put it up on their walls, that they wanted it as a poster, they wanted it as a T-shirt and it just was this strange thing ... so eventually I started making T-shirts on my own and everything has like...

EI Sky rocketed.

RL Yes. It's ... it's absolutely done its own thing. The 'loud white men' and 'opinions that matter' diagram, I don't even feel like I know where that came from. I was just angry one day but people seem to be so into it, and I'm like, I don't know.

I think it was really important for me to find a way to map out my mental health and I'd actually been doing this for years using another method that I'd got from a friend, but I wanted to come up with some kind of method that felt like it was mine so I started to think about the Venn diagram. The thing about Venn diagrams is that people take them as facts. People assume that there's some kind of solidity in a diagram, that the ideas are based on something or rooted in something and that they're real, and I really like this idea of playing with something that people automatically take as a fact

and then finding a way to put my own opinion or ideas into that as well. In terms of the mental health one, I wanted to show how mental health overlaps with lots of different things, it's never just one clear thread and how mental health is actually very messy and so the diagrams started off with just one circle and then all these things start to layer up on top of it and almost in my head it could be a 3D object to show how there's all these different things coming in from different angles and that they're all overlapping in really different ways.

In terms of the diagrams themselves, sometimes people will say, 'oh, they should be this much overlapped or they should be that much overlapped or you haven't done it quite right' ... they're entirely subjective, but because it's in diagram format people are like, 'okay, I guess it's real'.

EI The diagram gives it a solidity of science in a way, even though science is still quite subjective ... it has that aura of truth and objectivity even though it's not.

RL I think especially being a queer black person there's something really funny about having some kind of medium where I can say something and people take it as a truth, because I feel like so often we say things and people feel the need to interrogate what we're saying. This has been the first time that I've made something where people are not interrogating what I'm saying, even if what I'm saying is quite provocative.

EI I wanted to focus in on mental health and race, disability and race, which comes up in the diagram and is a big part of your work as well. Something I watched recently was a *Huffington Post* black voices video called something like 'Black influences open

up about their self-care practices when mourning black life lost to police brutality’ and then there is video by Evelyn From the Internets who posted a video called ‘Call in black’.³

It’s quite funny and playful. She’s talking about when you’re constantly dealing with news and you’re constantly mourning and actually it does take a toll. It is a trauma that you live with and she’s talking about how sometimes you want to just ‘call in black’. Call in sick to work. It’s like, ‘oh, I’m just having a black day’, you know what I mean? Thinking about race in relation to mental health and how actually black people, people of colour are disproportionately affected by mental health issues and what that means and how that can be addressed. How do you address or think through that in your work?

RL There’s a comic that I’m currently making for the website ‘The Nib’ that is all about my experiences of being on a psych ward and about the high numbers of people of colour on the ward.⁴ A lot of them are there on a section, which means they’re sectioned under the Mental Health Act and they don’t have the power to leave if they want to and so, yes, so it’s all about that and it’s also about how a large proportion of the doctors, the psychiatric doctors, not the nurses but the doctors specifically, were all white men and how there is a massive link between who is being institutionalised on psychiatric wards and looking at marginalised communities. Large numbers of people of colour, large numbers of

3 ‘How to Practice Self-care in Times of Black Trauma’, *The Huffington Post*, 14 July 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/self-care-racial-violence-police-brutality_us_5787ed37e4b03fc3ee4ffcea. Evelyn From the Internets, ‘Call in black’, YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpVeUVcFMAU>.

4 *The Nib*, thenib.com.

people who come from working-class communities ... and you're more likely to see people who have been through the foster care system, people who come from marginalised communities who are not necessarily getting the help that they need and then being sectioned on a psychiatric ward becomes an alternative stop to prison and works in a similar way in the way that these people are not necessarily there voluntarily and are being kept there for a specified amount of time.

It's not even necessarily that people of colour are more likely to have mental health issues, although I would say that I think that they are based on the fact of experiencing systemic oppression, but I think it's also about the way that black people... specifically black people's mental health is criminalised as well.

I was on a panel recently with a really interesting artist, Aaron McPeake, who was talking about how when you have a black man showing the same symptoms as a white woman, the black man will be diagnosed with schizophrenia, the white woman will be diagnosed with bipolar disorder and so this is like seeing someone as a potential threat. Seeing violence in somebody, seeing this potential violence before they've even done anything, so how are we looking at people's symptoms and behaviours and that people are being criminalised for those things regardless of the fact they are displaying the same behaviours as somebody else.

One of the things I've tried to talk about if I do panels or public speaking, is the fact that mental health will sometimes show itself in different ways in different people from different communities. It's no good having two people who have had completely different lives come into the doctor's office and try to look for exactly the same symptoms of depression. Are they wearing all black? Are they taking care of

themselves? Have they got any make-up on? Have they had a shower? Because especially for black working class communities some of those things are coping mechanisms, so that you don't get harassed by the police or so you don't get followed around a shop or so you're not getting beaten up ... it's just not understanding the perspective that people are coming from.

I think it's really, really important in terms of mental health practices that we figure out a different way to think about how to address people's different mental health issues and how that comes up in different communities. There's always talk about how black communities don't talk about mental health but it's spoken about in isolation outside of the fact that black people have a very good reason to mistrust [the authorities] why would you go to the doctor when they're locking us up?

Why would you do that when you know what could happen? The question should be, what are mental health services doing for black people?

EI Yes, definitely. That's a really good point. I was also thinking about the *Plantain* zine and about how that actually is an example of self-care ... about being here at Wysing Arts Centre at the moment and being surrounded by mostly white people and what that does to one's soul and psyche and not having immediate access to foods that warm you in a certain way and actually even that does take its toll on you. When Ingrid Pollard came up, she texted me beforehand and said: 'Do you want me to bring you a roti?' She brought me a goat roti. It is those little things that make a difference. They really do something for one's sense of self and well-being and so I was thinking about the *Plantain* zine and how that was a really great example of trying to bring together

different communities of people of colour, but actually finding this common ground in this food, this plantain ... Ingrid brought me a plantain to cook as well.

I left it there to blacken a bit because I like to cook them when they're really ripe and then one of the other residency artists asked me why I hadn't eaten it yet. I'm thinking about flicking through the zine as being nourishing and uplifting, so thinking about the importance of creating and cultivating spaces to be around other people of colour, other black people, to share in the foods of our communities and what that does.

RL I think you are totally right about how food does that for us. How it creates a sense of community. A lot of the things that I really love in that zine are not actually my work but, yes, since I've moved to Stockholm I really have had a lot of those experiences as well ... I've got one single plantain in the cupboard right now that I'm waiting to ripen and I was like where can I get plantain? Where can I buy ackee? Where can I get a decent hot sauce or a scotch bonnet pepper and, yes, there's something about trying to find your community as an anchor that actually resonates.

Being in Stockholm, which is incredibly white ... I have been very intentional in trying to hang out with people who I have a shared experience with and I didn't have anyone to hang out with yesterday and I was just wandering around by myself and then I saw this young black woman with a really nice afro and I turned to look at her and at the same time she turned and said to her partner, 'oh, you missed it' and we looked at each other and we'd been looking at each other's hair and had been having this nice moment of recognition. And just for a second I realised how good that made me feel because I felt anchored in having some kind of mirror and I think that, yes, food

does the same thing ... it does it really helps your mental health. It makes you feel less alone and I even bumped into an African migrant family in IKEA and I was trying to ask them where can I get African food from and they were giving me the low down on it. It's the basis of a community, which is such an important part of good mental health, having a solid community around you.

Community is the reason why I did the *Conversations On Our Hair* zine as well. The idea of queer black hair, what do we do with that hair and self-care things is really a focus on hair being a way of bringing us together. I like these threads around food and hair and things around the body that can bring us together and help to create this mirror.

EI Can we talk about the falling image. I wanted to talk about the way that we can use art to think through certain experiences without language because sometimes words are not enough or words fail us. It's a really evocative image, you know, that sense of falling, of weightedness, but also weightlessness. Can you elaborate on that image but also talk about when you're working without text how you communicate?

RL The image is called *Freefall 2014*, it's a woodcut and it's an image of me and my mother falling, looking towards each other but in symmetry almost and it's about the parallels between our experiences. My mum had a very serious accident and then I had a very serious accident. There was a really large time in between but the parallels, similarities and differences between those two experiences interested me. The idea of free falling. What does it mean to free fall? In black communities and especially I feel like with black women, there's an expectation of resilience





Rudy Loewe, *Freefall*, 2014, woodcut

and I think that black women are really resilient but it's not necessarily always a good thing ... it is a strength but at the same time it comes from this trauma, the cycles of trauma, the trauma that gets carried down through different generations, the depths of mental health, the mental health cycles between different generations ... I was interested in all of these things.

I had a lot to say in that image and there was no text that was going to be able to speak to that, but it's a very personal motif that I was working with for a while, this idea of me and my mother ... I think that there's something really powerful about looking between me and my mum and our experiences as survivors and as black people coming from slightly different perspectives and different generations. Existing in slightly different timings and history and all of these different things but, yes, finding some commonality between our experiences.

- EI** When you create or produce images without words there's more space for the audience or the viewer to engage because you're sharing that it's you and your mum but somebody else could easily position themselves in relation to somebody they're in a relationship with and that is something else I want to talk with you about, the way that you discuss and think about the impact of your mental and physical health on your relationships. Such as your familial, love, your friendships, all your different kinds of relationships. Perhaps we can also talk about the next image, *I Hear Your Voice But I Can't See You* 2015.

I recognise some of the people in the image and I can tell that they're people that you have close relationships with. Can you talk about that, the way that it becomes a space to think through your interpersonal relationships?

RL I have borderline personality disorder and I was undiagnosed for a really long time but I had this thing that was impacting all of my relationships with people, but I didn't know what it was and it was causing a lot of problems. I had no grasp on what was happening so I took it as a very personal thing ... that there must be something wrong with me, that kind of thing. Having a diagnosis has been quite helpful because it can help with seeing certain aspects of the way that your mind works in a framework.

Having this framework of, 'oh, okay, this is maybe why this is happening and dah, dah, dah, dah, dah', can be very helpful. *I Hear Your Voice But I Can't See You* was related to having a filter, which is sometimes what it feels like you process the world through.

Occasionally the filter distorts perceptions of people. Sometimes it's really hard to know if I know somebody, whilst also having to experience the world through this filter. That drawing, which includes people who I know, is done in a way to show how I would like to see them and then on top of it I printed these other thoughts and feelings. The mono print on top of the drawing is about all the negative stuff that restricts my ability to really communicate or to have relationships with people.

I think it's a really important dynamic for me to be able to recognise that I have something that I don't really have any control over in terms of how I relate to other people and there are a lot of other conditions or disabilities that have similar effects on people's relationships with the world. My younger sibling has Asperger's syndrome and it's been really useful for me to know that they have Asperger's which is why they process the world in a slightly different way. It took a really long time for my younger sibling to get

a diagnosis ... as a young black person, why did it take so long for them to have a diagnosis? Why have they had so much trouble accessing support? *I Hear Your Voice But I Can't See You* and other work is really trying to think about how do we talk about the fact that people are trying to navigate the world whilst experiencing these barriers? Sometimes I can really feel like I just don't know how to talk to people.

EI Do you think that maybe this is a utopian way of thinking? Or that communicating through your art can be a way of bridging that gap?

RL Yes, I think it's like a multi-fold process. I really am in favour of art being a means for people to process the world. For me, making art is definitely the way that I process the things that are happening to me. Being creative has always been a very integral part of figuring out how I feel about the world or my life and in my work as a facilitator I try to urge people to get involved in arts.

The arts can be really empowering for people, regardless of whether or not they see themselves as having some kind of skill in it ... even just for ourselves, there can be massive benefits to being involved. I think it's really important that people access therapeutic processes as well, whatever process works for them. I think that art is incredibly important in having some kind of outlet to explore ideas that don't have to come with the pressure of what the outcome looks like, purely enjoying art as a process.

EI One other thing I wanted to talk to you about was your facilitation practice because as well as generating art work you also support other people to develop and express their own creativity around

a host of different things. Can you talk about the project you had been commissioned to do for Hackney Council, looking at different health services that are available to young people? Or can you talk about some of the other work that you've been doing with people?

RL I've done a lot of zine-making or comic-making workshops, getting people to think about different issues. For example, running mental health zine workshops and getting people to either use prompts or just work by themselves to create a zine about their own experiences of mental health, which I think has had a really positive effect for people, especially people who have never made a zine before.

Teaching people how to make a mini zine from one sheet of A3 paper that produces a six-sided booklet with a front and back cover gives someone this format and then they can do it again outside of the workshop. As a facilitator that's what I want to be able to do.

I often talk to people about being a hype man because I actually feel like this is my role in life. I want to say to people, okay, look, you already have the tools to do this thing, I'm just going to let you know that this is how you could do it and then you can go and feel empowered to do it by yourself ... You don't actually need this space to do it. You don't need fancy tools, you just need some paper and a pen and there you go.

It feels very important to me to share skills rather than art being a very highbrow elitist thing. I want art to be as accessible and open as possible and in terms of people who are experiencing disability or who are chronically sick or who come from a marginalised community, these are the

people who I think need these outlets more than anybody else. They are the people who I enjoy working with the most, which is why I do the workshops that I do in the spaces that I do them in because I want to reach those people who have really important stories that aren't being told and let them know that their stories are important and they should go and tell them.

- EI** That was everything that I wanted to discuss with you but before we wrap up I want to check if there was anything else that you wanted to include in this conversation?
- RL** As a final thing, I want to go back to the 'sick woman theory' article, which, when I last read it, had a really profound effect on me regarding finding a way to change the conversation around disability. I'm not saying this as somebody who is perfect at all ... I've made a lot of mistakes around disability but I think that there are many important things that are not necessarily spoken about and it's marginalised communities that are the worst hit by a lack of understanding. The conversation needs to begin with focusing on the people most marginalised by these issues and then renegotiating from there.



Rudy Loewe, *What Remains Unseen*, 2015,
drawing, digital collage

[illegible]

Signposting

This list is not exhaustive. If you know of an organisation that offers relevant support services, contact us via resource.coordinator@tate.org.uk for inclusion in the online version of Key Words available at www.tate.org.uk/art/teaching-resource/key-words

Gendered Intelligence: Specialise in supporting young trans people under the age of 21. www.genderedintelligence.co.uk

Mind: Advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. www.mind.org.uk

Rethink Mental Illness: Helping people affected by mental illness by challenging attitudes, changing lives. <https://www.rethink.org/>

Samaritans: Supporting anyone in distress, around the clock. www.samaritans.org

Scope: Provide support, information and advice to disabled people and their families. www.scope.org.uk

Switchboard LGBT+ Helpline: Provide information, support and referral service for lesbians, gay men and bisexual and trans people – and anyone considering issues around their sexuality and/or gender identity. www.switchboard.lgbt

Key Words

Devised by Evan Ifekoya in collaboration with
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www.tate.org.uk/art/teaching-resource/key-words
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HOW DO OUR EXPERIENCES SHAPE HOW WE MAKE, TALK ABOUT OR INTERPRET ART?

Key Words is an Invitation An invitation to you – and through you to your students – to question the complexity of lived experience; an invitation to unpick how your own lived experiences impact on the classroom.

Key Words is a Call to Action A call to address a gap in the representation of cultural difference in art education and in the gallery; a call to readdress the art ‘canon’.

Key Words is a Tool A tool to impact on how race and cultural difference are discussed in the classroom; a tool to broaden the references used in classrooms; a tool to develop critical thinking and discussion around difference.

Developed as an artist’s response to their own experience of working in art education, *Key Words* takes an intersectional approach to challenging dominant discourse on the subject of race and cultural difference. Artist **Evan Ifekoya** invites you to utilise the ambiguity of language to complicate the relationship between race and other aspects of identity (gender, class, sexuality, ability) as a way of supporting engaged, contextualised, meaningful conversation and recognition of difference.

Informed by conversations with teachers, students, artists and academics, *Key Words* offers creative strategies to support open dialogue and champion art as a powerful tool and catalyst for change.

The Schools and Teachers Tate London team is committed to educational equity, inclusion and social justice. *Key Words* is part of a series of interconnected events and resources that explore the importance and power of art in confronting racism in the classroom and the gallery.

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