

WATCH AND LISTEN

FLOW FRIDAYS X ENTANGLEMENTS

Eight young poets present their personal explorations of British colonialism, inspired by sound and image from West Africa to London. <https://bit.ly/3hAQJOy>



PODCAST

The Art Assassins in conversation with Onyeka Igwe, Emmanuelle Andrews and Paul Basu discussing their research and collaboration. <https://bit.ly/3yniz6w>



REMIX

Tony Nwachukwu's remix of the Art Assassins soundscape *Resetting the record*. <https://bit.ly/2S5seOI>



A DISCUSSION WITH THE ART ASSASSINS, EMMANUELLE ANDREWS, ONYEKA IGWE AND TONY NWACHUKWU

Emmanuelle Andrews, invites the Art Assassins, artist Onyeka Igwe and producer Tony Nwachukwu to discuss their research into the Northcote Thomas archive.

<https://bit.ly/3fn5iSW>



PANEL DISCUSSION: DECOLONISING THE ARCHIVE

Paul Basu, Yvonne Chi Mbanefo, Carmen Vida and Emmanuelle Andrews reflect on their work with the Northcote Thomas archive from across the fields of art, anthropology, conservation and linguistics.

Chaired by Errol Francis. <https://bit.ly/2S4Gp6m>



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SPECIAL THANKS TO

Art Assassins

Akhera Williams, Dora Mooney, Ella Soni, Esme Wedderburn, Fatima-Zahra Et-Taheri, Harriet Vickers, Helen Stephenson-Yankuba, Ivo Blackwood, Jordan Minga, Joshua Olayinka, Joshua Whitehead, Lucien Sone Ebongue, Max Baraitser Smith, Maya Campbell, Mia Davey, Mildred Plodowski, Nathan Twentymen, Phaedra Haas, Phoebe Musa, Ruby Stanhope, Ryan Scullion, Sadie Moir, Sam Baraitser Smith, Sebastian Whitehead, Sonny Brett, Tamzin Smith, Yinka Aresa

Artists and collaborators

Onyeka Igwe, Rosa-Johan Uddoh, Sarah Saey, Tony Nwachukwu, Languid Hands

Researchers-in-residence

Emmanuelle Andrews and Emma Dabiri

Project Partners

Paul Basu (SOAS), Ali Eisa (Autograph), Carmen Vida (UCL), Dean Sully (UCL), Yvonne Chioma Mbanefo (Igbo Studies Initiative), Angelica Baschiera (SOAS), Janet Topp Fargion (British Library), Johanna Zetterstrom-Sharp (Horniman Museum), Kate Berlewen (UCL), Bill Mastandrea (UCL)



ART ASSASSINS: AN ARCHIVE BY OTHER MEANS

19 MAY – 30 JUN 2021

GROUND FLOOR &
GALLERY 4, FIRE STATION

'I invited the group on a journey through the archive by other means: through a privileging of the senses that confront Western ontology's desires to judge knowledge through the rationale of scientific certainty.'

Emmanuelle Andrews, Researcher-in-residence

An archive by other means is an exhibition that invites us to consider the ways archives that document fraught histories can be understood in present day contexts.

Curated by the Art Assassins, the South London Gallery's youth forum, this exhibition features new video work, a soundscape and fly-posters, made by the Art Assassins in collaboration with artists Onyeka Igwe and Rosa-Johan Uddoh.

Between September 2019 and December 2020, the Art Assassins interrogated an early twentieth century archive assembled by anthropologist Northcote W Thomas for their project *Entanglements: Who makes history?*

Working in West Africa between 1909–1915, Thomas amassed a huge collection of materials from Nigeria and Sierra Leone, including photographs, objects, sound recordings and field notes. The archive represents a unique document of life in these areas during that period, but is entangled with British colonialism and its legacies.

This project offers a unique opportunity to explore aspects of colonial history often neglected in the school curriculum, empowering young people with tools to research and critically analyse historical archives. Guided by the questions, 'Can the archive be decolonised?' 'How do we work ethically?' 'What does this archive mean for communities today?' *An archive by other means* enables us to reflect on the enduring relevance and renewed significance of British colonial history, from the perspective of a diverse group of young people living in south London today.

Entanglements: Who makes history? is led by the South London Gallery in partnership with SOAS University of London, Autograph, Igbo Studies Initiative, University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, British Library and the UCL Institute of Archaeology.

Supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Oscar Humphries and Sophie Oakley and the SLG Council



WORKS

ART ASSASSINS & ONYEKA IGWE

Resetting the record, 2020

Billboard, speakers and stereo audio, 9 min

Resetting the record is a soundscape that brings people from pre-colonial West Africa into conversation with people in modern-day London through music, voice and rhythm. Thinking about how communities are represented sonically the Art Assassins and Igwe worked with digitised versions of the wax cylinder recordings from the Northcote Thomas archive which document stories, speech, song and musical instruments in Nigeria and Sierra Leone. The group also created a library of sounds from their own everyday lives – considering how a young person from south London today might be understood in 100 years time. The soundscape also features oral history interviews with members of the community connected to the archive across generations. *Resetting the record* is presented on a speaker set loaned from B.O.S.S (Black Obsidian Sound System) in homage to the practices of Black music cultures in the UK.

ART ASSASSINS & ROSA-JOHAN UDDOH

And I would've gotten away with it too, if it wasn't for you meddling kids, 2020

Video, 23 min

And I would have gotten away with it too, if it wasn't for you meddling kids is a video work posing a playful counterpoint to traditional museum and archival practices. Centring on a series of objects from Benin City, Edo State, the Art Assassins and Uddoh reconstruct and reimagine these artefacts in a new multi-layered narrative. A cartoonesque Scooby-Doo inspired storyline involves the Queen and plays out debates surrounding the conservation and repatriation of colonial collections. This is intercut with a chat show whereby the Art Assassins and Uddoh reflect on their process and the power dynamics at hand. In a nod to the ways our 'unreal' and 'ultra-real' past histories have impact, the video also makes reference to the impact of lockdown on the young people and the challenges faced when trying to continue their collaboration remotely.

THE NORTHCOTE THOMAS ARCHIVE

This 'ethnographic archive' comprises over 3,000 artefacts, 7,000 photographs, 750 wax cylinder phonograph recordings, as well as fieldnotes, correspondence and other documentation assembled by the British anthropologist Northcote Thomas (1868–1936) in Nigeria and Sierra Leone between 1909 and 1915. Together these materials provide a rich and unique insight into life in Nigeria and Sierra Leone at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The collection is currently held by institutions including the University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, the British Library Sound Archive and the Royal Anthropological Institute.

ART ASSASSINS

Fly posters, 2020

Presented on the walls of the gallery space is a display of fly posters designed by the Art Assassins that draw on materials from the archive, ephemera from workshops, poems and quotes. These posters make visible the exploratory process and divergent thinking taken by the Art Assassins as they have navigated the Northcote Thomas archive and its problematic history. Visitors are invited to consider the many challenging questions and debates that remain from the project and the plurality of positions that exist when engaging with these histories.

LOCATED AT THE ENTRANCE TO GALLERY 4: ART ASSASSINS & SARAH SAEY

Entanglements, 2019–20

Video, 20 min

Working in collaboration with filmmaker Sarah Saey, the Art Assassins produced a film documenting on the project. The film follows the group from their initial encounters with the archive through to creating the final exhibition.

LOCATED ON THE FIRE STATION GROUND FLOOR: ART ASSASSINS

Dubplate archive, 2020

5 dubplates, record player and headphones

Explore the original audio recordings from the piece *Resetting the record* which have been cut onto dubplates. This newly constituted collection also includes a specially commissioned remix of *Resetting the record* by producer Tony Nwachukwu.

Until recently, these collections and archives have been largely inaccessible. Through an AHRC-funded project entitled 'Museum Affordances / [Re:] Entanglements' led by Professor Paul Basu at SOAS University of London, the artefacts, photographs and sound recordings are now being researched, digitised and made accessible.

As well as better understanding the historical context in which these materials were gathered, the project seeks to re-think their significance in decolonial times. What do they mean for different communities today? What actions do they make possible? How might we creatively explore their latent possibilities?

Find out more at www.re-entanglements.net

BIOGRAPHIES

Art Assassins was established by the SLG as a creative forum for young people aged 14–20 in 2009. Members of Art Assassins meet weekly at the SLG, and the size and membership of the group is continually evolving. Through collaborative projects, they have defined a peer-led approach, representing themselves and their ideas across a range of platforms with a focus on collectivised decision making and a culture of openness and inquiry.

Onyeka Igwe is an artist and researcher working across cinema and installation. Her work uses dance, voice, archive and text to expose a multiplicity of narratives, exploring the body and geographical locations as sites of cultural and political meaning.

Rosa-Johan Uddoh is an interdisciplinary artist working towards radical self-love, inspired by Black feminist practice and writing. Through performance, ceramics and sound, she explores an infatuation with places, objects or celebrities in British popular culture, and the effects of these on self-formation. She is still influenced by her architectural background, rooting stories in specific spaces and materials.

Emmanuelle Andrews (she/her) is a researcher, campaigner and facilitator working across domestic policy, the arts, academia and activism. She is a founding member of the Free Black University and is committed to the development of radical, imaginative and transformative knowledge production. Currently, she works full-time as Policy and Campaigns Officer at human rights organisation Liberty and previously worked in research and policy organising with activists to campaign against the colonial export of homophobic laws.

Paul Basu is Professor of Anthropology at SOAS University of London and Principal Investigator of the 'Museum Affordances / [Re:] Entanglements' projects. He specialises in issues around cultural memory, history, colonial archives and ethnographic collections.

Black Obsidian Sound System was established in the summer of 2018 with the intention of bringing together a community of queer, trans and non-binary Black and people of colour involved in art, sound and radical activism. Following in the legacies of sound system culture they wanted to learn, build and sustain a resource for collective struggles. The system, based in London, is available to use or rent by community groups and others with the purpose of amplifying and connecting them.

Tony Nwachukwu is a respected music producer, consultant and educator. He specialises in connecting the worlds of music production and learning by creating innovative opportunities with music-focused creative professionals and industry. To shape this journey he setup CREATE DEFINE RELEASE (CDR) a platform and community honing an array of forward-thinking artists and producers that includes SBTRKT, Floating Points, Maya Jane Coles and Monki. To many, he is also known for his productions for Attica Blues and project monikers NEPA Allstar and The Wach crafting diverse production and remix credits that include The Cinematic Orchestra, Jazzanova, Duran Duran and U.N.K.L.E. His lecturing, consulting and learning concepts have been utilised by companies and organisations including the University of East London, Ableton, Native Instruments and Apple.

Sarah Saey is a documentary maker who works in film and new media. She is a recent recipient of One World Media and Drum Media awards for *Treasure Hunters* (2020), an interactive online documentary that she directed and produced for the BBC. Sarah has also facilitated media arts projects in schools, youth and community centres in the UK and Egypt. Her particular interests are in Middle Eastern affairs, migration and the experience of diaspora communities.

HOW TO JOIN ART ASSASSINS

Art Assassins are always keen to welcome new members. If you are aged between 14–20 years old and live in south London we would love to hear from you. You don't need to know anything about art to be an Art Assassin, but you do have to be enthusiastic, willing to work as part of a team and eager to share your ideas.

To join Art Assassins please email: artassassins@southlondongallery.org