X MARKS THE SPOT

Human Endeavour

a creative finding aid for the Women of Colour Index



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Published by Women's Art Library, Goldsmiths, University of London.
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ISBN: 978-1-902770-15-4

First published in Great Britain in 2015 by Goldsmiths, University of London, New Cross, London SE14 6NW

Edited by X Marks the Spot, Joan Anim-Addo, Althea Greenan
Designed by Dominique Z. Barron
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X Marks the Spot received a bursary from the Gillian Elinor Estate. This publication is generously supported by the Women's Art Library, Goldsmiths, University of London.

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Introduction

Althea Greenan

"How you see us?" is a gift of a question - or rather a suggestion - that twists neatly into: "See us!" I now have a provocation and a starting point to begin this brief consideration of why it was so important to invite X Marks the Spot to work with the Women of Colour Index.

In the late 1970s, a feminist collective of women artists met to explore ideas for promoting women's artwork. Collecting slides into a slide library was a direct action to raise the visibility of their art practices. Making artwork as a feminist was an undertaking to make art work and take responsibility for a strategy to take up public space. The feminist artist could not ignore how her art can be made to work as a new contribution to culture that changes and strengthens what needs to be represented and isn't.

The artists' group X Marks the Spot evolved from what Jo Spence brought into view in the 1980s, the female body branded by the inflexibility of a healthcare system, the breast marked up in black felt tip. Following their work for Not Our Class and the Jo Spence Project at Studio Voltaire in 2013-14, the group put forward a proposal to work with the Women of Colour Index in the Women's Art Library. Here again was a politically charged archive offering a setting in which they could take up residence. As a result XMTS turned the WOCI archive into a strategic vantage point from which to look out and respond to the need to look out for each other.

The identity-based archive can redraw our collective artistic genealogies even as it focuses exclusively on the work of black women artists. It scrambles the configuration of patriarchal hierarchy where single artists and their singular artworks supersede their "elders" in a pattern of oedipal toppling as if art were enriched by systematic erasure. Of course, what a collaborative project like X Marks the Spot highlights is that we connect

with the archive through the practices it represents rather that the sense of tradition it might be subsequently used to reinforce. The archive is a source of innovative re-thinking not just what precedes us but what we need to engage with.

The material of past practice is not always about the finished works, the final manifestations. By undertaking politicized collection, the Women of Colour Index proposed a network of practitioners where artists of the past become our contemporaries. "See us" emphasises how mutual recognition is sustained by careful documentation. The WOCI represents art production as cultural work that draws on the practices of documenters and archivists alongside artists.

What makes the XMTS distinctive to me is their history of critical work especially attuned to giving voice to the archive. Their work with the Jo Spence archive reconnected with Jo the campaigner, the critic of prevalent health care practices and convenor of hard questions. When XMTS presented a conversation with Terry Dennett, the curator of the Jo Spence Memorial Library, they did more than celebrate Terry's knowledge and Jo Spence's legacy. They took up Jo's engagement with socio-political issues through her friend and collaborator, as part of their own process of activism rooted in the Lambeth Women's Project. Through conversation they made art work.

The WOCI began as a way of mapping and supporting the emergence of black women artists in the UK. It brought together two collecting forces, Rita Keegan at the Women Artists Slide Library in London and Eddie Chambers at the African Asian Visual Artists Archive. They not only recognized an expanding field of art practitioners, they also highlighted the crucial importance of the curator and archivist, a challenging concept in the artworld of the 1980s. When Rita left the WASL in the mid-1990s, I tried to continue to add to the WOCI files whenever I came across a new artist, a press release or an image. But my act of filing, my gesture of collection was

not the collective work Rita had established not only with Eddie, but with a stream of artists and researchers, individuals and organisations. Rita was a practising artist and distinguished advocate of the arts whose work with the WOCI attracted international visitors and interns as well as donations of documentation. Adding files or materials to the WOCI was only part of the way it was enhanced and developed.

The bequest from the estate of Gillian Elinor opened the possibility of a new project. It was also an obvious one. Gillian was a crucial advocate for the AAVAA during its transition to the University of East London where she lectured, and earlier in her career she was also a key figure in the early meetings that established the WAL. These two projects so significantly marked by Gillian Elinor's activism, come together in the presence of the Women of Colour Index. And the project could only be the one proposed by XMTS alongside a cataloguing project to be carried out by a newly qualified archivist.

Through the generosity of the Gillian Elinor project the WOCI is now catalogued as an archive, secured, accessible and still historically identified with a politicised project. Nevertheless, exploring the real significance of these artists' files - constituted by those who are represented alongside the crucial potential of those that are absent - requires the collective work of its constituency: practicing black women artists. This too, the Gillian Elinor project has supported.

XMTS bring a critical eye of the now to this timely review of the WOCI nearly 30 years on from its beginning – an especially poignant project now that the AAVAA collection is for the moment, not publically accessible. Instead of revisiting the past decades XMTS are finding artists to have a conversation with. Their approach shows how the WOCI is not a single object to engage with but a complex entity to interact with in a way that becomes what Grant Kester (2013) terms "dialogic". His evocation of flexible temporalities enacted through practice sums up how the XMTS

have connected with the WOCI and will leave it renewed. “Dialogic practices can… unfold over week, months, and even years, and their spatial contours or boundaries typically fluctuate, expand and contract over time.”

The XMTS produces a close reading of the WOCI that goes beyond understanding the past out of curiosity or a sense of loss, and recalls us to the power of citation. Who we reference – through text and image – determines our cultural identity and artists probe the issue of visibility because of this. The dialogic artwork is a site of exchange, growth, and an investment of time that prompts the discourse we need to hear more clearly. WOCI not only created oral histories that replay, record and reveal hidden chronologies, they elaborate and embody the practice of listening. The voices they brought together liberate us from repeating the question of: Why have I not heard of her work before? because they steer us away from the singular answer.

XMTS collectively involved an extraordinary range of makers of culture from different generations who contributed to the Gillian Elinor Project as peers and co-participants who assist the group to shake up the linear chronology that had frozen the WOCI in the last millennium. They have brought the WOCI into the scope of vital scholarship based in other arts archives that continue the identity project; in particular the research of Dr. Gemma Romain and Dr. Caroline Bressey who reveal and cite the Black cultural work already evident in the archives and successfully brought Black Modernity (1919-1939) into view at Tate Britain and elsewhere.

Producing a cluster of texts – spoken, written, blogged, mapped, projected – XMTS bring different qualities of time, reading and exchange to bear on the WOCI and with this a new granular knowledge of the work of Black women artists and a new kind of finding aid.

Why was it so important to invite X Marks the Spot to work with the Women of Colour Index? To see again, to see more.


peep
sonia boyce

Women of Colour Index (WOCI)/ Black Women's Artist Index

X Marks the Spot

The Index is a compilation of information, press cuttings, catalogues, notes, photos and slides of Women of Colour Artists. The collection has a strong UK-based emphasis with the emergence of a third and fourth generation of Black British artists. The Black Women's Artists Index defines Black, not in a Pan African sense, but as in non-white and non-European perspectives, an inclusive, political definition.

The purpose of WOCI was to collect material about Black women artists (nationally and internationally) which had often been neglected and omitted from the wider narrative of art history.

Rita Keegan was invited and asked by Pauline Barrie, the then Director of Women Arts Slide Library (WASL), to start a separate archive within WASL. WASL felt strongly that the collecting should be done by a Black Woman. This was in 1987.

The collection included copies from magazines, catalogues, periodicals and donated material.

Rita Keegan had been part of an Arts Council initiative that was reflecting what could benefit the UK Black Arts movement. A decision was made that an archive would be most beneficial. Collecting information, photograph exhibitions and catalogues, the African Asian Visual Arts Archive (AAVAA) was established in Bristol in 1989. As Rita had already begun the WOCI collection, she was sent the women artists information and this boosted the existing WOCI collection.

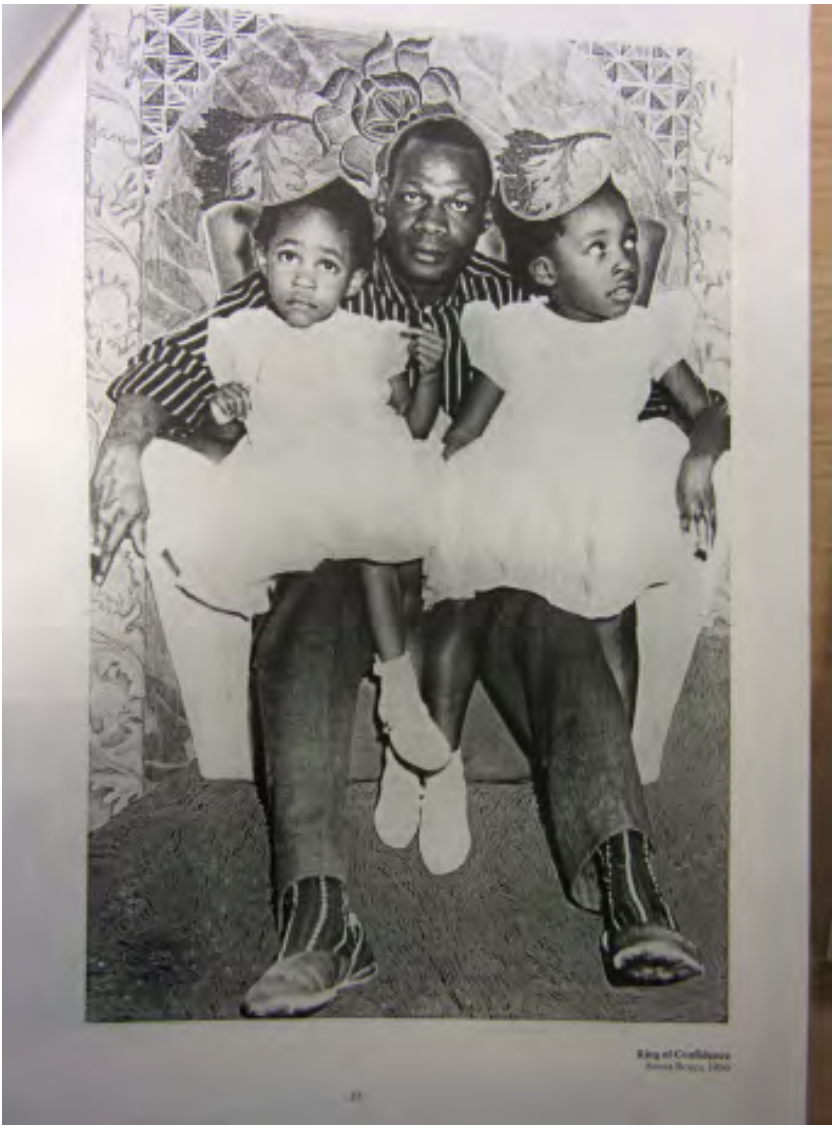
Rita had a studio at Small Mansions, Acton. Gillian Elinor visited Rita's studio. They had known each other from WASL and had a preliminary

discussion about the African and Asian Visual Arts Archive (AAVAA) and they both felt that AAVAA would be better positioned within what was then East London Polytechnic. However, at this point (90's) the Arts Council felt that everything had become too London centric and government policy reflected this too. So AAVAA remained in Bristol until 1995 when it came to East London University.



X Marks the Spot is an art and art research collective, consisting of practitioners, formed in 2011 as part of the Not Our Class programme commissioning research based in the Jo Spence archive. The group continues to work on developing connections made through their work with the WOCI. The members are Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski, Lauren Craig, Mystique Holloway, Zhi Holloway and Gina Nembhard.


Alia Syed
Jigar



Finding Aid:
What's in the Collection?

'A finding aid helps to identify and locate [it] in order to undertake the further work necessary to make it accessible for research.'

- Caroline Williams

» 'Represent and interpret contents and context of collections
» 'Provide evidence and information about an organisation's structure, functions, and activities
» 'Enable archives to be searched from a range of angles and approaches
» 'Protect records by ensuring only those actually required are produced for the user
» 'Enable users to help themselves and make choices
» 'Interpret original records that are in an unfamiliar media, language, or handwriting'[1]

1. Williams, C. (2006) Managing Archives: Foundations, Principles and Practice. Oxford: Chandos Publishing, p. 71-72

Overview of the Collection

Identity

Repository:	GB 2603 Women's Art Library
Collection Number:	MAKE/WOCI
Title:	Women of Colour
Collection Dates(s):	1983 - 2002
Format:	Printed documents
Extent of Material:	8 linear ft

Information for users of the collection

Context

Administrative History:	The Women's Art Library (also known as MAKE) was originally set up as the Women Artists slide Library in London in the late 1970s. This initiative from feminist artists' developed into an arts organisation publishing catalogues, books and a magazine from 1983-2002. During this time women artists deposited unique documentation on their work and created personal files that functioned together as an alternative public space. Thousands of artists from around the world are represented in some form in this collection. In 2004 the collection became part of Goldsmiths Library Special Collections. At Goldsmiths The Women's Art Library (MAKE) continued to collect slides, artist statements, exhibition ephemera, catalogues, and press material in addition to audio and videotapes, photographs and CD-Roms. As at 2009 they continued to welcome donations from women artists to help develop this collection.

Administrative History (cont.):	Rita Keegan joined the Women Artists Library in 1987 to establish the 'Black Women Artists Index', later called 'Women in Colour'. Working in collaboration with the African Asian Visual Artists Archive, her task was to collate slides of the work of black women artists from exhibitions and compile folders on each individual made up of articles and other relevant papers from periodicals, magazines, catalogue extracts and books in the Women Artists Slide Library archives. The main focus of the collection is on work created in Britain, but includes material from around the world in particular the USA, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia.
Copyright:	Collection items available for reproduction, but the Special Collections makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Reproduction permission from WAL: reproduction fees may apply. All duplication request must be reviewed and approved by WAL staff and artists who hold the copyright

In depth information about the collection

Content

Description:	UK Contemporary Individuals - arranged in alphabetical order by surname. Individual folders include information relating to the individual artist; for example, press cuttings and exhibition details including posters. Also details about UK exhibitions, organisations, conferences and events. USA contemporary individuals and USA historical individuals.
Appraisal:	Part of Genesis 2009 Project.
Conditions Governing Access:	The collection is public and open for research use.
Accruals:	Further accruals are not expected
Physical Access:	Access for visitors is by appointment only.
Key Words:	Women artists, Photography, Exhibitions, Ethnic groups, Fine Art, Keegan, Rita, Women Artists Slide Library, United Kingdom, Africa, Caribbean, United States, Contemporary Art, Black Art Movement, African Diaspora

Access

Access Status:	The collection is public and open.
Access Conditions:	Access for visitors is by appointment only.

Allied Materials

Researchers interested in this archive may also wish to consult the following resources:

The Women's Art Library/Make slide files contain 35mm slides, and accompanying original documentation, given to the library by contemporary women artists working mostly in the UK, but including artists working internationally. Documentation of work in all visual arts media. The slides files are attached to documentation wallets containing further written and visual information. They have been collected from around 1980 onwards, from members of the Women Artists' Slide Library.

MAKE/SLC/002 Afro-American Women artists slides

MAKE/SL Individual Contemporary Artists Slide Files

MAKE/SLC/015 Black Art: New Directions

MAKE/SLC/016 Black Women in View

MAKE/SLC/019 Brixton Art Gallery-Women's Work 1983

The Collection
Artist Files

SERIES 1

Artist Files

A

1. Agard, Brenda
2. Alexander, Simone
3. Andrews, Margaret
4. Arai, Tomie
5. Austin, Mishtu

B

6. Baig, Yasmin
7. Banton, Susan
8. Belfont, Georgia
9. Bhimji, Zarina
10. Biswas, Sutapa

C

11. Camp, Sokari Douglas
12. Campbell, Jean-Marie
13. Campbell, Marilon E.
14. Chu-Cheong, Joyce
15. Christian, Yolanda
16. Coker, Similola
17. Comrie, Jennifer
18. Cooper, Margaret
19. Curtis, Sharon

E

20. Ebdon, Vinodini
21. Edge, Nina
22. Enyote, Wanagho

G

23. Grant, Georgina
24. Gregory, Joy

H

25. Hammad, Medina
26. Harriette, Rhona
27. Harris, Leslie
28. Hill, Shareena
29. Himid, Lubaina
30. Holiday, Amanda
31. Hunjan, Bhajan

J

32. James, Stephanie
33. John, Cynthia Lawrence
34. Johnson, Claudette

K

35. Kahumbu, Joy
36. Karimjee, Mumtaz
37. Kaur, Arpana

38. Kaur, Permindar
39. Keegan, Rita
40. Kempadoo, Roshini
41. Kewlani, Sushila
42. Khanen, Semena
43. Khanna, Indra
44. Kharag, Evelyn
45. King, Linda

L

46. Li-Sue, Jillian
47. Lutchman, Sharon

M

48. Madikiza, Nandipha
49. Mahlangu, Esther

N

50. Ngankane, Diepolla
51. Niati, Houria
52. Nicodemus, Everlyn
53. Odonkor, Mowbray
54. Odundo, Magdalene
55. Olany, Nike

P

56. Parekh, Madhvi
57. Patel, Amina
58. Patel, Anuradha
59. Patil, Vijaya
60. Patti, Symrath
61. Pollard, Ingrid

R

62. Rajah, Nirjan Arumugam Deva
63. Ramirez, Louie
64. Roden, Suzanne
65. Ryan, Veronica

S

66. Sabharwal, Tara
67. Sanderson, Lesley
68. Scott, Dawn
69. Seepersaud-Jones, Shiela
70. Shinhat, Molly
71. Sisters, Zamani Soweto
72. Shoga, Folake
73. Sikand, Gurminder
74. Smith, Marlene
75. Sparks, Dionne
76. Spencer, Madge
77. Sulter, Maud

T

78. Tang, Lin
79. Thomas, Shanti

W

80. Walker, Kanta
81. Walker, Maxine
82. Williams, Paula
83. Walsh, Geraldine
84. Walsh, Gloria
85. Wallace, Sharon
86. Wills, Leslee

SERIES 2

Artist Files Historical/
Afro-American (US)

A
1. Abad, Pacita
2. Agins, Michelle
3. Auld, Rose
4. Allen, Winifred Hall
5. Amos, Emma

B

6. Banks, Ellen
7. Billops, Camille
8. Blayton, Betty
9. Bohannon, Gloria
10. Browne, Vivian E.
11. Burroughs, Margaret
12. Byard, Carole
13. Bullock, Barbara Jane
14. Bullock, Starmanda

C

15. Carter, Yvonne Pickering
16. Catlett, Elizabeth
17. Chase-Riboud, Barbara
18. Cissoko, Roberta
19. Cryor, Cary Beth
20. Cunningham, Fern

D

21. Davis, Billie Louise Barbour
22. Davis, Lenore

F

23. Favorite, Malaika
24. Ferrill, Mikki
25. Fields, Violet
26. Fuller, Meta Vaux Warrick

H

27. Harleston, Elise Forrest
28. Hardison, Inge
29. Hill-Montgomery, Candace
30. Howard, Mildred
31. Hoard, Adrienne Walker
32. Hunter, Clementine

G

33. Galloway, Delta

O

34. O'Grady, Lorraine

J

35. Jackson, Martha
36. Jackson, May Howard
37. Jackson, Suzanne
38. Jackson, Vera
39. James, Catherine " Catti"
40. Jefferson, Louise
41. Jeffries, Rosalind
42. Jessup, Georgia Mills
43. Johnson, Marie (File Empty)
44. Jones-Hogu, Barbara
45. Johnson-Calloway, Marie
46. Jones, Lois Mailou

K

47. Kennedy, Harriet

L

48. Lewis, Edmonia
49. Lewis, Samella

O

50. O'Neal, Mary Lovelace

M

51. Martin, Louise
52. Maynard, Valerie
53. Moja, Januwa
54. Moutossamy-Ashe, Jeanne

P

55. Packerson, Michelle
56. Perinchief, Roxanne
57. Pindell, Howardena
58. Piper, Adrian
59. Powers, Harriet
60. Prophet, Nancy Elizabeth

R

61. Ragland-Njau, Phillda
62. Ringgold, Faith
63. Roberts, Lucille Malkia
64. Roberts, Wilhelmina Peral Selena
65. Robeson, Eslanda Goode

S

66. Savage, Augusta
67. Scott, Elizabeth & Joyce
68. Sharpe-Etteh, Gilda
69. Simon, Jewel
70. Simpson, Coreen

T

71. Teal, Elnora
72. Thomas, Alma W.

W

73. Ward, Barbara
74. Waring, Laura Wheeler
75. Washington, Leah Ann
76. Weems, Carrie-Mae
77. Westbrook, Rene

Miscellaneous
1. Misc 1 of 2
2. Misc 2 of 2

SERIES 3

WOCI Contemporary Exhibitions

1. Correspondence
2. BlackArts Alliance
3. Commonwealth Institute
4. Camera Work
5. Miscellaneous Conferences/Events
6. Film
7. Crafts
8. Africa Centre M.A.A.S (Minorities Arts Advisory Service
9. Panchayat
10. Film & Photography
11. Photography
12. Press
13. Publications
14. US Publications

SERIES 4

WOCI Publications & Group Shows A-R

1. Affirmations
2. Africa through the eyes of Women Artists
3. The African Muse
4. Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum
5. Along the Lines of Resistance
6. Ambika
7. Asian Women's Art Group
8. Autoportraits
9. Autographs
10. Black Artists Festival
11. The Black Experience
12. Black Markets
13. Black People and the British Flag
14. Black Women Time Now
15. Black Women in View
16. Blind Machines
17. Breaking that Bondage
18. Breathes
19. Bridging Cultures

20. Brush Strokes
21. The Caribbean Cultural Center USA
22. Caribbean Expressions in Britain
23. Circular Dance
24. Colour of Europe
25. The Colours of Black
26. Connections Project/ Conexus
27. The Critical Decade
28. A Critical Difference
29. Diverse Cultures
30. Distant Relations
31. Disrupted Borders
32. Dislocations
33. Different Circles
34. The East West Connection
35. An Element of Fantasy
36. Encounters
37. The Essential Black Art
38. Eyes of the World
39. Finding Out
40. Hidden Heritage
41. Hunting Time
42. Ihouma Kay Kamula
43. In search of Our Mother's Garden
44. In to the Open
45. The Image Employed
46. Images of a Native Girl
47. Influences
48. Intimate Distances
49. Jagrati
50. Kalayaan
51. Keepin it Together
52. Let the Canvas Come Alive with Dark Faces
53. Looking Beyond the Frame
54. Mantrike
55. Mata
56. Milka
57. Mirror Mirror
58. New Worlds
59. Obaala
60. Onno Chokhe: Seeing with a Different Eye
61. The Other Story
62. Passion
63. Plotting the Course
64. PolarEyes
65. Red
66. Revelations of Black

SERIES 5
MAKE WOCI Group Shows
S-Z 34 Files

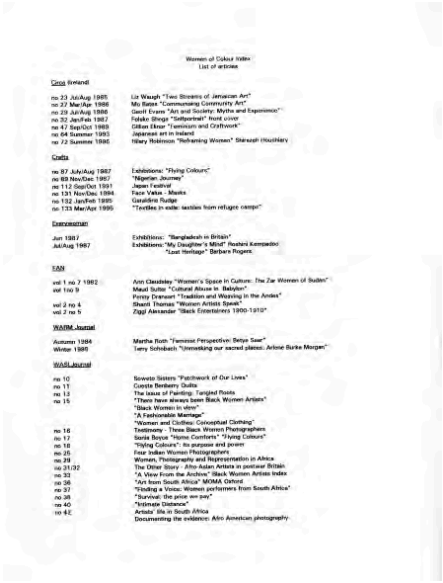
1. Safari Studios
2. Scan Video Productions Seven Stories About Modern Art From Africa
3. Shifting Terrains
4. South Asian Contemporary Visual Arts Festival
5. Soweto Images

6. Starting Points
7. A Table for Four
8. Taking Pictures
9. Tangled Roots
10. Textile Forums
11. Third World Within
12. Threads
13. Through Our Black Eyes
14. Traditional Carvings
15. Transatlantic Dialogues
16. Transitions
17. Transition of Riches
18. Trophies of Empire
19. Unrecorded Truths
20. View of the New
21. Vision 85
22. Whakaahua
23. Womeness
24. The Whole Earth Show
25. Textile Arts
26. Yoruba African Cloth Culture
27. Zamani Soweto Sisters
28. Zabai
29. A.A.V.A.A
30. Art Angel Trust
31. Africa Center
32. Afro-Caribbean Women Artists
33. Arts Council
34. Horizon Gallery

SERIES 6
WOCI Selected Articles



Resource List



Women of Colour Index
List of articles

Circa (Ireland)

no 23 Jul/Aug 1985 — Liz Waugh "Two Streams of Jamaican Art"
no 27 Mar/Apr 1986 — Mo Bates "Communising Community Art"
no 29 Jul/Aug 1986 — Gavin Evans "Art and Society: Myths and Experience"
no 32 Jan/Feb 1987 — Folake Shinge "Selfportrait" front cover
no 47 Sep/Oct 1989 — Gillian Ekiyor "Feminism and Craftwork"
no 64 Summer 1993 — Japanese art in Ireland
no 72 Summer 1996 — Hilary Robinson "Reframing Women" Shirazeh Houshiary

Crafts

no 87 July/Aug 1987 — Exhibitions: "Flying Colours"
no 89 Nov/Dec 1987 — "Nigerian Journey"
no 112 Sep/Oct 1991 — Japan Festival
no 131 Nov/Dec 1994 — Face Value - Masks
no 132 Jan/Feb 1995 — Geraldine Rudge
no 133 Mar/Apr 1995 — "Textiles in exile: textiles from refugee camps"

Everywoman

Jun 1987 — Exhibitions: "Bangladesh in Britain"
Jul/Aug 1987 — Exhibitions: "My Daughter's Mind" Rashmi Kempadoo
"Lost Heritage" Barbara Rogers

FAN

vol 1 no 7 1982 — Ann Cleasbey "Women's Space in Culture: The Zar Women of Sudan"
vol 1no 9 — Maud Sutter "Cultural Abuse in Babylon"
Penny Dawson "Tradition and Weaving in the Andes"
vol 2 no 4 — Sherri Thomas "Women Artists Speak"
vol 2 no 5 — Zigi Alexander "Black Entertainers 1900-1910"

WARM Journal

Autumn 1984 — Martha Roth "Feminist Perspective: Betye Saar"
Winter 1985 — Terry Schobesh "Unmasking our sacred planes: Arlene Burke Morgan"

WASL Journal

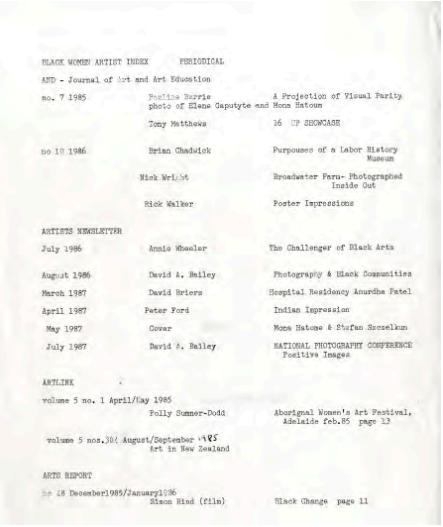
no 10 — Soweto Sisters "Patchwork of Our Lives"
no 11 — Cuesta Benberry Quilts
no 13 — The Issue of Painting: Tangled Roots
no 15 — "There have always been Black Women Artists"
"Black Women in view"
"A Fashionable Marriage"
"Women and Clothes: Colourful Clothing"
no 16 — Testimony - Three Black Women Photographers
no 17 — Sonia Boyce "Home Comforts" "Vivng Colours"
no 18 — "Styling Colours": its purpose and power
no 20 — Four Indian Women Photographers
no 29 — Women, Photography and Representation in Africa
no 31/32 — The Other Story - Afro-Asian Artists in postwar Britain
no 33 — "A View From the Archive" Black Women Artists Index
no 36 — "Art from South Africa" MOMA Oxford
no 37 — "Finding a Voice: Women performers from South Africa"
no 38 — "Survival: the price we pay"
no 40 — "Intimate Distance"
no 4E — Artists' life in South Africa
Documenting the evidence: Afro American photography



WOMEN OF COLOUR INDEX

SELECTED ARTICLES

2 *There have always been great black women artists* Chila Burman
Recreation Kellie Jones (Tan-8)
3 *Lemhall Road Workshop* Barbara Jones (Polarreyes)
4 *Rights and Status* and Black Arts Alliance(AN)
5 *Black Arts: not it but how* Naseem Khan
6 *Beyond the Barricades* and *Black Photographers 1940-1988* book review
Third Text Guy Brett (ARLIS Journal)
7 *Talking About Black Art*....
8 *Pale Reflections in the Black Country* Ade Solanke
8a *Africa Woman* Melba Wilson (Africa)
9 *Three Brazilian Photographers* SpareRib
Julieta Rubio SpareRib
The Politics of Space: of a Black Women Architect Shaeen Haque (SpareRib)
Will the Art Critic Please Step Forward Marlene Smith (SpareRib)
Lionhearted Women Elean Thomas (SpareRib)
10 *The Challenge of the Black Arts* Annie Wheeler (AN)
11 *Call and Response* Maud Sutter (FAN)
Breaking through the showcase: Amanda Holiday's video "Employing the Image" Hagiwara Hiroko (FAN)
12 *Aspects of Performance in the work of Black American Women Artists* LS Sims (Feminist Art Criticism ed Raven, Langer,Fruen)
13 *New Spaces* and *Fifteen years of feminist action!* from Framing Feminism ed Parker and Pollock)
14 *A Bizarre Form of Anthropolgy* Eddie Chambers (The Race Today Review)
Alive and Kicking Errol Lloyd (The Race Today Review)
My Parents/Their Children Illustration Lubaina Himid
15 *Black Art in America* Barbara Rose
16 Excerpts from *Get The Message* Lucy Lippard
17 *Photographic Essay* (SAGE)
African-American Women Artists: An historical perspective A Alexander Bontemps and J Fonvielle-Bontemps (SAGE)
Women and Slavery in the African Diaspora: A crosscultural approach to historical analysis R Terborg-Penn (SAGE)
18 *Black Girls Talking* Evelyn Reid (Gender and Education)
19 *Beyond the Boundary: The work of three black women artists in Britain* Gilane Tawadros
20 *Washington Review: gender, race, class*
"Representations of Slavery lead towards an understanding of Caribbean History of Art" Barbara Preston
"Black Diaspora Artists in Britain: Three Generations of Post-war History" Stuart Hall
"Black Artists in the Mainstream" Kandy Fusco



BLACK WOMEN ARTIST INDEX PERIODICAL

ARTS - Journal of Art and Art Education

no. 7 1985 — Pauline Boyce — A Projection of Visual Purity
photo of Elena Caputyte and Mona Hatoum
Tony Matthews — 16 UP SHOWCASE

no 10 1986 — Brian Chadwick — Purposes of a Labor History Museum
Nick Wright — Broadwater Farm- Photographed Inside Out
Rick Walker — Poster Impressions

ARTISTS NEWSLETTER

July 1986 — Annie Wheeler — The Challenger of Black Arts
August 1986 — David A. Bailey — Photography & Black Communities
March 1987 — David Briers — Hospital Residency Anuradha Patel
April 1987 — Peter Ford — Indian Impression
May 1987 — Cover — Mona Hatoum & Stefan Szczelkun
July 1987 — David A. Bailey — NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY CONFERENCE Positive Images

ARTLINK

volume 5 no. 1 April/May 1985
Polly Sumner-Dodd — Aboriginal Women's Art Festival, Adelaide feb.85 page 13

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Art in New Zealand

ARTS REPORT

no 48 December1985/January1986
Simon Hind (film) — Black Change page 11

Top Left: Women of Colour Index List of Articles; *Top Right:* Women of Colour Index Selected Articles; *Bottom:* Black Women Artist Index

Women Artists Slide Library Journal Scans

1a.



1b.



1c.



1d.



1a–1c. Women Artists Slide Library Journal Issue 15, Pages 9-12. Title: *There Have Always Been Great Black Women Artists*
1d. Women Artists Slide Library Journal Issue 15, Page 15. Title: *'A Fashionable Marriage' Lubaina Himid Pentonville Gallery. 27 November–20 December 1986*

2a.



2b.



3a.



3b.



2–2b. Women Artists Slide Library Journal Issue 24, Page 27. Title: *Sonia Boyce Recent Work Whitechapel Gallery London E1 13 May – 26 June*

3a–3b. Women Artists Slide Library Journal Issue 30, Page 25. Title: *Intimate Distance Photographer's Gallery 21 July – 9 Sept*

Women Artists Slide Library Journal Scans

4a.



4b.



4c.



4a–4b. Women Artists Slide Library Journal Issue 31/32, Pages 26-27. Title: *The Other Story — Afro-Asian Artists in Post-War Britain*
4c.Women Artists Slide Library Journal Issue 33, Page 37. Title: *ZABAT: Poetics of a Family Tree Maud Sulter.*

5a.



5b.



5c.

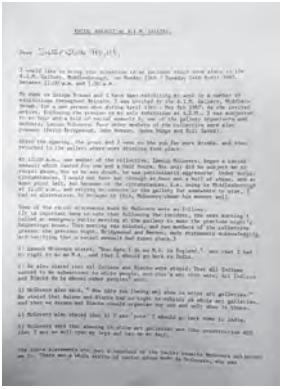


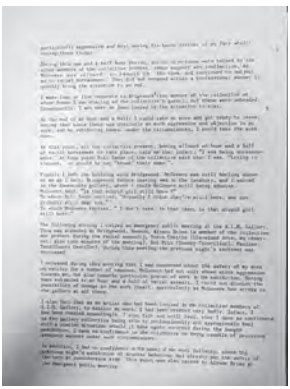
5a–5c. Women Artists Slide Library Journal Issue 33, Pages 17-19. Title: *A View From the Archive: Black Women Artists Index*

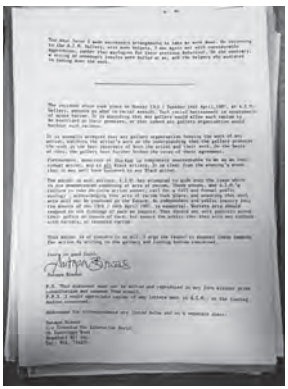
Snapshot into the Archive: Sutapa Biswas







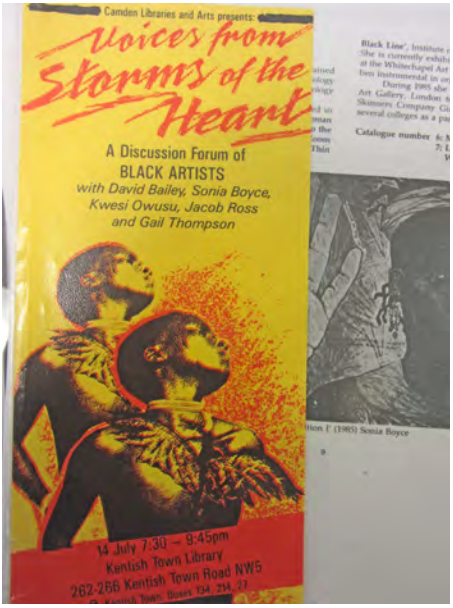




Snapshot into the Archive: Sonia Boyce





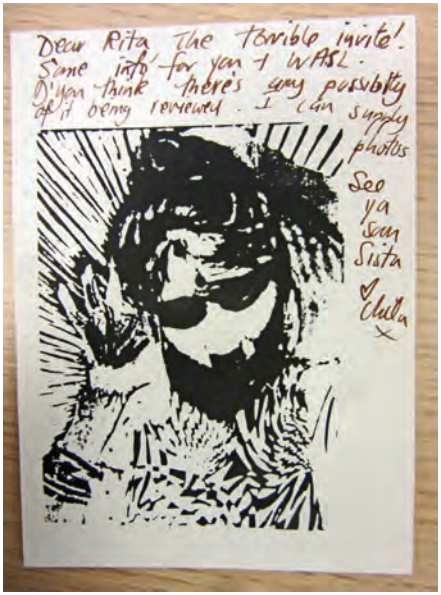


Snapshot into the Archive: Chila Kumari Burman









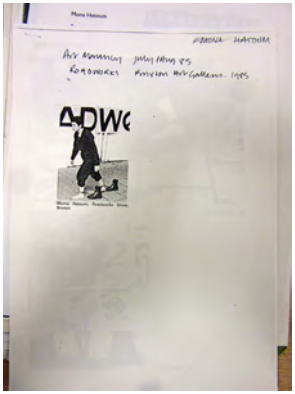


Snapshot into the Archive: Mona Hatoum









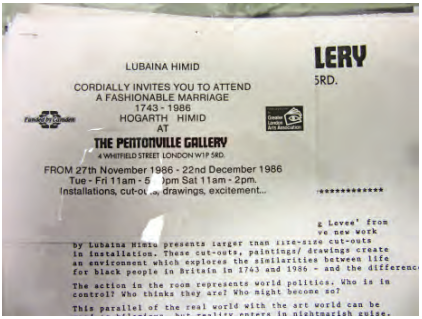




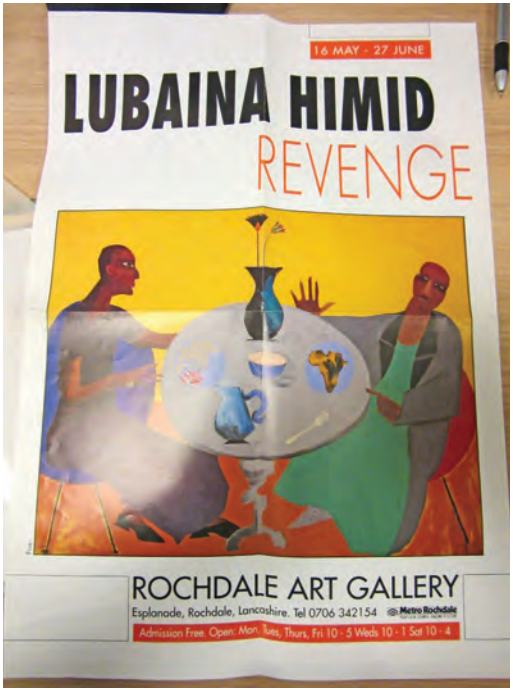


Snapshot into the Archive: Lubaina Himid





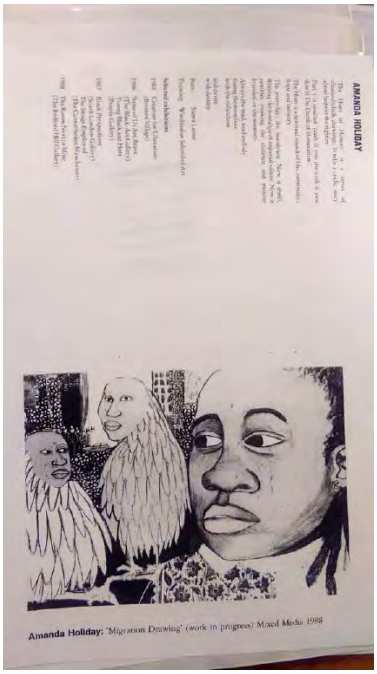


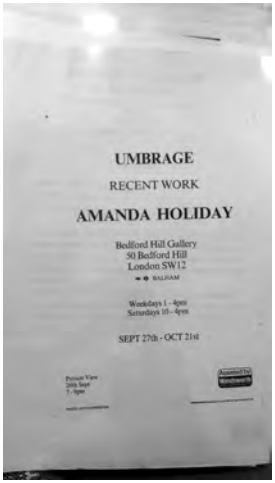




Snapshot into the Archive: Amanda Holiday

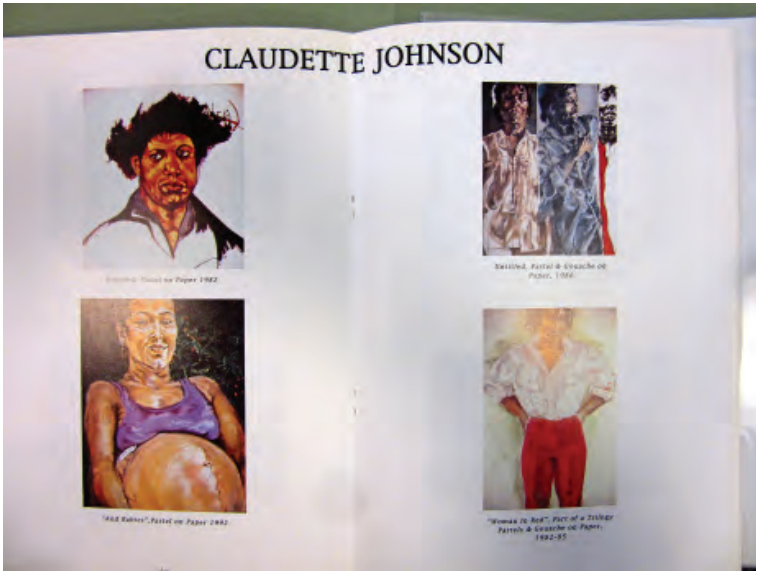


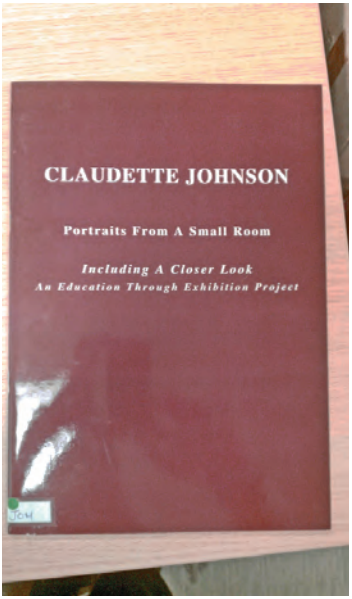




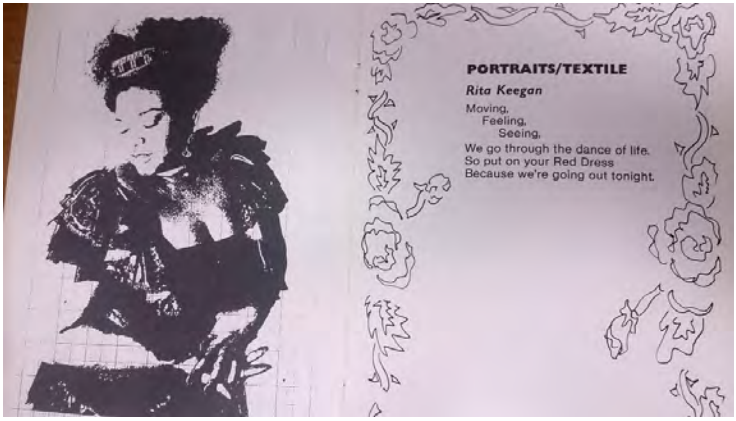


Snapshot into the Archive: Claudette Johnson

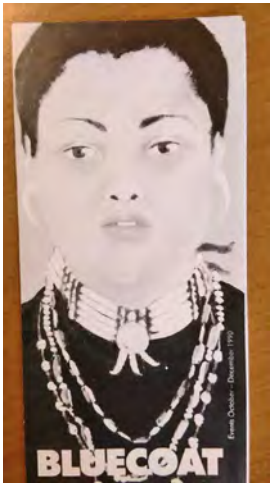




Snapshot into the Archive: Rita Keegan







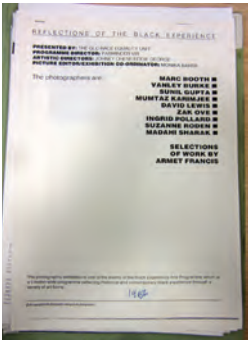




Snapshot into the Archive: Ingrid Pollard



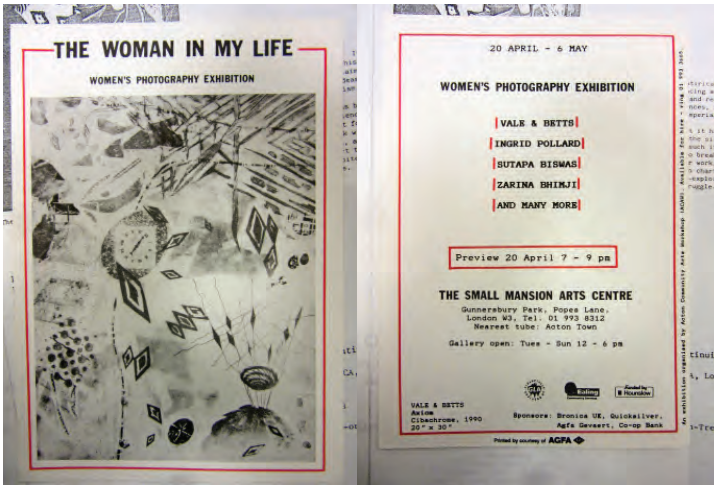












Gillian Elinor's bequest and the Women of Colour Index

Jonathan Rosenhead

My wife Gillian Elinor died in December 2009. For some 25 years from 1975 she worked at the University of East London (and its predecessor organisations) in the School of Art and Design, latterly as Head. In her will she left a bequest which has helped to support the work on the Women of Colour Index. Some background will I hope explain why this is a particularly appropriate way of remembering her.

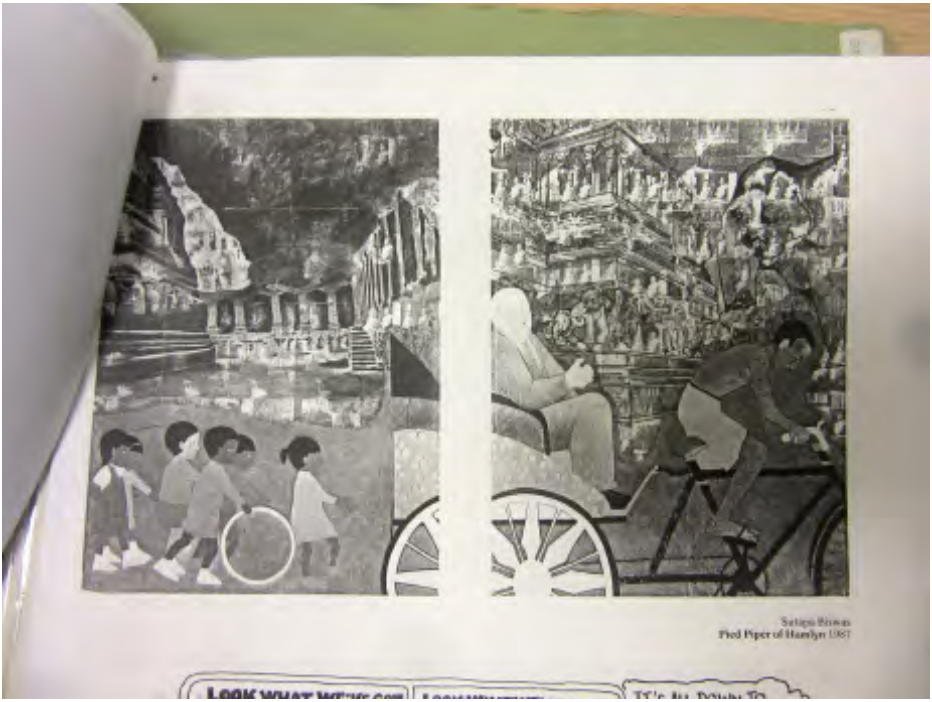
Gillian was brought up in a feminist household. Her mother Marjorie, the dominant influence in her upbringing, was an engaged feminist from at least the 1940's. She was active in a number of organisations but notably in the Married Women's Association. So as Gillian started her academic career in the 1970's (a late starter, she became a university student in her 30's and with 2 children) it was natural that she became involved with a number of feminist activities, and in particular those concerned with art. She was a member of the FAN (Feminist Arts News) collective, and was continuously involved over many years with the Women Artists Slide Library. She was joint editor of the 1987 Virago book Women and Craft.

There was I think another factor in Gillian's choice of bequest. Her family on both sides came from Ulverston on the edge of the Lake District. Her maternal grandfather was an Army bandsman, and her grandmother did not learn to read. Her father became a merchant navy captain, and was often away. Marjorie's health was insecure due to a congenital heart defect and she was refused a grant to go to university (a practice not uncommon in the 1930's); but Marjorie's younger sister Joan studied at Manchester University after the war. There she met and married a fellow student Ivo De Souza - a Jamaican who had been a fighter pilot in the war, and after Jamaican independence became a senior member of that country's diplomatic service. It was a period when inter-racial marriage was rare in the UK, and Gillian

felt strongly committed to the struggle against discrimination. And quite apart from this political commitment she became very close to our extensive network of Jamaican relatives.

I don't remember her giving this as a reason for her interest in the work of black artists, but it is likely that there was a connection at some level. In any case in 1995 she became aware that Aavaa (the African and Asian Visual Artists Archive) which had been founded in Bristol in 1989 was in danger of going under, and successfully schemed to provide it with a relatively secure home in the UEL School of Art and Design. In the university funding climate of the day that was a striking achievement. In the years that followed she defended it, largely successfully, from the repeated raids launched by university administrators attempting to claw back some of the financial commitments that had been made. There is no doubt that Gillian felt strongly identified with Aavaa, and in her will made out a few years before she died it was to Aavaa that she made her only non-family bequest.

After her death, however, I discovered that Aavaa had in the meantime changed both its name and its mission, and that its successor organisation no longer had a focus on the work of black artists. Her family were delighted when, as a result of connections which linked back to Gillian's work on Women and Craft, we discovered that the spirit of the Women Artists Slide Library was alive and lusty at Goldsmith's. We were then able, by redirecting her bequest, to create 'The Gillian Elinor Women of Colour Index Project' at Goldsmiths' Women's Art Library collection. In this way both Gillian's feminist and anti-racist commitments are jointly celebrated and taken forward.



Satya Biswas
Pied Piper of Hamlyn 1987

Reflecting with Rita Keegan — on 4 September 2015

Interviewed and transcribed by Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski

Over the summer of 2015, as an extension of the Women of Colour Indexing cataloguing Ego has been archiving Rita Keegan.We meet on Fridays and work, talk art, laugh, cry, eat, drink, explore catalogues, listen to music and archive. The process has been captured by a series of weekly audio recordings as we have gone along.

Rita - I guess the whole thing is, well I guess I was talking about, how you forget you existed, I know that sounds weird but, you know I did this work, I felt it was important at the time. I got paid, you know I survived on it, it wasn't a massive amount of money, but it was a job. Though you know, I would have done it with or without the job, but getting paid was gravy. It was you know, it was originally two days a week at minimum wage, but it was 2 days a week on minimum wage. [laughs] So it also gave the things that I was doing and it puts it on a different level when it's being collected.

Also being there at the Slide Library, which I will call, because that was the name at the time. That meant that I could go to other meetings that were Greater London Arts, The Arts Council, I could sit at the table and discuss and also get the organisation some funding, extra funding and if not funding get funding in kind, in materials. That's where Eddie Chambers' African and Asian Visual Arts Archive (AAVAA) comes in because Eddie was doing it anyway, he was already going around and taking photographs and things. It meant that he could get paid to do that, plus his transportation was paid for, his film costs and stuff, then he could facilitate my project by bringing in the materials.

We all felt very strongly about documentation. Ultimately the only thing that is left is documentation and that was a perfect way to do it. We felt like that in terms of exhibitions and in terms of any kind of research we

were doing that, it was so easy to get erased from history. You know, we'd seen it with the feminists; we'd seen it with so many other things. So the, understanding of how important documentation was key.

Having the place at the Slide Library, where I could sort of invent this Index and that it was always available for other people to see, for me it was quite important that it's not someone's private collection, that it is available.

I left the archive in 1990 and I guess went on to AAVAA and then left AAVAA in '92; I taught, I think 93 or maybe it was 95, who knows I can't remember the years anymore, at Goldsmiths, I was teaching one day a week at Goldsmiths. So you are getting on with your life, the archive was supposed to move, well AAVAA was supposed to move and it did, but because it wasn't any longer my responsibility, I was getting on with my own life teaching and showing, I was very busy in the 90's. But also you had to be busy, you know between paying your rent and having exhibitions and trying to fund exhibitions because I didn't have a gallery. I didn't have someone that was going to help me find exhibitions or help me apply for exhibitions, so I was a one man band, a one woman band only with not many instruments or broken instruments. [Laughs] But um, so its, its I guess you're so busy living and also getting on with the next thing and following the fortunes of the Library the Slide Library then the Women's Library, then from place to place, was, well you know that was a full-time job in itself. Then after I left Goldsmiths then to find out that it was going to find a home there and you know, good or ill I feel that Goldsmiths is a very good place, and that the library being within an institution that's not going to disappear. It's within an art library but also within the University of London bigger library, it's the work, whether it's the archive that I put together or the Woman's Art Library, that it is within the canon that it is not off some place where you have to find it. If you know how to find it, if you know someone who can find it and that is the main problem with being an 'Other', you have to want to find us.

That's the joke about "how many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb? Only one but you really have to want it to change" [Laughs] so you know that's the kind of thing so 'how do you find this archive' 'well you have to go through back and beyond, you have to ask the right person you have to do this to actually find it. So I was ultimately quite happy when you, or meeting Gina (Nembhard), and the fact that Gina was saying that she was aware of the archive, more than aware, working on it and that you all invited me to Goldsmiths, I was really taken aback. You know, I had just thought, that I had done it and that was it and you know things are important when you do it, but you don't really know that anybody else knows that it's important. The fact that you all cared about what I had done was for me, really touching, not in a trite sense, just that it was being used made me feel, I guess vindicated that what I did was worth doing. Not many people actually get to feel like that, so, you know. Also I was happy about giving the archive that I have collected since and during to it because it needs facilitation. There's so many gaps and I am not saying I am filling in all the gaps but its, its, its quite crucial to be able to see that, those things didn't stop when I left the archive. That the struggle and you know it's really depressing to use that word, but that it is all and is still continuous.

Ego - What do they say? La luna continua (the struggle continues)

Rita - Yeah, so I'm happy to, share what I have. Also, to know that it can be looked at and you know, also it's for other people to put their own opinion and swing on it. It is there. It's for other people to choose what they want to take out of it and what they want to gain from it. You know, obviously it's a combination of the things I wanted to keep and the things that somehow I kept, [Laughs] the things that were sent. There are things that I might have gone out and gotten so you have three or four different strands of collecting. I am not a fanatical collector, as we sit in my house full of all sorts of stuff, but I am an eclectic collector. I've also never needed to own a whole series of bus tickets or you know, things like that. So its also very easy for me to think that I got it and it doesn't matter that issue

No. 2 is missing or that I stopped at issue no. 27 or you know, those gaps hopefully will be filled.

Ego - I did want to ask what you, what were teaching at Goldsmiths?

Rita - I was teaching in the Cultural Studies Department. My course was new media and digital diversity and that's when work on the computer was new so, I started, I guess it might have been '93 or '94 or something like that. Computer-based work was very new, also the problem with the course was, that department had little or no technology. The library was being built, and the people that had the computers turned out to be the design department and so we had no access to the medium that we were actually talking about. So in truth the course was almost too avant-garde for the place. That was a big difficulty because if I am teaching about the medium and all I can do is show them videos, that's sort of defeating its purpose. So I was never really able to do what I really wanted or what I could do. I taught there, I also taught on the Curators course in the Fine Art department with Anna Harding. That was very interesting because as an artist I had done quite a lot of curating but also self-funding, you know, you know about that, that terrain.

Then Goldsmiths stopped, I suppose made a conscious decision to stop hiring visiting lecturers so they got rid of most of their visiting lecturers and used their PhD students. Which is great for the PhD students but it also means that all those extra voices on a regular basis of people who are out – really OUT in the art world are not getting heard, except with the odd lecture you know, other visiting lecturers either in the art department or cultural studies department were really diverse and I thought it was a great loss. You need people that are not from the institution to actually feed into the institution I don't know what the situation is now but urm

Ego - I think it's pretty much the same

Rita - But you know, you do need other voices because the art terrain is always changing its never shrinking and if somebody is showing and selling now then they know what the terrain is like now. I have no idea, you know, I guess it's a different level of self-help. You know talking about when I was living in LA and you know, why I didn't turn that space into a gallery, because it never occurred to me to do that then. It wasn't what people did and also I hadn't lived here (UK) but maybe if I was in New York, the whole gallery system was different and I guess I was to busy making art to think about turning it into a place for other people to sell it. Yeah.

Ego - In the process that we have going through of urm archiving, why deposit or why allow me to come in? [Laughs]

Rita - Because you like me, well you only found out you liked me afterwards. Why? Well I wanted, well I guess it started because I was doing a lot of clearing and moving around and also I didn't want all these papers to end up being landfill and if they are going to be landfill well that's okay, but I wanted them to be looked at before they were turned into landfill. [Laughs] Whether they were important, well they were important enough for me to keep them. I think I am a relatively good judge of things that are important so I wanted to see if anybody else did. You know, you could have easily said thanks, but no thanks but you found the archive interesting and worth using, so that was good. It's one thing to think. I guess I never think that anything I do is that important it's just what I do. My ego isn't as large as my tiara collection, which could be bigger, which should be bigger. [Laughs]

Ego - There is still time – I suppose I want to ask you about the next stages, your work is deposited your 'shedio' is up you've created the space, I just find it interesting that you haven't lost that urge to work with others and just wondering. (Yesterday I gave a talk at Autograph to a group of young women that I found really inspiring, a group of young black women that I thought were WOW.) Feels as if there is still a gap or space that is missing in regards to art education.

Rita – Starting a charm school, we can choose our tiara's online

Ego - Step 1

Rita - That's not the first step darling that is so not the first step! One thing I did, I enjoyed teaching. I enjoyed seeing people being interested and one thing, I never want people to leave empty handed, I liked to find out what they wanted and if there was something that I could give them something that would put them on their path to something else. I guess, I'm a facilitator but I guess I would have no problems with letting the chicks leave the nest. They don't need to, I don't think I want my chicks to stay around, I don't mind them coming to visit but you know, I don't need a following, you know I don't need disciples.

So, yeah I think that we need people to learn from, we need mentors of all sorts of different things and as Black women to see that we don't have to be one type of Black woman and that there is space and because we are so hard on ourselves, you know we are so self disciplined so – that shoulda, woulda, coulda, is always standing there with its finger over our shoulder, [Ego gestures wagging finger] Exactly and so there is always that voice that says you don't belong there this is not for you, this is you know... and it's very difficult to you know to, to knock that voice aside and I'm not saying that Black women are the only women that have that I think we all have that voice, but if we don't see ourselves anywhere, then it's very difficult to put ourselves there.

Now I happen to have the kind of character that felt that I would, when I was a kid, I was thinking this this morning, I wanted to dance but my parents didn't have. I didn't realise that the reason I didn't go to dancing school was because they didn't have the money. The reason why I didn't play the piano was because they didn't have the money. When I look back in retrospect I understand why I didn't have those things but then, when I went to one school they had a dance class after school and so I just took

myself in and went for it. I think I heard the 'Sabre Dance' on the radio and I remember in 5th or 6th grade, I remember going to dance class and I remember the outfit, I can't remember the steps. So I am remembering that, I am also remembering that I went even once I got into junior high school, so I went for another year, but in spite of the fact that my parents couldn't give that too me I went and got it for myself. And that takes a, a certain type of personality and I don't know whether it's a courage or a naivety or an entitlement or what, or just the desire to do it but also that singleness to also go and do something that no one else or my other peers. This was a school that I had been transferred to for integration so I was already bussed, so it wasn't like – I was already out there, and I was just thinking how odd it was to go for this class and you know not be intimidated. I remember the dance teacher Mrs Chakette and she was with her bun and her black leotard. She was European, the school was mostly Jewish and stuff, so I don't know, I could write her backstory, but I can't. So this is '59 yeah, so it must be about '59 or '58 it's a different world. I am sure I was the only Black kid in the class but there weren't many over there anyway.

To put myself in that place, I suppose it was a precursor to me putting myself in that place for the rest of my life. Or just stumbling into it and saying 'okay lets do that" well you know, it's like those things can be learnt later on, when you are older but I think, they do hold you in good stead. But also we are constantly learning we are still, I am still that 8 year old girl, I'm still her. You know, you carry all that with you.

I was listening to a program on Radio 4 and I think it was from the Tavistock and they were talking about children and depression and stuff and how children have a new world that they have to negotiate and technology being a game changer. I completely agree, that you know, it's a very different world, and only in the sense they have access to so much more and its not filtered and there is no one that buffers them. Now there are certain things that we wish we had been buffered from, but if we weren't buffered from those things, imagine the extra things that they are not buffered from, you

know that's terrifying to think.

Ego - I wanted to ask you race and archives? What's race got to do with it?

Rita - Well I guess in my hierarchy of things you have, there's gender, race and class. Well class is movable and it depends on who you are, where you are. I guess you do take your or the things that define your class is movable and things can be learnt. And people who are incredibly hung up by what class people are, they are the ones who have the problems not the person who is moving within and out. That is of less importance.

Now race, you know, again its quite visible, so that's something that can be movable not in terms of your race, but in terms of the canon and power. But gender I think is, is at the top, because it's looking at power and the power is held in between a particular gender, yes things have changed a lot.

There's a wonderful program on at the moment on BBC I can't remember the name of it but it just started the other night and it was looking at prehistory, and looking at women within society and what laws about the veil, and we're talking Greek and Syrian we're talking B.C. veil not talking Arab veiling and you know, the power that men have had over women and still continue to have. I don't know if its fear or what but ultimately with power you have to be willing to give that up and I don't know if men want to give that up.

It's like the issue of privilege you don't have to be rich to be privileged you just have to not know that things are not! [Laughs] And so you know even though a man is or may not be white and wealthy in his society still has a lot more privilege than a woman of the same race, of the same class. I do think that is across the board, I think it's here, there and everywhere. I think as woman I am in a much better place than I have ever been in terms of financial security, in terms of independence in terms of being able to live in this house on my own and not be burnt at the stake for a witch. It's

that freedom I have, is just in one or two places in the world. Now a lot of places women don't have that and I could be seen as suspect for how I've lived and what I've done, and in some places I can be respected for how I've lived and what I've done. You know, but it's unlikely that I would have been left alone. So, it's ultimately gender, I think race is big, I am not denying it's not big but I think that there has to be a will for change, you can't force it, because it will just slide back. Change is slow and small and it's not everywhere.

Ego – If you take that in relation to the Women's Art Slide Library and the work that you did for Women of Colour Index in regards to history and keeping women's narratives around art how important is it?

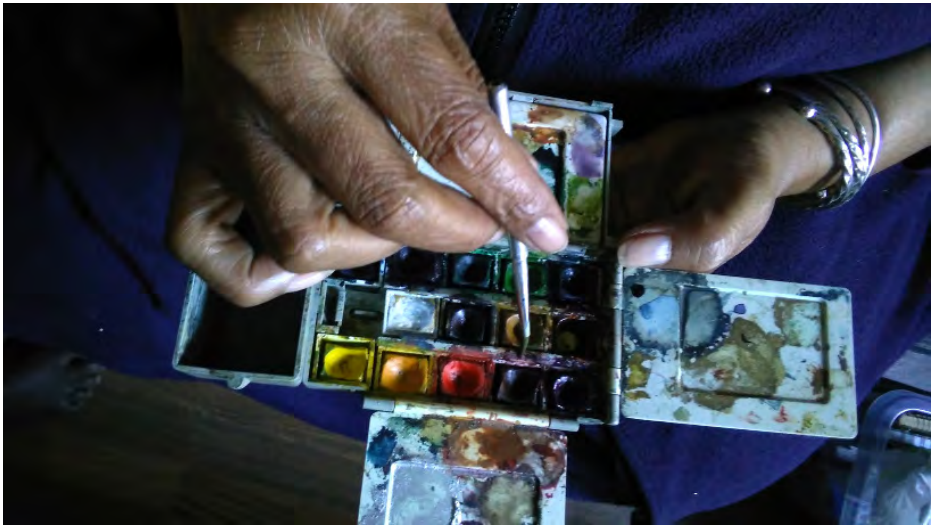
Rita - We have to know that we have been here. We have to know we have done things. We have to know we had a voice even if it is still not heard. We have to know we've been screaming in the wilderness because the whole problem is reinventing the wheel, if you know the wheel was there then you don't have to spend your time trying to invent it you can get on and invent the cart to put on the wheel you know!!!

And that's it I think ultimately, you can't forget where you've been but you shouldn't have to keep on revisiting it and that's for me the main thing and that's what one learns about any movement, I was talking to Crystal [Zevon] the other day and we were talking about being women back in the 60's and 70's and the wholesale abuse of women and children and you know that's male children too. So we were talking about change and stuff and I said 'Well you can't have women that have worked in the civil rights movement, without them then ending up being feminist, because the abolitionist movement went hand in hand with the suffragettes movement. You can't have freedom on the basis of race without realising you are not free because of your gender.'

I don't think it's an accident that the rise in movement of so many women

for example in America, happened after the civil rights movement because you realise you don't have the same rights. I think they do go hand in hand, when you start fighting for rights, you start looking for who doesn't have them and whoops it's me.

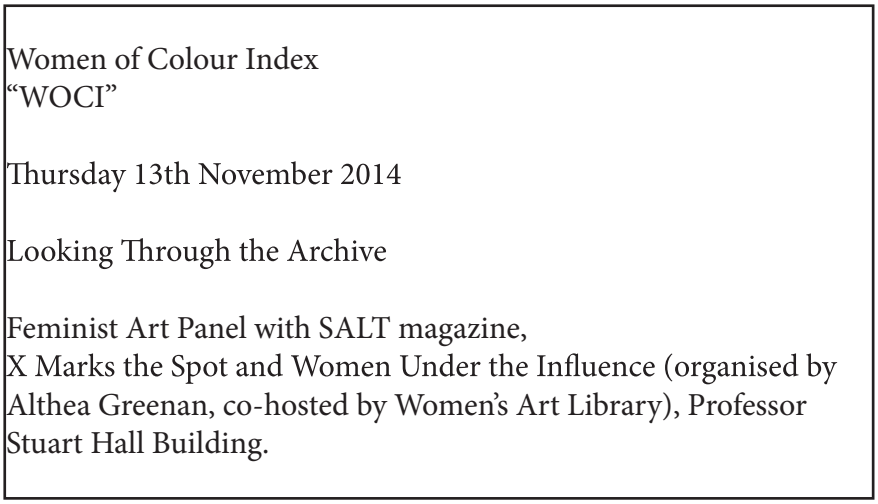
Yes it's race, but it's also who has that power and I might not necessarily want power but I don't want someone to have power over me - I think that is probably as simple as it is.



Looking Through the Archive

Gina Nembhard

This is a transcript based on a slide presentation given for the Centre for Feminist Research. This is a presentation of early investigations into the WOCI archive.



SLIDE 1

X Marks the Spot is a collective of women who have had or have experience of the art world. Formed in 2011 in response to the archives of the artist Jo Spence, XMTS were introduced to the Women's Art Library/Women of Colour Index archives whilst working originally with Jo Spence's archives as part of an exhibition on the work of Spence which took place at Studio Voltaire based in south London. In 2012, XMTS were reintroduced to the WAL archives when we were given the opportunity to look at the women of colour artists' archives commonly known as WOCI.

Gina Nembhard

We have been delving into the archives and we have a series of responses. With this year-long project we are able to delve into archives. Within the collective we have an archivist Ego Ahaiwe, who will be cataloguing the existing archives. Ego will be contributing to this presentation later. We will be involved in this project over the period of the year. Over this period the Index will be catalogued and we also hope at a future date digitised.

XMTS will be responding to the archive and showing our outcomes at other venues later in the year.

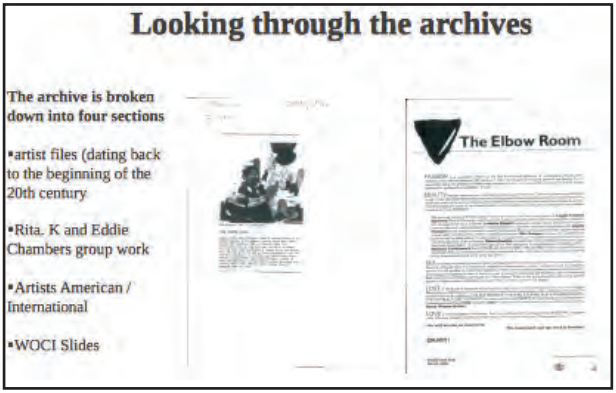
In 1986, the American artist Rita Keegan was involved with the Women's Slide Art Library. Rita had started to collect and compile work by women of colour and then with her involvement at the slide library when it was based at Fulham Palace. Also at this point she, along with a number of others involved in the arts, was invited by the Arts Council to explore and investigate what support black artists needed at that time, such as funding and other opportunities.

To give you a sense of what is in the archives I'll leave it to Rita to tell you about that. We have some audio of Rita talking. She will give you context to the archive. She also explains what the period was like culturally and politically.



SLIDE 2

This quote from "Testimony" a show I'll discuss later gives you a sense of what the sentiment was in the 1980s of many women of colour artists. They also wanted and needed the opportunities to be visible.



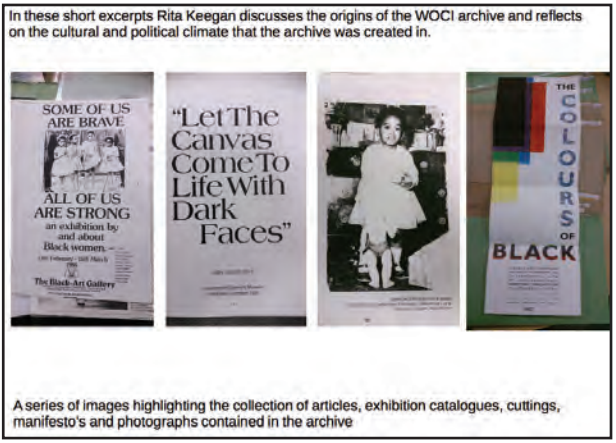
SLIDE 3



SLIDE 4

With this image I try to give you a sense of the group shows, the galleries, the artists, the organisations and the publications that existed at this time and evidence of them all are contained in the archives. The archive is an incredible record for a relatively narrow period of time, the early 1980s to the late 1990s.

In the archive you see early traces of the formation of organisations like African and Asian Visual Arts Archive and Autograph ABP. You have ground breaking exhibitions like 'The Other Story', 'Gold Blooded Warrior' and 'Five Black Women', where women of colour become the curators. At this period of time the voices of women of colour were just not being heard and exhibitions like these allowed their voices to finally be heard.



SLIDE 5

Rita film

After initial exploration into the collection, XMTS at the end of October 2014 were able to invite Rita Keegan to come and spend some time with us reflecting on the WOCI. Here is a short excerpt of a 2 hour conversation that was held at Goldsmiths College with her.

This method of the audio interview is what we have always used as part of our collective work process.

The images above are just a small fragment of what is actually in the archive.

As Rita Keegan was the person that compiled the collection of files, we are hoping that through the year we can collaborate more with her and other artists whose work is in the archives as well. This we hope will be an ongoing process.

Gina Nembhard

Rita Keegan Excerpts from XMTS visit 10th October 2014

"Arts Council Got Sick"

"Well you know in the mid- to late 90s you had a healthy scene with publications and magazines that don't exist anymore like you had Spare Rib, I mean one could just go through a whole list of magazines and things that were out. The photography ones. Autograph. There was the Black Arts publication ARTRAGE. And the Arts Council had a special section that did fund magazines and publications. It seemed quite healthy and then it got sick.

"Arts Council Documentation"

"I think it must have been Sandy Nairne, one of the officers, who said that they were trying to find a group of Black practioners to discuss what would benefit the Black Artist community most. Which I know sounds pretty weird now because you don't see the Arts Council or any of the councils as being proactive but Sandy was pro-active. And so, myself, Gavin Jantjes Eddie Chambers, Shakka Dedi from the Seven Sisters Art Gallery - I think Sunil might have been invited - Sunil Gupta and Rasheed Araeen, Arts officer, Sarah Wason and Sandy Nairne, and we had a few months of discussion. It was back in the day when it was 101 Piccadilly or 105. So that must have been 85/86 something like that. What would benefit the artist most? Most of us agreed that it was documentation and without documentation because without documentation you become invisible - and yes you can fund all the shows in the world (not that they were going to) but it's like if you don't document, it never existed.

"Dividing up WOCI"

"With funding and Thatcher and lots of other things - the Black Arts Gallery, the Asian Gallery lost their funding - and the only two places

left were the Slide Library and Eddie's thing in Bristol. And what was decided, was that all the Asian stuff would go to the Asian Gallery, all the Black stuff would go to Seven Sisters and I would get the women artists of colour.

"Visibility and Gallery Spaces"

"The thing with group shows, if you look at the gallery spaces, there weren't really a lot of gallery spaces. And a lot of gallery spaces weren't taking on anything but the status quo. So, it's like I don't know if you know these movies called Andy Hardy movies, and they were American and they were made in the late 30s and its "My Dad has a barn, let's put on a show" kind of thing. And that's kind of the ethos: we're here, let's show our work. Would you like to? There is a space available. I know what happened with the Brixton Art Gallery is we had 3 railway arches, and it was very much that sort of thing: we have this space what shall we do with this space? There are certain things we would like to show that don't get a chance to be seen. One of the things is women artists, another thing is women artists of colour, gay and lesbian. You know Textile Works? It made a point of showing work that didn't get into the mainstream and it was also quite a large space. We also thought it was important to show many people as opposed to a vast body of someone's work.

"Hierarchy- authentic curatorial practice"

"Also most of the stuff wasn't big curators with galleries that had the funding to do anything for you. And you tended to either go down private or public and there weren't a lot of private galleries that, that even to this day have artists of colour. Unless they are doing the exotic and the authentic, "you don't want a Black British Artist, you want an African artist or you want a Brazillian artist". So there is a strange sort of hierarchy and authenticity that you still get in curatorial practices.

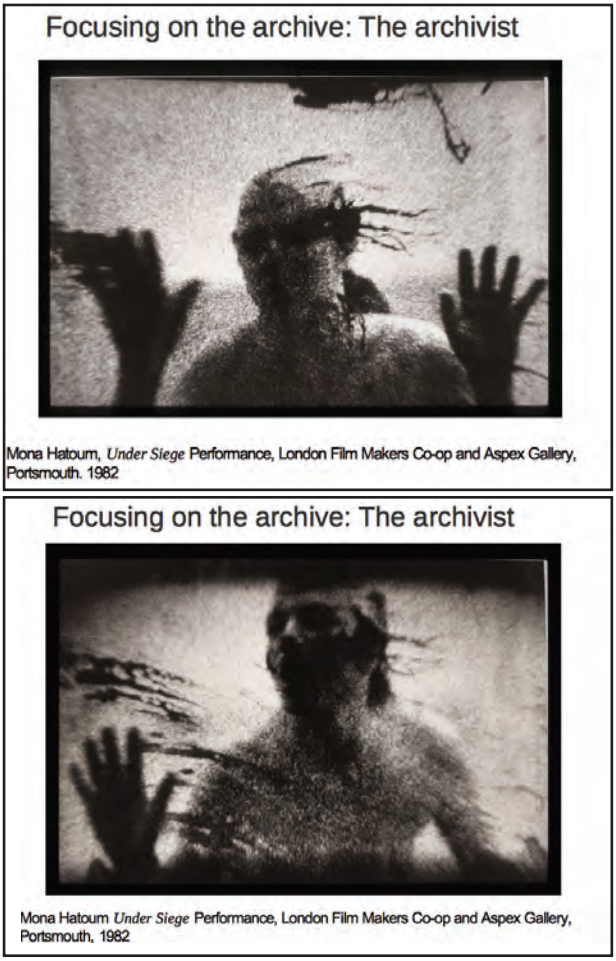
"Why WOCI? Inclusive"

I decided to call it "Women of Colour" because, when I was born, I think it said, it probably says 'Colored' on my birth certificate, and then I remember I was a negro, then I was Black, and then I was an Afro American (and as we all know that is a hairstyle) then African American, and now I think it was Black Woman of Colour. I thought: I don't care what you call me, because I have been called it before. Also I wanted a title that was inclusive as opposed to exclusive. I felt that way, I could fill in some of the gaps, Native American, Aboriginal women, you know I could collect a wide range of US artists."



SLIDE 6 Mona Hatoum

While Ego in her archiving role has been exploring the archives, she has found herself very much interested in the work of Mona Hatoum. Ego wasn't familiar with the work of Hatoum before entering the archives. All the slides here are originally part of the WOCI collection. Since Rita's departing from Goldsmiths in 1996, the slides and photographs have been absorbed into the main archival collection at the Women's Art Library (WAL).



SLIDE 7/8 Documentation

In these two images by Mona Hatoum, Ego responds to the work of the artist. Through looking at these images Ego wants a number of questions answered and she plans on exploring Hatoum's work over the year.

Ego's response...

"Mona Hatoum defining herself as Palestinian and a Turner prize nominated artist in 1995. The WOCI collection of artist files, covers a number of disciplines, photography, sculpture, painting, but performance art not so much, I believe that this makes for quite a unique file within the collection - also the idea of what remains of a performance or the traces of a performance is a two dimensional image."

She feels this changes the nature of the work. This ultimately is the only trace and documentation of the work.



SLIDE 9

Mona Hatoum, *Roadworks*, Performance, Brixton Gallery and the streets of Brixton. 1985

These other images fascinated Ego. These were performed by Mona Hatoum in early 1982 as part of the Brixton collective at Brixton Gallery and through looking at the archives, we realised that this is one of the few traces of that performance.

Ego is, "....interested in where the performance of Roadworks, 1986 took place in Brixton, and how the geographies of spaces like Brixton Art Gallery are relevant.

"Mona Hatoum, born 1952, her artist file is one of the more complete. It captures her soon after her period at the Slade and though she is less associated with performance today, her file includes her early period of performance art – in the form of photography..... Key provocative performance."

Ego then goes on to say, "Hatoum's file also includes, photos, invites, press, slides, group show info and articles. It is one of the most comprehensive artist files, including her biography."

On the subject of inclusion, Ego feels, "It's also one example of how broad and inclusive the collection is – Palestinian born in Beirut, non-white" and for Ego "it reflects a politics of solidarity that existed and was much *of* its time – and I feel feminism generally lacks this today - being able to see common ground rather than difference, above all else."



SLIDE 10

Gina Nembhard

One of the artist files that have interested me is the file of Maud Sulter. There are just a few slides representing her work in the actual WOCI archives.

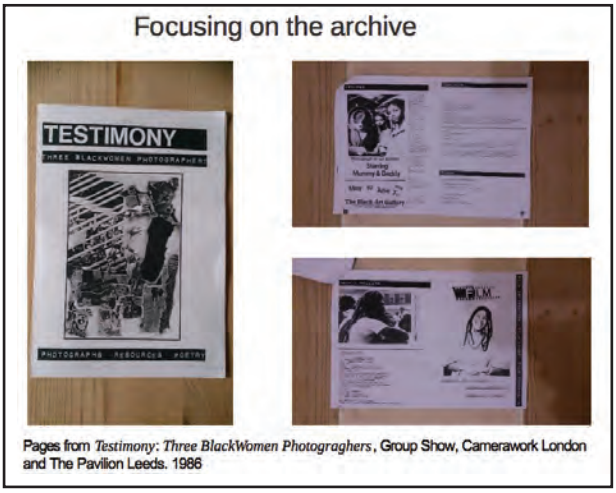
These two pieces of work from the group exhibition, 'Along the Lines of Resistance', selected by Sutapa Biswas, Nina Edge and Claire Slattery, artists who also have files in the archives, was a collaboration with Lubaina Himid and is an exploration into the family links and African diaspora.



SLIDE 11

Sulter who died in 2008, was a much respected artist and was seen as a key figure in the Black Arts Movement from the early 80s through to her death. And still today her legacy of questioning the western art historical narrative, is central in the work of many artists from a new generation.

A key aspect of Sulter's work was her involvement in a diverse range of disciplines. Sulter was an artist, photographer, curator, writer, publisher, poet and more and created the London-based gallery, Rich Women of Zurich.



SLIDE 12

In the archives there are other forms of documentation of Sulter's work and collaborations such as the work 'Testimony'.

Prior to the 1988 exhibition already discussed, in 1985 Sulter co-created 'Testimony', an umbrella project with an outreach programme. This was the African and Asian Visual Resources Project, which included 'Blackwomen's Creativity Projects', photography workshops led by Sulter, Brenda Agard and Ingrid Pollard.

The resources pamphlet within the collection shows what else was created by the artists for the exhibition and beyond. The pamphlet acted as a tool for creativity and included; a resources index, written pieces, photography and poetry.

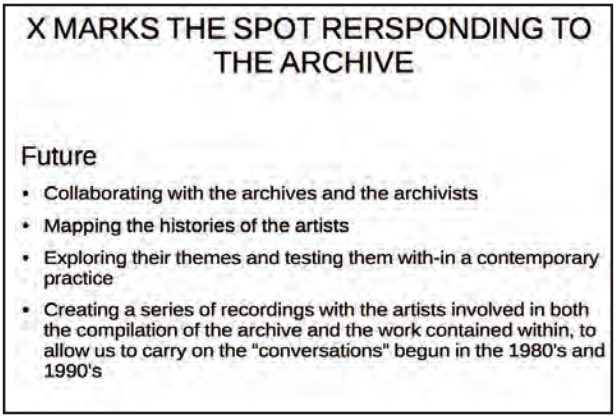


SLIDE 13

Sulter, like many other women artists of colour recognised the importance of documenting. In the archives you realise that Maud Sulter represents very well what a number of artists of colour did in the 80s and 90s. They realised the importance of the academic institutions and through exhibitions like 'Passion' which then led to Sulter editing an anthology made up of literary contributions and visual contributions. 'Passion: Discourses on Black Women's Creativity' a discourse was able to be had between the artists, the academics and the public. This book and exhibition was valuable for women's studies and black women's studies, as well as art, historically.



SLIDE 14



SLIDE 15


2011 Visit to the archives of Jo Spence
The Picture of Health?
DOUBLE EXPOSURE
THE MINEFIELD OF MEMORY

SLIDE 16

Bittiness, Art & Blackness: Musings on the fragmented history of black women artists in Britain

Amanda Holiday

When I first started to consider what contribution I could make to 'X marks the spot' in terms of black women artists and our history and visibility – I started to think about several things. Firstly, I considered the 'pockets' of black arts archiving that have emerged or disappeared mainly over the last 15 years in different places and also the lack of cohesiveness or communication between these various entities. Perhaps they are connected by particular people or artists themselves or itinerant researchers who go from one to the other?

I also started to consider the history that has been told about UK black women artists. Essentially there is a 'single' narrative about Black British political art of recent times that derives from the activities of the BLK Art Group of the mid-eighties – featuring Marlene Smith, Claudette Johnson, Sonia Boyce (who came along a little bit later), Keith Piper, Donald Rodney and Eddie Chambers (who has established a considerable personal archive). So much recent history of black British political artists emanates from this and is, to a large extent, 'the only story' told. My assertion is that there are other, equally important yet lesser known contributions to the cultural cannon particularly in regard to black women artists.

So 'Bittiness, Art, and Blackness' looks at the piecemeal way our histories have been told thus far, how we have been made invisible and also why we keep ourselves invisible. I'm going to explore this a bit and talk about certain figures – some of whom may or may not be key.

To start with, a quick overview of existing (Black) art archives at the moment. There's this one at Goldsmiths – a great initiative which currently seems to consist of photocopies and hopefully people are going to contribute to it. There is also Lubaina Himid's 'Making Histories Visible' at the University of

Central Lancashire. Himid has been a strong proponent of visibility of black women artists from the days of the Elbow Room in the 1980s and the Thin Black Line exhibition in 1985 at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA). The Thin Black Line was a key exhibition showcasing the work of numerous black women artists who are still working today. There is Eddie Chambers' archive in Bristol. There is also all the work being undertaken at Middlesex University under the guardianship of Professors Boyce and Goodwin etc. There was Boyce's previous collection AAAVA which presumably has now been subsumed into another archive somewhere. There is INIVA and also the Huntley Archives at Guildhall University currently showing the No Colour Bar exhibition. Then there are all the memorabilia, flyers, leaflets and letters kept under the beds and in the back of wardrobes of various practising and no longer practising black women artists up and down the country.

Key to this discussion is Maud Sulter - a well-known photographer who died of cancer in 2008. She had been the partner of Lubaina Himid for a number of years though they had separated by the time she died. In 2008, I was living in South Africa and was in email dialogue with a fellow artist Georgina Evans. The news was a shock because Sulter was a peer – our age more or less and also because news of her death only emerged after some time. Although she wasn't an artist who influenced me greatly, she was memorable and a vocal campaigner for black women artists' visibility. Mixed-race, dressing like Frida Kahlo, she cut a striking figure articulating confidently in her Scottish accent. I was moved more by her political passions than her art.

In recent years there have been various moves to unearth and resurrect particular black artists. Rotimi Fani Kayode - a photographer, who also died prematurely, left behind a huge body of work has had several posthumous exhibitions. Donald Rodney's legacy has been kept alive mainly by a band of artist friends.

On the other hand, for some time after Sulter died, it felt as though she had been swept under the carpet. I emailed Evans 'it's really weird how someone who was so involved in promoting visibility in her lifetime – could be so overlooked after her death'. Then when she was revived recently – that was also strange because it was as though the curators were bringing back someone completely different – creating a legend. So it is hard to try and sift and analyse these things and to try and be dispassionate when attempting to interrogate 'to what extent can an artist be excavated?' With regard to Sulter's resurrection in 'Passion', it is as though the reprinted works supersede her legacy as an artist and any ideas retained of her. Thus historical analysis complicates - there is so much that is erased, reinvented, reimagined, washed out or removed that we all become complicit in the lie.

Also, for black women artists, for the most part we have all been scrabbling around for crumbs of the cake really – scrabbling for a very small piece of cake.

Let me go back to the beginnings of my path into art. I was at Wimbledon School of Art from 1984 -1987 with another black art student called Mowbray Odonkor who I became very good friends with. Together we formed a black art student group that brought together dozens of people from across London. We linked up with another group of 5 black art students at Goldsmiths including Kimathi Donkor and Zarina Bhimji. We came into contact with Himid and we sought out numerous artists including Marlene Smith - who is now involved in the Middlesex research programme.

In the 1980s, there were numerous pockets of black art activity. There was the Black Art Gallery, The Elbow Room, The Bedford Hill Gallery and The Brixton Art Gallery with Rita Keegan at the Brixton Art Gallery and the Women Artists Slide Library. The Bedford Hill Gallery didn't really have any black person who was a key mover and a shaker there – but various figures such as Eugene Palmer sat on the Artistic Subcommittee at different times and so did I and also Yinka Shonibare was very connected to that

gallery. There was quite a lot of crossover. The Black Art Gallery was run by Marlene Smith under Shaka Deddi. The Elbow Room was managed by Lubaina Himid.

So all these years down the line – there are all these different and separate pockets and I don't know how much dialogue there is or sharing except perhaps at symposiums.

Recently I questioned how much was Himid involved in Sulter's resurrection? Does it matter? Is this the way history should be uncovered? Maybe it is not deemed 'serious' to cite personal history but then again relationships mould us and contribute to all our dialogues – and what we are about. For women artists, much of our lives have been caught up playing second fiddle to men or even women. I know some of mine has – and this can also be a way in which we are erased from history.

Another consideration in any discussion about 'missing pieces of art history' – is 'crossover'. There's actually a lot more crossover than has hitherto been discussed or acknowledged in terms of UK black art history. Here 'crossover' is a broad term used to describe any meeting points and connections between groups of artists considered 'mainstream' and those considered 'marginal' - between black and white - and between success and non-success. These connections may come via friendships, relationships, college attendance, the private view circuit & exhibitions etc.

In Sonia Boyce and David A Bailey's tome Shades of Black they contrast the key exhibition of 1989/90 'The Other Story' at the Hayward Gallery; a survey potpourri black art show with the infamous inaugural Freeze show in the Docklands that took place a year earlier in 1988.

It is an easy contrast to make but there was a lot more going on than the book uncovers. There were many more meeting points, friendships and interactions between those seemingly disparate groups of artists than

Shades of Black hints at.

To backtrack a little, I was on Foundation course in Leeds with Damien Hirst, befriended him and he came to various black art exhibitions with Carl Freedman who now runs a gallery. They both came to Young Black and Here curated by Mark Sealy at the Peoples Gallery in 1986. While Freedman wondered whether anyone would think he was black, Hirst, on the hustle, secured a Private View invite from Creon Butler for his father Reg's forthcoming retrospective at Gimpel Fils.

My exhibit in the People Gallery Show was a large crucifix called 'Black God' consisting of a triptych of three pencil drawn male heads positioned on a patterned totem on which I had stuck some wooden bird heads. During the curator's introduction, a bird head unexpectedly flew off the totem across the room. This was, Hirst declared, 'an omen'.

Hirst also visited the Black Art Gallery and visited me at Wimbledon at the time when our student group was underway. I'm sure he thought the black art student photocopied posters were a bit scrappy. Later, a contemporary of Hirst's at Goldmiths was Virginia Nimarkoh. These kind of things are not generally known about or written about. Donald Rodney accompanied me to the Young British Author's (YBA) inaugural Freeze show in the Docklands and was blown away by the chutzpah and the way these young student types were selling themselves - all very professional and glossy. Charles Saatchi came out because they had booked and paid for his taxi there. At that time, black artists weren't doing that kind of thing.

So there was a huge difference. I mean we were motivated by passions and political agendas more than anything – not about money and reaching the market and breaking the art world. And this is probably what has informed invisibility too.

For subsequent waves of black artists – the YBAs delineated a trajectory

of success. If they desired, they could dip into the black art gene pool. It became a guarded relationship - something that is covered by Eddie Chambers in his book Black Artists in British Art published in 2013.

So in any telling of history, particularly that of black women artists, it is important to clarify that the choices and the art we made was what we were compelled to make. We were another side of history; stories and exhibitions and parties and friendships and camaraderie – a huge web of it. We didn't get side-tracked into taking a 'loser' position in a game of life. And as we matured we wanted more, we changed our outlook perhaps and some of us even lamented the paths that our choices had put us on.

So that's all really – some thoughts on the process of archiving, history and what remains.

Hearing Our Voice

Elizabeth Williams

This is Elizabeth's response to the initial X Marks the Spot email, which was compiled of a set of questions setting the context for responses and contributions to the publication Human Endeavour*.*

We are writing to you as we hope you will consider making a contribution. The publication explores the Women of Colour Index collection (WOCI), held by the Women's Art Library (WAL) at Goldsmiths University, Special Collections. The collection is made up of individual artist files, slides, group shows and ephemera. The archive was collated by Rita Keegan, a multi-media artist, who was also involved in the creation of The Brixton Gallery and the 198 Gallery. The publication aims to highlight the collection, by making it accessible and visible through cataloguing and display of archival material from within the WOCI collection.

The archive is valuable to independent researchers, the educational sector, as well the artists themselves. The collection has art historical relevance, showcasing black women's art and its impact on contemporary art practice. The collection can also be seen to inhabit a space at the intersection of feminism and hidden black women's histories in Britain and Internationally during the 1980's – 1990s. The collection has not been added to since the late 1990's.

We are interested in commentary on the period within which the archive was put together or a response coming from present day.

X Marks the Spot would like to invite you, to join us in exploring some of the following:

Elizabeth Williams

Did you know about the Women of Colour Index?

Yes, due to the Women's Art Library (WAL)/MAKE curator.

What is the importance of the Women of Colour Index collection and its content?

The collection is an important record of the artistry of Women of Colour (WOC) and contribution to the Arts in the UK.

What is the relevance of Women of Colour artists and archives?

It is important to acknowledge their presence, to hear their voices and what they have to express about their experience of engaging in this society and beyond.

Do you feel representations of women of colour artists have changed/ stayed the same since 1980/90s?

I am not in the "Arts" world to make a full assessment, however from an amateur observer's viewpoint I feel there is still a long way to go in terms of WoC being foregrounded within all the art institutions and called upon to present and represent individuals. Invisibility is a significant problem. Ask anyone to name 10 WoC artists, they would struggle with even 5! Look at the programming of arts and cultural establishments, WoC are non-existent.

How do you engage with archives?

From a service provision level as well as a historical researcher.

How do you reenergise a forgotten/invisible archival collection?

Elizabeth Williams

Well planned events, and publicity, creating platforms to showcase the artist and their work. Connecting with key people in the area.

What is an archive to you?

A record of human endeavour.

These Little Transparent Jewels

Lauren Craig

My rationale was to project a slide show on to 16 Laurie Grove, the former Centre for Caribbean Studies, which has now been moved into the Warmington tower block, renamed the Center for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies. Keeping the integrity of the artists work at the heart, the show is not curated but constrained by which slides will show up best in their new home. They are in alphabetical order. Taking the literal meaning of diaspora the work speaks of the displacement of the centre. Similarly, the women artists in the Women of Colour Index and the archive have travelled to many homes as movement and migration defines the African Diaspora as a whole. On a micro scale, the work references the movement of people, talks about the lives of artists and people of the Diaspora in urban London. The use of projection talks about our (my) habits of projecting meaning onto archives, how this gives us a sense of presence for things that are absent, like validation and evidence of existence. Attention given to the second of silent space transition between artists slides, speaks of the links, relationships and precious interconnections.

When considering the aesthetics it was difficult to not start creating a new film or to start making animation with the collages. These works belong to the artists and I want to show them in the clearest way possible with a research context. Rather than heavily apply my curatorial framework, I played with the idea of the slides being little jewels, hidden gems and with organic qualities that I wanted to bring out. Visually exploring slides was a way of using technology to create images formed from the colours found in nature as opposed to digital colour which belongs to world of electronic pigments. The slideshow's transition slides set a rhythm creating my emerging sense of the lasting imprint these images have made on my own imagination, sense of creative heritage as well as creative future.

Lauren Craig

Untitled Jewels

21st Century Icons

#3

#4

"Who Nose" Collage *

Sit Down+Listen

Grace Is Going Places

Women of Colours

Home Owner

Musâlimûn for Clearing the Garden

She Loved to Breathe

Will Always Be Here

The Tower

Saris

As I Stood, listened and watched, my feelings were,

this women is not for Burning

Black 'female Hairstyles

Black 'female Hairstyles

Self-Portrait

Open The Doors

Visionary Self-Portrait

Crossover

Support System

Raga

Butterfly

-

Where does the British Black Belong?

Where does the British Black Belong?

Limpieza de Sangre / Purity of Blood

-

Lauren Craig

Over My Dead Body

Roadworks /performance

Unprepared

Shrine

17 August 1989

African Gardens: Romare Bearden (detail)

Peacock Feathers

Confrontation

#3

#5

#8 **

Encaustic

15

15 Detail

15 Detail

Afternoon Snooze

Woman in Sari

Sleeping Mum

Karoo and Strange Thoughts

Today is Like Twenty Strange Dreams and Too Many Dry Thoughts

Clariows of Thought ***

-

-

The House...

Innocence

Arrival

-

-

-

Presence

Constant Trans-formation

Identity in Production

Lauren Craig

Promise

Stream of Consciousness

Larded All With Sweet Flowers

Grace - Paula and Tony Dance

Erotica

Tony

-

-

-

No. 24

No. 25

#3

#4

-

No.28

No.28

Maid and Madam *

-

-

-

Self-Portrait Exaggerating My Negroid Features Vanilla Nightmares

Political Self-Portrait

Copper Head Goat

#11

#19

#50

Fight

Minna

The Black Light Series: Flag for the Moon: Die Nigger

Wedding II

The Prodigal Son *

#3

The Prodigal Son *

Lauren Craig

#3

A Tree in the Park

Greetings

Terrace Walk

Accessories

-

#2

The Sprog

#4 *

Krishna

Kali Eliminating A Demon

#1

#2

#3

Self Portrait

Self Portrait

Bearing Fruit III

#2

#7

#19

#20

Jesse Owens

Universal Unification

* = Work Titled Untitled

-= Work given no-name

#No = Number given to the slide by WASL / WAL / WOCI

(?) = Cannot read handwriting

Zhi Holloway



Zhi Holloway

CLASS

PAIN

SHAME

Zhi Holloway



Zhi Holloway



Zhi Holloway

Take Back Your Power

Memories Formed, Memories Made, Contributions Formed, Contributions Made

Ain Bailey

Where to begin with the creation of a text submission for the Women of Colour Index publication? As a sound artist/DJ my links, both creative and community, with various members of X Marks The Spot are various and longstanding. Initially I was panicked into having to dive headlong into the archive and find a way to situate my sonic practice with artists represented there. But there's another way to make those links visible and I'll tell you my particular story – and I'll be brief, as there will be other similar stories included in this publication, and hopefully room was found for everyone.

At some point in the late 1990s I met Ego Ahaiwe-Sowinski, who worked at Lambeth Women's Project. I was a subtitler. That was then. I'm going to forward to today - Ego is an archivist and I, as mentioned earlier, engaged in sonic work.

While our careers haven't overlapped – yet - our community engagement has. It's been an important part of my feminism that I was able to lend support to Lambeth Women's Project, right up until those last few boxes were packed. Pride of place in my flat is a Lambeth Women's and Girls Project sign.

Let's make the links. In the last months of LWP, protests were held in order to resist its colonisation. While the resistance in hindsight was worthy, alas LWP was faced with an immovable object which unfortunately could not be surpassed. Fuckers!

But in those days of protest, memories were formed and contributions to the LWP archive made. As I was learning my sonic craft I recorded one of the pot-banging protests, opposite Lambeth Town Hall, as a way of documenting the resistance to LWP's closure. Pot banging is a noisy

Ain Bailey



protest with origins in Chile and other Latin American countries, usually conducted by women. A battered pot hangs in my bathroom – another example of LWP's living archive.

The Pitch Sisters, a project made as part of the portfolio for my Masters degree at Goldsmiths, University of London, features many women who have passed through the doors of LWP. So, so many women! Women who have been facilitated by LWP, and who I hope do not forget this – though the horse may have bolted on that one. The resulting composition serves to remind us, certainly myself, of the urgency of our struggles – our voices.

Most of the members of X Marks the Spot, the group organising the Women of Colour Index, featured in The Pitch Sisters. In turn, I helped them create a radio jingle for a radio show about the artist Jo Spence, about whom they have done much important work.

But in making a direct link back to the Women of Colour Index, a special and sincere mention must go to Sonia Boyce. Artist extraodinaire. Woman of vision. And generous artist comrade. In 2010 Sonia invited me to collaborate on a project which stemmed from her Devotional archive - 'Oh Adelaide'. To date, this work has been shown at a variety of art and gallery spaces including Tate Britain, London; The Kitchen, New York and CCA in Glasgow, Scotland. Interest in the work continues.

Archives are very much of the now, and hopefully funding remains in place and is created for the development of future archives that record the lives of women, people of colour, queer and working class lives. For the most part when we think of archives, we might stereotypically imagine dusty letters, photos and the ephemera of an individual or an organisational life gathered in a haphazard way. In 2015, I attended 'The Black Subject: Ancient to Modern', a symposium looking at the Black presence in the visual art collection of the Tate Gallery in London. Discussion led to the question of how do we preserve our own personal archives for future

Ain Bailey

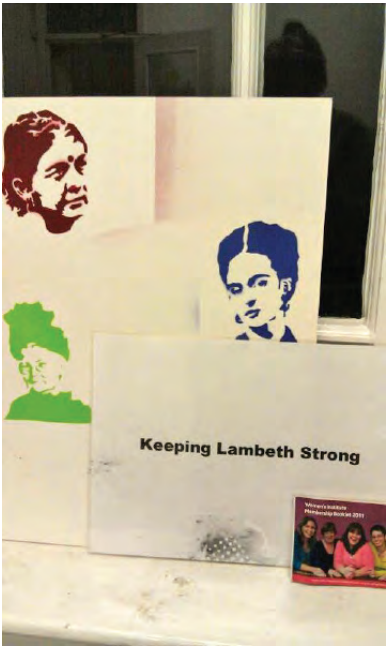




generations, and the importance in doing so. I'm not particularly organised enough in terms of my papers, but certainly it is interesting to think of both my personal music collection and compositions and associated ephemera, being preserved for anyone who might be interested in them in the future. And certainly to understand the journey that I have made as an artist, but also to perhaps illuminate the fact that if I can do this thing called art, so can anyone on the margins.

It's important to be visible, to share the work, the process, the real struggle of making the work. I'm interested in subjects that speak to my own subjectivity: being queer, black and female; issues of the outsider looking in. And enjoying that position. Of the other, of the hidden. These too are compositional strategies. And what incredible building blocks on which to create material.

In listing the aforementioned collaborations/formations, not as a woohoo look at me - self aggrandisement, I seek to highlight that in the formation of alliances and collaborations, and indeed through the struggles, both personal and political that we experience, that we can all endure. Indeed we truly are. Bring on the new formations!


Keeping Lambeth Strong


Room 4
LWP

Taking Charge

Humera Syed

I initially visited the women's artists library to do some research for an experimental theatre piece that I was involved in at the Brit School for Performing Arts and Technology as part of our graduation performance.

Visiting the archive enabled me to research artists work dealing with identity and migration. By looking through the library I was able to find inspiration and ideas to translate on stage, such as the use of objects. Once I had shared this idea with X Marks the Spot (XMTS), we were able to discuss ideas and share views which contributed to our final draft of the script. The use of objects played an important role in one section of our piece about transgender identity in which the character used fancy dress costumes from their childhood such as a builder's hat, a tutu, a cape and a bra. All of these objects are associated with different jobs, lifestyles or cultural icons. For example a cape would cunjure up memories of heroes such as Zorro or Batman.

My personal written piece explored ideas about how two cultures are pushed together and the effect this has on everyday life. For example I wrote about hearing the muslim call to prayer. Despite not being very religious this sound still evokes in me a sense of comfort and home. I also wrote about the prohibition of eating pork and turned this into a comedy sketch. For example, in the piece, my character is eating a bacon sandwich. To her horror a passer by comes up and says, 'Are you allowed to eat bacon? Are you allowed to eat pork? Is that not against your religion?' By using exaggeration in these lines, we created a humorous atmosphere. My piece was inspired by Sutupa Biswas and how she uses found and family images to portray her cultural identity and themes of migration. From looking at her work in the archive, I decided to write a personal piece about my own cultural identity entitled 'Golden Brown'.

Humera Syed

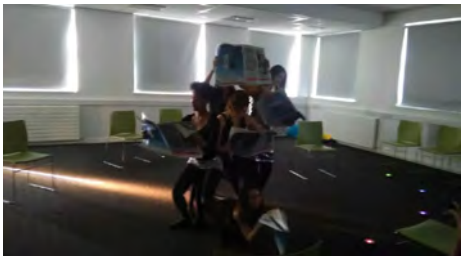
When visiting the archive for the first time, I was not sure what to expect. I did not know how it would be beneficial to my process or what knowlege I would gain. I had emailed Ego before my visit telling her of themes I was interested in. From this she selected certain artists folders for me to dig into. Not only was this extremely benificial to my creative proses but it also gave me an idea of how an archive works.

I first gained access to the archive through Ego who I had met at my mother, Alia Syed's 'Open House Studio' which was organised by SAWCC (South Asian Womens Creative Collective) in which many of her films were shown in various parts of our house. This was part of an event organised by Nazneen Ayub Wood with the intention of acquainting the general public with how artists live and make work.

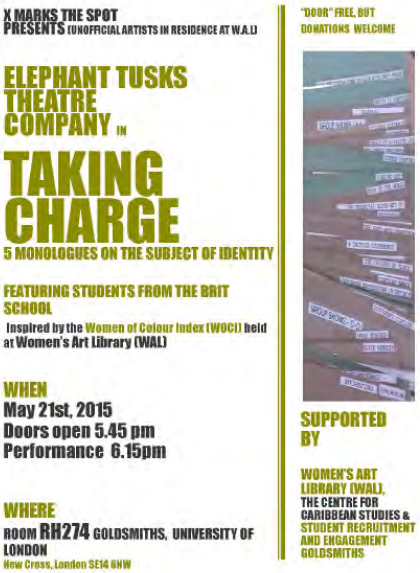
It was very interesting to hear my mother talk about her work as she had never explained her process to me in such depth before. I was only aware that she was busy making her films.

One of my first memories is of playing with the splicer which is a machine that enables you to stick two pieces of unrelated film together. Splicing tape is almost the same as cellotape and I remember really enjoying the sensation of pulling the tape over the bridge of the splicer. I particularly liked the sound of the blade cutting the tape. I used to sit on my mother's lap watching her film pass by on the Steinbeck. The images wizzed by and then stopped suddenly and ocassionally my mother would then allow me to make an actual edit by placing two pieces of film against the cold metal bridge and joining them together with the splicing tape. This everyday occurance was just another chore to get through in the day, but was exciting for me. These everyday objects that seemed ordinary to me as a child have now become things I associate with my mother and her work. This made me realise how the everyday can become magical in theatre and art.

After leaving the archive I met with members of our theatre group which we had named 'Elephant Tusks', to discuss our research and put together a script we were then ready to perform. We had invited Ego to see our performance at college and she then invited us to perform at the archive at Goldsmiths University. I went about discussing possible dates and spaces in which to perform. This process taught me how to organise a performance outside of a school setting and how to create a successful event.







Tweeting Through the Archive

Compiled by Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski

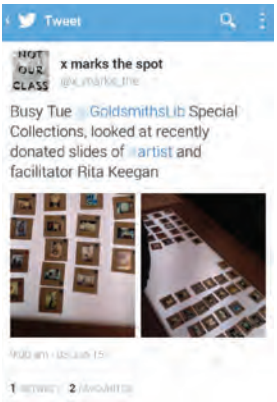


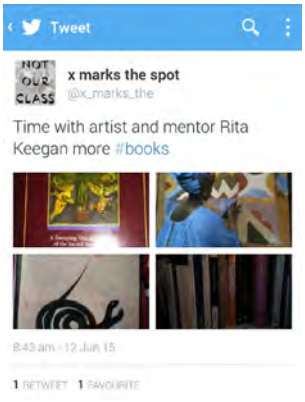


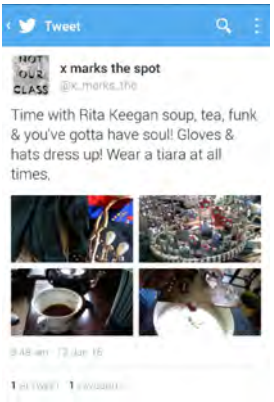









Tweet
x marks the spot
@x_marks_the
Time with artist and mentor Rita Keegan more #books
1 RETWEET 1 FAVOURITE


Tweet
x marks the spot
@x_marks_the
Time with Rita Keegan soup, tea, funk & you've gotta have soul! Gloves & hats dress up! Wear a tiara at all times.


Tweet
x marks the spot
@x_marks_the
Talked about understanding creativity, writing & publications, health, solidarity, diaspora, family, collage!
1 RETWEET 1 FAVOURITE


Tweet
Rai Kabir
@Rai_Kabir
@x_marks_the @qtipoc_CC @SYFUCollective @DarkMatterPoets So nourishing for qtipoc to have these conversations.. Great to take up space too.!
2 RETWEETS 3 FAVOURITES

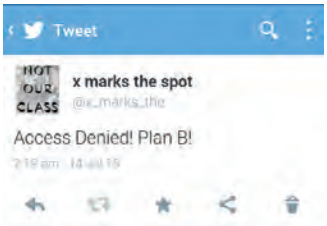

Tweet
x marks the spot
@x_marks_the
Zoe is dead long live Zhi!!!!!


Tweet
instant vintage74
@thoughtful74
"As a black person and a woman I don't read history for facts, I read it for clues" catalogue arrived @maudsulter
PLANTATION
MAUD SULTER
PASSION


Tweet
x marks the spot
@x_marks_the
Really happy to have received our copy of the @maudsulter catalogue! Last night we had our own "Summer Madness Rant"


Tweet
Heidi Safia Mirza
@HeidiMirza
Fab evening of radical black art and laughter with my black feminist sisters @nocolourbar @misschazmatazz @EQCentre
5 RETWEETS 12 FAVOURITES


Tweet
x marks the spot
@x_marks_the
Do the artists in the Women of Colour Index @WGCI know they are there within the collection? "I'm in the archive?" #ClaudetteJohnson


Tweet
x marks the spot
@x_marks_the
Access Denied! Plan B!


Tweet
instant vintage74
Artist versus Black artist? ...that is the question, listening to last nights thought provoking audio
#nocolourbar

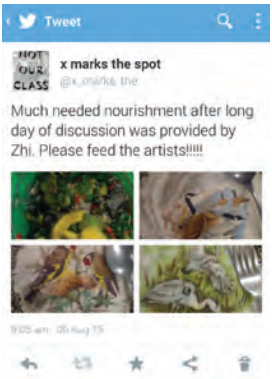

Tweet
x marks the spot
@x_marks_the
Cataloguing #WOCI Women of Colour Index #details #articles #archives


Tweet
x marks the spot
@x_marks_the
Cataloguing the Women of Colour Index #WOCI #groupshows #montage
Photos take a pasting


Tweet
x marks the spot
Linda King - extract from poem Hallaleuya: A Call to God, Please Help This Genius #cataloguing #WOCI


Tweet
x marks the spot
@x_marks_the
Finally out of the proverbial "K Hole" in cataloguing terms riding high in the M.
Andrew Gray PSK
@x_marks_the Mom!


Tweet
x marks the spot
@x_marks_the
This week XMTS were visited by #film #curator #writer Karen Alexander - explored the ? What is #WOCI? #artistfiles


Tweet
x marks the spot
@x_marks_the
Much needed nourishment after long day of discussion was provided by Zhi. Please feed the artists!!!!!


Tweet
x marks the spot
@x_marks_the
XMTS member Lauren Craig encouraged us to explore different #publication styles from #Goldsmiths Special Collections

Tweet

x marks the spot

#Artist Amanda Holiday got back to us "What's in my file?" - sharing #archives #artistfiles 1988-1992 #photocopies



9:18 am · 06 Aug 15

3 RETWEETS 3 FAVOURITES

Tweet

Amanda Holiday

@evan_ife @x_marks_the cor that's going back some! #MigrationDrawing

10:08 am · 06 Aug 15

1 RETWEET 2 FAVOURITES

Tweet

x marks the spot

@chispywispy @evan_ife we love your work tbt



10:17 am · 06 Aug 15

2 RETWEETS 1 FAVOURITE

Tweet

x marks the spot

@chispywispy @evan_ife more from your file...



10:19 am · 06 Aug 15

3 FAVOURITES

Tweet

Amanda Holiday

@x_marks_the @evan_ife feel like someone's been rummaging under my bed! #earlywork

10:20 am · 06 Aug 15

2 RETWEETS 2 FAVOURITES

Tweet

instant vintage74

Archiving Rita Keegan part I

Translate from Estonian



1:47 pm · 21 Aug 15

2 RETWEETS 2 FAVOURITES

Tweet

x marks the spot

Women of Colour Index artists in Transforming the Crown exhibition New York 1997 #archiving Rita Keegan #geography



7:56 pm · 23 Aug 15

5 RETWEETS 6 FAVOURITES

Tweet

instant vintage74

Good day working with Rita Keegan collective #curating #chronological #inspiring #selfless #livingarchive #decades



11:16 am · 28 Aug 15

1 RETWEET

Beyond the Glass

Lauren Craig

It was not long after I had published an article and blog piece for the Feminist Review (British Black Feminisms, issue 108) inspired by Professor Joan Anim Addo, we decided to compile this publication as X Marks the Spot. The idea of writing ourselves into history was strong in our minds. The writing was an internally empowering process and the publishing an externally powerful tool we used to weave ourselves into the material fabric that documents our lives. This is part of our methodology, applied to art and autobiographical writing, archiving and visual art practice.

In this publication we are responding to an archive created by black women artists (Rita Keegan et al) for black women artists and beyond. I see this as a historical moment for our collective. With this process we are challenging what archiving is and needs to be now in order to have an equitable framework that allows for cultural production from the African Diaspora to be as valued as it deserves to be, and to be curated and collated in a way that has a positive reflection on us and our impact on future generations. I am writing this piece to take this unique opportunity to share a little bit about my journey, starting with my personal archive to also say something about the artists and curators who have inspired me.

When nobody wants your autograph, it's a lonely place to be. There is no one that wants your signed work, the fact you have made something has no currency in the frameworks set up for art. You might as well not even exist, you feel like you are nobody. In the days I felt like this (not to say there are not some days now) writing was not an option. Despite my hard hat from home, I had taken on the negative labels given by the education framework that never even considered my kind. The

connotations had seeped through my soft skin. Black, women, disabled, poor and from a single parent home, fit only for vocational training, too airy fairy, not a fine artist. In retrospect, I am not surprised nobody wanted my autograph, because I didn't think it was worth anything myself. Not through dance or modelling did I find or send these fully confident messages. Even when creating an embodiment of these emotions they remained an internal shadow, something uncertain and unfinished. I needed to start to create my reflection, to reframe my vision and journey, then to look with honesty at my thoughts and - the hardest part - to share them with others.

Darkroom photography became my therapy, how I chased the voids, eased the pain and brought negatives to light.

Photography became my transitional tool, though my heart was heavy, disappointed by my subject, the social drivers to violent street crime. I was revolted by the state we were in and I felt that these images were stuck inside my head. Compelled to study, document and to evidence these atrocities I gained momentum from the people and purpose of the work. I didn't understand why it was only people but not institutions that were interested in these images. Not Autograph, not PYMCA. I thought this must have been because they were just not good enough. I would coo over the images and glossy books of Joy Gregory, Charlie Philips, Sunil Gupta, Neil Kenlock, Ajamu and of course Ingrid Pollard, thinking why not mine? I know now that is takes patience and experience to let the dust settle on trauma, when you are trying to prove to the world that something hurts you, some how the pain tastes better, more easily digested by others when it can be turned down. The desperation to be recognised and accepted can cloud the work - and let's face it - it's ugly.

My archive became my vehicle of transmutation, as I somehow started to make a chronological order from the images, separating analogue from digital, creating a throne for my slides. Making contact sheets for

each page of each volume gave me a sense self-importance. I needed to imagine that the images were of value, that they were telling stories that some day people will want to hear, that the people who had lost lives themselves, or friends or family were important. That these lives were at the very least equal, if not of more value then most of images we are bombarded with everyday. I needed to believe that it was possible. In some way the archiving developed some sense of ego, just enough not to give up, but to preserve the work. Because it had been treated carefully, this work became precious even though nobody had seen it and certainly didn't care whether it was signed by me or not.

I started to document the faces and behind the scenes for artists, designers and musicians of whose autographs hundreds of thousands of people wanted. I used the money I made to buy equipment to work with people who had experienced loss through violent street crime. I called this therapeutic process Petal Tank. I learned to contextualise this work through Jo Spence's archive while XMTS was in residence at Studio Voltaire as part of the programme - Not Our Class - revisiting Jo's work. Her collaborative practice with Rosy Martin and Terry Dennett along with her exploration of health and wellbeing continued to impact the photography made in response to Judith Hopf's Testing Time also at Studio Voltaire. I also began the work Art Cleanse, the first of a series of performative installations called 'Cleanse'.

I think the struggle between wanting to hide and file yourself away to be discovered later, set down, right up against the urge to share your vision is what led me to develop my own gallery/therapy/garden/shop space in Granville Arcade, now known as Brixton Village. Situated at an intersection with a triple-glass frontage with 3 doors and an open-door policy, the space was called 'Field'. In some ways the whole thing was an installation. The space allowed me to develop my curatorial practice by developing a framework where I laid out Art, Fashion, Complementary Therapies, Plants and Floral Installation with open space for people to

contribute. There were various artists, community groups and design ers showing their work and collaborating over a nine-month period. My themes were looking at the rhythm of social change in Brixton and what gentrification meant for us local artists.

I dug into my own archive and presented Petal Tank, an installation featuring auto-ethnographic mixed media sculpture and photography. Contributions to other installations like, Hybrid, came in through the doors, the most memorable to me was Cliff Hanger, a series of 7 imaginary inner landscape drawings on everyday envelopes, contributed by artist Paul Jones RCA - people just wouldn't stop looking at them. Even people that didn't like the look of me running a gallery space, had to get over themselves and came over the threshold. From this show Paul has become a mentor, teacher, inspiration and a friend. The spirit of a true artist, his kindness led to our collaborative sculpture, Heal, Transform, Unite (one of its titles) being my first piece of work to be acquired for the inspirational Eden Project's permanent collection.

'Field' was the place of many friendships. It was also where the 'Cleanse' series began; I was contemplating social cleansing, spiritual cleansing and dietary cleansing. One highlight was being able to offer therapies to the local communities. I had been a qualified therapist for just over two years and I was as keen to practice the healing arts as visual art and performing. It was not long after closing the space I went to learn Afro-Brazilian dance in Salvador, Bahia, licking my wounds from not being able to be part Brixton's new creative class. Then the real healing began. I deepened my knowledge of African dance, painting and floral offerings (installation) inclusive of healing as I mourned the changes in Brixton and so much of London.

The photographic archive is still my treasure trove and I see it as a place where unfinished business lives. Photography was a way of developing a visual language not only to speak with others but to find a form for my

ideas and feelings, to process my emotions, heal from the past and to imagine my future. These photographic elements are still strong in my work and have evolved into projections, such as the slideshow of 35mm transparencies from the Women of Colour Index that accompanies this publication alongside the texts, 'These Little Transparent Jewels' and 'Untitled Jewels'. I must say that each week I grew closer to the slides, the nights spend at the light box, looking in through the window on the rest of the group. It has most definitely inspired me to return to the medium and focus on shooting slides.

Dance has morphed into performative elements within my installations to create alter egos like Aura Limpo and the High Priestess in Training and others. Floral installation has become more itinerant and includes ceramic vessels that flowers can be kept in for movement, alongside the tools we use for the healing arts. My auto-ethnographic research of the Ancient Egyptians came from my participation in a curation and exhibition project for the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology called 'Fusion of Worlds: Ancient Epypt, African Art and Identity in Modernist Britain', co-curated by Dr. Gemma Romain and Dr. Debbie Challis. This gave me a greater taste for the objects especially bronze measures with their ritual and ceremonial context, as well as an interest for how this was integrated into the every day. Commissioned by the Petrie Museum I produced, Modern Measures: Holding Pouring Stirring 2014. This 4-hour performative installation allowed the alter ego of the High Priest in Training, to engage the public of Malet Place in an exploration of everyday rituals - like the burning of resins - composing offerings using semi-precious stones and taking time to reflect. My research included responding to the museums vessel collection including the contextual design of a 34 piece contemporary ceramic herbal medicine making kit thrown by Andy Willcocks. These pieces became part of the performance and have continued to do so in two other pieces commissioned by the Petrie Museum, Please Don't Rob The World of Your Light, 2014 and Secret / Sacred, 2015 and further works: We Don't Do That You Hear,

Barbados 2014 and a piece commissioned by the British Museum for Soul of Egypt, an opening event for the Egypt: faith after the Pharaohs December 2015.
Now I want to share a little bit about other artists inspiring me at this present time. I need to talk about Jeanette Elhers! Simply because I will never forget this show. Whip It Good: Spinning From History's Filthy Mind, 20th April 2015, Rivington Place. And I never remember dates. It takes a lot to command a space, to allow strangers to join you in the making, to relinquish the ego and to accept the gestures of others. I was attracted by the artist's confidence and how she made collaborative, what looked to be seven foot paintings through the guided actions of the participants. These were shown for seven weeks and made a powerful show of the spiritual significance of the number 7. It was the last of the seven days of Ehlers's action painting performances; I had been meaning to go all week.

The gallery was packed, so much so that people were spilling out into the street. Jeanette had painted her body white like a Haitian voodooist revolutionary and stood brave, strong in potent command and conviction. The whole process was filmed, from the moment she asked participants to, "Please help me finish the painting," to the dousing of the black leather whip in charcoal before striking the canvas with the whip. I was relieved to be watching from outside. I saw the stressed, troubled contemplation and reluctance in people's bodies, how they grimaced as they struck the bare white canvas with the whip. In their posture I saw shame, grief and silent, almost meditative self-examination.

The artist glared in my direction, while her entranced body moved towards me with the poise and strength of a dancer. I was convinced it would not be me she was looking at, as I am rarely chosen for anything. But, sure enough, as I moved my eyes her eyes moved too. "Is it me she's calling for? No, it is the lady next to me, surely." From beyond the glass she offered me the whip. I heard the words, "I summoned you," her

body spoke to mine. You remember why you are here, of course it is you I am looking at, who else is going to do it? It was my turn.
Both Gina and Ego were there. I felt supported. The gallery staff and participants all made adjustments to accommodate me and the others that followed. As I stepped in the silence struck my back, my shoulders cowered in to protect my heart from embarrassment. I cannot strike that canvas, that white body, the memories and markings on it too deep. I could only dance. As I struck the canvas my back shuddered again and again. In this three-stage turn the word trans-mute-ation came to me. I viewed my dance as the all, drawing up the actions of participants as a collective body, while the painting transformed the pain and turned down its bright harsh scrapping colours.

Although Elhers says her inspiration comes from the horrific whipping scene in Steve McQueen's 12 Years a Slave in the Haitian Voodoo tradition, the cracking of the whip is said to disperse unfriendly spirits during the initiation ceremony, Kanzo. There are also rites that involve gunpowder for the Petro Loa, a group of spirits known to be angry and unhappy about the harsh conditions of slavery. The charcoal reminded me of the gunpowder when Elhers loaded the whip for the explosion on the canvas. I think the work contributes a muted question of value to the art world. I see the black whipped white canvas challenging the systems, structures and power, every time, asking questions about the present value of the whipped bodies they represent. I am intrigued by the trace the work will make when and if it is sold. Whose hands will it pass through? Into whose collections? How will it appear in the Autograph archive?

This experience moved me to want to make more visual work related to my performative installations, to make drawings, paintings, to take more photographs, to project more images. During the time of this writing I was awarded a bursary to join the Curating Conversation 2015, convened by Karen Alexander, the curator of Whip it Good. I aim to use

the programme to find pathways for the works and artists I need to see in the world; to bring about the shows in my head. This programme is delivered in partnership with Autograph. I had a nervous laugh to myself as I signed the contract. I thought, just how easy it is to project your feelings of rejection, displacement or loneliness on to others, an archive or institutions. I also thought how participating in a collective involves owning your shortcomings alongside the comfort in the things you bring. It's not perfection, finished or fully formed, but I have found it is a much more harmonious place to share from.

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The Archive: Apron, Memory, Narrative and the Photograph

Sireita Mullings-Lawrence

No archive arises out of thin air. Each archive has a 'pre-history', in the sense of prior conditions of existence... Stuart Hall

The archive is said to be an accumulation of historical records or the physical space where such records are held. They are also where memories are stored and where history is made. Archives give context to life, they are a repository of knowledge that documents what is important. Here I will explore the ways in which archives feature in our daily lives, and share how I have come to experience archival material as a researcher, arts practitioner and photographer. I begin with a conversation held with artist Rita Keegan and juxtapose my awareness of her interest with genealogy as seen through art and craftsmanship against the making of my own genealogy which draws upon the significance of memory, narrative and photograph.

The Apron

When I went to visit Rita Keegan at her home in Vauxhall, I wanted to learn about the Black Arts Movement. I wanted to know if she was a member and what it meant to be a part of such a movement. During our conversation she shared her insights, I noticed the collection of aprons mounted on her kitchen wall. The curation intrigued me, and Rita explained that the aprons belonged to her family. She managed to collect the aprons of her female ancestors. Here the archive exists not in the form of a photograph taken by the visiting researcher, but as a tangible collection of what appeared to be more than six beautifully crafted items each bearing its own human history. What I saw was a series of stories that live in the form of woven fabric, which exists as a construct of social life. It is this social fabric which forms not only a backdrop to Rita's history but forms part of her personal archive. The constructing of social fabric in any format is itself an archive, however

an archive exists beyond the tangible objects found in everyday life and is generated through life's experiences. How we come to choose what is important or what should be valued and shared in the privacy of home or publicly with others, occurs by way of the significance we attach to an experience and the meaning we apply to key moments. Significance and meaning is stored in our memories and often transposed via visual and oratory narrative through a vehicle of emotions.

Memory object and narrative

Ever since I can remember, well from the time I was able to count and proudly tell the world how many siblings I have, or from "mi eye de a mi knee", I like most of us have been building an archive of my family which has been logged in my memory. Anyone who records and logs their family members be it via a document made in the format of a family tree, a collection of objects, a series of photographs or a mental note of who belongs to who, creates a genealogy with new additions.

Likewise the stories belonging to Rita's mother and grandmother are attached to her aprons and are stored in her own memory which contributes to the construction of her social fabric. Although there may be aspects of the puzzle or story missing, by this I mean that it's not possible to capture all of the narratives that exist, in one given moment however, what is essential is how information passed on to us about our families can be stored and accessed through objects as well as from our memories.

Having been told that there are five of us, my younger brother Derrick and myself lived in Manchester, Dionne and Damion lived in London and my eldest brother Dean, well I didn't know where he lived. Although the puzzle to where all my siblings were located was incomplete their existence lived with me in memory. It was during family gatherings that the story of Dean, as my father's eldest child who got up to mischief, and not knowing where he was would reinforce the fact that I had four siblings despite having

never met him. In this case the archive is not necessarily tangible. Multiple memories of our growing up are often housed and triggered by various things from films we watched to music we listened to, the food we loved the food we hated, and the clothes we had to wear. The point here is that memory is not the only storage space for what we come to recognise as special or significant to our growing up. These moments are also stored in everyday objects that form pieces of our past and present - they form our archives. What's interesting is the way we access some of our fondest memories through such objects. So an object that has become archived acts as an access point to narratives, some of which are stored in memory, therefore memories and narratives are embedded within the object.

In 2011 my sister Dionne came across some notes she made from a conversation with my father before he passed away. She called me saying "Remember when we were about 16 we bumped into dad on Coldharbour Lane and I asked him the name and address of Dean's mother and his older sisters. Well!" she said "I had written it all down in my diary that day and I am sure we can use this information to find our brother Dean". The notes which Dionne archived held multiple stories. The story of a conversation with our father, the story of a family elsewhere and the notes of names and addresses gave significance to the idea and possibility of making contact, which creates a platform for another story.

We were able to locate our brother and the internet's ability to access information via online profiles can not be ignored as a living and moving archive. Had it not been for 192.com we would not have got a lead on the whereabouts of Deans family. Facebook gave us access to relevant email addresses and we were able to confirm some of our questions such as is he still alive and what does he look like? For each question we were able to gather material that provided us with an answer. What began as a story about an additional sibling which travelled around with us in our memory and accompanied by photographs, became activated by way of a set of notes. It was from these initial notes that we are able to make new and

additional notes that gave greater context to who my brother is and exactly where he was.

Finding Dean was the beginning of additional stories that we were yet to collect. There was the story of why his name was changed from Mullings to Herbstreit. We learnt about an amazing man from Germany - Mr Herbstreit who raised him as his son. We also learned of our two new nieces, Megan and Breanna.



Therefore the archive in this sense is not fixed but is constantly changing. As Stuart Hall argues in "Constituting an Archive" (2001) that the construction of a "living archive" must be seen as "an on-going, never completed project" (89).

The Photograph as archive

As in Rita's collection of aprons which for her serves as reference to her female ancestry, they have been selected as they are significant to her. I am taken to the photograph, although if a photograph of the aprons had been made it would only provide partial insight to the true meaning of the aprons as they relate to Rita. Rita's archive, once photographed would no doubt document the work of the artist, but the photograph would only partially communicate the alter-narratives that live in each apron. Recently Rita informed me that the aprons have been made into prints. None the less they would reveal, as a collection, the intention of the artist which is to document her ancestry through crafted objects. I say partial for the simple fact that a photograph is not a fixed object that merely references or documents a particular moment in time. The photograph of any aspect of life serves as a means to elicit dialogue into the multiple and fluid stories that are embedded within any image.

The importance of the photograph as an archive is what I want to bring into focus here. Not in the sense of a photograph living merely as a document to an event or series of events or an image of an object but the way in which a photograph goes beyond the possible stories embedded within the image. When we sent our first email to Dean asking him to confirm if he had ever lived in the UK and if he was born in Manchester, we followed that email up with a series of images of him as a child that had been collected from both of our parents. He responded swiftly asking who we were and how it is we came to have these photos of him.

The photographs created a common ground for our initial discussion

and confirmed our relationship. The image in the top left is my father Derrick Dean Robert Mullings. The child is Dean and his mother Jennifer in the background. He had never seen this photograph before, nor did he remember the day, however he recognised his mother and himself as a child.

The memories of my siblings have been reinforced through the images in my mother Reita's photo albums as well as the albums of Dionne and Damion's mother aunt Carol. The photos captured us as children at each other's birthday party, however Dean was never present. Yet, as seen in the top right photo, he is on his own celebrating his birthday with my mum, grandmother and my mother's friend Grace Brikett.





Dean remembered the photograph of himself as seen in the bottom left images with our uncle Bradley Mullings, he also had a copy of the same image.

Sireita Mullings-Lawrence





Through the photograph our brother lived with us for over thirty years until we met in 2012 when he became more than a photographic representation of our eldest brother. It was during this time that we shared images of other members of our family which included our grandmother Phylis, our Aunt Angela as a child and our great grandparents Mr and Mrs Hacker. As seen in the bottom left image they sit with three of their six children. I recently learnt that many Hackers arrived in Westmoreland, Jamaica during the 18th century, in a place called Seaford Town, where I will carry the photo as a means to learn, unravel, capture and share more archival material.





Sireita Mullings-Lawrence

The photograph as an object, houses multiple archives in the format of memories and narratives that can be accessed simultaneously. The photograph is one of many modes through which we are able to collaborate, collate and extend those significant moments in life by sharing them as living and historical archives.



From left to right Dean Herbstriet, sireita Mullings, Dionne Mulling, Damion Mullings and Derrick Mullings.

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Sireita Mullings-Lawrence



FAMILY HISTORIES:
eating with our memory
sleeping with the ancestors

RITA KEEGAN

You are invited to the private view
on Tuesday 13th October 1998
6.30 pm - 9.30 pm

Exibition starts 14th October - 31st October
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cover illustration - Apron Strings computer generated prints 1998
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The Re-invention of the (Self) Portrait

Mystique Holloway

Prior to the 'In Conversation' event with Terry Dennett, members of the X Marks the Spot group were asked to bring questions and views on a topic relating to Spence's work. I was given the "reinvention of the portrait".

"Mystique - re-invention of the portrait thinking about photography, Jo's work, other artists we have looked at, the workshop, own work e.g Mystiques photography - ask Terry a few questions in relation to Jo's re-invention of the portrait".

I began by trawling a great book *Auto-Focus: The Self Portrait in Contemporary Photography* By Susan Bright.

This book is packed with a diverse range of self-portraiture from all over the world divided into groups including 'The Body', ' Masquerade' and 'Autobiography. I swiftly realised that Spence's work could be comfortably placed in anyone of these chapters, the span of her work being that broad. As I was to also talk about my own 'work', I began to think about how that could be categorised or defined. Being able to define one's own work is almost as important as the work itself and has been my bugbear for some time.

Coming across the work of Dita Pepe and Trish Morrissey, I thought about Spence's work with the family album. Morrissey and Pepe insert themselves into existing family groups to (re)create the family photograph and in so doing exploring their expected place in this institution. Others such as Sunil Gupta and Hannah Wilkie have explored their own illness through the lens making images from the inside looking out, contrary to the usual objectification of the 'patient'. I had no way of knowing if any of these artists are familiar with the work of Jo Spence but I could not help but feel,



Sweat, Tears, The Sea - details 1, 2, 3

as she was working some 30 hence, her influence has trickled through as it does in the art world.

For myself, I first came across Spence when working on a project using family photographs. It was reassuring to find a theoretical basis to my very personal practice. Returning to what to write for the 'In Conversation', I revisited the personal and looked at my own picture taking/making. When I began taking pictures, for anything other than a commemorative snapshot, I turned the camera on myself.

As a Communications student, I had been given a project titled 'Public and Private'. I may as well have been given the title 'Life', for the possibilities held within these words seemed as great as existence itself. While other students asked friends or fellow students they liked the look of to sit for them, I, a shy and socially uncomfortable undergraduate, didn't have the confidence to do this and so turned the camera on myself. I had a ball. A collection of wigs and clothing I had used for performances as a dancer were put to use in the studio. I created characters and scenarios and tried to capture then with a single fill lamp and 35mm B/W stock. At the time I thought I was being 'odd' and not doing what I was supposed to. Little did I know I had just become part of a gang of photographers who dress-up, put themselves in front of the lens and very importantly control the shutter.

Jo Spence often worked in collaboration when making self-portraits (which may sound oxymoronic). However, turning the traditional dynamic of sitter and photographer on its head put the person in front of the camera rather than the one behind in control of the image. For example, Cindy Sherman sometimes had a second person hit the button on the camera to release the shutter, yet she is most definitely the author of the work.

As has happened throughout this project, my initial forays into exploring the re-invention of the portrait took me in unexpected directions. Ana Mendieta is an artist we also looked at and through her, I came across

Damali Abrams, Adrian Piper and Linda Mary Montano whose performances, art/life counseling and health issues hold parallels with Spence's work and life. This project has once again broadened my horizons and encouraged my own practice.

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‘LIVING ANCESTORS’ and the Lost Portraits 2nd June 2015 at the Women’s Art Library

Gabrielle Le Roux

The invitation from Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski provided the opportunity to talk publicly for the first time about the recent and very raw loss of “Living Ancestors,” ten portrait drawings I did in 2001 in the island of Dominica of women over the age of a hundred. It was my first body of work, the first time I was trying out the idea of combining my self-taught passion for drawing portraits from life with the stories of the people portrayed.

As an activist I developed this idea as a way to centre the stories of people whose lives and contribution were immense in their communities, and largely unknown outside of them. I went on afterwards to develop the concept further over the following years and to work in increasingly collaborative ways.

The opportunity to meet and draw ten women over the age of a hundred was life-changing. It readjusted forever my own understanding of ageing. To sit on the bed of Elizabeth Pampo Israel in 2001 who was born in 1875 and who was still as sharp as a knife at the age of 126, and have her neighbour Rose Peters who was 118 look at the portrait I’d drawn of her and say I’d made her look a little bit old…these experiences made me understand some things differently.

The loss of the work is devastating - the circumstances of its disappearance straight out of a B grade movie. On the one hand I wanted to talk about it and on the other I dreaded it. By inviting me to talk about it Ego acknowledged the importance of the work and helped me come to terms with the reality of the loss.

I appreciated that what also came out of the discussion were thoughts on how to make the work continue to live in the absence of the originals. Ego

and Ain Bailey could not have been kinder and created not just a space to share the work itself but very intentionally in her introduction, Ego acknowledged that I was grieving and that the people who had gathered to listen should bear this in mind in the way they engaged with me around the work. This approach is very different to anything I had previously experienced on a public platform. It was a very healing approach.

The event felt very intimate and was an opportunity to meet some wonderful people. Thank you for creating such a supportive and kind environment.

The Other Women's Art Group (OWAG) was established in a local pub on 21 May 2015, after Humera Syed's Performance, Taking Charge*. The members are:*
Gabrielle Le Roux
Ain Bailey
Gina Nembhard
Miriam Sampaio
Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski

GO WRITE HER ARTICLE: a blatant attempt to recruit you to Wikipedia

Kelly Foster

GO WRITE HER ARTICLE is the handwritten instruction glaring down at me from a neon pink post-it note above my desk. I am a Wikipedian, one of the faceless army of volunteers who edit and contribute to the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia. In my case, I usually edit Wikipedia at home from my ancient and noisy laptop whilst swathed in a fluffy leopard-print dressing gown. The post-it note is my attempt to control my habit of procrastination and a reminder to bring wider attention to the histories of women who look like me.

When I was first asked to contribute to this finding aid it was suggested that I do a "how to" guide - but really, who wants to look at pages and pages of screenshots. So instead this is my attempt at blatant recruitment. I want you all to GO WRITE HER ARTICLE. For the 'how to' check the links at the end of this piece.

We live in an information age. Every time I buy a new book my mum asks "Ain't that on the internet, Kel?" Well, no Mum it ain't. My Mum isn't unique in expecting access to all information to be just a Google away. Type a query or name into Google's search box and we expect a succinct, accurate and unbiased answer to be produced on the screen. But the content doesn't just appear there by magic - someone has to create it.

I'm an OG (Original Gangster) in the internet game. I remember the days of shrill modem bleeps, Geocities, Compuserve email addresses and a time when teachers warned their students off the weird, text-dense and usually inaccurate pages of Wikipedia. Wikipedia came to life in 2001, envisioned as a repository for the sum of all human knowledge. Yes, that's ALL HUMAN KNOWLEDGE. Today it's the 7th most visited website in the world, Google being number one, of course. Wikipedia's pages are almost always

the first or second result of a Google search.

In fact Wikipedia is a vast voluntary project with around 125,000 active editors in any given month. They give their own time to research, write and correct the millions of pages on the website. Wikipedian's usually create articles about things that are important to them, things which they may have an interest in or some level of expertise. The average Wikipedian is a young, technologically savvy, white, English-speaking man living in a majority Christian country in the Northern hemisphere. Oh, and they tend to have significant amounts of free time. Editors whose time is filled by other activities, such as full-time work or caring for others are underrepresented.

All of this leads to a SYSTEMATIC BIAS so significant that it has its own Wikipedia page[1]! A 2011 survey found that only 8.5% of editors are women. And generally women editors leave earlier than men and the articles they contribute tend to be shorter. This goes some way to explaining why there are lengthy articles on Battleships and individual episodes of Seinfeld.

Wikipedia is a territory resource, a fancy way of saying it relies on information that has already been published in some form. Therefore the website tends to replicate the already existing gender gap and racial bias founding in mainstream publishing. So the place that is attempting to capture the sum of ALL HUMAN KNOWLEDGE is missing the experiences and contributions of most of the people on this planet.

So WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT? I think you already know the answer to that one... GO WRITE HER ARTICLE. If you notice that someone or an organisation is missing from Wikipedia or the internet in general. GO WRITE HER ARTICLE!

That was my motivation for starting the article for Pearl Alcock. I had heard rumours, folklore even, about a Black women who lived in Brixton and ran a shubeen (an unlicensed bar) that was a favourite haunt of the local gay

community in the 1980s - oh, and she was also an artist who was exhibited at the Tate. Once I was able to find her name I began to piece together a short biography, using resources such as newspaper articles, published oral histories and exhibition catalogues, the article incorporated all aspects of her life from her migration from Jamaica as a young woman to her recognition as a celebrated Outsider artist when she reached her sixties. It took a few days and a visit to the British Library but I was able bring more visibility to her story and her work.

Now I'm working on an article about Rita Keegan the artist and archivist who was the founder of the Women of Colour Index. A Wikipedia article is never finished, once it's published it continues to grow. I have to remind myself to suppress the urge for things to be perfect before I make it public and to GO WRITE HER ARTICLE.

The press cuttings, exhibition catalogues and ephemera that make up the WOCI are an indispensable resource in bringing their work and their stories to wider attention. And that doesn't only have to be via academic journals and scholarly monographs - it can also be done by Black women in south London tapping away on an ancient laptop while swathed in a leopard-print dressing gown.

Don't get me wrong writing the stories of British women artists of colour can be time consuming work. However, Wikipedia presents an opportunity to write history as it's never been written before.

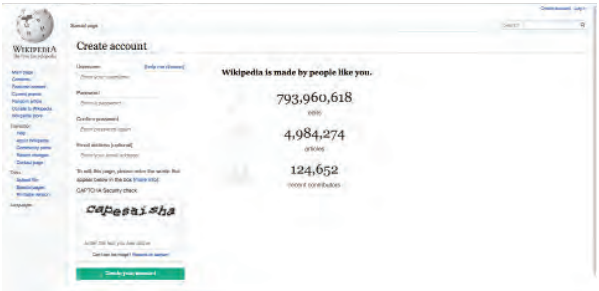
In a 1987 interview[2], Rita said: "If you don't document yourself, nobody else is going to do so. A photocopied sheet is better than nothing." Almost thirty years later the photocopied sheet has been replaced by a webpage on one of the most popular websites in the world. If you don't GO WRITE HER ARTICLE who will?

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Systemic_bias
[2] Rendell, C, “Actual Lives of Women Artists - Rita Keegan”, Women Artists Slide Library Journal, (Oct/Nov 1987): Pg, 10-11

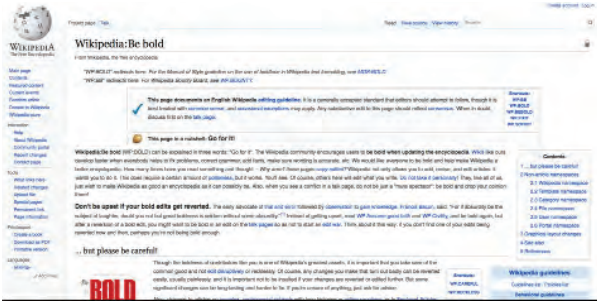
Need some help to start editing? Drop me a line at: foster.kellyann@gmail.com I’m happy to help.

Some tips on editing Wikipedia

*Create a user profile
You can edit without a user profile, but it’s best practise to create a profile.

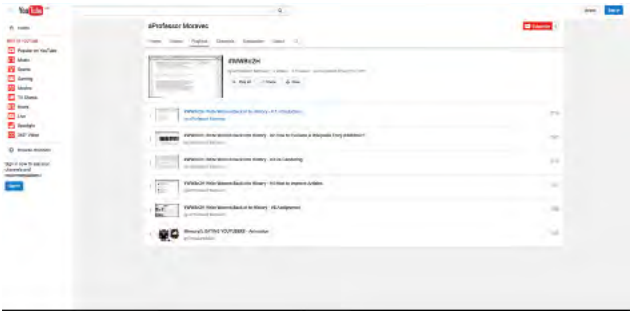


*BE BOLD!
Number one guideline of Wikipedia - Go for it!



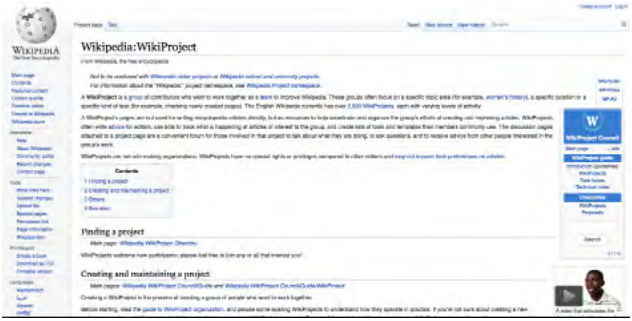
Kelly Foster

*How to edit Wikipedia
Prof Moravec's video series "Write Women Back into History" explains it much better than I ever could.



*Create a stub
It doesn't have to be perfect, a short article can always be improved on later.

*Join a Wikiproject
Work together with other Wikipedians. "One one coco full basket" as my Grandmother would say. I'm a member of WikiProject Women's History and WikiProject African Diaspora.



Kelly Foster

*Attend or host an Editathon
An editathon is a special type of meet up to contribute to the encyclopaedia. I got my start editing at the Black History Month editathon hosted by UCL's Equiano Centre.



Kelly's Useful Resources

Google Books

My first search is always in Google Books. Sometime you have access to all the information you need in a Preview. At other times the Snippet allows you to know which books to request at a research library.



Kelly Foster

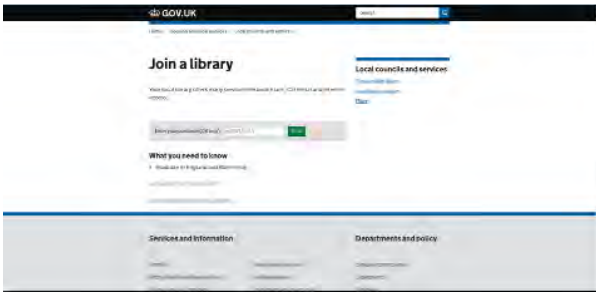
Spare Rib Archive

The British Library and JiscMail have given access to the entire run of the feminist magazine Spare Rib. Magazines like Spare Rib are of vital importance because women's art was rarely reviewed or listed in the mainstream press. It's also fun to look at all the covers.



Local library membership

Many local libraries offer remote access to newspaper databases and other reference material with library membership, which means you can be a Wikipedian in your dressing gown.



Using archive catalogues and heritage projects

This can be especially important where there are limited conventional published references. Descriptions on archive catalogues, for example oral history interviews, may also be used as reference.



As References [edit]

References support the verification of the information contained within an article or record. Citations from external sources give readers the opportunity to click through and check where the information came from and if it is a valid source for the claim. On Wikipedia, we generally do not use primary sources to verify claims; instead, we prefer secondary or tertiary sources. That said, if you have a finding aid with rich scholarly supplemental material or metadata about the subject, then that can be considered a secondary source about the item and used to verify content. In general, the community most prefers links to external resources added as references to verify article content.

Adding references

To add a reference do the following steps:

- Click "Edit" or "Edit source".
- Summarize the source material that you plan to reference.
- Place your cursor at the end of the sentence which your reference will verify.
- Click the "Cite" menu at the top of the editing Window, choose the "Cite web" option and fill out the form with the citation information (metadata) describing your cite.
- Click Save
- Your citation should appear in the text within ...(/ref>. modifying the reference can be done within the citation template, "cite web" in this case.

Adding a reference using the "Cite" reference toolbar".

For more information about adding references to Wikipedia pages, see Help:Referencing for beginners

Example of references to archives [edit]

Displays as:

References

Formatted with:

Chila Burman



Chila Burman



Contributors' Biographies

Ain Bailey is a 2015 Leverhulme Trust Artist-In-Residence at Birkbeck, University of London. She is also set to commence a PhD examining the relationship between migration, sound and place-making, also at Birkbeck, University of London in October 2015. www.ainbailey.com

Chila Kumari Burman was brought up in Liverpool and educated at the Slade School of Art, University College London. Chila Kumari Burman has worked experimentally across printmaking, painting, sculpture, photography and film since the mid-1980s. She draws on fine and pop art imagery in intricate multi-layered works which explore Asian femininity and her personal family history, and where Bollywood bling merges with childhood memories. Burman's work is held in a number of public and private collections including the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Wellcome Trust in London, and the Devi Foundation in New Delhi.

Lauren Craig BA, MA is an artist based in Brixton, London. Her work explores our relationship to nature and wellbeing in urban environments through an interdisciplinary practice spanning floral installations, sculpture, and photography. She explores the materiality of flowers. Craig practices as a holistic therapist. Her practice-based research addresses contemporary rituals and ceremonies as themes for performative installation. As a Doula, Craig creates environments to explore women's creativity and expression during pregnancy. Commissions include the Eden Project, Tate Modern and The Victoria and Albert Museum.

Kelly Foster is a historian and London Blue Badge Guide by day and a Wikipedian by night. She's worked in archives and museums for over 10 years and is an unrepentant advocate for introducing more people to the joy of archives.

Althea Greenan is the curator of the Women's Art Library (WAL) in the Special Collections held in Goldsmiths University of London. Since the 1980s she's been writing on the work of and collaborated with women

artists. Her doctoral research focuses on the WAL slide collection as a feminist project to ask: what else can a slide do besides represent an artwork? The WAL was an artists' organization collecting and archiving its members' slides and publishing a magazine. In 2002, the collection was gifted to Goldsmiths to remain accessible to the public, support artists' research and collect documentation on women artists.

Amanda Holiday is an artist and filmmaker who studied Fine Art at Wimbledon. Active in black political art, she exhibited across the UK before moving into film; directing shorts for the Arts Council, BFI and Channel 4. Later in Cape Town she directed educational TV programmes. She returned to the UK in 2010.

Mystique Holloway is a Londoner who has worked in social care, the film and music industries. She studied at Goldsmiths, University of London, University of the Arts and the University of Westminster. Her work is largely still photography and film with themes often exploring autobiographical issues and social phenomenon. Her influences include Cindy Sherman, Yinka Shonibare, Richard Wentworth and Wolfgang Tillmans. Holloway also writes and DJays around London.

Zhi Holloway states: Music takes me to another realm and helps me to plan my work, which is mainly influenced by our social/economic downturn, community stories, literature, poetry, documentary and film. I tend to carve out ideas by imagining a concept and then following it up with the necessary research. Work is then created throughout the learning process. The work is in the form of social commentary and documentary photography, film, illustration, clothing, painting, music and writing.

Rita Keegan was born in the Bronx, New York City in 1949. She went to school and art college in America. She has been based in Brixton since the 1980s. Rita was involved in 198 Gallery and setting up Brixton Art Gallery. She is a multi-media artist who assigns digital technology an important place

in her work, which explores issues of identity and representation. The use of family narrative and autobiography feature strongly in her work.

Gabrielle Le Roux is a South African feminist, artist and activist for social justice, who spent many years living in the Caribbean. Le Roux creates projects of portraits and stories that pay tribute to brave activists while raising awareness about different human rights issues. Le Roux's work has included portraits of trans and intersex activists from Zimbabwe, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Namibia, Burundi, and Botswana. Her exhibitions travel internationally and have been shown at universities and cultural centres in South Africa, the Caribbean and Uganda. She has also exhibited at NiNsee Museum in Amsterdam, Museum of London Docklands, Amnesty International Amsterdam and UNESCO Paris.

Dr Sireita Mullings-Lawrence is an arts practitioner and educator who completed a BA in Art, Design and Education at the University of the West Indies (Mona) and Edna Manley College of Visual and Performing Arts, where she majored in photography and graphic design in Jamaica. She later returned to the UK to study an MSc in Multimedia at the University of Westminster. She has completed her PhD at Goldsmiths University of London. Here she carried out an ethnographic study in visual sociology, which interrogates how postcolonial legacies of marginalisation are rendered in the visual works of multi-ethnic young people living in Lambeth. She is currently a lecturer and researcher at Goldsmiths and creative project manager at the 198 Contemporary Arts and Learning.

Gina Nembhard spent a number of years running arts and crafts workshops for children in schools and after school clubs whilst studying mixed media textiles at Goldsmiths and later architecture at London Metropolitan University. She also spent a number of years working in an all-female run architectural practice based in London. With her interests in research and cultural theory, Gina has been able to contribute to the development of artists working in fine art, architectural art and responsive

architectures. She is currently studying for a BA/BSC at the Open University whilst developing her own product ideas.

Professor Jonathan Rosenhead was Gillian Elinor's partner over 40 years. He is Emeritus Professor of Operational Research at the London School of Economics, and has been President of the British Operational Research Society. He is currently chair of the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine, and is active in Artists for Palestine UK.

Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski is a London-based artist, designer and archivist. Her research focuses on Archival Therapy, a practice that incorporates the creative use of archives and their therapeutic impact on marginalised communities. Through this practice, communities are able to develop their voice in a way that is rehabilitative and empowering. Her research also centres on Black British feminism/activism during the periods 1970 – to date.

Humera Syed has recently completed a BTEC in Theatre at the BRIT school for performing arts and technology. She is now on a part-time theatre and performance arts business course, learning to run a theatre company and devise work. She lives in New Cross and her work comes from a very multicultural family with Welsh, Indian and Scottish relatives.

Dr Elizabeth Williams has studied at LSE, SOAS and Birkbeck and her PhD was in British foreign relations in Southern Africa. Elizabeth has recently completed the postgraduate certificate in the management of teaching and learning and is currently pursuing professional registration under CILIP. Elizabeth teaches, writes and is a keen musician. She is the author of *The Politics of Race in Britain and South Africa: Black British Solidarity and the Anti-Apartheid Struggle* (2015).

Acknowledgements & Thanks

X Marks the Spot would like to thank all those who have supported and helped us over this last year, this publication would not have been possible without you. We would like to give special thanks to the following:

All Contributors including editors:

Dominique Z. Barron
Professor Jonathan Rosenhead and Family
Rita Keegan
Lesley Ruthven
Althea Greenan
Andrew Gray
Dr Elizabeth Williams
Chila Burman
Sutapa Biswas
Ozden Sahin
Alice Measom
James Bulley
Jack Mulvaney
Goldsmiths Security Guards
Mark Edmondson
Rosario Fernandez Ossandon
Gloria Ojosipe
George Shire
Renée Mussai
Professor Joan Anim-Addo
Karen Alexander
Dr Janice Cheddie
Allison Thompson
Lerato Dumse
Dr Eddie Chambers
Dr Gemma Romain
Dr Caroline Bressey
Avril Horseford
Professor Sonia Boyce
Ingrid Pollard
Professor Lubaina Himid
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Marcia Michael
Sidra Foster
Nadine Throp
Aida Wilde
Terry Humphery
Rosie Martin
Jo Spence
Gilda Baron and Family
Maxine Miller
Sheila Faucher