

Look We Here Curating the Caribbean

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Compiled and edited by Michael McMillan – March 2024

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Look We Here Curating the Caribbean – An Introduction

This is the second iteration of the *Look We Here Curating the Caribbean* programme that ran every Wednesday from 24th January – 28th February 2024; the first course took place in 2018. Our aim was to enable participants to develop curatorial skills by collaboratively curating a pin-up display and producing a zine. Participants came from a range of diverse practices, backgrounds, and generations, though we all share a lived experience of global Africa. Participants are: Akira Francis Grant, Angela Harvey, Avril Horsford, Bernadette Hawkes, Cassia Clarke, Christine Warrington, Coleen Hall, Jaixia Blue Ellis, Joseph Jeffers, Judah Attille, Lauryn Grant, Margaret Holder, Marlene Wylie, Melanie Castel, Monair Hyman, Pamela Kandekore, Patricia Uter, Sade Clarke, Selene Heath and Tyreis Holder.

Each session started with a meditation exercise, followed by critically unpacking the history and cultural politics of the pre-selected objects from the V&A collection that represented the Caribbean diaspora, and informed the context of the five set themes i.e.: colonialism and imperialism, the Black presence in Britain, Black style on the dressed body and in the home, resistance and the development of Black consciousness, and Black arts practices and movements.

Within the theme-based groups, students shared their own personal objects and stories, developed creative writing around these, and learned how to photograph them. This material forms the basis of the pin-up display, alongside written labels to a set format about their personal objects, and one selected from the V&A Collection. This process was assisted by presentations and discussions with Byrony Shepherd, V&A Head of Interpretation, and Christine Checinska, V&A Senior Curator Africa and Diaspora Fashion.

The course facilitated and supported participants in raising their confidence and belief that they too can write their own narratives, to add new dimensions and thinking to what they already knew of their respective cultural histories, and to develop their potential regardless of their creative pathways. There is always more to learn, because if you ***look we are still here!***

Dr. Michael McMillan, Course Leader.

NB. Disclaimer for any misspellings or factual inaccuracies.

Colonialism and Imperialism

We share in our Caribbean heritage a history of enslavement, colonialism and imperialism. This is where modernity began, what they call the industrial revolution, and therefore capitalism, on the slave plantation. And a cook-up made up of African, Asian, European and Amerindian ingredients, whether we ate from the same pot, there was always resistance, from the Haitian Revolution to slave revolts, from maroons to petit marronage, from sabotage to answering back.

And we continue to do so through music, literature, poetry, visual arts, film, performance and in our everyday lives 'back home' and in the diaspora, what we call Babylon. Like Shakespeare's Caliban, the savage, we took Prospero's language, of the master, and spoke better than him, because having worked in his fields, and his house, we know him more than he knows himself. We creolised his and her language and created our own nation languages and cultures. Now, they want to be like us without being us. They just love Black culture, just not Black people.

Many who travelled to the metropole, the centre of the empire, never forgot where they came from and passed on this knowledge to their children. Many didn't. And from generation to generation, there is a burning desire to know what their ancestors did, to use it, to create with it, to be part of the future in the present. If this isn't postmodernism in action, then what is.

As for the environmental catastrophe, nature's revenge, the disaster is already in the Caribbean and elsewhere in the Third World, the global majority. And we have been warning them for the past 500 years that nature is God's plan to take care of humans. But what does being human mean, when many are treated as if they are not human, by those who know very well that we are human. The post in postcolonialism never meant that colonialism was over, and let us not chat about her sister imperialism, read globalization. Who can't hear, must feel.

Christine Warrington, Marlene Wylie & Avril Horsford

The Bride Stripped Bare...

Four women from a little island, which they called a 'Third World' country back then, now a 'developing' country, even when they visit for holidays and stay in our luxury hotels.

I can't believe we managed to reach England, at last. Look *me* here at my wedding. I wish my mother could be here to see me in my bespoke wedding dress. I wish *any* of my family could be here to see how far I've come since I reached England a few months ago, but they send me here to help out the family, and I don't know when I will ever see them again. I pray for them every night, and sometimes I dream about them. I will never let them know how much I miss them, especially on my wedding day. But I will send this picture to them, so they can show everyone in the village who had never seen such a pretty wedding dress.

The other girls back home got married in a dress made by their favourite seamstress, but mine is made by *Leah Marks*, a lady's occasional wear outfitters, known as the best store in Leicester. I was so proud when two of us carried the large cardboard boxes with separate parts of the wedding dress carefully wrapped in white tissue paper, onto the bus to Highfields, where West Indians settled, and felt safe. Each box was bigger than the suitcase that came with me from Antigua, and heavier too. I still don't know how I managed to spend two weeks on a ship with such a little grip; but Fernie, to my right in the picture, travelled with three children, including a one-year-old baby on the ship, and she only had one grip as well. All of us women who shared a cabin, did our washing every day and kept themselves clean and tidy, just like our mothers trained us. They would have been proud to see how we carried ourselves on that ship.

I was here to marry my man, so I put a down-payment on the wedding dress two weeks after I arrived. I was so happy on that day that I could hardly feel the cold outside our rented room in that dark, dingy city. Happy about the wedding plans, I wanted to shout out loud and tell everyone that I was getting married. But we didn't really know anyone, having left our close families and friends behind in our village, you see. English people say that West Indians make too much noise in the streets, that we talk too loudly; so, even if I was shouting for joy, they would think I was screaming with anger. In my new job, I try very hard not to raise my voice, because I am afraid that the other women in the factory will think I am angry. When we came to this country, we realised that unless we were smiling, everyone accused us of being surly or angry. Nothing has changed. I kept my joy to myself, and even as we made plans for the wedding, like finding bridesmaids; our 'natural' bridesmaids, my young sisters and cousins, were all still in Antigua. The young girls chosen included the children of the women in the picture, like the daughter of my friend, Verna, and Avril, the daughter of Fernie, Verna's sister-in-law.

Avril attended almost every West Indian wedding in Leicester before she reached her teens. It was a role she sometimes resented, believing it to be almost that of an unpaid 'bridesmaid for hire' by maternal force, to almost total strangers. None of the girls seemed to be overjoyed about their roles, having been bridesmaids several times lately, and so found it tiring. Also, their parents had to pay for the bridesmaid's dresses, and it took so much time to get ready on the wedding day. And the sandwiches were always dry by the time of the reception, after such a long wedding ceremony. The situation was made even worse as we needed a 'father-giver', or father-of-the-bride, as the white preacher called them in England. Without exception, we all left our fathers at home, if we were lucky enough to even know who they were.

For some of our men, their 'best man' could almost be *any* man who was free on the day of the wedding and owned a good suit.

The iron comb for straightening our hair was always too hot, especially with heavy-handed busy mothers, who still had to get themselves ready, after dressing the bridesmaids. All the women we knew, silently thanked god for the new and glamorous wigs that 'coloured' women were wearing in America, which we managed to buy as soon as we could. The fibres were synthetic and rough, but we looked the business. However, I will never forget when they attached the veil to my head through my wig and onto my bare scalp; the pain was almost unbearable. A wiser woman suffering such pain would have considered cancelling the wedding. But the wigs made us look those beautiful black singers in the groups we idolised, called exotic names such as the Supremes, the Ronettes, and the Toys. They were young like us, and we looked just as glamorous as them when we put on our wigs. I'm just sorry that none of my family, especially my mother, could see how I looked on my special day. We were all smiling in the wedding photograph, but I cried the whole morning before I went to the church for the wedding ceremony, because I just couldn't stop thinking about my mother, who wasn't here to see me.

We all looked solemn and serious before the photo was taken. But then the photographer began to sing a mock-calypso, told me I was the most important person in the picture, encouraged us to have happy thoughts, and that we would only be allowed to send pictures of our 'happy, smiling faces' back home to the family. We began to smile. I won't send my mother the photo in this fancy frame, as the glass would make the parcel too heavy and more than I could afford. They think life is easy for us in England, but I can only afford to write to my family every few weeks. I always use the blue Air Mail envelopes, the cheapest, unless I was sending a postal order. It had the words 'Par Avion' printed on the outside, and I always wondered what it meant.

In those days, wedding receptions were held in someone's front room, but eventually it became an opportunity to show off, and church halls were hired. Catering for events often took place in the various houses of the bride's friends, until guests at a wedding reception, probably attended by Leicester's entire Black community, nearly died from food poisoning after the fried chicken cooked in advance, was kept at room temperature for a couple of days on top of the cooker before being served. We didn't have fridges then, but it was many months before *that* bride could show her face in the Black community again.

My man didn't seem too happy to see me when I first arrived. Back home, word reached us that most of the men, who came earlier to save up the 'passage money' for their wives and children to join them, had actually 'set up shop' with young English woman they called 'blue veins', because unable to afford stockings, their bare legs showed their blue veins. We found secret second families of what they called 'half caste' children that families back home knew nothing about. Some of the bedsits that we lived in saw family battles that have impacted down from generation to generation, and for many of us, the pain is still felt today.

© Avril Horsford – February 2024



This Bride Stripped Bare... This hand colour-tinted wedding photograph, originally B+W, features L-R: Verna; Beth, the bride; Fernie and Hyacinth, outside a church in Leicester. The decorative frame was printed on glass and overlaid on the photograph. Hand-coloured photographs were popular with Caribbean migrants arriving in the 1960s/70s, and were prominently displayed in their homes; as well as sent to relatives 'back home', in less-ornate frames'.

Avril Horsford



Untitled [Young teenage boy who, just arrived from Jamaica, shows off his latest reggae dance with his younger brother watching, Brixton Hill, Photograph, 1968, Neil Kenlock.

He is Trevor, younger brother of Neil Kenlock, and could be described as a 'rude boy', as well as being one of the 'barrel children', who arrived in Britain to join a fractured family, only one day earlier, after many years of separation. He proudly shows his newly-acquainted younger brother the Jamaican dance moves he brought with him.

Avril Horsford

'The Waiting Room', a painting by Joe Cromwell

The Trinidadian born artist, Joseph Cromwell-Assee, came to London in the 1950's to advance his career in fine art. To fund his journey, he sold most of his early work in Trinidad. Born of working-class Grenadian-Chinese parents, Joe wanted to study art, so he enrolled for classes at the Chelsea School of Art. The subject matter of Pieter Bruegel, the elder, fascinated him as well as the modernist painters Paul Gauguin, Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso. To study their work Joe often visited the galleries in London and Paris.

Although a contemporary of Trinidadian artists, Althea McNish, Sybil Atteck, Boscoe Holder and Carlisle Chang, Joe was never one to follow fashion. American impression and abstract expressionism, in his opinion, 'never said much' to him. He was influenced more by the writings of Edgar Allen Poe, Ted Hughes' *Crow* and Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* in their use of folklore, poetry and contemporary vernacular. He had a wicked and satirical sense of humour, and loved the Trinidadian folk tradition, which he re-created in his paintings.

Through the gaze of a Black Chinese creole with age and experience, Joe became critical of life in post-war and post-colonial Britain. He never returned to Trinidad. In London, race, religion, gender and class kept him on the margins of the art world at a time when 'if you were not White you were Black and that is that'.

How would Joe write about his 1956 painting *The Waiting Room* in a post-pandemic London? Would it be in the language of the bureaucratic office and business culture that dominates contemporary life? Would this be juxtaposed with metaphor, satire and humour to critique the painting? Would this be from a black perspective in a hyper high-tech media driven world of double consciousness, where modernity fractures and splinters contemporary life recalling the past as a burdensome struggle?

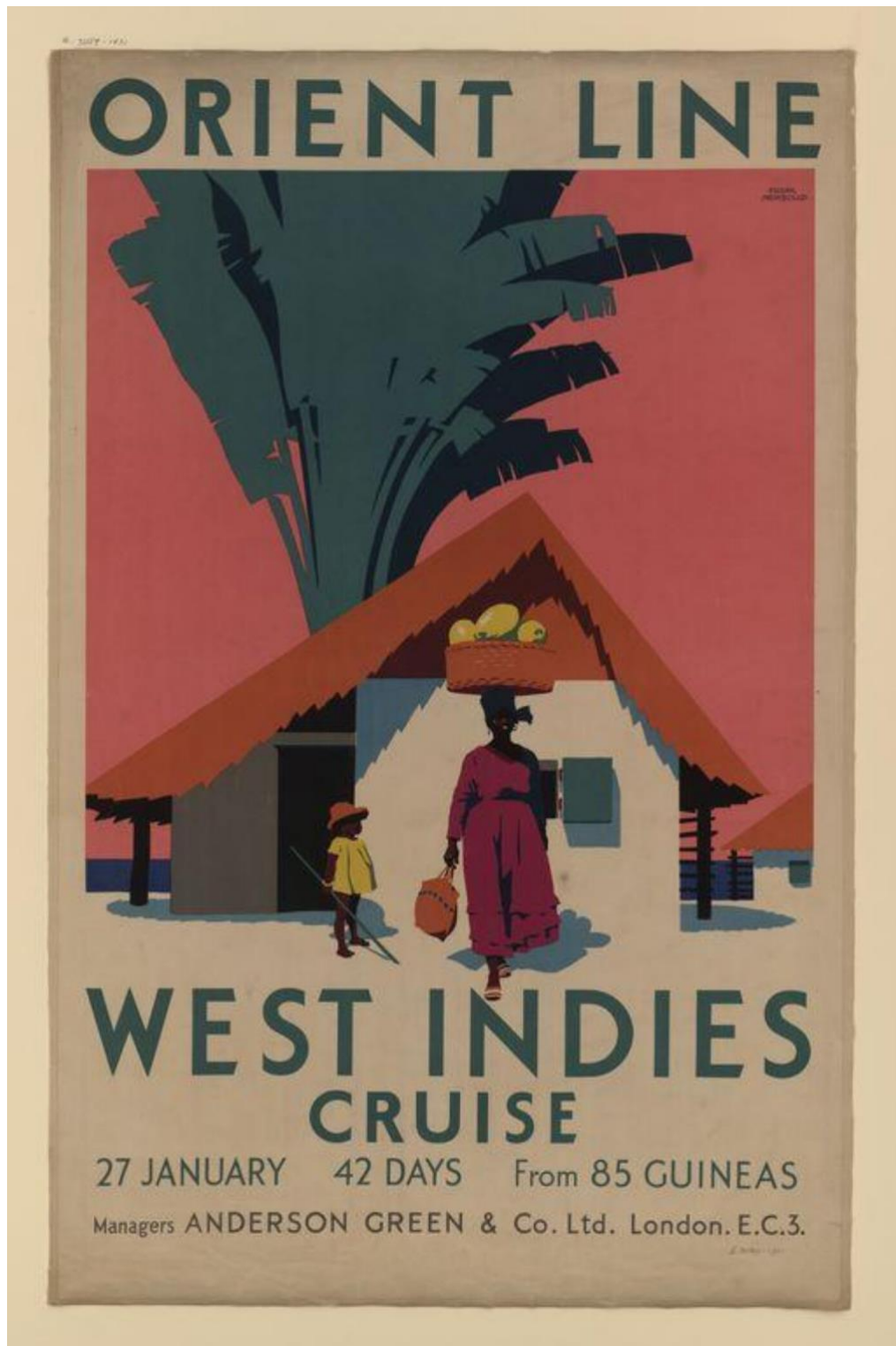
Some might consider this painting by a Black Trinidadian to be meaningless, without a critical gaze. It was the ongoing demonisation of immigrants and black communities in mainstream media, and a sign 'If it is not written down it did not happen' on a hospital notice board that prompted my critique of *The Waiting Room* using the jargon of political economy that reign supreme.

© Christine Warrington – February 2024



The Waiting Room (1956) is an oil on board painting (66cms x 46cms) by Trinidadian artist, Joseph Cromwell-Assee born 1927. The figures in the waiting room exude the bleak drabness of everyday life in post-war London that Joe encountered on arrival, though the colours capture the vibrancy of the Caribbean. Joe could be the Black man sitting beside a blonde white woman with her hand on his arm.

Christine Warrington



Orient Line West Indies Cruise, Poster, ca.1931 (issued)

This poster by Frank Newbould depicts a Black woman in a red dress with a basket of provisions on her head, and a child in yellow standing beside her. Along with the palm tree and thatched roof hut in the background, it reinforces a stereotype of the West Indies as a tropical exotic idyllic paradise for tourists, largely white, to whom it was being sold.

Christine Warrington

Feed the Soul

I was born in Hackney, East London. I hold strong and vivid memories of Hackney Ridley road market over the years where fresh breadfruit, when in season, is one of the few places that it can be found and purchased.

My journey exploring the origins and benefits of consuming breadfruit began in earnest when I was commissioned to write a teaching resource for the Hackney Public Art Commission in 2021

I have been enjoying breadfruit off and on since childhood, however, I was not fully aware of the significance culturally and historically, not to mention the amazing health benefits, until my work led me to research the rich knowledge needed to write the content for the Hackney Diverse curriculum teaching and learning resource. Through my deep dive research, an amazing web of connections has occurred for me.

I have become fixated on this incredible monumental seedless fruit, that indeed, as it has been described in research papers I have read, internally resembles the texture of bread and is a very effective carbohydrate. As I have continued to dig into the facts I have discovered further connections with different aspects of my professional, personal, and spiritual life.

I have come to experience deep engagement, real life, rich cross-curricular learning at its best and most desired. Breadfruit bears all of the attributes of what we consider to be superfood. Rich in vitamins and minerals it is not only tasty but a highly desirable way to reduce weight and lower blood pressure whilst satisfying those hunger pangs.

On a personal and spiritual level there is something about anticipatory grief, the feeling of loss and bereavement that makes you want to hold on and preserve what is in danger of being forgotten or lost forever through oral histories alone. Through my research work I am very aware of the data surrounding the dwindling numbers of those who would in this country describe themselves as Caribbean and who hold important lived experience stories.

Being of Afro Caribbean descent, educated and living in Britain it is important to me that we preserve stories relating to 'Life Between Islands', the 'Black Atlantic', the 'Windrush era' and the African diaspora. As a result of the death of our elders this has become urgent, and important work. Future generations will thank us for helping them to know and understand who they are and where they have come from, enriching their cultural capital and heritage.

I chose to create a poem for my piece of writing for *Look We Here* as a homage to the late and celebrated Poet Benjamin Zephaniah. His interest and connection to Veronica Ryan's Turner winning Public Art Sculpture in Hackney, the place of my birth resonates deeply. Featuring the mighty breadfruit, alongside soursop and custard apple in celebration of the lives and contribution of the Windrush generation in the country is significant. Given the symbolic nature and history attached to this fruit and the peoples of the Caribbean, we feed our soul as we take time to feast on it's goodness.

© Marlene Wylie – February 2024



Roast Breadfruit

Breadfruit originated from New Guinea, and the Indo-Malay region of the Pacific. It was transported by Captain Blythe on HMS Bounty during the 18th century to feed enslaved Africans on plantations in the Caribbean. Peeled and pricked before roasting, breadfruit is highly nutritious, then sliced and or fried, and eaten with ackee & saltfish, or treated as another provision.

Marlene Wylie



Sugar Bowl and Cover

Sugar cane was key commodity produced by enslaved African on plantations in the Caribbean to satisfy the growing obsession to sweeten foods including tea and coffee in Britain and elsewhere. This bowl contained refined white sugar. Ironically, the descendants of slaves across the African diaspora are today affected by health problems, like diabetes, associated with sugar in their diets.

Marlene Wylie

Brit-ish: the Black Presence in Britain

look we here/ we are here /because you were there / you gave us the bible / when we opened our eyes / you took the land / our sweat gave you sugar/ coffee / cotton / we fought and died in your wars / but you don't remember this on 11th November

look we here/ long before 1948 / we helped you build Hadrian's Wall / played drums for Elizabeth 1st / where you sent us away to create Sierra Leone / where Olaudah Equaino lived / where Mary Seacole nursed your soldiers in the Crimean War / where Ira Aldrige played Othello / where Pan-Africanism began/ where Nkrumah, Padmore and James plotted to bring down your empire/ that you choose to forget

look we here / you invited us / so we arrived in our Sunday best / dignity buried in our grips / we worked on your buses / worked on your trains / in the cold / slapped the bottoms of white babies as midwives in NHS/ who now turn around and tell us to go back to our own country

look we were / our style cut through the grey smog / our music infectious / our sound systems is your dance music / our carnival makes millions / you nyam our jerk chicken and roti/ hot pepper and spice / now all young people want to speak like us / walk like us / but not be us

look we here / you'll be our friend but you won't let us marry your daughter / you make our young women change their hair to look like you/ you think our flesh can take pain/ so our mothers die in childbirth/ you won't give us the job that you know we can do / better than you / your police stop and search our young men and kill them in custody

look we here / our parents have been laid to rest / but we're still here / we stand on their shoulders / resisting/ fighting injustice/ a loving race with a thumping bass/ you still go on about immigration / as if you aren't immigrants yourselves/ then tell us we're illegal / incarcerate us / deport us / we die before the compensation arrives/ but we're still here / this is our home / look we here

© Cassia Clarke, Sade Clarke, Angela Harvey, Coleen Hall & Akira Francis Grant

My journey as a 'grip' (suitcase)

Trembling hands, jolts of nerves rushing through her, strong arm, great posture. The beaming sun on me, my handle is hot to touch. Salty air of the Caribbean sea, my stiff cardboard body packed so tight I am suffocating. There are many of me, departing home.

The temperature drops, rough sea, I am tossed about in the small cabin. Neatly packed within me is a pristine jacket, a perfectly pressed shirt and skirt, Sunday best shoes, a crochet needle, but still room for hope. A new life, new home – chest of draws. Weather cold, cockney accents loud, racial slurs. Opened once and left alone for decades. Fewer adventures now, more dust, more battered... I miss home.

At some point I end up in Battersea, where Mary Ann Clarke nee Antonio first resided once she moved to the UK. Again, I am surrounded by many of me, and other items I recognise but now I rest there with a tag on my handle. Rented for a few quid by a young man, an actor perhaps? Then as vintage, purchased for even more money in a charity shop, by Sade Clarke, great granddaughter of Mary Ann. I imagine I was once owned by her. Resting on a chest of draws in my new home, opened once and left alone for decades. My adventures are fewer and the places I reach aren't as sunny, I have become more acquainted with dust. Trembling hands still reach for me, it must be that hope- the wish to use me again and maybe go back home? I miss it there.

Trembling hands, jolts of nerves rushing through her, strong arm, great posture. The beaming spotlights elevate me. The grip on my handle tightens. Reclaiming her power on stage or at home, filling life with the hope that was once encased in me in spilling out. Once the sun beaming on my skin, now a spotlight, salty air replaced by the sweat of movement. *Fever*, the sounds of Little Willie John echo through my stitching, and the rhythm and bass of Vybz Kartel make my leather vibrate with the eruption of cheers. A coat, a corset, feather fans and a flag of Jamaica are flung into me as I lay open on the table. Once battered but no longer bruised, I feel polished and priceless, a vessel of memories and this, this is where I belong.

The cockney accents remain but I am mostly surrounded by eruptions of cheering. A beautiful energy encases me, the cheering is so so loud and I feel nostalgic toward the hope that once took up so much room. I feel as if I have been freshly polished, given a new chance at life. Purchased for £26 but I feel absolutely priceless, I am a vessel of memories and this, this is where I belong.

We all want to know where we come. I was made between 1920 and 1960, according to my buckle, 'Cheney', famous for making suitcases in England. Yet many of my adventures and stories come from people far from England, not quite English, but in the same sense very English indeed. These people are shakers and movers and they value me. Years later, I am an important part of their story. From sea to the stage. I and I is one with them.

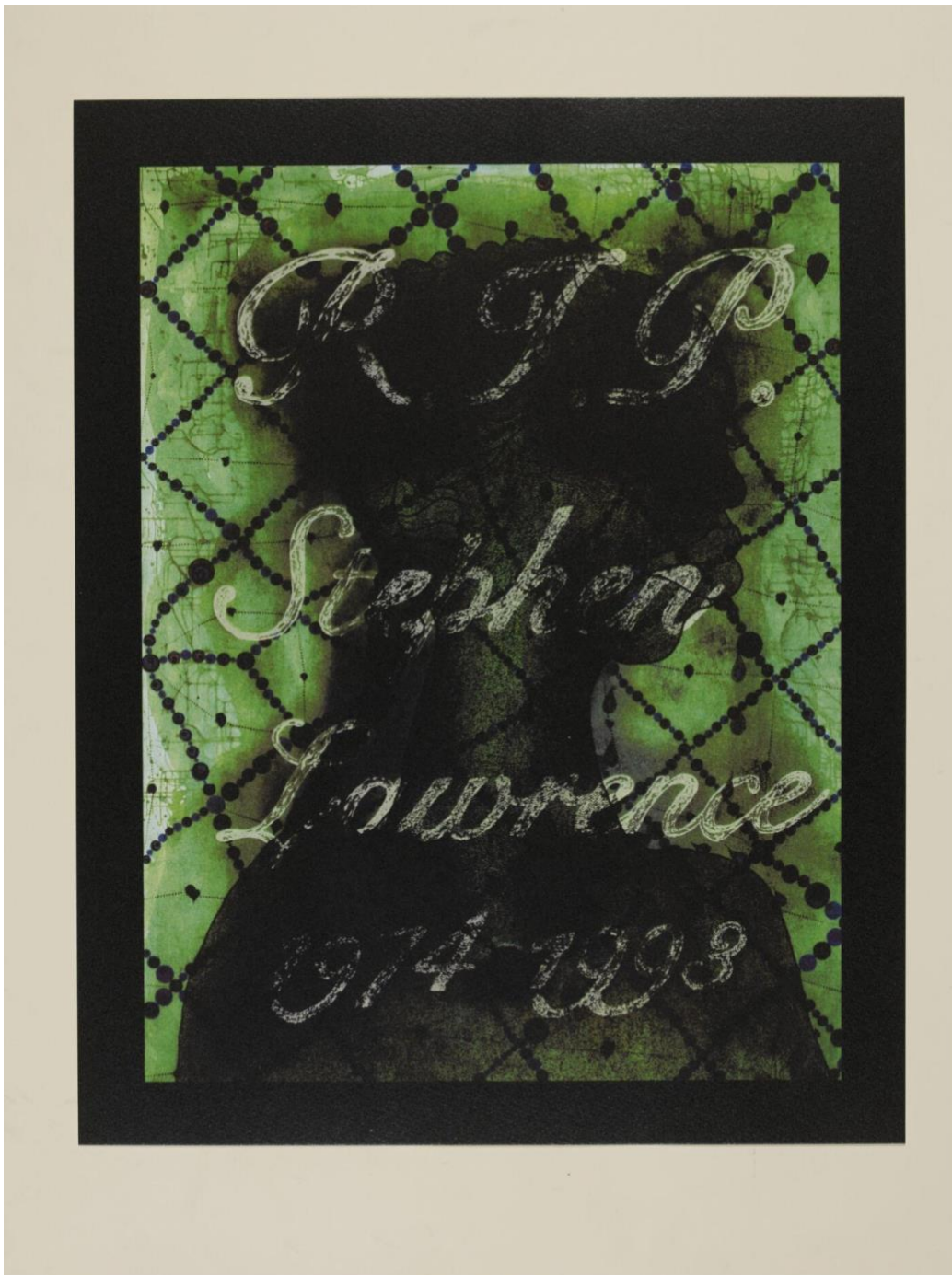
© Sade Clarke – February 2024



The Grip

This 'grip' suitcase was manufactured by Cheney, an English based company, 1920-60. It has a dark grey body with light stitching, and a light brown checked patterned interior. It is slightly scuffed and scratched from usage. Grips like this were familiar forms of luggage used by many post-war Caribbean migrants, the Windrush generation, travelling across the Caribbean diaspora including Toronto, New York and Britain.

Sade Clarke



R.I.P. Stephen Lawrence 1974-1993, Screenprint, 2013 (printed and published), Chris Ofili.

No woman, no cry.

Coming to this motherland full of hope. New life, new home, new opportunities. Reality hits, violence, riots, hate crime. Murder in our streets. Funerals becoming a commonplace for us to greet. In this 'motherland' every woman a cry. We are both brutalised and criminalised by police, by men, by ourselves. Gang violence, knife crime... burying you't's in their prime! In this 'motherland' every woman a cry.

Sade Clarke

The Pardner Money Savings Club

Reading Deanne Herson's *Pardner Money Stories* (2011) made me smile as it brought back memories of my mum joining a 'pardner hand' and saving for essential things we needed and, occasionally some luxuries, which includes a £1 note from that era.

The pardner hand is a form of micro saving used within poorer communities across the developing world, but called by different names: Guyana, 'box hand', Haiti, 'min'; Barbados, 'su su' or 'meeting'; Suriname, 'kasmoni'; Ghana, 'sou sou'. In fact, from the 1840's, saving clubs were common amongst working class communities, which formed the basis of the Cooperative Bank and eventually Credit unions.

The practice involves small groups of people coming together to form self-help saving clubs, usually church members or work colleagues, where trust is shared. A 'banker' is nominated from the group, and each member gives them or 'throwing your hand' an agreed amount each week or month. If a member can't afford the agreed the amount, then they would get another member in a similar situation, and together they would throw a 'full hand' as each dropped 'half a hand'. The banker knows who is struggling financially and their role is not 'carry news' about members, but maintaining honesty and reliability. When everyone throws their hand, the banker gives the total sum 'draw their hand' to a member on rotation or on request from a member who may request it.

The pardner hand was particularly important for migrant Caribbean communities, because as my mum said when she came in 1960 to Britain, banks 'didn't loan us money'. I remember moments when my mother would be close to tears receiving her draw, coming at the right time to buy new shoes or winter coats for us, her children. On an another occasion, she used her draw to mend a leak in the roof. Mum also used it for day trips with other Caribbean families, such as Butlins, with the dreaded corn beef and cheese sandwiches. And in the 1980s, she used her draw to a washing machine, which like the 'gram' was a luxury, because it meant no more trips to the launderette, feeding coins into the machine for the wash, and the eternal dryer, which seemed to take forever.

Pardner hand savings also helped Mrs C to open a hair dressing business in the back room of her house, whilst many others used it for a deposit for a house.

© Coleen Hall – February 2024



The £1 sterling note, series D, was issued in 1978 and features a portrait of Queen Elizabeth on the front, and Issac Newton on the bank. It is watermarked and printed on cotton. This was an example of the tender many African Caribbean people used in their everyday lives, as well as their pardner hand draws.

Coleen Hall



The Black House, Photograph, 1973-1976, Colin Jones.

A young Black couple are seated at their wedding reception, behind a table laden with a wedding cake, bottle of champagne and other bottles of drinks. The bride gives a shy smile, while the groom wears a light coloured striped suit, white shirt and striped tie, and a rude by style trilby hat. It is a rare portrayal young Black people forming romantic bonds and love.

Coleen Hall

How I hold my head up high

As a Ghanaian woman, I carry a glorious history, and creating a clothing style of colourful African prints and textiles says look, I hold my head high with pride, and I have my own beauty being Black and African in Britain. Even before I learned to talk as a child, I was surrounded by cloth. My mother was a wholesale trader in Dutch wax textiles. I remember her making all my clothes from these textiles, though I sometimes felt ashamed and envious of my friends who had clothes from abroad, in Europe.

I came to England about 34 years ago, and I now cherish every thread of those African textiles, their prints and style, because it explains who I am without having to open my mouth. I bring from my childhood the act of dressing in African prints that tells a story of who I am in the Ghanaian diaspora.

Kente textiles are usually worn during special occasions such as weddings, christening and birthday parties. At Christmas, I use them to make cushions as decorations. It is also my everyday wear, and even on a cold winter's day, I style myself in a polo neck jumper and skirt made from African Dutch wax textiles. It also reminds my children, who were born in England, and never had the chance to see their grandparents, and know who they are.

It makes me unique, stands out and different from the crowd. And sharing my clothing with my family and the wider British community triggers conversations about where I get them from, and where I come from.

But sometimes, others see my clothing as too colourful and bright, because we should be not seen and heard. This attitude is a legacy of colonialism, and I make no apology for being rebellious. It is my right to create and style my body as a woman, and the style narrative of being a Ghanaian woman in the African diaspora is what I tell myself everyday.

© Angela Harvey – February 2024



This is myself in a full length dress made by Nirmala Emefa Forson, a dressmaker in Ghana, at a Ghanian and Caribbean wedding in London, 2019. It is a modern fusion of handmade cerise tube beading, traditional yellow and green Kente colours tube beading bordice in Swiss lace with a purple headwrap (called Duku in Ghana) in a Gele style adopted from Nigeria.

Angela Harvey



Ankara, Dress Fabric, ca.1994 (made)

The headwrap is a universal accessory that is worn for centuries by African. It is a fashion statement and symbols of traditional pride, identity, and religious beliefs. The Ghanaian called it Duku whilst the Nigerian called it Gele. On this occasion, it was worn for a wedding for close family members.

Angela Harvey

The Photograph

The retelling of cultural and family history in African-Caribbean communities is predominantly dependent on word of mouth. Our 'relatives-cum-archivists', coined by Abundance Matanda in her *The First Galleries I Knew Were Black Homes* essay (2018), were simply point-and-shoot photographers, who documented intimate, historical moments that captured everything, but sometimes nothing at the same time.

My grandmother, Joyce, and I sat side by side on the sofa with her photographic collection that has been in development for generations. The load was too heavy to carry in my hands alone from her bedroom to the front room, so I enlisted the trusty maroon basket. With the photographs in my hand being passed one by one to the empty space in between us, we looked together and chatted. By the end, I learnt that she regretted relying too heavily on oral history as she could only remember moments in her mind's eye that she struggled to share with me. Yet the failure to contextually document family history alongside the photographs has necessitated the importance of memory, even in the face of age and health implications on that memory.

An A6 colour photograph depicting new life was gifted by my grandmother following our moment of reminiscing. She stands beside an open car door, wearing a dark blue, knee-high dress with white detailing on the neck and sleeve ends. She has a permed afro hair-style and wears white closed toe heels. Supported with one leg in front of the other, she holds her infant daughter, draped in white, accompanied by her young son in smart attire. The passenger door is being held open by a white female neighbour, a gesture reversing what one might expect. She is dressed in a patterned pink dress, and unlike my grandmother and her young son looking directly at the camera, she diverts her gaze towards the brown car with its cream interior in the middle of the street, in front of their home, surrounded by a row of neighbouring houses.

Joyce migrated to Britain, c.1960, following her partner at the time, leaving her two children in Jamaica to be raised by their grandparents. As she settled into British life, Joyce had three more children and called on her children in Jamaica in the 1970s. However, only her daughter migrated to Britain to join her, while her son remained behind.

Viewing family photographs owned by my mother, father and grandmother, from my mother's side, I noticed a lack of cross pollination between the two sides of my family. As far as I am aware, the two sides did not and do not congregate. The first and last time the two sides connected was most likely at my parents wedding, in the 1980s. I have always desired a stronger, interconnected family and these photographs prove that this desire holds weight. As a child growing up in a Caribbean household where the generational belief was that children should be seen, not heard, I am not fully aware of the reasons for why the two sides did not create a stronger bond. I can only speculate, as I have done most of my life using what information I or my younger sister could decipher. Having to experience moments of uproot and change, without the ability to question or given any opportunity to truly understand, I was angry. Inside. It is only now in my adult years that I am learning who my family are and were.

© Cassia Clarke – February 2024



This colour photograph, Fulham, London. c.1970, was owned by Joycelyn, and gifted to Cassia Clarke, her grandchild. L - R: Joycelyn 'Joyce' Clarke, b.1941, holding her infant daughter, Loleta, b.1970, her son, Colin, b.1968, standing between her and an unknown and unnamed white woman friend and/or neighbour holding open the passenger door. The photograph was presumably removed from a photo album due to a rip on the back and is now packaged separately in a polyethylene sleeve by Clarke.

Cassia Clarke



Untitled – young lady points to 'Keep Britain White' graffiti at the International Personnel Training Centre in Balham, Photograph, Neil Kenlock, 1974.

This photograph featuring Barbara Grey was taken during the same period as the photograph of my grandmother, Joycelyn 'Joyce', young aunt, Loleta, and uncle, Colin, c.1970s, which was taken roughly 45 minutes away in Fulham. There is a clear contrast between Kenlock's image depicting racial hostility, and my grandmother proudly showing herself off with her children, beside a car door opened by a white female neighbour, in front of their home.

Cassia Clarke

Sounds of the System

Subwoofer frequencies, the floor vibrates
sounds of the evening
emanating from dubplates
this is the real reggae roots
red, gold and green
no red, white and blue, ya hear me, ya seen?
pull up selecta! Reload de tune!
let us vibe nice together
as we breathe high grade fumes

Melting pot cities call us into raves
in the cover of darkness, no need to behave
from John Major's blue misery,
we need an escape
back to the jungle, we're told to go
but jungle is massive
and like most which is massive,
it came from negros

As sistren we came inna de dance
but the brethren don't wanna give us a chance
"Dis a big man ting,
wha you know 'bout clash?"
but the same big man,
with our lyrics we mash
me and my sistas take our stand
with nothing but tunes
and the mic in our hands

© Akira Francis Grant - February 2024



JVC home hi-fi system, early 1980s

A JVC home hifi system featuring a double tape player, equaliser and amp. It was acquired by my father as a young man in the 1980s from an electronic shop in Tottenham Court Road, London. He played roots, dub, dancehall and soul music from cassettes and vinyl (many from *Daddy Kool* Records in Soho) both recreationally and at family events.

Akira Francis Grant



4 Aces Club, Count Shelly Sound System, Hackney, Photograph, 1974, Dennis Morris

Music from sound system culture often spoke of the African diaspora's wish for freedom from western oppression, but patriarchal views were still present within the scene. Female operators and attendees reported feeling alienated and migrated to venues that played more 'female friendly' genres (e.g. lover's rock and soul) while sound systems retained their 'boys with toys' image.

Akira Francis-Grant

Resistance and the development of Black consciousness

Growing up in Britain as part of the Caribbean diaspora, resistance is an everyday act. Whether through literature, music, hair or the home, rituals and items which formed significant but routine parts of our childhood and teenage years have manifested themselves into our ways of life as Black women; 'selectas' in our self-expression. In reflecting on our paths to becoming a visual artist, probation officer, psychotherapist, DJ, musician, teacher, poet and more, we come to understand how profound their roles have been in shaping our consciousness and teaching us the value of ourselves and our creative gifts.

While experiences may differ from generation to generation, our stories all share distinctively Caribbean ideals with remnants of colonial-tinged respectability juxtaposed with an emerging autonomy inspired by Black pride yet finding empowerment in both. From the influence of our parents and education (both in and outside of the formal classroom) to African American role models and movements, such as the British Black Panthers and Rastafari. All these things served ultimately to instill a confidence and sense of purpose in us as Black women, living as 'Other' in a hostile home environment, in bodies politicised and constrained by societal expectations. In us, has bloomed the desire to create a legacy which we hope will outlive us in the spirits of future generations.

Resistance is in the ways we choose to express (or not express) ourselves. In times of crisis or strife, sometimes this is all we have at our disposal.

© Lauryn Grant
[Bernadette Hawkes, Lauryn Grant, Monair Hyman & Pamela Kandekore]

From Black Panther to Soul Girl and Beyond

In May 2023, I joined a walking tour in Harlem, New York, USA. I was thrilled when I learnt that we would be visiting the Schomburg Library. The bookshop was a treasure trove for me, especially when I encountered the Black Power Button Set. I lost my original badges after leaving the family home at seventeen. The house was later sold before it went on the market. My mum, Eloise told me to come and collect some things, but the original badges were gone. I knew the Schomburg Library existed as I had stumbled across some of its publications in a London bookshop, in 1968. Seeing them again took me back to my early adolescence. I was twelve or thirteen years old again, worshipping my heroine Angela Davis. I felt like a child in a sweetshop when I rediscovered the badges. The set consisted of four buttons with slogans: *Black Is Beautiful*, *Say It Loud*, *I'm Black and Proud*, *Free Angela Davis* and one with the Black Power fist.

I became aware of the Black Power Movement growing up in Forest Gate, East Ham, in the borough of Newham. My parents bought their own house, although legally, it wasn't a joint purchase as my mum wasn't named on the deeds. It was bought with a mortgage of £3,000 in 1964. They taught me about Guyanese (formerly British Guiana) history and some African American history, and so the notion that Black people needed assert themselves through resistance was strange to me. I realise now that I've been a rebel all my life, beginning at school aged six, when I pretended to have a sore throat for a few days, so that my form teacher Miss Smith couldn't ask me to read aloud from Clive King's novel, *Stig of The Dump*, in class towards the end of the school day. I was born in Guyana, in the Demerara region, where Demerara sugar comes from. I was aware of slave rebellions on former plantations, and my village is Friendship/Buxton had been one. Buxtonian's are famous throughout Guyana for the 'stopping train' protest, when Sidney King led them to lay down on the railroad tracks during the 1950's.

My now late mum Eloise was extremely shocked and concerned to discover the badges, and that I was 'wearing them in the street', when out with my friends. I also imitated Angela Davis's style of clothing, with a black polo neck sweater, black mini skirt, and I was very particular about my Afro hair do. When I was fourteen, I bought a copy of Bobby Seale's 1970 book *Seize The Time*. Racism, then called 'prejudice', pervaded the streets of East London, which was fanned by Enoch Powell's infamous 'Rivers of Blood' speech. It reminded my parents of the 1958 Notting Hill uprisings, when largely white people violently attacked innocent black people, who lived in the area. Black people fought back in the 1960s and 1970s. And in my own way, I did too. Sometimes with my fists in the school playground when some of my attackers were not put off by my sophisticated verbal put downs. I once threw a bottle of black ink over a white male classmate at Plaistow County Grammar school, when I had had enough of his racial abuse towards me. When the boy complained to a teacher, he was given short shrift, the tutor telling him, 'Serves you right!'.

We weren't allowed to wear badges at school, so I kept them for out of school hours. I wore them to the *Little I Youth Club*, where I wasn't really supposed to go to, in case I got involved with boys. Looking back, I would describe my parent's attitudes towards young people as Neo-Victorian; boys and girls should be firmly kept apart or at the very least chaperoned, and of course that couldn't happen in England, much to my relief. I remember longing for a black leather jacket, which all self-respecting Black Panthers seemed to wear. My family couldn't afford one, because there was no spare money. I was something of a 'bedroom revolutionary' and front room DJ in my early teens. When my dad was on night shift work, my sister and I played his precious vinyl records on the radiogram he had built himself. We studiously avoided Jim Reeves and his country and western songs. We were always careful to put the records back exactly as we found them.

At the time, I was styling myself as a Black Panther, and too young to actually join a group, though I felt like a fully-fledged member of the party. I knew all the books to read, such as Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul On Ice* and Angela Davis's *If They Come In The Morning*. I borrowed some of these books from Plasket Library, which was often a refuge from the tensions at home. By saying that I going to the library, meant I could legitimately be 'in the street'. I began buying my own books when I got a Saturday job in a dress shop. It was close to a record shop, another place I wasn't meant to go, but I did, listening to the latest soul and black dance music tunes.

My dad was less worried about my reading material than my mum. He took me to political meetings of the People's National Congress, and it was at one these that I learnt about Forbes Burnham and the struggle for Independence. He would often tell my mum to 'leave the girl alone' when she found me with my 'head in some political book', although she didn't mind Jane Eyre and other Bronte novels. Mum feared that I would be beaten up by racist men as I wandered about the local streets 'armed' with *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Though I knew some of the white boys who leaned towards the suede-head fashion style than the 'bovver boys' look.

© Bernadette Hawkes – February 2024



This collection of badges was bought from the bookshop at the Schomburg Library Centre for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, New York. They took me back to my youth, when I used badges like these in my teenage rebellion against family, and wider oppression including racism towards me in schools, in shops and on the street.

Bernadette Hawkes



Untitled (schoolgirls in a Line] from the series *On a Good Day*, Photograph, 1970s, Al Vandenberg.

This photo illustrates the subversive way in which schoolgirls wore their school uniform, me included, guilty as charged. Young people commonly restyled their school uniforms, and with department store plastic bags, they pose like fashion models, though it was rare to see Black British models featured in glossy magazines then.

Bernadette Hawkes

A Way To Bloom: A message from a China cabinet

'When you have a garden of your own you will never be alone'
Benjamin Zephaniah (1958 - 2023)

Red ladee!
Chuh! Back home it was handmade in mahogany or ebony
papa made it so
 my home from home
mass produced walnut veneer style 1970's

I reside in many things
a chocolate box with pastoral scenes of the Hay Wayne
 holding black and white memories.
a cowrie shell covered boxes of cotton reels, embroidery silks, needles,
pins

The best of me is here
attractive its plain to see
well turned out, neat, tidy and clean
well ordered, everything in its place and as it should be
adorned with a carefully placed circle of starched homemade lace
no dust or marks on me
Papa always said 'You can be whoever you want to be'
 'Good better best may you never rest, till your good is better and
 your better is best.

Inside there is faith and hope
planting China dreams for a better life
that spiral around roses of pink, yellow and red
I have tended and grown my garden despite the long shadows
I created a way to bloom
not labour as you understand it
 a labour of love
blooms for me, for you and all to see

Gathered the China blooms
my beloved, my breath, the meaning of your name
the beginning of the long goodbye
even as I held you I was letting you go
 you are in me and I am in you
'Good better best may you never rest till your good is better and your
better is best'

Across oceans of mirrored surfaces, reflections and transparent screens
life has passed in front of me far too quickly
I observed and recall the years of comings and goings
of fellowship and celebration, laughter and tears

I contain so much more than the way I look
it's not really about teapots, cups and sugar-bowls
it is the importance of self, belonging, people
 occupying space
finding your garden, remaining authentic and self-contained.

We communicate in suspended air
across space and time
seeker, nomad, wanderer
 come to me
I wait for you in the blooms of
The Royal Albert Old Country Roses China
 'Good better best may you never rest till your good is better and your
 better is best'

© Monair Hyman – February 2024



The Best China

This collection of bone china, belonged to Mrs Ruby Hyman (1929 – 2019) and was purchased from Kelvin's Reproduction Warehouse, Meanwood, Leeds, 1970. Housed in a reproduction walnut veneer cabinet, it was never used. The floral pattern design is in Royal Albert 'Old Country Roses' style. The cups and saucers held white Japanese chrysanthemums and white orchids at her celebration of life funeral.

Monair Hyman



Pinky, Photograph, 2001, Jenni Baptiste.

you see me/queen in pink/pink heaven/pink love/pink life/power is pink/
living pink/my best life/the moment is pink/lost in pink/adorn me
pink/free to be me

Monair Hyman

Property of M.R.O. Kandekore – 'The Autobiography of Malcolm X with the Assistance of Alex Haley'

On a Saturday morning in 1971, Menelik Kandekore first presented his personal library of books containing novels, essays, speeches, and an autobiography to his children. The family congregated as usual in the front room to listen their parents' life stories and music. Sounds of Curtis Mayfield echoed:

'...Sisters, we're all so very proud of that natural look we see among the crowd worldwide admiration from nation to nation...'

Menelik handled the box like a prized treasure. The children questioned why such a plain, unremarkable box lived under the radiogram. At last, their father talked about the books inside. After a while, they returned to squabbling over reggae records. However, Pampi, his seven-year-old daughter's interest didn't waiver. Pampi gazed in awe at the book covers pondering. 'A pile of books with no Peter and no Jane. These people are Black!' She asked her father who authored them.

He told her, 'Look at the faces. Black people. Yu no how hard it was to get dese books? Some, me haffe get from America! They don't want us to read dese kind ah radical books, but we are Africans. We must educate ourselves.'

It made her think about her school experience. The teacher and head mistress whispered loudly in front of her. Their annoyance and bewilderment made clear. How was this girl reading better than our own British pupils? After that, whenever the Islington born girl read with her teacher, she pointed slowly to the repeated words, as if she needed to study each one.

'Well done,' her teacher smiled. Pampi then thought, 'Maybe someone like my teacher doesn't want dad to have his books, but he does have them, so I have them too.'

Another Saturday, Pampi's father insisted that his wife, Ivy, take down the picture of the Jesus with blond hair and blue eyes from the wall. He pulled out his box with a little more force than before and began to read aloud. Ivy left the room to complain in the kitchen.

Amongst the book collection, Pampi was interested in a 1968 penguin publication, 'The Autobiography of Malcolm X with the Assistance of Alex Haley.' Its front cover was styled with a portrait of a smartly dressed Black, bespectacled man and words and phrases formatted in capital letters and bubble writing— like designs she had seen on protest posters. She wanted to know who authored the books. Over the years, Pampi was often drawn to the autobiography. Maybe because she was familiar with Malcolm's words. Her dad and uncle enjoyed quoting his famous remarks in conversation, 'One thing the White man can never give the Black man is self-respect!'

'Look at the faces on the covers', her father said, 'Black people wrote them.' She considered her school once more. Alex Haley or Malcolm X were never mentioned. Instead, the bookshelves were crammed with Enid Blyton and C.S. Lewis titles. Pampi wondered, *'Is this the same Malcolm Daddy talks about with Uncle? The man who talks about blue-eyed devils? That's why Daddy took Mummy's Jesus down!'*

Pampi decided not to be put off by the numbers of words inside the book. *If I can read verses from the Bible to Mum, she determined, I can learn to read this book.* Neither was she hindered by the lack of key, frequently used English language words to learn at the bottom of the pages, although now she *did* need to use her finger to pause at unknown polysyllabic words and to blend chunks of sounds. She decoded words like, 'independence' and 'improvement' and found answers to some questions:

This writer says I and my, so this author writes about himself. The book must be about him and a true story. Malcolm had a mother who was born in the West Indies, like Mummy and Daddy.

Over the years, Pampi was often drawn to the autobiography. Maybe because she was familiar with Malcolm's words. Her dad and uncle quoted his famous remarks in conversation, such as, 'One thing the White man can never give the Black man is self-respect!' The girl gradually learned more about Malcolm X. He was an activist against racial inequalities. He, like her dad, promised to protect his family. His X was like her family name—a new name which does not belong to a slave owner. He talked about political education.

In the 1990s, Menelik downsized home. He said, 'Tek de books. Use them.' Pampi felt honoured to inherit books stamped, 'Property of M.R.O Kandekore'. She placed the autobiography on her bookshelf between her copies of James Baldwin's 'Notes of a Native Son' and Ambalavaner Sivanandan's 'A Different Hunger'.

© Pamela Kandekore – February 2024



The Autobiography of Malcolm X with the Assistance of Alex Haley.', Alex Haley & Malcolm X, 1968.

'...I do not expect to live long enough to read my book...' Malcolm X
Written before he left the Nation of Islam, the book's cover depicts a tired man above images of a Klansman and Confederate flag, whose activism still resonates internationally for those willing to engage with radical forms of resistance against racial inequality and social injustice.

Pamela Kandekore



George Jackson is dead, Grosvenor Square, Photograph, 08/1971, photographed, 2010, printed, Dennis Morris.

Surrounded by protesters and placards declaring the murder of the Black political activist, George Jackson, in prison, David Udu from the *International Personnel Training Centre, Balham*, addresses senior police officers at a demonstration outside the American Embassy. This is at the height of the Black Power Movement symbolised by the clenched chained black fist on a banner.

Pamela Kandekore

Desta is for joy

How could I politicise the innocence of these eyes
in the hearts of those who can is where badmind resides
Princess Desta, hanging lovely in my godfather's home
taught me nuh follow fashion inna dis yah place
just be
walk good
tek up space

For my father, she was a grounding pride
for me, proof of an innocent beauty inside
I was never told of my own

*It's me
No, you
(No, us)*

*Do you know of this beauty undenied
of lights that cannot die
I and I nah guh tell yuh a lie*

*Look at all you have been blessed with
it must be love that
lifts hair unacquainted with gravity
gifts soles the knowledge of ancestral cartography
handed down over hills and valleys (too)
in all you are and all you do*

*You have been here before
learned of the Earth
bound to a place beyond Babylon
and agents of downpression
between ism and schism you are not torn
we exist as we were born*

How could I politicise the innocence of my eyes
those who can haffi know that in their hearts badmind resides
there is such light in this thing called
blackness
abundance, livity, wealth
and a simple truth:
being pure means being true to myself

*Desta means joy in Amharic

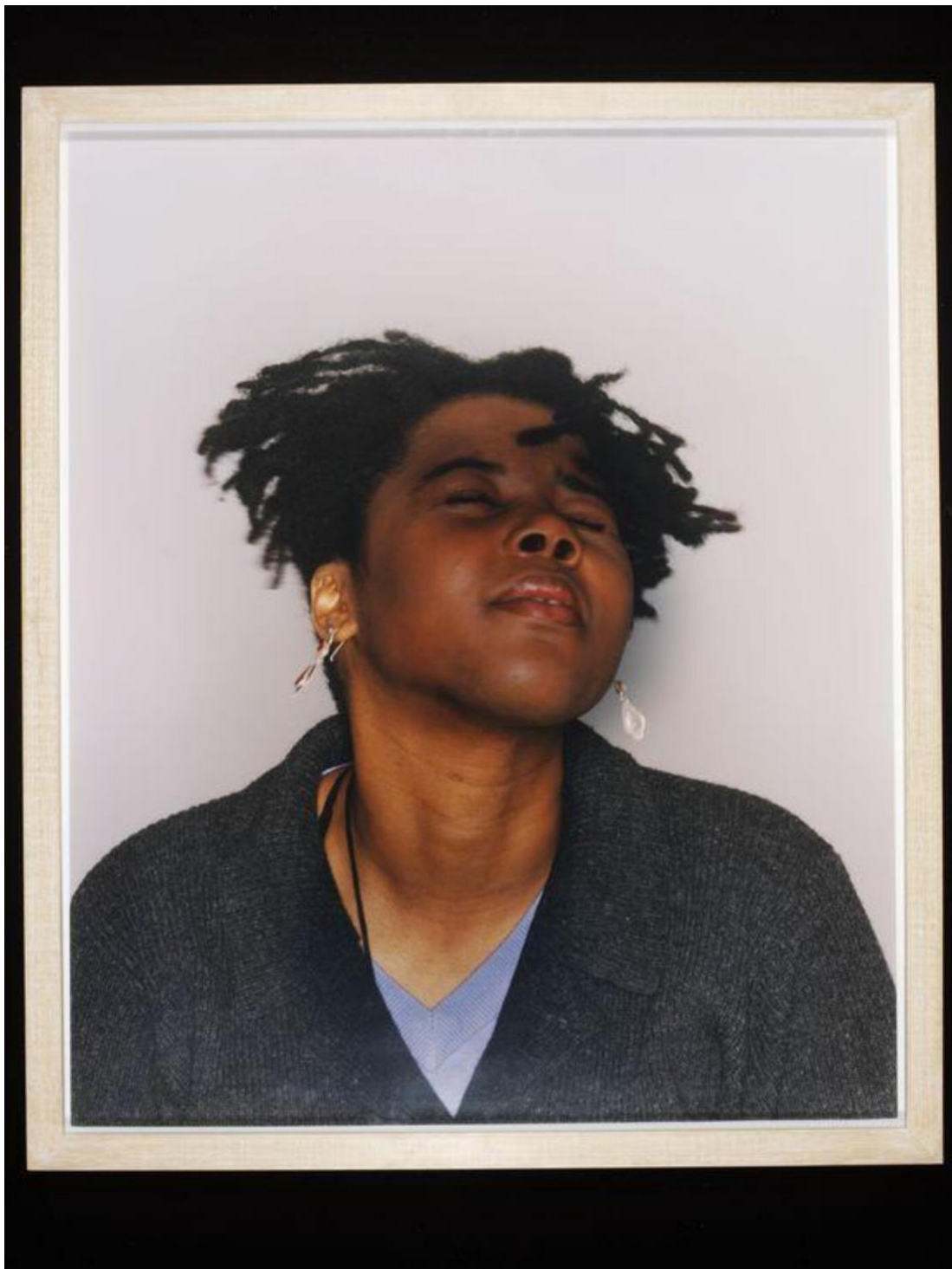
© Lauryn Grant – February 2024



Princess Desta, 1973, Ras Daniel Heartman b. 1942 d. 1990

'Princess Desta' is a pencil/ink drawing by Jamaican artist, Ras Daniel Heartman, known also as the 'Walking Camera'. As part of a series of posters and postcards commissioned by Jessica and Eric Huntley, for Bogle L'Ouverture Bookshop, it depicts authentic representations of Rastafarian subjects. The young girl could be the artist's daughter, who shares her name with grandchildren of Emperor Haile Selassie I, a key figure in the Rastafarian movement.

Lauryn Grant



Untitled, 1995, Maxine Walker b. 1962.C-type print.

Here, Walker subverts the politics of black hair and reclaims power by defining her aesthetic, wearing different hair styles and experimenting with camera exposure to change her complexion. First exhibited in a series as part of the 'Self-Evident' exhibition of Black photography at IKON gallery, Birmingham, 1995. Walker plays with the photo-booth format, allowing the viewer a snapshot into a moment, only suggesting at a depth which they cannot determine without her permission.

Lauryn Grant

Black Style on the Body and in the Home

I believe that Black identity is the richest in history, and black style is outstanding, intentional, meticulous and creatively expressed all the identities who have lived within me. From tropical colours to large tattoos, feared yet fetishized; as bell hooks says, 'ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture' From oppression to resistance, old fights, a higher purpose, making our own reality. Hear the sound of my '*freedom symphony*'.

I have a series of family photographs where the 'sitter' had dressed up to have their photograph taken - always a performance in costume. I love the tailored and handmade 'Sunday best' clothes, no patches and mend. I love the 'party dresses' and the sartorial elegance of dressing up to go out, wearing hats and gloves and matching ribbons.

It started with the hat. A 1960's pink netted pillarbox affair, worn to church. Theatrical and flamboyant on my six year-old head. Perfect to accessorise with my hand-me-down cord dungarees and fair Isles cardigan. Looking back at that photo, and I wonder if I would have dressed differently with the heritage fabric of African ancestors. But I didn't, and I created my own rite of passage, my own heritage cloth in the form of my 'Free Nelson Mandela' t-shirt, my red, gold and green bracelet from Jamaica, my sweatshirt 'Black history, knowledge is power'. The vintage finds have become my new style heirlooms. Will I pass these to my children and forge our legacy?

Eclectic shapes, patterns and colours drawn from contemporary fashion trends and traditional diasporic culture. Postmodern poetics - worn, upholstered or positioned behind glass they demonstrate an acute heightened awareness of aesthetic curation. Objects become heirlooms, encapsulating fragments of lives lived. Colour telling stories of textures and shapes swirl poetically to the rhythm of past times, loves, hopes and dreams.

Bilingual aged 8, speaking my first sentence: a crocheted 7cm x 9cm lopsided rectangle. Taught by my mother, taught by her mother. As I grew, my vocab expanded. Adjectives: through crocheted doilies on my nannies side tables. Verbs: by seeing my mother in a wicked three piece suit. Tenses: through handmade artefacts of clothing in my nannies wardrobes. One day - I hope to be fluent.

© Mélanie Castel, Margaret Holder, Selene Heath, Patricia Uter & Tyreis Holder – February 2024

Rooms of her own

I toyed with the temptation to spray the varnish in the air like perfume, just to get back a small moment when nanny would insist that 'godliness was next to cleanliness' as she polished with near religious vigor, while humming gospel songs of Mahalia Jackson.

The gold gilded picture of a deep olive-skinned Jesus hung in the room as a reminder of this most precious motto, next to the framed cloth Jamaican coat of arms - *Out of Many, One People*.

I tried to open that locked door to nanny's front room, every single time I entered the house and would feel an absolute thrill on the rare occasion she forgot to lock it after a weekly cleaning session. My elusive treasures that lay behind the door were darkly, patterned carpets and a tight, leather studded Chesterfield sofa, without a hint of wear. An imposing wooden side cabinet, heaving with a collection of large glass Murano-esque 1960s animal sculptures.

The hefty, wooden dinner table in the middle of the room was laden with a fine reproduction of a Victorian ceramic jug and wash bowl, glazed in the softest lilac, painted with pastoral scenes and trimmed with a gilded ruffle edge.

Where objects were displayed to museum level quality, nanny's front room became my first gallery. Her porcelain collection mounted behind glass, the picture gilt framed and ornaments elevated on a plinth of crochet dollies, I marveled at her masterful, working-class curatorship. It was a room that taught me to respect and appreciate special things. Even little child like me, knew to look and enjoy, but not to touch.

This prepared for my first London gallery visit as a child in the 1990s, when we were continually followed round by a scowling exhibition guard, most likely from being the only Black visitors. When my mum went to the toilet, the guard took the opportunity to bark, 'Don't you dare touch the art'. I wanted to shout back and say, 'I know how to move around a gallery and look carefully at artwork. My nanny has a whole room full of art!' I cried as I realized, I would never walk into a room like this again and felt panicked at the feeling of being left adrift from my connection to my Caribbean heritage, as the last of my Windrush generation family member died.

The display cabinet full of carefully selected ornaments, not to be touched, the proud reminders of 'back home' in the form of a Jamaican crest plaque on the wall, the purposeful curation of crochet doilies to elevate the hard-earned pieces. The proudest and most public of space in the whole home.

But I was also one of the luck few, to enter the private space. When I visited my Jamaican grandparents, as well as a pot of handmade Saturday soup from Nanny G and Peanut Punch, with peanuts lovingly soaked and blended through a fine mesh by Granddad R, Nanny would said 'Selene, Nanny bought you some new ribbons from the market. Do you want to go to my room and pick a colour? Come bring it and Nanny do your hair for you'. Her private space, her sanctuary, the bedroom.

The bedroom was a masterclass in romantic luxury. The first step by my slippers foot, was met with a plush dark pink carpet and matching the deep pink velvet curtains. The pin stud velour stool, placed me in front of her dressing table, a frothy looking affair, topped with a frilly gilt edged mirror.

I didn't have too long before my delay returning downstairs would be noted, so I scanned the dresser with the round eyes of someone viewing a feast laden table. A diamond cut glass dish held a large cream cameo brooch, the round tub, decorated with a plastic rose, housed a magnificent power puff covered in rose scented talc, I dabbed some on my neck, praying Nanny wouldn't notice. And bottles of perfume, some full, some empty and pretty collectables from Avon. And yet, not cluttered. Such care was taken to display each treasured item in the way of her liking.

Like her front room, her bedroom was a safe, beautiful space. Projecting at home, a level of luxury and comfort that the media did not aim at her, but that she none the less, surpassed, she has style in abundance and if the fate of 1960's Britain had been kinder to her as a Black women, she would have most certainly opened her own interior design firm.

Now years later, after my horrendous trip to Granada in Spain, I understood the magnitude of what that bedroom meant to her. I went on holiday, only to be greeted with my food slammed down on the table by my waiter. My museum ticket roughly thrown at me. The man who screamed 'don't you dare touch anything. I don't want you in my shop', the second I walked through the door. The Granada airport staff member, who informed me 'get to the back of the queue, we don't want you in our country.' Yes, there is a lot hardened racists can squeeze into two weeks. I came home from that 'holiday' physically sick and emotionally weakened. How on earth did Nanny and Granddad deal with two decades of racial aggression and this level of stress. No wonder her bedroom was a shrine to soft and the lovely.

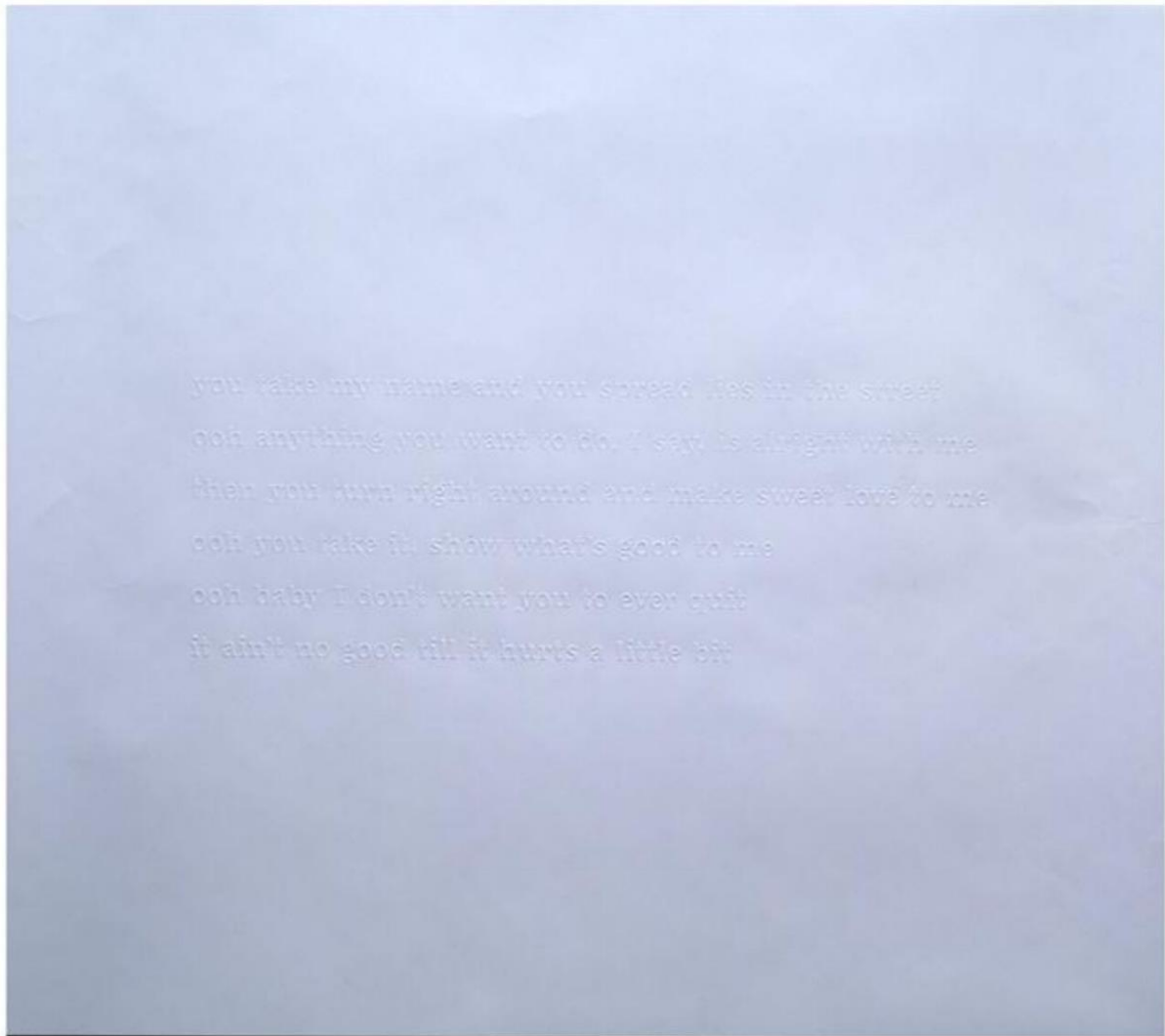
© Selene Heath – February 2024



Babycham Glass

This gold rimmed coupe shaped *Babycham* champagne glass from the 1970s accompanied the sparkling perry drink. It bears the famous logo of the prancing tan coloured fawn, with flowing deep blue neck ribbon, originally created in the 1950s. It belonged to Mr R. Robotham, from Jamaica, and was displayed in a glass fronted cabinet, to be used only on festive occasions, such as Christmas and New Year's Eve.

Selene Heath



Lover's Rock, wallpaper, 1998 (made), Sonia Boyce.

Absorbing the reggae song 'Hurts So Good' by Susan Cadogan's reggae song, through the embossed text of Sonia Boyce's wallpaper art resonates with the decorative sentiments of my Jamaican Grandmother's bedroom. Odes to love, the intimate flourishes of romance and the sensual soul, evokes a familiar feeling of duality, the public and the private of our relationships and our homes. No matter how subtle the mark we make, it is worth cherishing.

Selene Heath

Le Vérié

Une vitrine de bijoux précieux à ne pas toucher!
Immense réflexion de nos habitudes.

19h, j'observais le reflet déformé du journal télévisé à travers le vérié

Le dimanche *mami* sortait les verres à vin, pour les anniversaires les flûtes de champagnes. Trois étages de verre minutieusement rangé

Reflec-tion de notre consommation.

En abondance ou par peur de manquer?

Tout devait rester propre,
Réflec-tion de son
identité?

Ma tante associait cela avec le bien être,

Néanmoins je questionnais le bien être avait il un rapport
avec le genre ? Papi faisait rarement la vaisselle et
paraissait en très bonne santé

Au dernier étage exposait les cadeaux d'artistes.

Mami était elle aussi une femme artiste couturière minutieuse et
talentueuse, Perdu dans le reflet du vérié

Entre privilège et patriarcat

Le doux son de la radio traversait la pièce

Le goût de sa passion, dans ses pensées où nostalgie s'entremêlent avec
regrets, fierté

« et si » 'Lè man ké mo sa kay passé'

© Mélanie Marie Castel - February 2024

Translated by Mélanie Marie Castel

Le Vérié

A showcase of precious jewels not to be touched! Huge reflection of our habits.

7 p.m, distorted reflections of the evening news onto the glass cabinet
Three floors of glasses carefully arranged by category.

On Sundays *Mami* brought out the wine glasses reflections of our consumption.

In abundance? Fear of losing?

Everything must stay clean,
reflection of her identity?

I questioned whether that had anything to do with gender? Grandpa seemed in very good health, clean hands, rarely did the dishes.

On the top floor, artists' gifts were on display.
meticulous artist and talented seamstress
herself lost in the reflection of the glass

Between privilege and patriarchy.

The soft sound of the radio carried through the room

The taste of her passion, her thoughts where nostalgia intertwines with regrets, pride, what if?

She used to say 'Lè man ké mo sa kay passé'

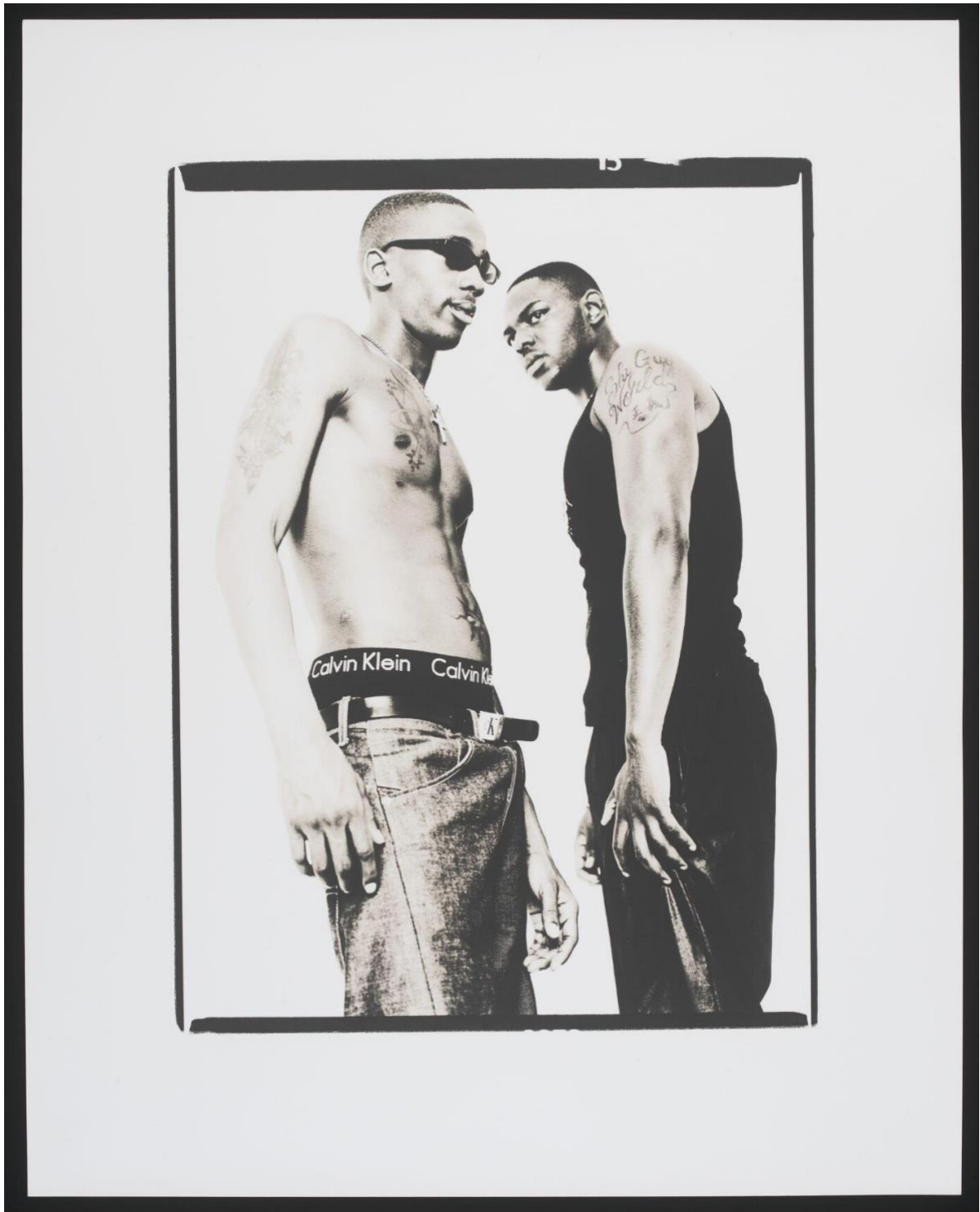
© Mélanie Marie Castel - February 2024



Le Vérié

A handmade glass cabinet (170cm x 190cm) in mahogany wood made in Martinique, Anses Arlet. This was amongst furniture ordered in the 1970s by Mrs. Castel, my grandmother, to display her collection of glass, crockery, and gifts from her tender loved ones and children.

Mélanie Marie Castel



Brixton Boyz, Photograph, 2001, Jenni Baptiste.

Two young Black men in Brixton pass each other. Tattoos on their bodies, one bare-chested with sunglasses and sagging jeans showing his Calvin Klein underwear. The other, dons a black vest and black sagging pants. Sagging as a style worn by young Black men in American urban areas, emerged in the late 1970s, and became popular within hip hop subculture during the 1990s.

Mélanie Marie Castel

Sewing, Knitting & Crochet

I loved our hand cranked Singer sewing machine with its Bentwood domed case, and remember feeling very grown up when I was finally allowed to use it. I developed my dressmaking skills on it, making my first garment, a simple straight skirt in a blue check fabric that I was brave enough to wear to primary school. I enjoyed winding the spool bobbin, threading the take-up lever, its steady rhythmical motion, the even fabric feed, and trying to use its small screwdrivers.

This sewing machine ignited my love of needlecraft, textiles, and making. Before I was allowed to use the sewing machine, I sewed, knitted and crocheted clothes for my dolls. This was inspired by my mother's friend, Auntie Millie, who crocheted colourful starched lacy doilies, dresses and later ponchos. She always had a project on the go when she visited, and as a young child, I was fascinated by the colours, the yarns and her process.

My dolls were the best dressed in our street, because I designed and created their garments. I had a plastic pink baby doll, and several non-branded skinny Barbie/Sindy type dolls, probably from Shepherds Bush Market. I later had a Tressy Doll and turning a button in her back made her hair grow longer or shorter. At the time, I didn't question that all my dolls were white.

I was largely self-taught, creating my own designs and patterns for my dolls, which included iterations of an A-line dress and matching pants for the pink baby doll, and knitting a lime green tank top in moss stitch for my 12 inch skinny doll. I thought I had invented a new stitch! Modelling my creations through trial and error, I would quietly and patiently work on a problem until I had solved it to my satisfaction. Later, I joined the local library and borrowed 'how-to' and 'fashion through the ages' books.

Aunt Violet was a seamstress, and used her knowledge and skills of sewing and dressmaking to support her family. She came to Britain in 1955, and sewed all the time, in addition to full-time employment, to save for and buy her home. She made my mother's wedding dress, and probably countless others. She worked in the canteen at Selfridges, and proving herself, she transferred to the Alterations Department when a vacancy arose. At the time of hearing this story, my own daughter was working Sundays at Selfridges in the Top Shop concession. I imagined them walking along the same corridors, 60 years apart, where Aunt Violet would tell her stories about her time at Selfridges.

Aunt Violet also sewed uniforms for BOAC, and for schools. She did this

for years as piecework around other employment. She had four sons, and I think welcomed the opportunity to make dresses for her brother's children. As a young girl I wore her dresses, including a pretty pastel party dress made in a lightweight nylon fabric with a rosebud print and in yellow, blue or pink colourways. These dresses had a full gathered waisted skirt, puff sleeves and very long sashes that were tied in a large bow at the buttoned back. We wore our handmade dresses with short white cotton socks, black patent leather shoes, and colour matched ribbons in our neatly plaited hair. Sisters and cousins were always dressed alike.

Aunt Violet inspired my love for fabric and sewing; she gave me bags of off-cut fabrics to fashion my dolls clothes and the occasional long length of fabric to create bespoke designs for myself.

Unbeknown to me my uncle was a tailor which I only found out at his funeral last year, as my cousins spoke of the coats and trousers that he had crafted for them.

© Margaret Holder – February 2024



Singer Sewing Machine, 1924.

A hand cranked Singer sewing machine with a black cast iron body and gold patterned decal design. It was used by Margaret Holder's grandmother, Gertrude Katherine, who created one-size wrap shorts in brightly coloured fabrics to sell to tourists on the beach in Barbados, where she had an old colonial style house between two large hotels. Her son, a tailor, who migrated to Brixton in 1960, used it to make trousers and coats for his three daughters.

Margaret Holder



Golden Harvest, furnishing fabric, designed by Althea McNish for Hull Traders Ltd., 1960s, UK. Museum no. T.178-1989. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Golden Harvest, printed on a heavy cotton satin for post-war domestic Britain, combines inspiration from the wheatfields of the English countryside and the colours of the Caribbean. Born in Trinidad, Althea McNish (1924-2020) trained at the Royal College of Art, London, in the 1950s, was first Black British textile designer to reach international acclaim, and whose work should now be taught throughout schools and colleges.

Margaret Holder

The Jamaican Tablecloth 1967-2024

- The Maker is a member of the *Jamaica Women's League Allsides Workroom*, established in 1936 to improve the lives and income of rural women, hence the embroidered figures on the tablecloth are engaged in pastoral activities, some unemployed women with children or women aiming to escape violence. This initiative also went some way to meet the demand for locally produced authentic products for the tourist trade worth circa J\$4 billion. 'Made in Jamaica' better still 'Hand made in Jamaica' commands greater profit; encouraging entrepreneurship.

The Maker: Anotha week, anotha one. Wi haffi duh dis fe mek ends meet. To mek we self safe. But at least is clean wuk. An we grateful. Mi hope ah go sum'ady who cah appreciate how much wuk dis is. Mi? Mi just looking fe mi pay! How much dem charging fe dis?!! Wednesday, de place mats, Thursday de coasters, den Friday de napkins. Mi wonder wey dem wi go. Who wl buy? Sum'ady stocious dat fe sure. Irish linen AND hand-embroidered? Fe sure! How dem earn dem living? Nah dem husband money! Me prraay fe dat!

- As a beneficiary in her step-mother's will, my mother returned to Jamaica 10 years after emigrating to London UK. In her absence, I was the stand-in 'cook and bottle washer'. I was 11 years old and was able to cook the full traditional Jamaican Sunday dinner without issue

It was repaired by my father, after being very badly scorched. Family friends were encouraged to identify where and how it had been repaired so clever were his skills. He taught me to sew. His mother was a seamstress.

The Tourist: I like this! I really like this! I can just see this in the dining room. It's a bit dear though... but it's good quality, pure Irish linen and hand embroidered! Yes I'll have it even though I'm here for the funeral. It reminds me of the home I left behind. The weather, a welcome change from grey damp London, and the smell of paraffin and the cold. Brings back the warmth of our relationship. She was good to me. She must have loved me. I loved her. Mi feel Stocious.

I feel loved and elevated! I want to remember being here, being back in Jamaica, with money that I can spend as I want. And there's more coming.

I know she was proud of me. I married good. He's a good man, has a good white collar job, yes me dear, and we have a good life. The children are doing well. We made the right choice. We own a big house in a good area. Life is good. No stabbings like in West London... a far cry from Norland Gardens, where the opening scenes of Steptoe & Son was filmed, you know. This is what I want to remember. I can afford this!



The Jamaican Tablecloth 1967-2024

This hand embroidered Irish linen tablecloth was made by the Allsides Workroom of the Jamaica Women's League. It was purchased by my mother in 1967, at Parkington Plaza, Kingston Jamaica. Following a telegram about her mother's passing, her first return trip was made. Together with her husband, within 8 years she bought a house in a good area and enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle.

Patricia Uter



Reaping Sugar-Canes in the West Indies, Poster, 1929, Frank Newbould.

This lithographic poster, similar in style to those produced for the London Underground, presents a rural scene of a sugarcane plantation in Jamaica for the Empire Marketing Board, but it perpetuates an image of Black servitude aimed at potential tourists, to somehow reassure them what to expect when they arrived in this tropical paradise; an old story recycled today.

Patricia Uter

Pom Pom Trousers

The sun silenced to a whisper
as the moon began to bass
plants and Palms finished their shifts
heat honouring a hard day's work with harmonious hums
darkness dancing in my peripheral
tunes tumping tru the walls
as I wait in line with my peers in anticipation
the door finally heaves open
and I'm met with the smell of excitement
coconut oil and overproof coming from a glass on the dresser
lights cocking their leg left and right
as the bouncer looks up and down at me and my entourage
long locs in a bun atop her head
scanning from left to right
praying we'll catch eyes
and she'll invite me onto her skin
freshly trimmed nails grabs me by the belt loops
and ushers me through security
alongside another line full of unfamiliar familiars
one by one
getting dashweh for forgetting their style D
and shortly
I'm welcomed to the dance of body, clunky wooden jewellery, scarlet red
blouse to match my pom poms, matching headwrap, slingback kitten
heels
and perfume that sweet me and our onlookers
cutting tru the air thick from body heat

And then we skank
sounds of ska
serenading my seams
sown with sweat of scenery and yours
shoulders swaying softly
steps stepping in two's
to the tempo tempting two tribes to tangle
via whimsical whine
in waist and tonic
as we move through the night into the early rising
and return behind doors

To be heaved open once again
in the room that once belonged to my mother
original wallpaper that she and my dad had wallpapered herself still intact
but peeling at the corners
with mum over my shoulder
To be met with a bouquet of clothing
and pungent perfume
with a base note of memories
and top note of mothballs
one by one
I shuffled through each item of clothing like a stack of receipts
each piece holding their own transaction
Their own story
one piece caught my eye
I extracted it from the bookshelf of fabrics
trousers that were black, with scarlet red pom poms running down the
sides
they almost resembled fancy dress
I turned to mumsy

"Who's are these?"

"They're nannies, she made them back in the day, before I was born,"

She replied back

"Nannies??? What did she do with them? "

"Back in Jamaica, she wore them"

"OUTSIDE?!"

I couldn't believe that these were something she had made
but more shocked to hear this was something she had paraded in public
I inspected the seams
to be greeted with a treadmill of handstitched stitches
each stitch pronouncing a new consonant
signifying the life she had once lived
waiting in Vain

© Tyreis Holder – February 2024



Pom Pom Trousers

They look slightly different to what I remember and only had Pom Poms down one side and had gold beading which was really pretty. I collaged the trouser image with a blanket as I feel it brings the trousers and my nanny's vibrancy.

Tyreis Holder



Pair of Shoes, 1994 (made), Sabiba, (maker).

I can see my nanny wearing these shoes with her Pom Pom trouser looking trash and ready going out raving to a dance in Jamaica, and drawing attention from everyone as she moves on the dancefloor.

Tyreis Holder

Black Arts Practices and Movements: Migration, representation, retrospection

The Caribbean Arts Movement of 1960s created the impetus for young people born and growing up Black in Britain to become playwrights, writers, poets, actors, directors, dancers, musicians, fine and visual artists, filmmakers. This movement gave birth to a cultural renaissance that saw a dozen Black run theatre companies in London alone, and the Black Arts Group of the 1980s. In post-imperial Britain, colonial racism may still exist, but artists who identify as Black have transformed the landscape of British winning major awards, knighted, damed, and at the heart of the art establishment here and abroad. And see below some of our stories as practitioners.

As a textile and sonic artist, my practice was born out of curiosity to connect more consciously with my identity and ancestry as a mixed heritage Caribbean and British third-generation female. My large-scale printed textiles and accompanying original soundtrack, explore my grandmother's journey (now fragmented due to memory loss) to England from Jamaica toward the end of the Windrush period.

As a filmmaker, my practice emerged through the activism of women in British arts, the Black Art Gallery under the directorship of Marlene Smith, the art of Simone Alexander, and exposure to a flourish of independently organised exhibitions featuring black artists, including *Unrecorded Truths* curated by Lubaina Himid. My short film, *Dreaming Rivers* (1988) was written and directed for the collective Sankofa Film & Video.

I was dancing from the age of four, but it was seeing Alvin Alley Dance Theatre of Harlem's production 'Revelation' with dancers on stage that looked like me that motivated me to become a professional dancer and choreographer, which I've developed over twenty-five years. Currently, this includes connecting creative dance with older people to facilitate 'moments of activism' with ASKI (Advice Support Knowledge Information) where I am CEO.

© Jaixia Blue, Martina Attille & Joseph Jeffers

Look, the House. Look, the Road.

A 7-inch folk doll representing a Caribbean agricultural labourer is a detail from the set of my 16mm film *Dreaming Rivers* (1988), which I wrote and directed for the London-based collective, Sankofa Film & Video. The doll is one of the items placed by artist Sonia Boyce, during her process of design and construction of a multi-textured, staged tropical ambiance.

The set's intention for the film was to fix a dreamscape through which memories of a Caribbean aesthetic could be visualised through objects made of natural materials, evocative of an internal landscape from 'back home.' The idealisation of 'back home' from which the mother, Shango dancer, actress, activist and educationalist, Corinne Skinner-Carter, as Miss T. the central protagonist ventures is bordered by three actors cast as her adult children. They encounter her as foreign. Each adult child is a symbol for a spatial relationship to the 'mother country' promoted and instituted at the heart of colonial conquest propaganda to win familial allegiance from colonial subjects. The arrangement of these three symbols and their simulated proximity to and oversight of the central protagonist function as mirrors that take up the theme of mirroring within the frame. This arrangement is projected out to a fixed point of reference off-screen, into the auditorium, through the space occupied by the trauma of the undead and unrested desires that hold the gaze of the adult children.

Christian missionaries literally put the fear of god into children to make them give up their playthings. Artists make dolls. Dolls have feelings projected onto them. Religion and dolls. Fashion and dolls. Celebrity and dolls. Magic dolls. Therapeutic dolls. Comfort dolls. In the film, this folk doll was placed below a dresser mirror on a mantelpiece, in a simulation of a room scented by a brewing electric storm, warm dark wood, damp bamboo, slept in sheets, patchouli oil in water and the fragrance of a mature woman waking out of heavy sleep, listless.

The fabric elements of the construction of the doll are a mixture of sturdy cotton-like fabric with embroidered features that fashion its head, and piecework of patterned, woven, worn fabrics. Aestheticised poverty in the choices made for the fabrics of the skirt is indicative of a type of commentary evident in the film *Dreaming River* (1988). The wardrobe door is opened to reveal an emptiness edged by a thin

hanging of utility wear and a raffia basket. A strand of shells and a passport fall out of the raffia basket and animate the folk doll's relevance to the film from its position next to the icon of the Black Madonna on the candle-lit mantelpiece, with a strand of shells around its base. In her poem *Seduction*, Merle Collins compassionately spells out the hazards of 'sweet subsisting' and sacrifices when investing too long in conditions of diminishing returns to settle for the promise of better for one who travels towards the metropole, the centre of empire.

This doll is a talisman as celebration for the poetics of carrying load through space and time – beyond a history when 'banana was king' in the Caribbean for cultivators, labourers, plantation owners and empire. With pleated strips of found scraps, possibly fragments from cuts of authentically weathered fabric, the doll is a timepiece as homage or fetishisation of the African diaspora female labouring poor. It pictures the lives lived and speaks to the carriers and keepers of those lives. It also symbolises the vulnerability of African diaspora women. In the film's conclusion, Miss T. wears a tea-stained muslin dress fashioned by designer Lorna Lee Leslie to perform the tempest of wind, sea, storm, and sail.

© Judah Attille – February 2024



This is seven-inch folk doll styled as a female agricultural worker, mounted on a wooden disc, and fabricated out of stitched and wrapped textiles. The key design feature is a madras head scarf. Madras is arguably modernism's most persistent index of colonial history, trade, and hybridity from its source in India, through Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, and the Americas.

Judah Attile



Spellbound, drawing, 1998, Hew Locke.

One day, artist and sculptor Hew Locke stunned me while meandering through the narrow, familiar, bustling streets of London's Soho. As I crossed a junction, a distinctively full-bodied woman draped in a trail of shamanic objects hovered in a narrow turning. It was *Selene*, a bronze statue commissioned by the Nadler Hotel, the goddess of sleep, the moon and magic.

Judah Attille

Rhythm in Motion

At the age of five, I embarked on my journey in the world of dance classes. Born in the UK, my life took a turn when I was adopted at the age of three. I was adopted by two wonderful people from the Islands of St Kitts and Nevis. From the ages of five to eleven, I had the privilege of living on the beautiful island of St. Kitts. I am conscious of always wanting to challenge injustice especially when it is based on race. Witnessing the frequent marginalization faced by this group of people supported my dedication to creating a more inclusive and equitable society.

In my dance practice, as CEO of Advice Support Knowledge Information (ASKI), I have the privilege of working with older men and women from the global majority. It is disheartening to see the lack of representation of older individuals, especially those from diverse backgrounds, in the dance community. That is why I aim to develop community dance that focuses on inclusivity and activism.

In our dance sessions, we engage in conversations and workshops that address issues of social justice and equality. We use dance and movement to express our shared experiences and challenge societal norms. By bringing together older individuals from different backgrounds, we create a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone's contributions are valued.

Together, we explore movement, rhythm, and expression, embracing the unique qualities and experiences that each individual brings. Through our collective practice, we not only create beautiful choreography but also build a sense of community and empowerment.

Through performances and collaborations, we aim to raise awareness about the importance of representation and belonging in the dance world. We strive to inspire others to embrace diversity and create spaces where people of all ages and backgrounds can engage in the joy and power of dance.

© Joseph Jeffers – February 2024



Here, older black and ethnic dancers captivate the viewer. Their skilled movements and experienced expressions showcase their talent and passion for dance. The dancers' diverse backgrounds and cultures are represented, creating a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere. Their synchronized performance is a testament to their unity and dedication. Through their graceful presence, these dancers inspire others to embrace their heritage and celebrate the power of artistic expression.

Joseph Jeffers



Lampworked figure of a dancer, designed by Fritz Lampl, Bimini Workshops/ Orplid Glassworks, Austria/ England, designed about 1925, possibly made 1940's.

This decorative piece captures the grace and elegance of dancers in motion and physical dedication and artistry in the world of dance. As a symbol of inspiration and admiration it reminds me of those who have shaped my love for dance, including dance teachers, as well as the strength and passion of my mom as a leader and to every female dance teacher I have ever worked with.

Joseph Jeffers

A Case for Vanity

Supple rich caramel skin
carries within
her hope for stability in the motherland
housing the promise of safety for three black boys and two girls
disguised delicate folds
simple comforts
amongst the of a woman's
one pristine white lace nightie, a polished pearl hair comb, cool mint
toothpaste
and a shaking bottle of blue Valium
smooth, robust contours gently knock and rub against the sheen of her dress
providing a measured rhythm that remembers...
the familiar journey to the hospital waiting room
this stark sterile place suggests a manufactured sense of calm
one could get used to...
rely upon
much like her trusty companion
the woman whose fingertips circle the cool steel clasp at her side
the comfort of knowing she holds within her
grip
everything she might need
for whatever comes next
no surprises, tricks or betrayals
just a woman's simple comforts

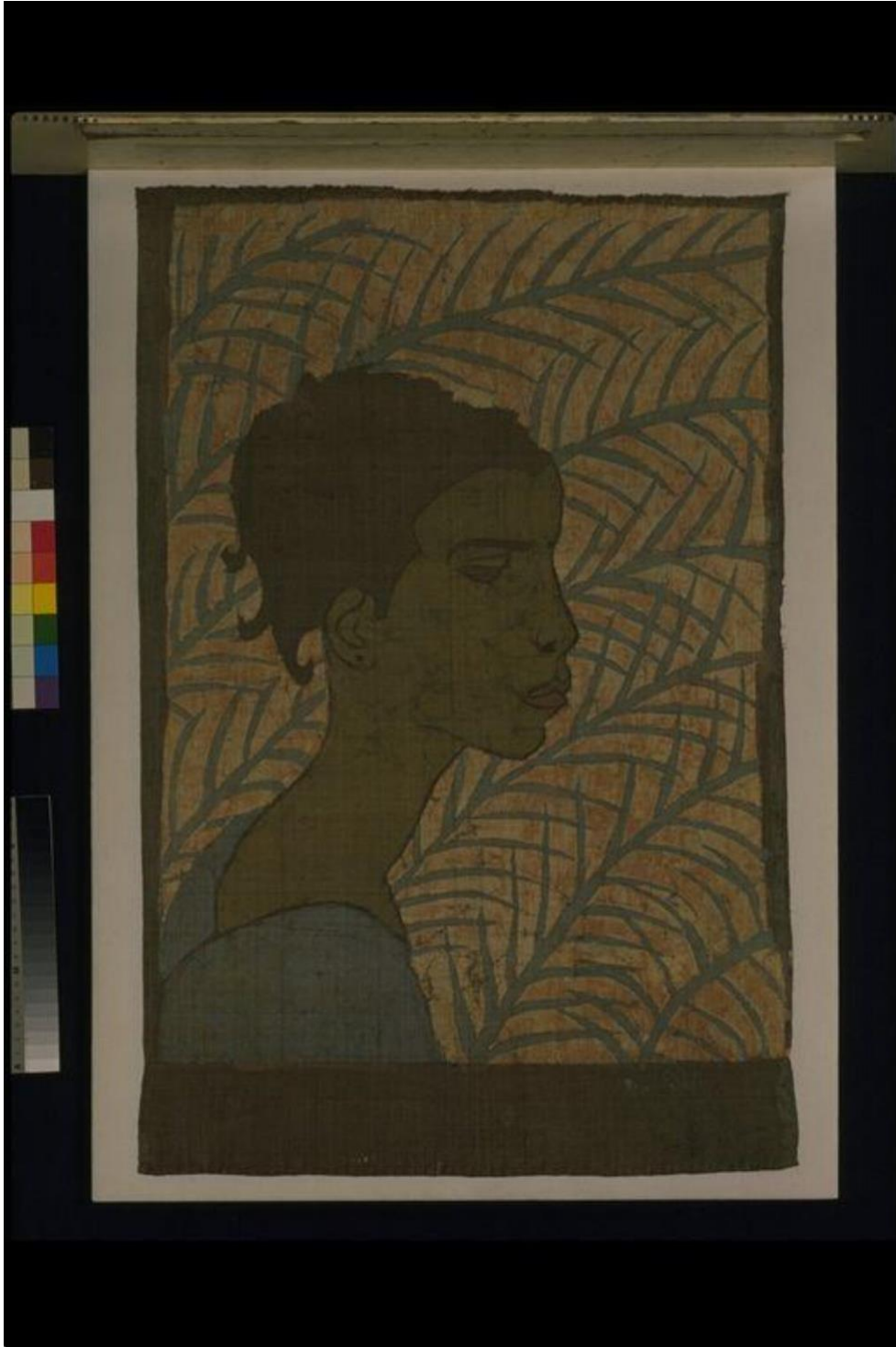
...

a case for vanity
a case for control
you might mistake aesthetic as a shallow companion
but it melts into her skin,
enveloping her psyche
until
everything is turned
inside out
instead of
out forced in
what was
lost
once again, found
hope
into safety
steady stepping
into steadfast resolution
this, informs her private revolution
one mother's constitution



This is a Foxcroft by Antler vanity case, also known as an overnight bag. It was owned by Odeline Ellis, bought in England circa 1970. Made from tan coloured soft leather. This particular bag housed the user's daily essentials, including: a white lace nightie, toothbrush, comb, and other toiletries.

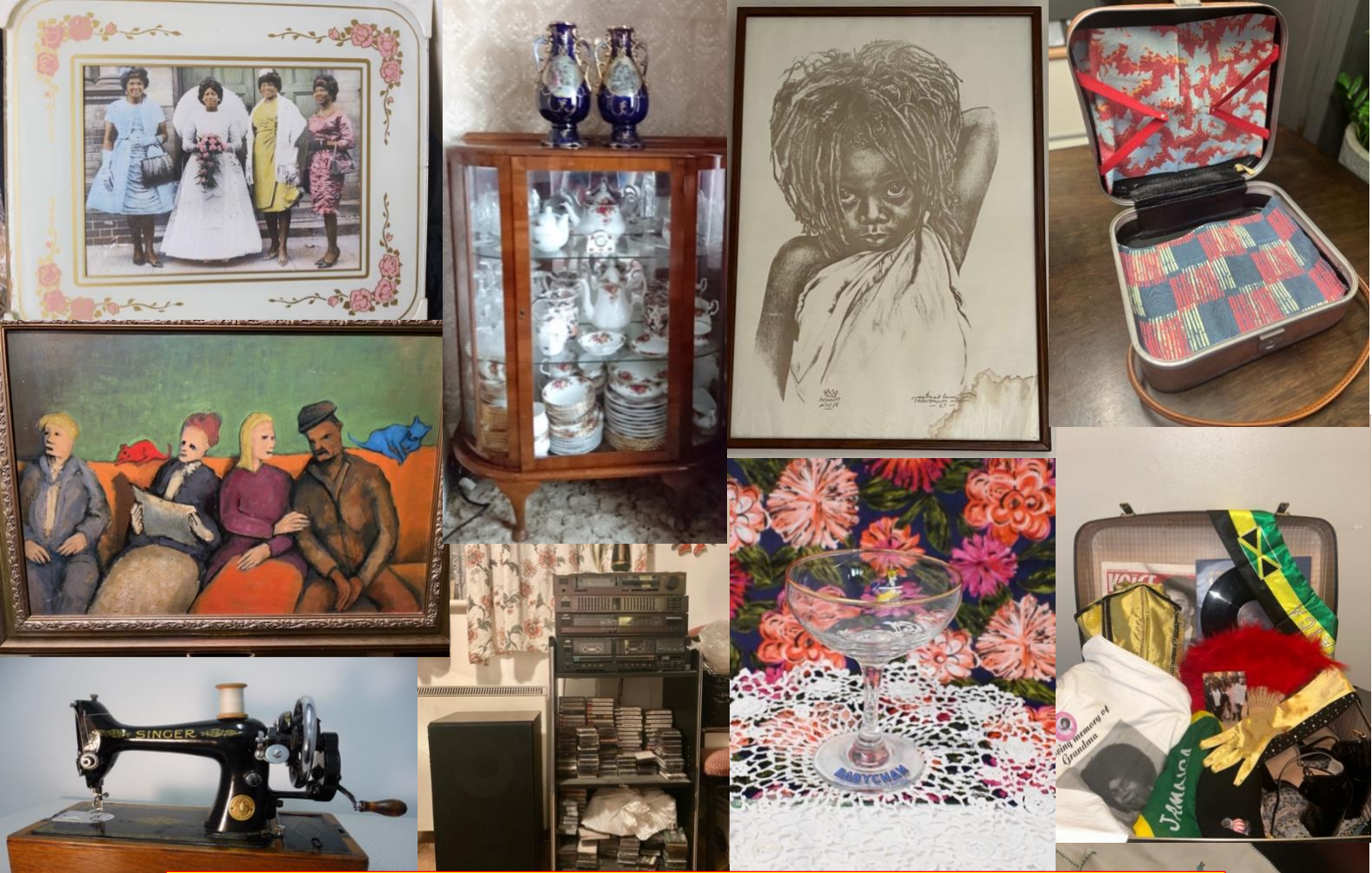
Jaixia Blue



Portrait, 1926 (designed and made), Alice M. Pashley.

The juxtaposing stories of a contemplative woman paired against an optimistic tropical backdrop conveys a sense of integrity. Not merely a caricature, but caught in a moment of quiet reflection, reminding me of my grandmother. Yet again, there is a simplicity to the brushwork which suggests a playful undertone, alluding to the nuanced human experience.

Jaixia Blue



Look We Here Curating the Caribbean 2024

