

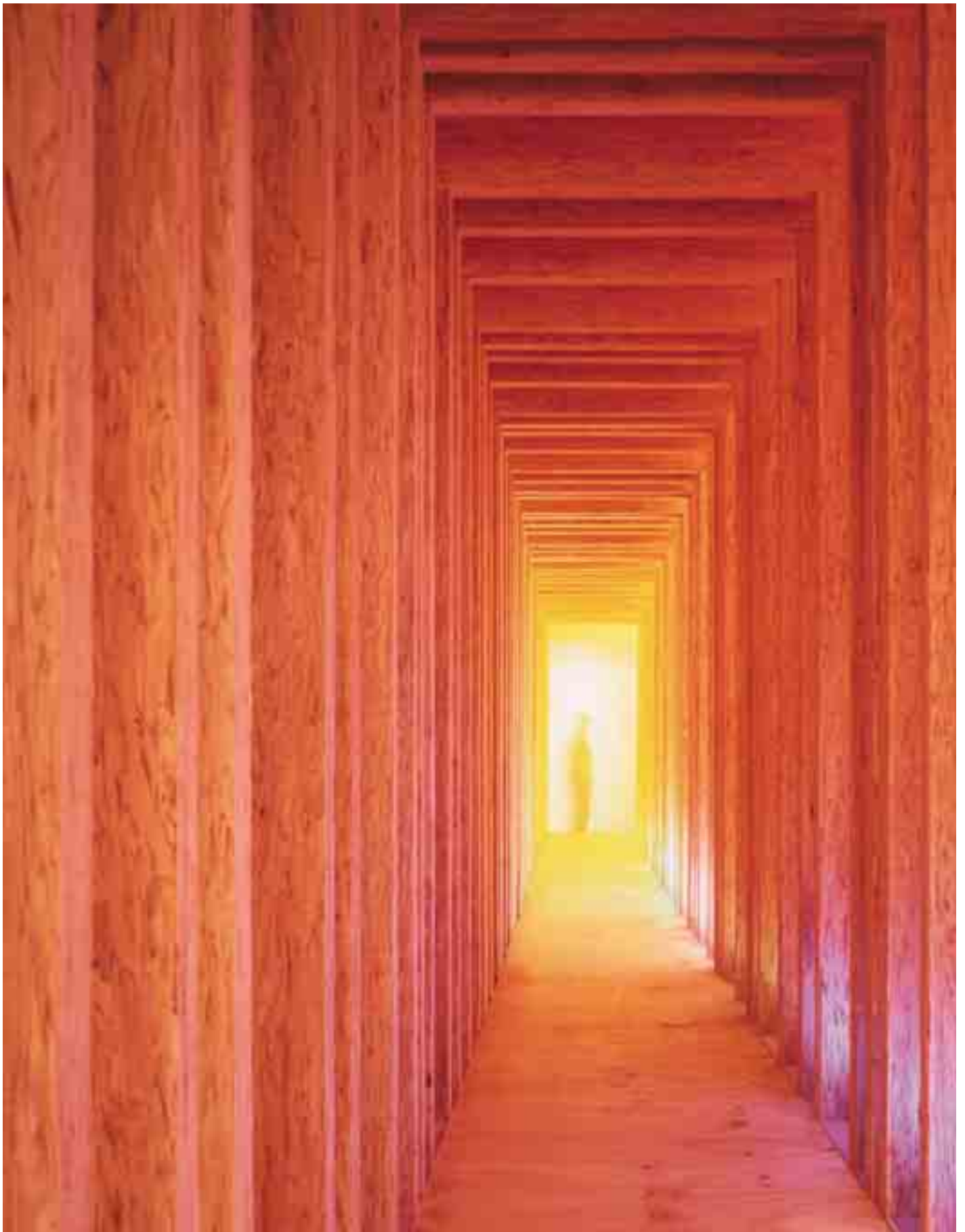
www.decibel-db.org
www.artscouncil.org.uk
www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk

The landscape is changing....

THE
BRITISH
MUSEUM







Cube Gallery Pavilion, David Adjaye

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Introduction



Space can take on a literal and figurative persona in visual arts practice. For artists locked in battle against cultural marginalisation, the yearning for space can take on more personal meanings. Some may argue that it is the cramping of space that frees up the creative juice. Many Black, Asian or Chinese artists working in a visual media in Britain are professionals at operating within such confines. It is only a few who have sampled the financial, cultural, mental or spatial autonomy exemplified by artists such as Fela Kuti and his creative space of self-definition, *The Shrine*, for example.

Inspired by this notion of spatial freedom, *A free state* intends to allow international culturally diverse visual artists the opportunity to blue-sky, envisioning a model that could fully house their creative needs and desires. Over these two days we will build a conceptual framework around creative freedom, self-definition, international collaboration and cultural autonomy. This imagined space will be both metaphoric and literal. At the end of the two days, leading British architect David Adjaye will help tease out the strands and prepare a concept for the freedom space, a structure that epitomises a safe, creative haven for Black, Asian and Chinese visual artists.

A free state is an intriguing conceptual exercise, a way for artists, practitioners and curators to freshly envisage the concept of freedom in their creative practice and meditate on their own personal desires for space.

Gaylene Gould
Conference coordinator



Welcome to A free state. Considering many of us spend more time on the job than we do in our personal homes, it would seem that the television schedules should be awash with work space makeovers. That is not the case, so decibel is proud to offer these two days as an opportunity for us to engage in just that.

A metaphorical work space makeover. What do I need? What do I want? A thorough and serious examination of these two questions is our quest.

Film is often used as a filter for society to view itself; the irony is that the emerging pictures are rarely inclusive or truly reflective of our society. It is fitting for the final decibel debate in the visual arts platform to use artists and film to discuss the issue of space. We are proud to have a wonderful line up of truly international speakers and contributors, here to inspire and galvanise us into an ambitious vision for the future.

decibel is drawing to a close but its legacy will ensure that the issues raised will inform Arts Council thinking over the next two years. Members of the decibel team are clearly identifiable and you do have evaluation sheets and vox-pop opportunities to let us know what you think. Our new thinking poses an interesting juxtaposition with our environment here at the British Museum, as do the new works commissioned especially for A free state by the British Museum, to live alongside their older exhibits for the duration of our conference. Do make the time to have a look and most importantly - Enjoy.

Samenua Sesher
decibel programme manager



Mad For Real
Photographer, Xiao W Ma

Welcome to The British Museum

We are delighted to be associated with the organisation of this pioneering international conference and to warmly welcome you all to the British Museum for these two days.

Although it may be a less well-known side of our work, the Museum is committed to the continuing collecting of contemporary visual culture. We hope that new relationships with artists and curators will continue the Museum's tradition of working across cultures and countries in replenishing the repository of work from across the globe, and redefining aesthetic boundaries and possibilities. We are especially pleased to work with partners such as Arts Council England's decibel project on this unique event which brings such an exciting gathering of international and culturally diverse artists and thinkers together to reflect on contemporary issues.

We look forward to continuing dialogue and partnerships with new artists, thinkers and curators, to new ways of working with culturally diverse audiences for museums such as ours - and new ways of together recreating and redefining the cultural landscape.

Finally, we hope you will take this opportunity to re-visit the universal collections of the British Museum. Whether viewed across culture or time they recreate another space, both personal and public, for reflection and inspiration.

Gareth Binns

Keeper of education and information

Margaret O' Brien

Head of lifelong learning

The exile of our longing



A free state: a place, a time, a temperature, where, under certain conditions, a space of possibility is built, word by word, image by image, face to face.

Today, there is more resistance to abusive power than ever before but little or no language for those actions nor the yearnings that drive them. Our desires to find a free space are contained by those same traditions of resistance we hold dear. On a bad day, I find myself pondering whether the critical weapons we wield with such pride have become consolation prizes for thinkers intimate with defeated radicalism. What we are for is so much more complicated, so much more fragile than what we are against; yet, who, among us has not found themselves busy, embattled by dictates and deadlines, only to be struck, vividly, indelibly, by what Marcuse once called 'the exile of our longing for non-sacrificial freedom.'

What if that 'exile of our longing' became a starting point for discussion? If that loss, felt as such, became the affective charge through which the state of a 'non sacrificial freedom' began tentatively, to emerge? If fear has a face and a name, perhaps freedom from fear does, too. A free state, then, would be the attempt to create a temporary time-space where it becomes possible to pursue freedom from the fear of a utopian imagination.

Think of A free state as an all too brief experiment in the indulgence of the intellect. As a self-conscious attempt to create a post-liberated thought process. A moment when the potential to decolonize ones dreamspace may in turn cultivate the preconditions for change.

Kodwo Eshun
The Otolith Group

Overview

Inspired by architectural practice **A free state** will be split between two types of dialogue session.

Foundations

The foundations sessions book-end the conference and are a chance to reflect on the way in which the seismic shifting of cultural influences transmitted throughout the African and Asian cultural diaspora has enriched the global language from the arts world to the streets. These intimate interviews, led by leading journalists and critics will re-acquaint you with selected international artists who have laid the foundations to current practice. With a focus on those working in moving-image, the foundations sessions celebrate achievements and review the strategies that led to the breaking of boundaries. What is the nature of their creative processes and how did they help build a new aesthetic? What were the barriers to creative freedoms and the strategies employed to deal with them? What were the issues they met in having their work received?

Building blocks

When an architect conducts an initial interview with potential clients, there are a number of important criteria which the architect seeks to explore. These include practical necessities but also involves collecting slightly more nebulous data such as personality, style, materiality and preference. The nine building blocks sessions will, in a similar way, capture the range of desires of contemporary visual practitioners through themed discussions led by leading artists, curators, architects and critical thinkers. These talking circles will detail the ingredients that will ultimately provide a conceptual framework for a creative space to redress creative and cultural equity in Britain. It will, in essence, provide a literal space to draw-up a concrete vision of creative freedom. At the end of the two days, David Adjaye will chair a final feedback session featuring each of the building block moderators. Teasing out the major points from each of the nine discussion areas, Adjaye will outline the basic concepts behind a space that could fully honor the creative needs of culturally diverse artists.

Day one

9.00 am

Welcome

Samenua Seshar, programme manager - decibel
Peter Hewitt, chief executive, Arts Council England
Margaret O'Brien, head of lifelong learning

9.15 am

Opening address

Nadim Karam, architect, Lebanon

9.45 am

Foundations - broader borders

Championing culturally diverse visions in the heart of the 'mainstream' requires a completely unique set of strategies and skills and a total revision of focus. Kasi Lemmons discusses the strategies employed to navigate her creative visions through the complex structures of Hollywood and mainstream cinema.

Kasi Lemmons, filmmaker, US
Interviewed by Gary Younge, writer, UK/US

11.15 am

Break

11.45 am

Building blocks - talking circle one

Freedom of speech

Moderator Mark Waugh, Arts Council England, UK
Roshini Kempadoo, visual artist, UK
Jian Jun (JJ) Xi, Mad for Real, visual/performance artist, UK
Eric Lesdema, visual artist, UK

Freedom to imagine the intimate

Moderator Manick Govinda, Arts Admin, UK
Kazukho Hokhi, visual artist, UK
Ansuman Biswas, visual artist, UK
Cameron Bailey, filmmaker, Canada
Jananne Al-Ani, visual artist, UK

Freedom to create value

Moderator Lola Young, curator, UK
Thelma Golden, curator, Studio Museum, Harlem, US
Richard Blurton, British Museum, UK
Ery Camara, curator, Senegal/Mexico
Kobena Mercer, critic/writer, UK

1.00 pm

Lunch

2.30 pm

Building blocks - Talking circle two

Freedom to build equity

Moderator Tara Mack, producer, US
Erika Tan, artist/curator, UK
Keith Khan, artist, UK
Rita Patel, The Peepul Centre, UK
Nima Poovaya-Smith, curator, UK

Freedom to reimagine viewership

Jie Lu, The Long March Foundation, US/China
Cary Sawhney, British Film Institute, UK
Tessa Boerman, curator, Holland
Kwong Lee, artist/organiser, UK
James Putnam, British Museum, UK

Freedom to creatively process

Moderator Dr Janice Cheddie, writer, UK
Robert Yao Ramesar, filmmaker, Trinidad
Alia Syed, filmmaker, UK
Sunil Gupta, visual artist, UK
Richard Fung, filmmaker, Canada

3.45 pm

Break

4.00 pm

Foundations - defining independence

Independent film has come to describe any film that does not feature an A list star. However the term once represented those films which counted the dominant perspective and its oligarchy. In the case of these two pioneers, it also pointed to an independence of creative spirit, which encompassed other art forms such as literature, painting and photography.

Melvin Van Peebles, filmmaker/artist, US
Horace Ove, filmmaker/artist, Trinidad/UK
Interviewed by Cameron Bailey, writer/critic, Canada

5.30 pm

End of Day One

7.30

Evening screening

Baadasssss

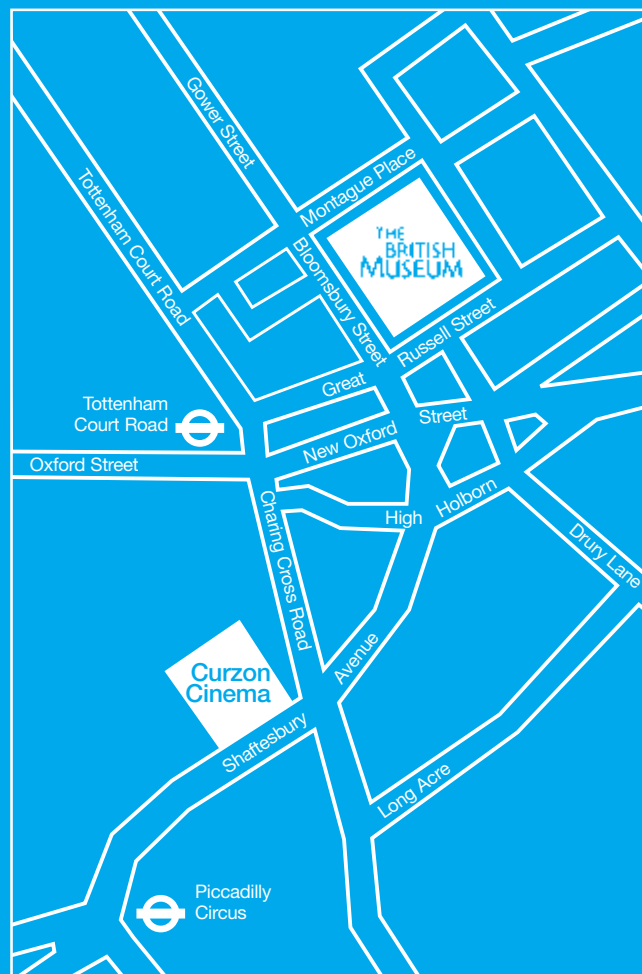
Dir: Mario Van Peebles

Introduced by Mario Van Peebles

The Curzon cinema, Shaftesbury Avenue, London.

The screening is only open to delegates holding a valid ticket, booked in advance.

There will be a drinks reception following the screening.





Baadasssss, dir. Mario Van Peebles

Day two

9.45 am

Foundations - the birth of memory

Exploring and reclaiming memory sits at the theoretical core of visual arts practice for many Black, Asian and Chinese artists thanks to the ground-breaking work of key artists such as Trinh T Min-Ha. Here she will relive her own memories, charting her creative journey and discovery.

Trinh T Min-Ha, filmmaker, US
Interviewed by Kodwo Eshun, UK

11.15 am

Break

11.45 am

Talking circle three

Freedom to imagine community

Moderator June Givanni, Ofcom, UK
Femi Kolade, filmmaker, UK
Mario Van Peebles, filmmaker/actor, US
Kasi Lemmons, filmmaker, US
Johann Insanally, film producer, UK
Effie T Brown, producer, US

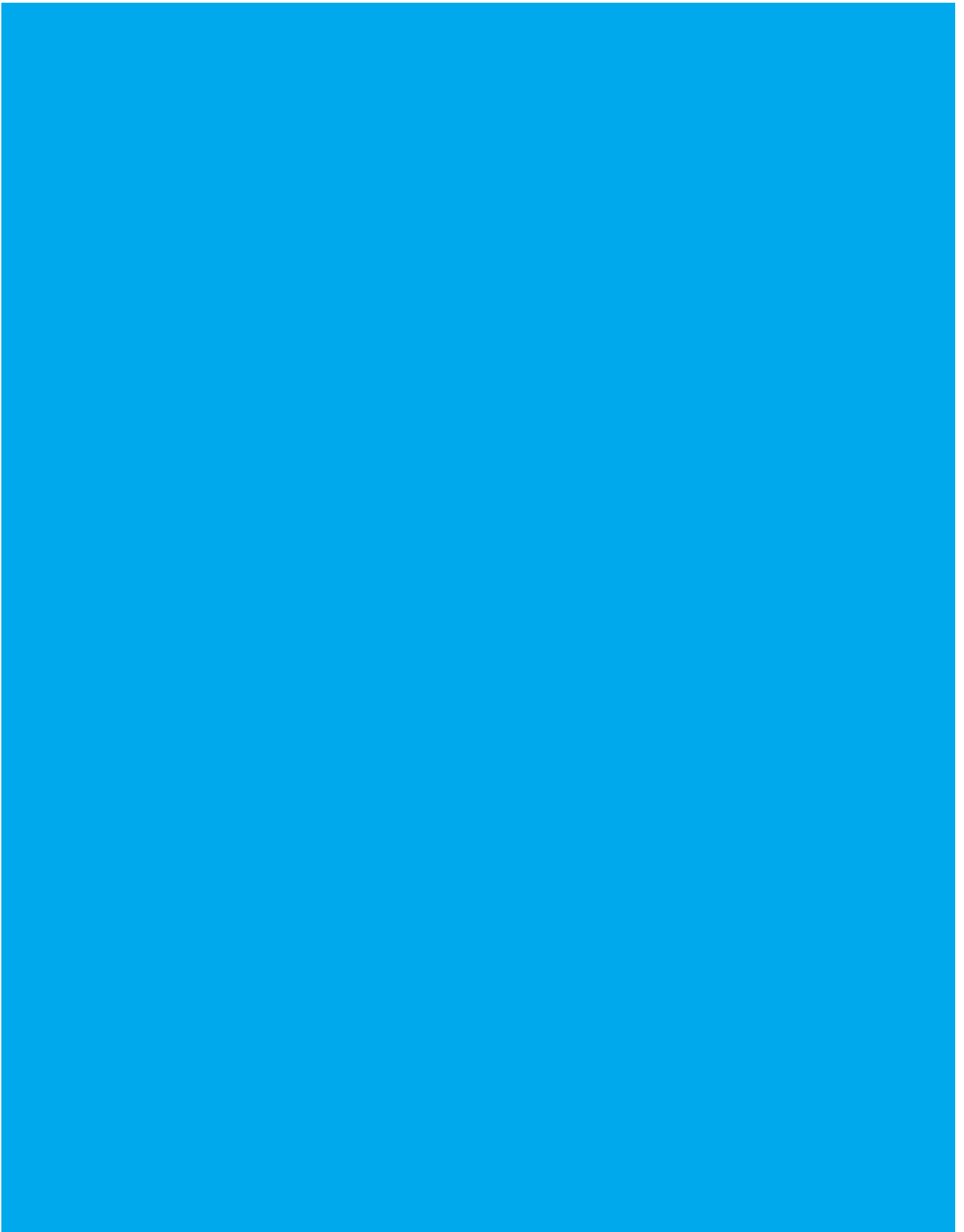
Global freedom

Moderator Tara Mack, US
Coco Fusco, artist, US
Anjalika Sagar, The Otolith Group, UK
Monika Baker, filmmaker/writer, UK

Freedom to reconfigure space

Moderator David Adjaye, architect, UK
Kodwo Eshun, The Otolith Group, UK
Ashwani Sharma, writer/critic, UK
Susan Pui San Lok, visual artist, UK
Anthony Hoete, architect, New Zealand/UK

1.00 pm	Lunch
2.30 pm	<p>Foundations - universal visions Culturally diverse artists are adept at mixing-up cultural iconography from the pop to the classic. Here, a Turner prize-winning artist and a Grammy-awarded one talk across genres.</p> <p>Don Letts, filmmaker, UK Chris Ofili, visual artist, UK Interviewed by Ekow Eshun, writer/critic, UK</p>
4.00 pm	Break
4.15 pm	<p>Summation panel Concept for the freedom space chaired by David Adjaye Architect David Adjaye chairs a summation round table with moderators from the nine think tanks. The feedback from each of the sessions will help to outline a general concept for the freedom space.</p>
5.15 pm	<p>Closing Samenua Seshier, decibel programme manager</p>
5.30 pm	Ends
6.30pm	<p>Cocktail reception - The African Galleries With announcements of the recipients of the decibel visual arts awards and fellowships.</p>



Information

Building blocks sessions

The locations of the building blocks sessions are displayed at information points in the foyer area. Your delegate pack contains additional information about which sessions you are attending. Sessions were allocated as selection forms were returned so you may not have your first choice. Due to the limited capacity of spaces, it may not be possible to swap.

Film screening

The film screening on Thursday evening will take place at the Curzon cinema. Capacity is limited, so only delegates who registered their interest in advance and have been allocated a ticket may attend. The film is followed by a drinks reception at the cinema.

Conference staff

Staff are available to help throughout the conference. They can be identified by their name badge or t-shirt.

Information & registration point

The conference information point is in the foyer of the Clore Centre.

Cloakroom

A cloakroom is available throughout the conference. Valuable items should not be left here.

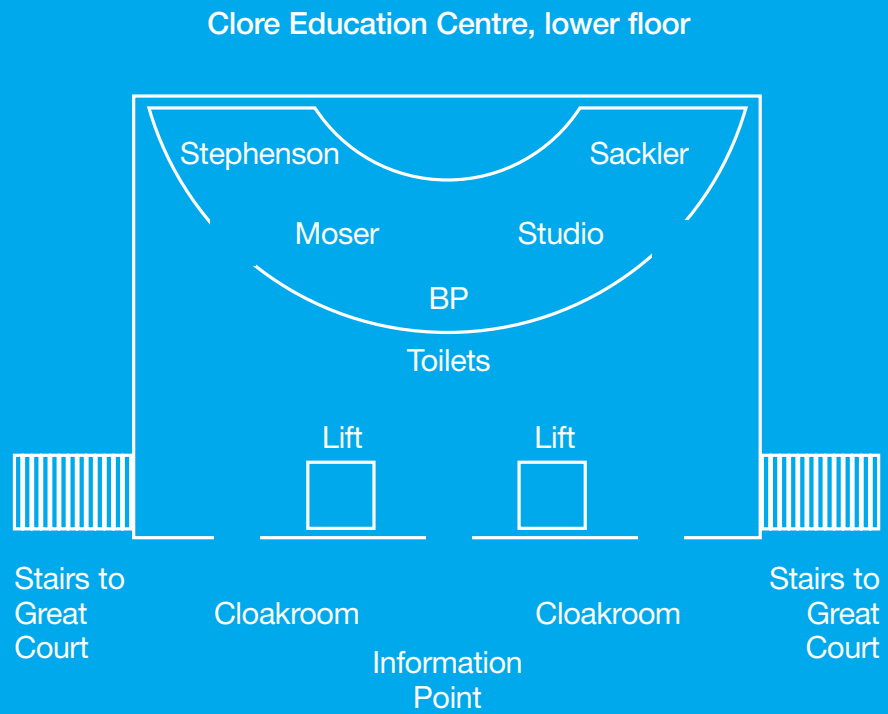
Toilets

Please see the plan on page 18 for the locations of toilets.

Access

Spaces around the British Museum are fully accessible. There is a hearing loop in the BP and the Stephenson rooms. Please ask a member of staff if you require any assistance.

British Museum plan





Simon Tegala, Dragonfly (2003)

Building block sessions

Freedom of speech

As a cultural industry, music has been the most responsive in absorbing the new trends in language which germinate in Black and Asian creative circles. The visual arts medium is notably slow to respond. This session will reflect upon the new wave of language exhibited by Black and Asian visual arts practitioners and anticipate how it is set to influence the global scene. How could we envisage the medium being revolutionised by such language in much the same way that Van Peebles *Sweet Sweetback's Baadaas Song* paved the way for a Miramax-backed Quentin Tarantino? Should corporate and governmental cultural structures remain flexible enough to proactively incorporate such shifts in creative language or will this result in a dilution of authenticity?

Freedom to imagine the intimate

Artists are choosing to investigate more closely their own intimacies, whether it be a literal refocusing of the camera underneath the skin or more self-referential looks into their own histories. It is the ultimate in self-definition and yet it is crucial that such intimacy is shared and understood for the work to be supported and realised. From their own experiences, artists define how an environment can be created that will honor an intimate connection with the own bodies and histories.

Freedom to create value

It was conceptual designer, Bruce Mau who said 'Without memory, innovation is merely novelty.' One of the struggles for practising visual artists of African and Asian descent is the lack of a continued legacy upon which they can build. For artists much investigation needs to take place in order to reconnect with personal hidden cultural histories. For the audience, the long-established parameters of art history provides a narrow prism through which this work is viewed and critiqued. For artists, critics and curators this is a constant block to grapple with. Here, curators come together to re-imagine a new way of teaching, reviewing and repositioning work from African, Asian and Chinese artists that will in turn re-inspire the visual arts canon.

Freedom to equity

Artists and curators will attempt to envisage a new definition of financial and resource freedom. What would such freedom look like and how will it positively impact the creative process? At what point in the creative process is financial freedom most crucial? The British government is hailed for having one of the more supportive arts funding systems in the world and yet very few Black and Asian artists have been nurtured by it. In a creative environment where financial support is increasingly tied to market potentiality which, in turn, falls within narrow cultural definitions, how best can culturally diverse artist's needs be met and their autonomy protected? Taking the broadest definition of 'resource' (financial, skills, time, space), this panel will step out a path to equity.

Freedom to re-imagine viewership

The visual arts world has traditionally been based around the white-box gallery and the darkened film theatre and has led to a restricted definition of who constitutes an audience. Black, Asian and Chinese artists have helped to redefine ideas of audience and have also been part of the vanguard in how to re-imagine and build an audience. Artists and curators talk of their experiences and ways to re-imagine viewership.

Freedom to creatively process

For visual arts practitioners working with new tools, new forms and new language, being offered the opportunity to fail is priceless. As any successful artist's trajectory will prove, it is the failures that define and can create success. The representation burden has meant that many artists from culturally marginalised backgrounds have not been perceived as having that right. Such pressure is enough to deaden any spark of creative risk-taking. Here artists lead the discussion to imagine a freeing space in which to creatively process. In the early stages of a project or a career, what type of support is necessary to inspire confidence? How can a sense of belief in an artist's ability best be demonstrated?

Freedom to imagine community

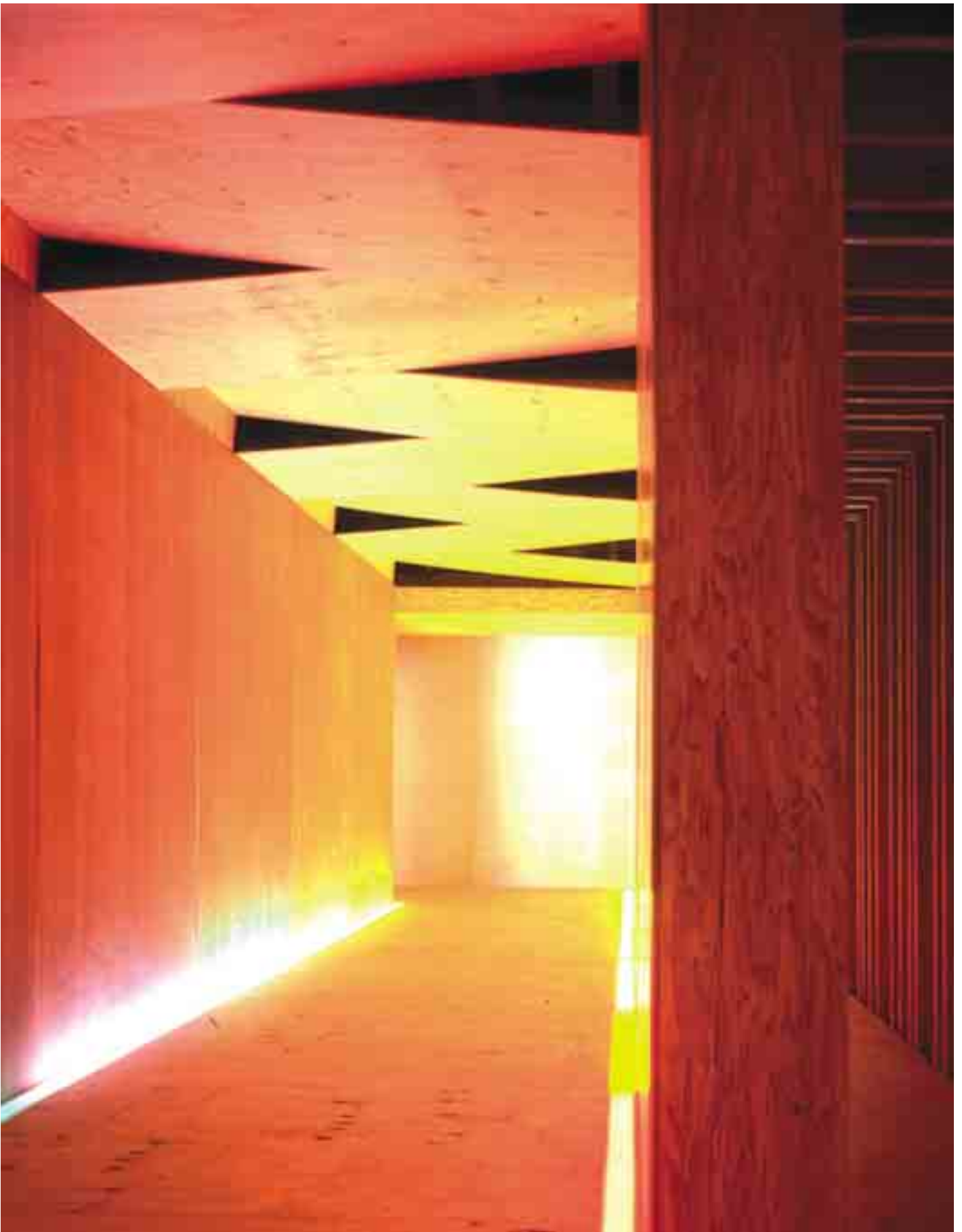
The value metered out to visual arts and film practice has been mediated through a Eurocentric idea of community. Its 'norm' follows certain rigid ideas of form, content and audience. The most basic struggle for filmmakers and artists who do not live their lives in the way that is projected on the international screen, is the struggle to represent their own lifestyles and communities in an increasingly market-driven business, it is difficult to find supporters who understand the nuances and honour such specific community visions. Here artists outline strategies to ensure that representations of their communities are respected.

Global freedom

UK based Black, Asian and Chinese artists have constantly drawn upon their diasporic connections for inspiration and have long enjoyed their international connections. However, it is often restricted opportunities that drive such artists abroad. Many find it easier to secure support from overseas agencies than from the UK, breeding a new type of forced exile. It is clear that building such global connections are important to stimulate and mutually support artist's creativity. How can trans-global collaborations be improved to ensure that previous colonial relationships are not simply mirrored? How can UK artists build international relationships while supporting themselves and their collaborators?

Freedom to reconfigure space

Designing and building a creative space to satisfy the needs of Black, Asian and Chinese artists will require more than bricks and mortar. The range of specific artistic needs, spiritual persuasions and various forms of creative expression will need to be literally manifested. This session will re-envisage the notion of a space to situate artists of African and Asian descent. How can the space best be designed to create a safe haven for artists? How could such a space reflect the troubled histories of those who inhabit it? Should there be walls or would this simply represent constricting boundaries? How can the lifestyles of such artists be honoured in the building? In this session, artists and architects will lead an exploration of the potential for reinventing creative space.



Cube Gallery Pavilion, David Adjaye

Foundations speakers



Kasi Lemmons is the acclaimed director of the highest grossing independent film of 1997 and multi award winning *Eve's Bayou*. The actress, director and writer has worked with legendary director Spike Lee, the actor Samuel L. Jackson as well others like John Woo, Jodie Foster, Nicolas Cage and Eriq La Salle.

For the 2002 Oscar telecast, Kasi directed a touching tribute to Sidney Poitier. She was also involved in an exploration of the roles and representations of Black women in film for the 2003 Tribeca Film Festival.

The Caveman's Valentine, her follow-up feature to *Eve's Bayou*, opened 2002's Sundance Film Festival to audience and critical acclaim, going on to open nationwide in April.

Adapted from the unconventional mystery novel by George Dawes Green, *The Caveman's Valentine* tells the story of a mentally-ill former Julliard music student who now lives in a cave in a New York park. When a corpse is found at his doorstep on Valentine's Day, the caveman decides to solve the murder himself.

Eve's Bayou won the Independent Spirit Award for best first feature and received seven NAACP Image Award nominations, including best picture. In addition, Kasi received a special first time director award, created just for her, from the National Board of Review.

She also won the director's achievement award at the 9th Annual Nortel Palm Springs Film Festival. Prior to *Eve's Bayou*, Kasi directed the short film, *Dr Hugo*, which has subsequently been shown in festivals around the world.



Trinh T. Minh-Ha is a filmmaker, writer and composer. A much sought after speaker she has travelled extensively in the States, as well as in Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand, giving public lectures and teaching at such august institutions as The National Conservatory of Music (Institut des Arts, Senegal), Harvard and Cornell universities.

The recipient of numerous awards and grants, she has made seven films, most recently *Night Passage*. Her films have been given thirty retrospectives world-wide, and have been exhibited at the international contemporary art exhibition *Documenta 11* (2002) in Germany as well as being shown at film festivals worldwide.

As a writer Trinh T. has many articles published in books and journals as well as being the author of nine books on subjects as varied as film, art, feminism and cultural politics and a collection of poetry. Her poems have also been performed by the University of Illinois percussion ensemble.

Trinh. T. is also an accomplished artist. Her installations include *The Desert is Watching* in collaboration with Jean-Paul Bourdier, which showed at the Kyoto Art Biennale, in October last year.

She is currently professor of women's studies and rhetoric (Film) at the University of California, Berkeley.



Melvin Van Peebles has worked in every medium of the entertainment industry from music, to television, to Broadway writer and director. He is a three-time Grammy Award nominee, an Emmy Award winner and has had eleven Tony nominations.

After 30 years, his block buster movie *Sweet Sweetbacks Baadasssss Song*, remains on Variety's list of all time top grossing films and Scott Gentry's *The Film 100* names him as one of the most influential people in the history of cinema for his commercialisation of both Independent and Black films.

Melvin began his career as a 10 year old selling second-hand clothes to winos, since then he has been involved with among other things, boy scouts, astronomy, Youth for Christ, The Strategic Air Command, The Merchant Marine, The Artillery, The Post office, cable cars, Het Nederlands Comedie, the ACLU, the Cinematique Francaise, the Harkness Ballet, Boston marathons, Pinochle, the Block, Blues, Dues, the Senegalese Police and the Mexican immigration authorities.

Melvin's works are taught at such distinguished schools as Yale, Harvard and Columbia. He was recently awarded the prestigious French Legion of Honour.



Horace Ové is the English-speaking Caribbean's foremost, most prolific and creative filmmaker. His career spans over 40 years and an oeuvre that takes in documentary and filmmaking for cinema and television, photography, and directing for theatre. Many of Horace's works were firsts in their time. He is listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the first Caribbean director of a feature film, *Pressure*, in Britain. He is also cited as the first Caribbean director of an independently produced documentary, *Reggae*, the first in depth documentary on Black music and reggae.

While his filmic style and language is uniquely suited to subjects, which involve the spirit and historic realities of Caribbean life, he has also produced a body of work that has influenced the nature and style of British filmmaking. This is especially noticeable in the way in which he mixes documentary content with dramatic elements in projecting ideas.

Horace's earliest works include *The Art of the Needle*, the first documentary made about acupuncture in Britain, and Baldwin's *Nigger* in which the famous African American author James Baldwin, together with Dick Gregory, discusses and compares Black life in the USA and Britain during the 1960s.

As a top photographer he also injects a sense of visual excitement and artistic strength into all his work which makes it immediately recognisable. He worked extensively as a reportage photographer during the 1960s and 70s and during his film career continued to take photographs in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. His enormous portfolio on carnival from all over the world spans 30 years and twelve of his photographs form part of the Arts Council permanent collection.

He is currently developing two feature films, has recently completed an extensive documentary on the life and times of John La Rose and is preparing for an exhibition to be held in the UK in May 2004.



Don Letts' reputation has been firmly established in both the film and music world by a substantial body of work from the late 70s through the 80s, 90s and well into the millennium. His work has been exhibited in The Kitchen N.Y.C, The Institute of Contemporary Art and the NFT in London. In March 2003 he won a Grammy for his documentary *Westway To The World*.

He came to notoriety in the late 70s as the DJ that single handedly turned a whole generation of punks onto reggae. It was whilst as a DJ at the first punk club The Roxy in 1977, that Don adopted the punk DIY ethic and made his first film *The Punk Rock Movie*. Shot on super-8 it is the only documentary on the UK punk scene with Sex Pistols, The Clash and many others. This led to a period directing over 300 music videos for a diverse range of artists.

From the days of punk rock to present day Don has always been drawn towards musical projects. After DJing at the Roxy and whilst directing videos for many other acts, he created the band Basement Five, released a single with members of John Lydon's PIL, managed the Slits and collaborated with members of Trouble Funk.

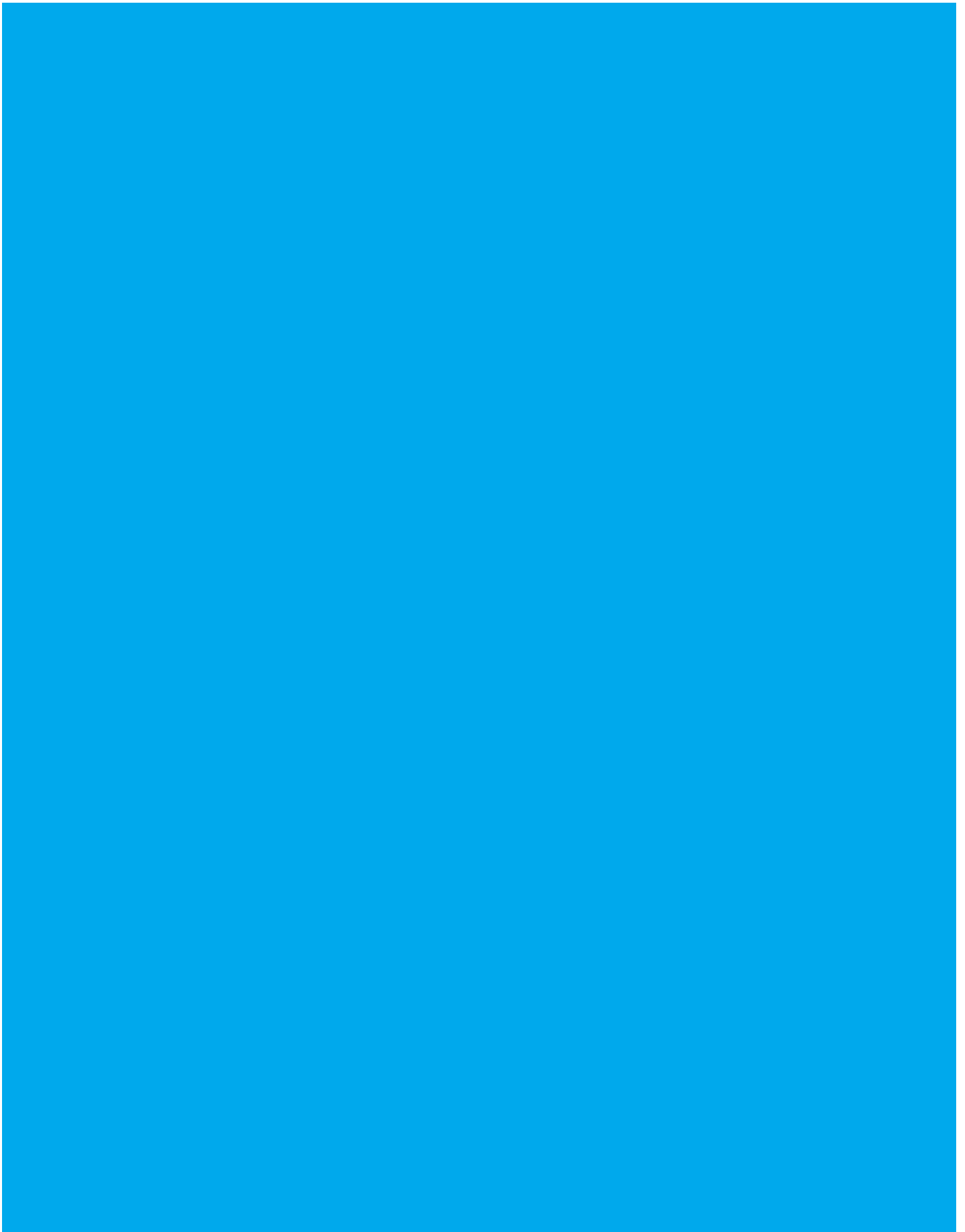
In the mid 80s he formed the group Big Audio Dynamite with Mick Jones (ex-Clash). He went on to perform and co-write four albums with BAD achieving several hits on both sides of the Atlantic including the top ten hit *E=MC2*.

In the early 90s, Don left BAD to form Screaming Target. Their debut performance at the Transmusical Festival in France received rave reviews. They released one critically acclaimed album *Hometown Hi-Fi*.

Along with collaborations with Dreadzone, remixes for various acts and his DJ set *The Dub Cartel Sound System*, Don has also released several compilation albums.



Chris Ofili came to prominence in the early 1990s with his densely orchestrated paintings. In 2003 he represented Britain at the 50th Venice Biennale with his exhibition *within reach*, for which he recently received the South Bank Show Award for best visual artist. In June 2002 Ofili presented his critically acclaimed exhibition *Freedom One Day* at the Victoria Miro Gallery, London. He won the Turner prize in 1998 and has exhibited in many international institutions over the past decade. Amongst others his work is in the permanent collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum and Tate Gallery, London and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Speakers



David Adjaye is recognised as one of the leading young architects of his generation in the UK with a reputation as an architect with an artist's vision. He reformed his studio in 2000 as Adjaye/Associates and has gone on to win a number of prestigious commissions. He has presented lectures at Harvard's Graduate School of Design, Architectural Association, the Royal College of Art, as well as Yale University, Art Center College of Design, Los Angeles and Tate Liverpool. His Idea Store library in East London was selected by Deyan Sudjic for the exhibition highlighting 100 projects that are changing the world at the VIII Venice Biennale of Architecture 2002. David is currently co-presenting BBC's *Dreamspaces*, a six part series on modern architecture, and is a visiting lecturer at the Architectural Association.



Jananne Al-Ani was born in Iraq in 1966. She lives and works in London. Al-Ani studied fine art at the Byam Shaw School of Art and graduated with an MA in Photography from the Royal College of Art in 1997. Al-Ani has exhibited widely in Britain and abroad and has had solo shows at Dryphoto Art Contemporanea, Prato (2002) and the Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie, Arles (2002). Recent group exhibitions include *Beyond East and West: Seven Transnational Artists* at the Krannert Art Museum, Champaign (2004). She has co-curated a number of touring exhibitions including *Veil* which toured to several UK and European venues. Recent commissions include *Identinet* (2002). She was the recipient of the East International Award (2000) and her works can be found in public collections including the Arts Council England, the Pompidou Centre, Paris and the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC



Cameron Bailey is a writer, broadcaster and film programmer in Toronto. He reviews film and video for *Now* magazine, CBC Radio One, and CTV's Canada AM. He is the past president of the Toronto Film Critics Association, and former co-host of *The Showcase Revue* (1998-2002). He also produced and hosted the interview show *Filmmaker* on the Independent Film Channel Canada. Bailey is the founder and former programmer of the Toronto International Film Festival's *Planet Africa* section, and past head of the festival's *Perspective Canada* series. He currently serves on the advisory board of the Royal Ontario Museum's Institute for Contemporary Culture.



Monika Baker is an award-winning filmmaker, photographer/curator and freelance photojournalist. Her film *Silent in the Crowd* won best short film in the US Oscar Micheaux awards. Her photographs have been exhibited internationally and she is also a contributor to the book *Disrupted Borders*, edited by Sunil Gupta. Her contributions to the visual arts community have been varied. Curator of the first major UK Black exhibition for photographers, *The Black Experience*, she has lectured in England, Scotland and India and has undertaken extensive research in Europe on non-Caucasian photographers for the Arts Council England. She is presently the Chair of OVA, Organisation for the Visual Arts, **decibel** visual arts events manager and is working on second draft of a film script, *Butterfly*.



Tessa Boerman is a programmer and documentary director living in Amsterdam. Before becoming an independent filmmaker, she worked for several years as a director at the VPRO broadcasting company and made various 30 minute investigative and current affairs documentaries. She has organised various programs and festivals at the De Balie, centre for culture and politics in Amsterdam and edited the *Beeldritsen*, essays on visual culture and ethnic diversity in the Netherlands. She is an advisor of the Dutch Cultural Broadcasting Promotion Fund and The Hague committee on cultural diversity in the arts. She recently completed a 50 minute documentary on women in boxing titled *A Knock Out*, to be broadcast by the NPS broadcasting company in 2004.



Ansuman Biswas was born in Calcutta in 1965 and now lives in London. Over the last 15 years he has developed an international practice which has encompassed directing Shakespeare in America, translating Tagore's poetry from Bengali, living with wandering minstrels in India, touring with Björk, coordinating grassroots activists in Soweto and flying on a magic carpet in Russia. He has shown work at The South London Gallery, The Whitechapel Gallery, Tate Modern and The Yerba Buena Centre, San Francisco. He has worked with Channel Four, MTV, the Royal Opera House and the National Theatre among many others and has been artist in residence at the National Institute of Medical Research in London and Headlands Centre, San Francisco. Ansuman is currently working on a four screen video installation based on research into the work of the visionary poet Rabindranath Tagore.



Effie T. Brown is an LA-based independent producer. She became director of development for Tim Burton Productions, and then went on to line produce several features including *Desert Blue* the subversive cult satire, *But I'm a Cheerleader*, and *Things You Can Tell Just By Looking At Her*. More recently, Effie was a producer on Cheryl Dunye's HBO film *Stranger Inside*, winner of several film awards and nominated for three IFP Spirit Awards. She then produced Patricia Cardoso's HBO/Numarket film *Real Woman Have Curves*, winner of two Sundance Film Festival awards. She was also executive producer for Jane Campion's film *In The Cut*, and more recently she produced Jim McKay's *Everyday People*, that premiered this year at Sundance where she also served as a juror for the short film competition.



Richard Blurton is an assistant keeper in the Department of Asia at the British Museum where he is in charge of the historic and modern collections from South and Southeast Asia. He has published widely, including *Hindu Art* (BM Press 1992 and reprints), is the co-author with Ralph Isaacs of *Visions from the Golden Land*. He is currently engaged as a member of two government-funded research projects, one of which, *Tribal Transitions* is working in Arunachal Pradesh in the north eastern Himalayas. He has curated a large number of exhibitions at the British Museum, including *Deities and Devotion*, *The Arts of Hinduism* (1993), and is deeply committed to ensuring that the Museum's collections are kept relevant.



Ery Camara is an artist, art critic and museologist, born in Senegaland now resident in Mexico City. He has been a speaker in a number of national and international colloquiums, seminars and forums on museology, art and culture and has published articles and essays in catalogues, books, magazines and newspapers worldwide. As a museologist, Ery has held the position of deputy director of three major state museums in Mexico City: The National Museum of Viceroyalty, The National Museum of Popular Culture and The National Museum of Anthropology. He is currently a freelance curator and adviser for cultural and artistic projects and Professor of Museology at Iberoamericana University.



Janice Cheddie is a research fellow in visual culture on *Translating the image: cross-cultural contemporary arts* (AHRB), Goldsmiths College, University of London. The joint research of the project will be published in three volumes by Walther Köing in 2005. Her individual current research is *Transcodings* an exploration of the technological production, circulation and dissemination of cultural difference within contemporary visual culture. Her written work has appeared in *Third Text*, *make*, *Fashion Theory*. Her film projects include *Go West Young Man* (1996) and *The Nation's Finest* (1990).



Ekow Eshun is a writer, broadcaster and cultural commentator. He is a former Editor-in-Chief of *Arena* magazine, appears on *Newsnight Review*, *BBC Two*, contributes to *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *Blueprint*, *Front Row*, *BBC Radio Four* and has presented various documentaries on TV and radio. Ekow sits on the board of *Tate Members* and is a Governor of the *London Institute*. He is currently writing his first book, *Black Gold Of The Sun*, which is published by *Penguin* in 2005.



Kodwo Eshun is interested in the utopian potential of Afrodiasporic culture and has published and lectured extensively on these areas. As an artist, Eshun collaborated in 1995 with *Black Audio Film Collective* on the award-winning documentary *The Last Angel of History* which is now regarded as the foundational film of *Afrofuturism*. He is a trustee of *Artangel* and *LongPlayer*, a research associate for the AHRB research project: *Translating the image-cross cultural contemporary arts* at Goldsmiths College and a member of the interdisciplinary task group at *Arts Council England*. Kodwo is a co-founder of the *Otolith Group* and lecturer in visual cultures at Goldsmiths College, the *Dutch Art Institute* and artist tutor in residence at *Nanjing Institute, China*.



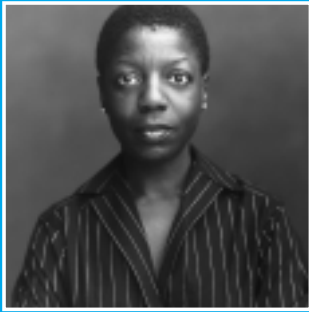
Richard Fung is a video artist and writer born in Trinidad and based in Toronto. His single channel tapes, which include *My Mother's Place* (1991), *Sea in the Blood* (2000) and *Islands* (2002), have been widely screened and collected internationally, and broadcast in North America. His essays on race and sexual representation and on the politics of cultural policy have been published in numerous journals and anthologies and, together with Monika Kin Gagnon, he is the author of *13: Conversations about art and cultural race politics* (Montreal: Artexte). Winner of the Bell Canada award for achievement in video art and a former Rockefeller Fellow at the Center for Media, Culture and History at NYU, he is currently associate professor at the Ontario College of Art and Design.



Coco Fusco is an award-winning, New York-based interdisciplinary artist and writer. She has performed, lectured, exhibited and curated globally. She is the author and editor of four books including *Only Skin Deep: Changing Visions of the American Self* (Abrams, 2003). *Only Skin Deep* is also a comprehensive touring exhibition on racial taxonomy in American photography, curated by Coco for the International Centre for Photograph. Her new play, *The incredible disappearing woman* premiered in Berlin in June 2003 and has toured to London, Portland and Serbia. She is the co-founder and co-moderator of *Undercurrents*, an on-line discussion about feminism, new technologies and globalization. Fusco is an associate professor in the visual arts division of Columbia University's school of the arts.



June Givanni is a programme executive at OFCOM (the regulator for the UK communications industries) in the content and standards group. She joined OFCOM from the Independent Television Commission where she was a programme manager with responsibilities for comedy and light entertainment, and multicultural programmes for four years. Prior to joining the ITC she ran the African Caribbean Unit at the British Film Institute and launched the quarterly Black film bulletin. More generally, June has worked as a film and television programme consultant for 18 years, specializing in black film internationally, working with festivals and events and writing about film and television.



Thelma Golden is deputy director for exhibitions and programs at The Studio Museum in Harlem. Since her appointment to this position in January 2000, she has organized a number of exhibitions, including *Freestyle* (2001), *Isaac Julien: Vagabondia*; *Martin Puryear: The Cane Project*; *Glenn Ligon: Stranger*; *Material and Matter*; *Freestyle*; *Yinka Shonibare*; *Red, Black and Green*; and *Black Romantic*. She has worked for Peter and Eileen Norton, contemporary art collectors and philanthropists and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City. Thelma also teaches, lectures and writes about contemporary art, cultural issues and curatorial practice and has been a guest lecturer, curator and essayist for projects at numerous institutions nationally and internationally.



Manick Govinda manages the artists' advisory service at Artsadmin. He developed Artsadmin's artists' bursary scheme and its digital media bursary for disabled artists. Manick has worked closely with a range of artists including Franko B, Zarina Bhimji, Robin Deacon, Helen Paris and Leslie Hill. He is a guest commissioning editor for [a.n], The Artists Information Company and has contributed to its new website. He is currently editing a booklet entitled *Performing Difference* featuring a number of artists supported by the Artsadmin bursary scheme. He also project manages the *decibel* visual arts awards.



Sunil Gupta is an award-winning artist, photographer and filmmaker. Born in New Delhi, India, he now lives and works in London. His latest solo exhibitions are currently showing at the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Canada and the Museum of Contemporary Photography in California.



Kazuko Hohki is an artist, singer, musician, animator, director, performer and storyteller. Born in Tokyo, Kazuko founded the Japanese female pop performance group Frank Chickens in 1982. She has made a trilogy of solo shows *Toothless* (1998), *The Shining Princess* (1999) and *My Husband is a Spaceman* (2001). *Spaceman* has toured the UK, New York, Slovenia and Singapore and was performed as part of the decibel showcase in Manchester in 2003. Kazuko is currently making a new show, *Evidence for the Existence of Borrowers*, based on her childhood favourite, Mary Norton's *The Borrowers*.



Anthony Hoete has been recognised in numerous design competitions including the Venice Prize at the 1991 Biennale. He is an architect and the founding partner of the network office WHAT ARCHITECTURE which recognises that through the inquisition 'what' everything can be turned into discourse. Such enquiry has led to a number of academic postings including the Bartlett (UCL), the Technical University of Delft, Sint Lucas Brussels and most recently as visiting professor at the American University of Beirut. Recognising that today books pre-empt buildings as the principal architectural experience, WHAT_research is also conducted beyond the academy through the populist intelligence of publication of which *ROAM>, a Reader of the Aesthetic of Mobility*, is the most recent title. Research via publication and teaching is then used to inform the design activities of WHAT ARCHITECTURE.



Johann Insanally has most recently been producing a BBC One feature length documentary, *QK*, for Insight Films, in addition to developing his own slate of feature film and television projects. From 2000- 2003, Johan was development producer for Spirit Dance UK – the company set up by US filmmaker and actor Forest Whittaker with a first look deal from FilmFour. Projects developed included a sci-fi trilogy from US writer Walter Moseley. As a freelance producer he has worked with such clients as EMI, British Airways, Volvo and recording artists ranging from Des'ree to the Cardigans.



Keith Khan is a 'spectacularist'. He was trained in fine art and worked as a carnivalist for many years. Recent commissions include *Escapade*, featuring 150 dancers and film projection, staged on the buildings of the South Bank Centre and *Waterscapes*, a performance series in and around the fountains of Somerset House. Khan has been involved in national cultural projects on many occasions, including the Millennium Dome where he designed the opening. Khan is also a founder and artistic director of motiroti, an arts led company who work with people and new technology. Recent motiroti projects have been presented at the Barbican, Tate Modern, Royal Albert Hall, Romaeuopa, The Whitney Museum of American Art and BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music), New York.



Nadim Karam, through his work on representations of contemporary territory using art, architecture, urban installations and stories as a medium, created the concepts of micropluralism, architecture of performance, and story-telling architecture. In 1991 he conceived Atelier Hapsitus Tokyo, from the need to assemble various artistic fields into one creative force. Formally established in Beirut in 1996, Atelier Hapsitus is the satellite grouping of young architects and artists around happenings and situations. In 2000, he published the book *Voyage* - a compilation of the works of Nadim Karam and Atelier Hapsitus. He was dean of the faculty of Architecture Art and Design at Notre Dame University in Lebanon from 2000-2003. He is currently visiting associate professor at the American University of Beirut.



Roshini Kempadoo is a digital artist and lecturer. She artistically creates digital media to re-articulate historical material into contemporary spaces and networked environments. Her work locates and visualises a Caribbean colonial legacy, transforming stories and locations. Roshini has exhibited internationally including solo shows in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, Rotterdam, the Netherlands and Slovenia. She is currently senior lecturer in digital media at the University of East London.



Femi Kolade was trained on the three-year fiction direction programme at the National Film and Television School between 1997-1999, subsequent to a six-year career in community media arts and regional television. Since graduating Femi has directed an animated documentary for Channel Four, managed a two year lottery community media training initiative and most recently worked as Stephen Frears' assistant on *Dirty Pretty Things*, released in the UK in 2003. Femi currently works at YCTV a media production and training company dedicated to developing young talent.



Kwong Lee is an artist and projects organiser. In the past two years he has exhibited commissioned work for Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester Art Gallery and Artranspennine03. He has also shown video work in London and Tokyo. As an independent artist-curator, Kwong has been involved with *Mart* (17 artist-curated exhibitions of 78 artists), *Sampler*, a DVD of contemporary artists' films for the Lowry and *BlueScreen*, a platform for dialogue amongst moving image makers. His art practice focuses on two themes - issues surrounding immigration and food as a medium for communication. Kwong is currently the gallery director of Castlefield Gallery, an artist run gallery that plays a strategic role in the artistic and professional development of artists.



Eric Lesdema moved to the UK in 1990 and studied at the University of Brighton. Graduating in 1995 his first series of photographic work *Fortunes of War* received the UN Nikon World Prize in 1997 and was exhibited at Street Level, Glasgow Watershed, Bristol, Blue Sky, Oregon Xapala, Mexico. Recent works have continued a move away from a two-dimensional preoccupation and seek to de-construct the camera and photographic process and re-construct them as a series of works that interrogate the apparent objectivity, transparency and purity of the photographic medium. *Butchery By Light Standpoint, London 1999 (freestanding light box, digital works)* began the process. *30,000 acres of tranquil gardens* extended ideas through filmic narratives. In 2003 Lesdema was awarded an international fellowship through Connecting Flights/Arts Council England.



Jie Lu is an artist, curator and lecturer. He founded the Long March Foundation in New York and the Long March Space in China. He is also founder and director of the 25000 Cultural Transmission Center in Beijing. He organized and moderated the international symposium: *Curating in Chinese context* in Zunyi, China in 2002.



Nima Poovaya-Smith has worked in a variety of influential national and regional advisory roles within public, cultural and academic domains. These include Arts Council England, the Crafts Council, the Museums and Galleries Commission, the Museums Association and the University of Leeds. Previous projects included the Year of the Artist campaign for Yorkshire and Humber region supporting over 220 artists. Currently, Nima is head of special projects at the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television, is involved in setting up Lightwave, a flagship creative industries and learning project and also Alchemy Anew, an innovative, independent charitable company based in Yorkshire concerned with the trans-cultural.



James Putnam is an independent curator and writer who runs the British Museum's contemporary arts & cultures programme. He initiates projects, residencies, installations and performances and collaborates with national and international institutions to develop talks and conferences on current cultural-related issues. He has organised exhibitions at unusual venues, which combine contemporary art with historic sites and artefacts, like the ongoing series of exhibitions he curates at the Freud Museum, London. His recent publication *Art and Artifact - the Museum as Medium* (Thames & Hudson) offers an extensive survey of the relationship between the artist and museum. He was recently appointed visiting scholar in museum studies at New York University.



Susan Pui San Lok is an artist and writer based in London. Born and educated in England as a second generation British Hong Kong Chinese immigrant, she trained in Fine Art at the University of Leeds, gaining awards to pursue graduate studies in feminism and the visual arts, and a combined practice/theory PhD in fine art at the University of East London. Her primarily installation-based practice has made use of painting, collage, found text, images, objects, sound, video and occasionally performance. Concerned with notions of place, displacement, memory, authenticity, migration and translation, her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. Publications include articles for the journals *Third Text* and *parallax*. She has also taught widely as a visiting lecturer and is currently consulting on public art projects and the development of a dedicated arts space in the capital's Chinatown.



Tara Mack is currently the program coordinator for Groundswell community mural project in Brooklyn, New York, responsible for organising and supervising collaborative mural projects with local community groups and for development. Tara moved to New York from London where she worked as the education associate for Talawa, a black theatre company, organising the company's education and outreach programs for youth. She was responsible for creating, managing and evaluating a diverse range of after-school and in-school theatre programs. Before joining Talawa Tara worked for five years as a print and radio journalist. Tara has a master of journalism from the University of California at Berkeley and a bachelor of arts in English from Brown University.



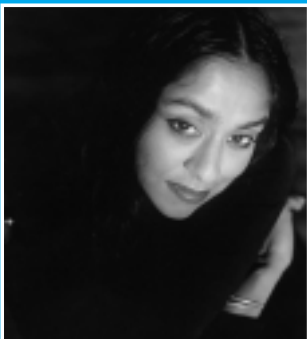
Kobena Mercer, formerly visiting professor at New York University and a fellow at Cornell University, is the author of landmark texts in visual culture and has an international research profile in cultural studies. His first book, *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (1994) has been followed by monographs on contemporary artists, including Keith Piper (1997) and Isaac Julien (2002). His research interests in issues of cultural identity, sexuality and representation inform recent articles contributed to *frieze*, *Artforum International* and *Camera Austria* and he is currently editing a collection of new art historical perspectives on cosmopolitan modernisms to be published by the Institute of International Visual Arts in 2005.



Rita Patel has over 25 years experience in the voluntary sector, locally and nationally and has contributed to numerous initiatives on black community development. Ten years ago Rita and the team embarked on the most exciting community empowered urban regeneration project in the country – The Peepul Centre. This 60,000 square foot £15.9 million centre of excellence, the first of its kind in the UK, will be built in the heart of Belgrave in the City of Leicester. As a model of self-sustainable community led regeneration, this flagship centre will be a dynamic gateway to opportunity providing health, leisure, education arts and cultural facilities under a single roof. Rita Patel was a finalist in the national Asian Women of Achievement Award in 2003.



Robert Yao Ramesar is an award-winning Ghanaian-born, Caribbean filmmaker and photographer. His long and distinguished career spans genre and globe and includes a recent collaboration with Nobel laureate Derek Walcott. He currently lectures in TV and film at the Festival Centre for the Creative Arts, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad.



Anjalika Sagar is the founder of the *Multitudes* list established in September 2001 and co-moderator of the *Undercurrents* list with artist Coco Fusco. As a sound artist, Sagar has worked with composers such as Talvin Singh and Jem Finer, collaborating with composer Heiner Goebbels and 28 London musicians to produce the acclaimed experimental music theatre work *No Arrival No Parking* for the London International Festival of Theatre and the Almeida Opera. She is currently editing a series of improvised compositions for voice and Supercollider software to be released in a limited edition through The Otolith Group website in 2004. She is artist in residence at Bootlab, Berlin and artist and tutor in residence at Nanjing Art Institute, China.



Cary Rajinder Sawhney is head of diversity at the British Film Institute. In 2002 he was director of the BFI's multi-arts *ImagineAsia* festival, which was the UK's largest ever celebration of South Asian and British Asian film. For the last seven years, he has been the adviser for South Asian cinema to the Times London Film Festival and is a committee member of the Satyajit Ray Foundation and a regular judge for the Carlton Multi-cultural Awards. He has recently conceived and developed *Black World*; a major BFI-led festival of Black film and related arts planned for June 2005.



Ashwani Sharma teaches, researches and writes in the areas of race, cinema, visual arts, music, photography, digital media, globalization, ethics and postcolonial theory. His current writing projects include a collection focusing on race, memory and diasporic media culture; a series of essays on political aesthetics and world cinema; and co-authoring a monograph, *White Paranoia: Orientalism in the age of Empire*. He is also a trustee on the board of the Rich Mix foundation. Ashwani also masquerades as a DJ, multimedia producer and poet.



Alia Syed's work embraces a wide range of film practices, refusing to sit in a single, definable form. Her films explore issues of identity and representation, often employing rhythmic and cyclical elements in which characters, places, text, images and sound coincide with and at times oppose conventional narrative structures. Syed has shown at film festivals around the world including *Eating Grass*, which is currently exhibiting at New York's Talwar Gallery. Alia Syed was born in Swansea, Wales and is of Indian and Welsh descent.



Erika Tan is an artist and curator whose work has evolved from an interest in anthropology and the moving image. Her work is often informed by specific cultural, geographical or physical contexts; exploring different media to create situations that excite, provoke, question, confront and invite comments from an audience. Current projects include a residency commission with the Turner Center in Margate and a video commission with Picture This, Bristol. She has exhibited both in the UK and abroad.



Mario Van Peebles has carved out a substantial career that is constantly redefining and inspiring modern cinema in the same revolutionary style his father pioneered in the 1970s. Most recently, Van Peebles portrayed political icon Malcolm X in Michael Mann's *Ali* and starred in the indie feature *The Hewbrew Hammer*. His feature directorial debut came with the critically acclaimed box office hit *New Jack City*, in which he also starred. Mario received a Director's Guild Award nomination for his telefilm *Malcolm Takes A Shot*, and he directed and co-produced the controversial, historical drama *Panther*, a film about the Black Panther Party for which he won the Silver Leopard Award at the Locarno Film Festival.



Mark Waugh is Arts Council England's visual arts officer for live art. Previous projects include director of media seditionaries *Bluntcut*, curator of performance club: *Die Leiber Rausch*, the symposium: *Pharmokon* and co-curator of *Transmutations: Festival of Live Art*. He is also author of the cult novel *Come*, published by Pulp Books. His current portfolio includes projects that redefine the context and provision for live art, in particular within the gallery, urban and media domains.



Yuan Cai and JJ Xi (*Mad For Real*) were born in the People's Republic of China in 1956 and 1962 respectively. They trained at the Royal College of Art and Goldsmith's College and have been living and working in London since the 1980s. Their work became known to the British public through the controversial intervention: *Two artists jump on Tracey's bed* in October 1999, an intervention performed on Tracey Emin's *My Bed* at the Turner Prize exhibition. Their recent work uses the city of London as an exhibition space, exploring the meaning of contemporary art in the public sphere. Their work makes critical comments on present conditions of globalization and on the relationship between east and west culture and consumerism.



Professor Lola Young OBE is head of culture at the Greater London Authority. Prior to that, she was professor of cultural studies at Middlesex University. Before becoming an academic Professor Young worked as an actor for eight years. She subsequently moved into arts development, promoting Black arts and culture, advising the Arts Council on numerous occasions on cultural diversity issues and was formerly chair of the Arts Council's cultural diversity panel, and has been on the board of Resource: the Council of Museums, Archives and Libraries. She has written and broadcast widely on television and radio, reviewing plays and films, and chaired the judging panel of the Orange Prize for Fiction. She was awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours List in 2000



Gary Younge is a columnist, New York correspondent for the Guardian and author of *No Place Like Home: A black Britons journey through the Deep South*. He has worked with the Washington Post, and has presented documentaries for the BBC and Channel Four. For the last three years he has been named newspaper journalist of the year for the Ethnic Minority Media Awards and in 2000 was nominated for foreign journalist of the year for his reporting from Zimbabwe. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife, Tara.

Baadasssss



For his second feature, Melvin Van Peebles hit upon the idea of a movie centred around a Black street hustler turned revolutionary who exposes America's institutional racism by kicking some major butt. The result, *Sweet Sweetback's Baad Asssss Song*, paved the way for a groundbreaking cinematic tradition: the black ghetto hero - far removed from the soft-shoe-shuffling black cinematic characters of Melvin's youth. However, his young, afro-ed son, Mario, was confused: how could a black screen character not be killed before the end of the movie?

So begins *Baadasssss* (formerly known as '*How to get the man's foot outta your ass*'), a son's dramatic ode to his father's pioneering independent film career - work that threatened to leave the latter blind, broke and permanently ostracized from his family. The film finds actor-director Mario Van Peebles literally stepping into his father's shoes, conjuring the revolutionary fire that caused Melvin to turn his back on the Hollywood system - and his impressionable son.

After his directing debut, *The Watermelon Man*, is produced for a major studio in the late sixties, Melvin (played by Mario) decides not only to bite the hand that feeds him but to aim a kick at Hollywood's groin. He assembles a ragtag crew of hippies, hustlers, wannabes and, in one case, a procurer of smoked meat, and goes it alone. When the money promised by a drug dealer disappears, he resorts to what he knows best, hustling by any means necessary to produce his vision - he becomes Sweetback, literally and figuratively.

The fiasco unfolds through the eyes of the young Mario, who asks: When does a revolutionary artist become a self-absorbed dictator? When he forces his son to perform his first sex scene at thirteen? When he leaves his crew languishing in jail?

This is a critical yet loving offering from a son to his father and a stylistic homage, assembled in the idiosyncratic style that is Melvin's trademark. Most of all, it is a reflection of a particular filmmaking moment, the force of which launched a new black aesthetic, marrying a political agenda with a cultural one. It seems to say: if only such energy existed today.

Gaylene Gould



Production credits

Production company

BAD AAAS Cinema Inc./Showtime

Executive producer

Michael Mann

Producer

Dennis Haggerty, Mario Van Peebles, Tobie Haggerty,
G. Marq Roswell

Screenplay

Dennis Haggerty, Mario Van Peebles,
based on the book by Melvin Van Peebles

Cinematography

Robert Primes

Editor

Anthony Miller, Nneka Goforth

Production designer

Alan Muraoka

Sound

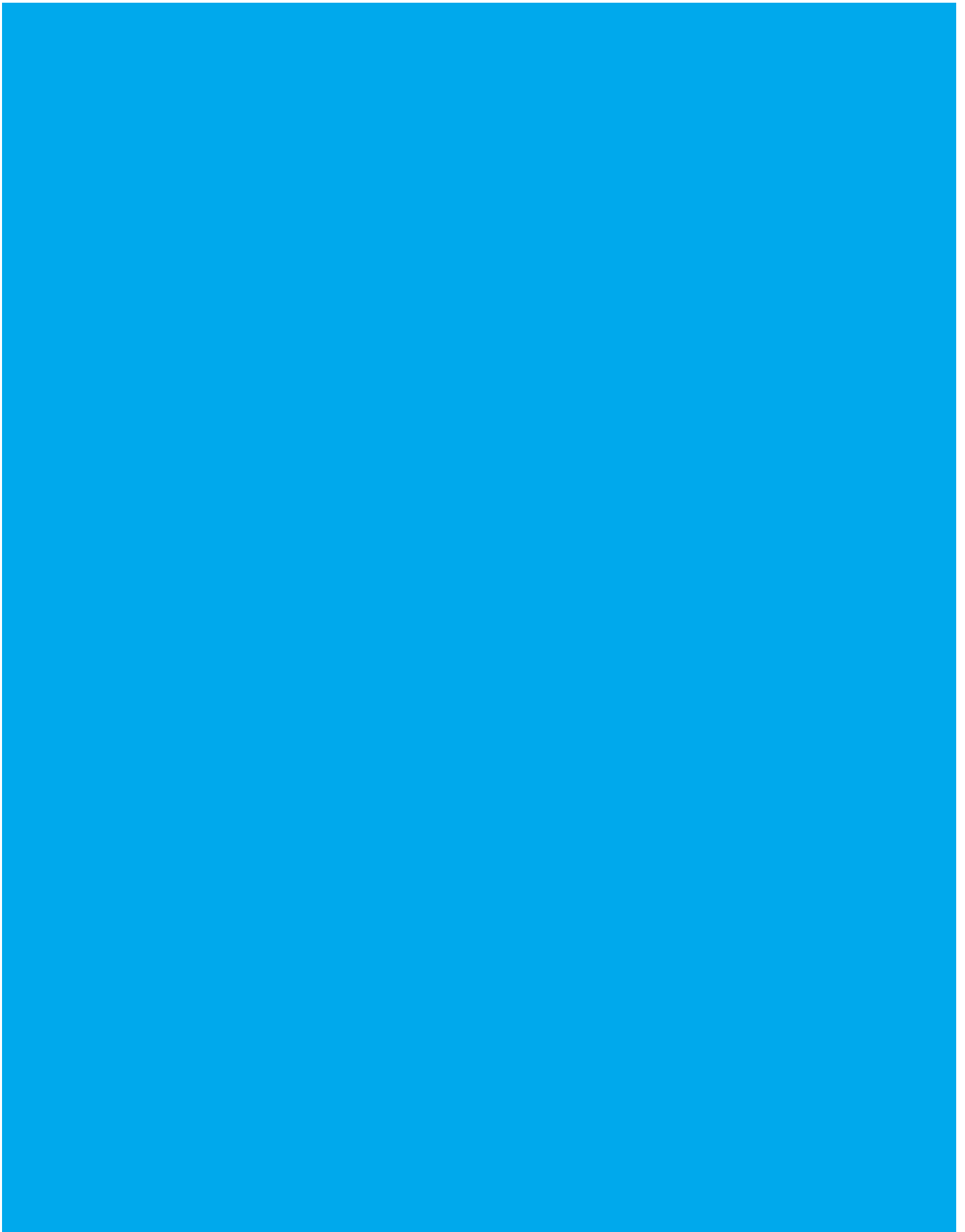
David Parker

Music

Tyler Bates

Principal cast

Mario Van Peebles, Khleo Thomas, T.K. Carter,
Ossie Davis, Nia Long



Installations

A free state is accompanied by art projects curated by James Putnam.

These installations take place around the British Museum as a way for members of the public to engage with the themes of the conference.

Commissioned by decibel in partnership with the British Museum, the works on show have been specially created for the conference and represent some of the work being produced by culturally diverse artists in England today.



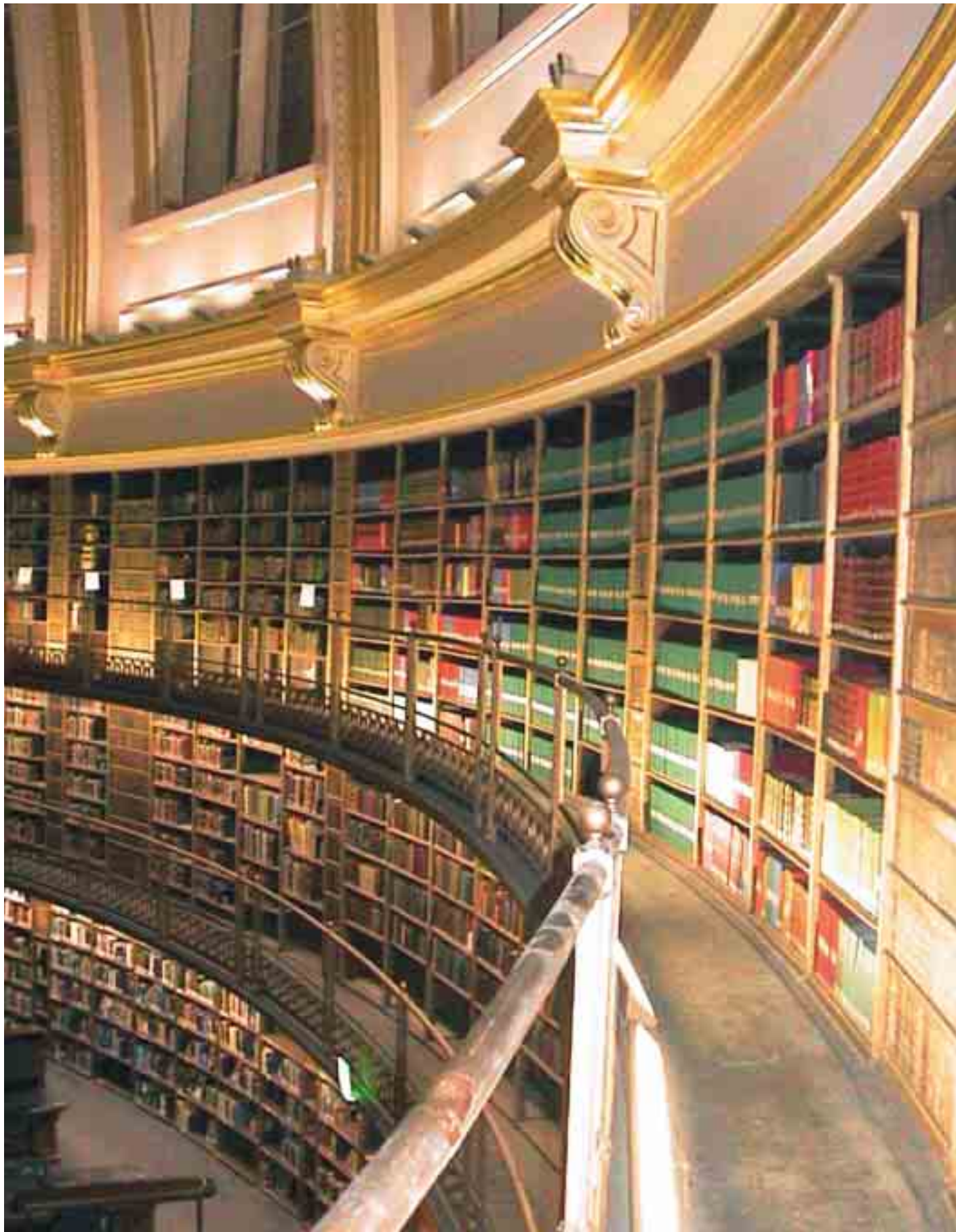
Meekyoung Shin will be showing sculptures based on ancient Greek originals in the British Museum. Part of a new series of works entitled *Translation*; they are created by body-casting and sculpting in soap. *Translation* involves reproducing an art work situated in a public establishment and relocating it in a different cultural context. Her practice is linked to performance art since the public can view her work in progress. As she carves her sculpture in the British Museum's Great Court it is as if she becomes integrated with the work itself. Born in Korea, Meekyoung Shin studied sculpture at Seoul National University and the Slade School of Fine Art, London.



Meekyoung Shin



Simon Tegala will be showing a preview trailer of his new video work specially filmed in the British Museum's famous Round Reading Room. In a play on micro and macro spaces its distinctive architecture becomes a metaphorical cell in which four characters play components of our immune system. The final work will be presented on 12 small widescreen monitors, symmetrically placed on the bookshelves of the Reading Room. A single screen version will be touring during 2004-5. Since graduating from Goldsmiths' College, London in 1995 Simon Tegala has exhibited widely internationally, was awarded the NESTA fellowship in 2000 and represented the UK in the 2003 Havana Biennial.



Simon Tegala



Cai Yuan and JJ Xi (*Mad For Real*) will be performing and screening their new photo/video work *Monkey King*. In the year of the monkey, they enact an ancient Chinese legend, using the British Museum as a metaphor for the Heavenly Palace. They move through the galleries of ancient sculpture in the guise of monkeys symbolically creating havoc on the road to enlightenment. This relates to their recent series of performances at major London landmarks, Westminster Bridge, the Millennium Bridge, Tate Modern and Trafalgar Square.

Born in the People's Republic of China, they have lived and worked in London since the 1980s and trained at the Royal College of Art and Goldsmiths College.



Mad For Real
Photographer, Xiao W Ma

Conference staff arts council contacts

Members of the team are on hand to help throughout the conference and can be contacted afterwards. They can be identified by their conference t-shirt or badge.

Gaylene Gould, A free state conference coordinator
Nike Jonah, A free state conference administrator
Conference volunteers.

decibel national team

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0845 300 6200
Text phone 020 7973 6564
Charity registration no 1036733

Credits



Gaylene Gould, conference manager

Gaylene Gould is an independent film programmer, events manager and filmmaker. She has programmed for a number of film festivals and museums in Canada and the UK. She is currently programmer of the *Planet Africa* section of the Toronto International Film Festival.



Nike Jonah, conference coordinator

Nike Jonah is a producer who has worked across the fashion, music, advertising and film industries in the US and the UK. She is currently working on developing projects on both sides of the Atlantic.

Conference publication

Design and print, tangerine

Conference notetakers

Roxane Liddell, Nana Ocran, Sarah Elizabeth Lewis

Conference volunteers

Chika Unaka, Kemi Abayomi, Mo Jonah, Judith Palmer
Angela Latty, Taiye Tuakli-Worsonu

Special thanks to

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Frank Stansfield
Sindi Gordon
Margaret O' Brien, British Museum
James Putnam, British Museum
Roshini Kempadoo
Vivienne Reiss, visual arts department, Arts Council England
Gary Thomas, visual arts department, Arts Council England
Mark Waugh, visual arts department, Arts Council England

About decibel



decibel is raising the voice of culturally diverse* arts in Britain.

decibel turns the spotlight on Britain's rich artistic landscape and focuses on African, Asian and Caribbean artists living and working in Britain today.

In 2002 Arts Council England published Ambitions for the Arts, its manifesto as the country's national development agency for the arts. Cultural diversity is now at the heart of the organisation's policy. decibel provides a platform to launch this policy and a focus for activity.

Arts Council England has developed decibel as a short-term project with a long-term impact. Through activities, debates and campaigning, decibel intends to challenge the existing arts landscape and create change so that the arts truly reflect contemporary British society.

Through decibel, Arts Council England has invested over £15 million in Black and Asian art and artists and will continue its work in this area through the decibel legacy programme.

decibel is building a voice, accessing funds and creating opportunity for artists now and in the future.

** In the context of decibel, the term 'culturally diverse' means ethnic diversity resulting from post-war immigration, with an increased focus on artists from African, Asian and Caribbean backgrounds in England. Asia refers to the continent from Turkey to Japan.*

decibel visual arts awards

artsadmin

decibel has offered 6 awards of £30,000 each to visual artists of African, Asian and Caribbean backgrounds, based primarily in England. In addition to the awards for artistic practice, decibel is also supporting the work of curators through a series of awards to support professional development. One curatorial fellowship is being awarded to a practitioner at an advanced stage in their career, allowing them to consolidate and develop further, in a national visual arts institution. A further two curatorial traineeships are being offered to practitioners embarking on their careers, to support their training and development.

In 2003 Artsadmin were nominated to deliver this unique and exciting programme and will continue to manage the awards and advise artists throughout. Announcements of the recipients of these awards will be made in the African Galleries on Thursday 18 March, at the evening drinks reception.