

TROPHIES OF EMPIRE



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Trophies of Empire

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INTRODUCTION

In the publicity blurb for *This England*, self-styled as 'Britain's loveliest magazine', a reader writes of the publication's ability to make her 'feel at peace with the world, especially in these troubled times.' Unsurprising, given the escapism the magazine offers through its propagation of a mythical England, a land of rustic contentment untarnished by modernity, and of a way of life that probably never existed. From *This England's* patriotic, not to say xenophobic, smugness, to the overt racism and gutter politics of the Far Right, such fixed notions of 'Britishness', of a national identity that denies the reality of cultural diversity, are constructed by a highly selective interpretation of the historical processes that have shaped contemporary Britain. One such process, the consolidation of Empire through colonial expansion, and its subsequent decline, remains indelibly imprinted on the present, and it was these legacies - these *Trophies of Empire* - which provided the focus for a unique series of commissioned artworks in three maritime cities, Bristol, Hull and Liverpool in 1992.

In developing the project, initially with the Bluecoat and then with Arnolfini, Hull Time Based Arts and other organisations, artist Keith Piper researched the ways in which imperial legacies are evident in the different locations: 'Some are highly visible, others remain obscured and unexcavated. They permeate the very social, physical and economic fabric, manifesting themselves in ways varying from place names, public monuments and buildings, to the presence of whole communities of people.'

1992 gave the project a sharper focus, with two significant events that year dominating cultural and political agendas alike. Firstly, the Columbus Quincentenary, which became less a celebration of discovery, more a condemnation of the genocidal effects of conquest and its global repercussions (a statue of Columbus, for instance, sited until recently in Liverpool's Sefton Park, bears the inscription 'The discoverer of America was the maker of Liverpool' in recognition of the importance of the Atlantic trade route to the city's fortunes). Secondly, the advent of European unification symbolically dislocated the old imperial states of Europe from links with their ex-colonies in favour of forging a new, insular 'Pan European' consciousness.

As outlined in the information pack collated by Piper, Abdullah Badwi and researcher Janice Cheddie to provide a starting point for the project, the intention of *Trophies of Empire* was to invite artists to 'creatively and innovatively respond to their own individual interpretation of these legacies and events through artworks that directly and poignantly reflect both the physical and geographical locations of the project against the backdrop of 1992 with its myriad implications'. In all, fifteen commissions were awarded, selected from an open submission. Through a collaborative process between the three cities, there followed a five-month programme of interconnected exhibitions, performances, discussions and events, the different contexts allowing for a broader and much richer debate than would have been possible by a single exhibition touring from one venue to another.

Site and local context were all important. Liverpool, a city itself mythologised, demonised even by sections of the media, politicians and others, had been chosen as the finishing port in the 1992 Tall Ships Race, entitled *The Columbus Regatta*, an association which prompted the 500 Years of Resistance Campaign to mount a counter programme of events in the city. *Trophies of Empire*, beginning with Keith Piper's powerful *Trade Winds* installation, housed at Merseyside Maritime Museum within the Albert Dock complex - a central focus for the regatta celebrations - was thus able to contribute to the debates generated by the Quincentenary.

A more direct engagement with Liverpool's mercantile history was the series of paintings produced by Paul Clarkson who offered a personal perspective on the failure of his native city to fully acknowledge its slave history. Subsequently displayed in Merseyside Maritime Museum, which is preparing to open a new gallery devoted to the Atlantic Slave Trade, the paintings have remained pertinent to ongoing debates in the city around issues of cultural identity and how history is represented. As Liverpool bids to become City of Architecture in 1999, Clarkson is working on a new series of paintings, again tracing the legacies of Empire evident in key civic buildings, highlighted in the bid for their architectural merit.

The Bluecoat building itself, originally a charitable school, was founded like many Liverpool institutions, in no small part from the profits of the slave trade, with more than half the early trustees being deeply involved in the business. In *Trophies of Empire*, Juginder Lamba's carved and constructed wooden sculpture, *The Cry*, placed outdoors in the Bluecoat's garden courtyard, surrounded by buildings little changed since they were first erected some 275 years earlier, acquired a special resonance and a contemplative presence, qualities equally evident when the sculpture was shown first in the garden of Wilberforce House in Hull.

A full year after *Trophies of Empire* finished, a student recalled to me her emotions at standing in the Bluecoat garden the previous Autumn in front of *The Cry* as the leaves fell on the sculpture. Others remember the distinctive aroma produced by the spices and tarred ropes of Rita Keegan's *Cycles*, another commission made for a specific site at the Bluecoat. Gathering historical reference material in Liverpool relating to her slave ancestry, Keegan injected an autobiographical narrative into her installation, described by Sean Cubitt (in his review 'Going Native: Columbus, Liverpool, Identity and Memory', *Third Text* 21) as speaking 'from the standpoint of a family history, seeking out an identity and a place from which to live, whilst simultaneously pointing out the perspective of the colonial and enslaved past in the present'.

This celebration of the strength of cultural identity achieved in the face of histories of suffering, also found expression in the live art commissioned for the project, with performances mixing media as well as artforms, being presented by Verbal Images on Humberside and in Liverpool and by Bandele Iyapo in Bristol. Visual Stress sought a direct route to the public by taking their *Mobile Auto Mission* onto the busy streets of Liverpool only a few shopping days before Christmas, ritually exorcising a succession of historically oppressive sites during a day-long convoy through the city centre.

Though created specifically for *Trophies of Empire*, several of the commissioned artworks have subsequently been shown in different contexts, Shaheen Merali's installation *Going Native* for example being included in the South Asian artists film and video exhibition, *Beyond Destination* at Birmingham's Ikon Gallery, and Veena Stephenson's *Ring a ring o' roses a pocket full of posies...* in the INIVA exhibition *Black People and the British Flag*. Even without its jingoistic appropriation by football hooligans and fascists, the Union Flag remains a redolent symbol of Empire, one that Stephenson cleverly subverted by reconfiguring the flag's motif into a dissected boardroom table, its surfaces overlaid with telling images, its delicate balance prone to collapse.

As the debates generated by *Trophies of Empire* continue to be developed elsewhere through exhibitions, periodicals and seminars, the need for a publication documenting the project has become more apparent. In devising this publication's format, the participating artists were asked to supply texts about their commissions and these are printed alongside images of the work photographed for the most part in situ at the various venues. However this publication is intended to be more than simply a document of a series of events. Essays were invited from several writers in order to contextualise and extend debate around the issues raised by the project. Keith Piper provides historical background, outlining the shifting landscapes of the different geographical locations with their various legacies of Empire. Gilane Tawadros focuses on the notion of forgetting and remembering as a thread that connects the work of several of the artists. Katherine Wood and Tessa Jackson look specifically at the Bristol experience and analyse the effect of the education project which Arnolfini organised around the exhibition. Jayne Tyler discusses the impact of Nina Edge's residency at Wilberforce House Museum. The combination of these texts and images will hopefully convey a sense of *Trophies of Empire's* achievements.

In articulating a complexity of issues bound to history and place, it was the imaginative responses of the artists above all that presented the project's themes so coherently to a diversity of audiences across the three cities. On behalf of my colleagues involved in organising *Trophies of Empire* - Keith Piper, Mike Stubbs from Hull Time Based Arts, Tessa Jackson and Katherine Wood from Arnolfini, whose enthusiasm and commitment were vital to the project's success - I would therefore like to thank all the participating artists, the contributing writers, and the many other individuals and funding bodies whose support has been crucial to the project.

Bryan Biggs, Director Bluecoat Gallery, 1993

SHIFTING LANDSCAPES

Historical memory and historical amnesia are commodities which reshape and reinvent themselves in tune with the demands of each passing generation. During every epoch, individually and collectively we seek to contextualise and decode our present as (in part) the product of a key set of strategically selected and interpreted historical moments. The selection of these key moments, these historical continuums, invariably reveals to us more about the social, political and economic orientation of the communities and individuals by which they are evoked, than it reveals about what could be problematically described as the ‘objective facts’ of history.

Within the development and maturation of any given nation, a body of dominant texts are systematically evolved to which, through the operation of a series of key institutions, a ‘majority’ of the population are persuaded to adhere. The cultivation of this ‘common sense’, these logic mechanisms of national belonging have always played a central role in the provision of the nation with a dominant image of itself, an image which is progressively refined and reinforced through the media of ‘official’ reportage, centralised political debate, the state-sponsored arts and education, and the established church. For all of these institutions the heroic mythologisation of particular historical moments and the cloaking in a shroud of amnesia of others has always been a key strategy.

In particular in this context, the state-sponsored (or at least endorsed) arts have played an interesting role. For example the mythologisation of the white ‘cowboy’ and the demonisation of the ‘red Indian’, which provided the key text for many a Hollywood Western, can be seen to have provided a heroic metaphor through which mainstream white America could celebrate its historic westward expansion whilst ignoring/excusing the brutal genocide waged against that continent's original inhabitants.

In the context of the *Trophies of Empire* project, however, it is the dominant texts which have come to surround British imperialism, with specific reference to three key geographical sites, which we set out to deconstruct, oppose and counter. As outlined above, the British state has over the centuries worked to define and refine a particular ‘common sense’ of itself through the selective activation and interpretation of particular historical moments, and within this the histories of empire and imperialism have always provided a particularly rich, if at times awkward vein. For instance, and in retrospect one of the key moments within the political discourse of the past few decades, Margaret Thatcher in her infamous ‘swamping speech’ of January 1978 activated a very particular interpretation of imperial legacy within her assertion that: “The British character has done so much for democracy, for law, and done so much throughout the world that if there is any fear that it might be swamped, then people are going to be rather hostile to those coming in.”¹

In effect, for Thatcher one of the key historical legacies of British imperialism was the imposition upon the former colonies of British models of parliamentary democracy and the judiciary. Within her selective conjuring of the

historical 'actual fact' she was able to recast the conduct of Empire as evidence of the benign nature of the British state. A state and culture which was now in her view under threat through an inverse colonisation undertaken by a non-white alien 'other'. It is of course not difficult to find a counter interpretation of the ongoing legacies of imperialism on the local systems of government from which it usurped control. In his classic study *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Walter Rodney presents the following alternative account of the process: "The negative impact of colonialism in political terms was quite dramatic. Overnight, African political states lost their power, independence and meaning - irrespective of whether they were big empires or small polities... Political power had passed into the hands of foreign overlords..."² What the dichotomy between the two above standpoints illustrates is the potential for cavernous disparity between historical interpretations of the same set of events: in this case, between the dominant utterance, the one which expresses the agenda of entrenched power and the status quo; and the voice of opposition to that agenda voiced by those who have found themselves the victims, or at least excluded from, that entrenchment.

Trophies of Empire sought to explore the tensions between the dominant and the oppositional or alternative utterances around the legacies of empire as they impact upon a set of key geographical sites. Within this, three British cities were brought under the analytical microscope. Each city is a port, and as such the development of its very physical fabric has been determined by its location on key maritime trading routes. In the case of the first two cities, Liverpool and Bristol, what emerges is a yawning gulf between the dominant texts as propagated by the 'city fathers' as to the importance of what has come to be known as the Atlantic Slave Trade to the historical development of both cities, and the oppositional texts which fight for a full recognition of the importance of, and the debt which these cities owe to, captive African labour. In the third city, Hull, one witnesses the emergence of an entire industry of civic pride centring upon the humanitarian efforts of a single individual, William Wilberforce, who as the Member of Parliament for Hull has been credited with 'securing the abolition of the slave trade (1807) and of slavery (1833) in the British Empire'³. It is a view of history which overstates the importance of liberal paternalism, whilst consigning Africans to the role of passive victims, and the evolution of global capitalism to a fixed and neutral entity, which in this context will be subjected to deconstruction and challenge.

What follows is of necessity a 'whistle stop' excavation of a handful of key historical moments through which an alternative appraisal of the legacies of empire in general and the Atlantic Slave Trade in particular can be read into the contemporary landscapes of Liverpool and of Bristol. It will also engage in a brief reappraisal of the mythologisation and the legacies of William Wilberforce in tune with an examination of the wider dynamics of the plantocracy and its role in the evolution of capitalism.

LIVERPOOL

Until very recently, the Atlantic Slave Trade represented very much a chapter in Liverpoolian maritime history shrouded in a cloak of civic understatement bordering almost on denial. On a trip in 1991 to the city's prestigious Merseyside Maritime Museum, one would have been surprised to see that within a well resourced and comprehensive exhibition charting the historical development of Liverpool as a trading port, the entire history of the slave trade was

consigned to a single, poorly lit corner; very literally an annexe of history. The text which accompanied this section of the display suggested that Liverpool's involvement in the slave trade had been overstated, and derided the local mythology which spoke of a network of tunnels beneath the dock area in which slaves had been held. Whilst it is often difficult to divide popular myth and folklore from the concealed and fragmented histories of the city's slave trading past, a few central facts remain beyond dispute. In Eric Williams' classic study *Capitalism and Slavery* we can begin to trace out the principal theme of the centrality of slave trading to Liverpool's development. 'The story of this increase in the slave trade is mainly the story of the rise of Liverpool. Liverpool's first slave trader, a modest vessel of thirty tons, sailed for Africa in 1709. This was the first step on a road which, by the end of the century, gained Liverpool the distinction of the greatest slave trading port in the Old World'.⁴

It is a view reinforced by Ramsey Muir in his 1907 study *A History of Liverpool*, in which he also references the broader impact of the slave trade upon the economy of the entire region, the vast influx of wealth which it represented being one of the principal factors determining the instigation and success of the industrial revolution which had its cradle partly in the North West. Muir's text speaks of high profits: '...which invigorated every industry, provided the capital for docks, enriched and employed the mills of Lancashire, and afforded the means for opening out new and ever new lines of trade. Beyond a doubt it was the slave trade which raised Liverpool from a struggling port to be one of the richest and most prosperous trading centres in the world'.⁵ The absolute centrality of the slave trade to all levels of the local economy was also summed up by local historian J. Wallace who in *A General and Descriptive History of the Town of Liverpool* wrote in 1795: 'Almost every man in Liverpool is a merchant... that almost every order of people is interested in a Guinea cargo... It is well known that many of the small vessels that import about an hundred slaves, are fitted out by attornies, drapers, ropers, grocers, tallow-chandlers, barbers, taylors, &c'.⁶

What remains far more contentious however, is the body of folklore which surrounds the idea that slaves were openly traded on the streets of Liverpool. It is true that within what has become infamously known as the 'Atlantic Triangle', the bulk of African captives were reduced to cargo during the so called 'middle passage', i.e. traded onto the ship in West Africa to be traded off in the Americas. A number of individuals would however also have made the journey from the Americas to Europe along with the sugar, rum, cotton and other commodities which were gaining fashionable status in the Old World. A portion of this traffic inevitably found its way to Liverpool and in Peter Fryer's study of the black presence in Britain, *Staying Power*, we read: 'One Liverpool street - the sources do not identify it - witnessed so many sales of black children and youths that it was nicknamed *Negro Row* or *Negro Street*. They were sold by auction in shops, warehouses, and coffee-houses, and on the front steps of the Customs House, on the east side of the Old Dock (afterwards Canning Place)'.⁷

What these early manifestations of a black presence in Liverpool heralded however was the development of one of Britain's oldest black communities. It is a community whose consolidation and history of struggle across the centuries in the face of racism, disenfranchisement and disablement, has and continues to be documented elsewhere and lies beyond the scope of this brief account. It would however suffice to restate the eloquent account of Dr Harold Moody who at the twelfth annual general meeting of the League of Coloured Peoples, held in Liverpool in March 1943, spoke

of “Liverpool’s large resident black population (which) had been treated... as outcasts, had been despised and looked down upon.”⁸ This legacy of racism, re-expressed and recharged through the anti-black riots of 1948 was waiting to meet the first wave of one hundred and eighty post war migrants to Liverpool from the West Indies who docked on the *Orbita* in October of the same year to join the 8,000 already resident in the city. These new arrivals, and those who followed them, entered a space of officially sanctioned racism and a myopic refusal to acknowledge the centrality of the historic contribution which the labour of Black people had had upon the development and one time wealth of the city. It was the total end of patience with this consignment to the margins of Liverpool’s social order which was to finally lead to the historic uprising of the summer of 1981, an event which placed the demands and aspirations of the black community of Liverpool 8 onto the local and national political agenda.

BRISTOL

As the first port to break the Royal African Company’s monopoly upon the supply of slaves to the colonies in 1698, Bristol’s entrance into the Atlantic Slave Trade predates that of Liverpool. Whilst Liverpool was to eventually outstrip its West Country rival in the volume of trade it handled, it was acknowledged by historian Walter Minchinton in his study *The Port of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century* that: ‘Thanks to slaves and sugar, the eighteenth century was Bristol’s golden age; for three-quarters of a century it ranked as Britain’s second city’.⁹

The history of Bristol as a slave port can be traced back to the eleventh century when it dealt in a local traffic in white slaves to and from Ireland. It was however its entrance into the Atlantic Slave Trade which was to generate the wealth which inspired a local annalist during the reign of Queen Anne to utter the often quoted remark that ‘There is not a brick in the city but what is cemented by the blood of a slave’.¹⁰ As with Liverpool, Bristol can boast a body of folklore which speaks of caves near the city used for the reception of slaves. Once again the nature of the so-called ‘Triangular Trade’ militated against the large-scale importation of captive Africans into Bristol, but considerable evidence does remain that individual and small groups of slaves were offered for sale in and around the city. Once again from *Staying Power* we read: ‘There is plenty of evidence that slaves themselves were bought and sold in Bristol. Many a captain, mate, or ship’s surgeon, short of funds, decided to convert his ‘privilege Negro’ into a spot of ready cash before the next voyage. ‘To be sold, a black boy’ is the cry that punctuates the pages of Bristol’s eighteenth century newspapers’.¹¹ These early black presences and the civic and mercantile commitment to the Atlantic Slave Trade of which these presences were a symbol, have left a set of indelible registers upon Bristol’s landscape. Perhaps the most poignant and telling of these is the often cited example of two key Bristolian street names, Whiteladies Road and Black Boy Hill. Black Boy Hill remains as a constant reminder of the site where the city’s population of African grooms, pageboys and coachmen would wait as the wealthy white women, for whom these slaves had become fashionable accessories, paraded along what came to be known as Whiteladies Road. In fact in his *Annual of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century*, historian John Latimer was moved to record that ‘Negro slaves were numerous in Bristol until far into the eighteenth century’. Although for the most part, the identities of these early black Bristolians have been lost to us, a few individuals remain, such as Scipio Africanus, a servant to the Earl of Suffolk until his death in 1720. His tombstone in Henbury churchyard is a constant reminder of the long-standing and visible black presence in the region.

As a slave port, Bristol had been long outstripped by a more efficient and in many respects more ruthless Liverpool by the time Wilberforce's first failed motion to abolish the slave trade was placed before Parliament in 1791. It took another sixteen years for the trade to finally pass into illegality within the British Empire, by which time Bristol's slave traders, already hit hard by the economic recession of 1793, had been severely thinned out by bankruptcies. The ongoing legacies of the trade however continued and continue to permeate the Bristolian economic, geographic and social landscape. As with Liverpool, the most poignant legacy of this involvement lies not in the buildings sponsored by the profits of the trade, nor in the place names which indicate the 'matter of factness' of civic attitudes to the trade. The most important legacy lies in the long established and systematically marginalised black presence in the city, and the cloak of racism, both officially sponsored and otherwise, which has underpinned and systematically reinforced that marginalisation. As with Liverpool it took almost four centuries from the moment that the first bound African was landed on the dockside, for the city's beleaguered black community to turn and place their particular demands foursquare upon the regional and national agenda. The site of this uprising was the Black & White Cafe. In *Staying Power* we read the following account of the day's events: 'In April 1980, after years of harassing Bristol's black community, police raided one of the few meeting places black youth had left to them. The resistance was tougher than they bargained for, and they withdrew after two hours' fighting. In fact, they ran away, and for four hours St Pauls was a 'no-go' area. Bristol became a symbol of resistance.'¹²

WILBERFORCE

To elevate William Wilberforce to a deity of liberal humanitarianism is to grossly overstate his importance. To disregard, however, his essential strategic role in finally bringing to a legal end an already faltering traffic in human beings, would be an equal travesty. The most accurate evaluation of his legacy lies somewhere between these two poles. It is an accurate evaluation which remains somewhat distanced from the body of romantic mythology which surrounds the Wilberforce industry, both in his native Hull and nationwide.

Three days before his death in July 1833, on the day of the second reading of the Bill for the Abolition of Slavery, Wilberforce is reported to have declared: "Thank God that I should have lived to witness a day in which England is willing to give twenty millions sterling for the Abolition of Slavery."¹³ The money to which he referred was the compensation the British government had agreed to pay to the West Indian Plantocracy in compensation for the loss of their 'property', namely African slaves. This amount, it was calculated, represented about half of the monetary value of the slaves concerned. The fact that, firstly, the government was prepared to pay out such a sum of money, and, secondly, that the politically powerful West Indian lobby were prepared to accept it, is indication of the magnitude of real economic pressure which had been generated within the global and local economy for slavery to come to an end.

The passage of the Bill through Parliament in 1833 abolishing the institution of slavery had been relatively smooth in comparison to the Bill seeking the abolition of the slave trade which had finally squeezed through in 1807 after numerous defeats. It is a change of fortune that tells us as much about shifting global power and trade relationships, the extension of democracy in Britain in the wake of the Reform Bill, the ongoing importance of Adam Smith's views on

the economic unviability of slavery and, last but not least, an increasingly rebellious slave population, as it does about the ongoing and indisputable success of Wilberforce and his peers as political campaigners. Whilst any in-depth examination of these complex and interrelated pressures lies outside the scope of this brief study, it is useful to look at the crisis in the Plantocracy as an economically viable unit and the increasingly courageous struggles of captive Africans which were to eventually render the plantations all but ungovernable. In his classic study in economics, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith argued that whilst in the early stages of capitalist development slavery acts as a useful generator of profits, its inherent inflexibility, its expensive demands for land and human resources, and its unskilled and brutalised workforce, begin to retard development. Wedded to this was that clear and very often expressed volatility of the labour force, with uprisings and ‘maroonage’ happening with increased regularity around the plantations of North, South, Central America and the Caribbean.

I would argue that these factors must be viewed alongside the campaigning of the Abolitionists in placing the issue of slavery before the public eye and the organisation of a number of effective boycott campaigns. The contribution of Wilberforce to this movement, although in many respects invaluable to its success, should not be viewed in isolation from the network of campaigners who committed their energies to the Abolitionist cause. Men such as Thomas Clarkson, a tireless campaigner who had in 1787 first approached a 26 year old Wilberforce to act as a spokesperson for the Abolitionist cause in the Houses of Parliament. Other individuals and organisations such as Granville Sharp, John Wesley, Josiah Wedgwood, James Ramsey, and the so called ‘Clapham Sect’ were also active. In comparison to some of these, Wilberforce's political instincts emerge as relatively conservative. Eric Williams launches a ferocious assault on the character of Wilberforce: ‘There is a certain smugness about the man, his life, his religion. As a leader, he was inept, addicted to moderation, compromise and delay. He deprecated extreme measures and feared popular agitation... The abolitionists were not radicals. In their attitude to domestic problems they were reactionary. Wilberforce was familiar with all that went on in the hold of a slave ship but ignored what went on at the bottom of a mineshaft...’¹⁴

This is possibly a more accurate account of Wilberforce's political orientation than the unquestioning mythologisation to which we have become accustomed. It however should still be acknowledged that it was perhaps this innate conservatism that enabled Wilberforce to build the range of political alliances which, in tandem with the wider set of economic and social forces we have touched upon, were responsible for the final abolition of the institution of slavery.

Keith Piper, October 1993. *Based on initial research by Janice Cheddie*

- 1 Rasheed Araeen, *Making Myself Visible*, p112 (Kala Press 1984)
- 2 Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, p246 (Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications 1983)
- 3 *Collins Dictionary of the English Language*, p1679 (Collins London & Glasgow 1979)
- 4 Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p34 (Andre Deutsch 1964)
- 5 Peter Fryer, *Staying Power (The History of Black People in Britain)*, p33 (Pluto Press 1984)
- 6 op cit 5
- 7 op cit 5, p59
- 8 op cit 5, p333
- 9 op cit 5, p33
- 10 op cit 5, p33
- 11 op cit 5, p58
- 12 op cit 5, p398
- 13 Susanne Everett, *The History of Slavery*, p153 (Magna Books 1978)
- 14 op cit 4, p34, pp181-2

RESIDENCY AT WILBERFORCE HOUSE

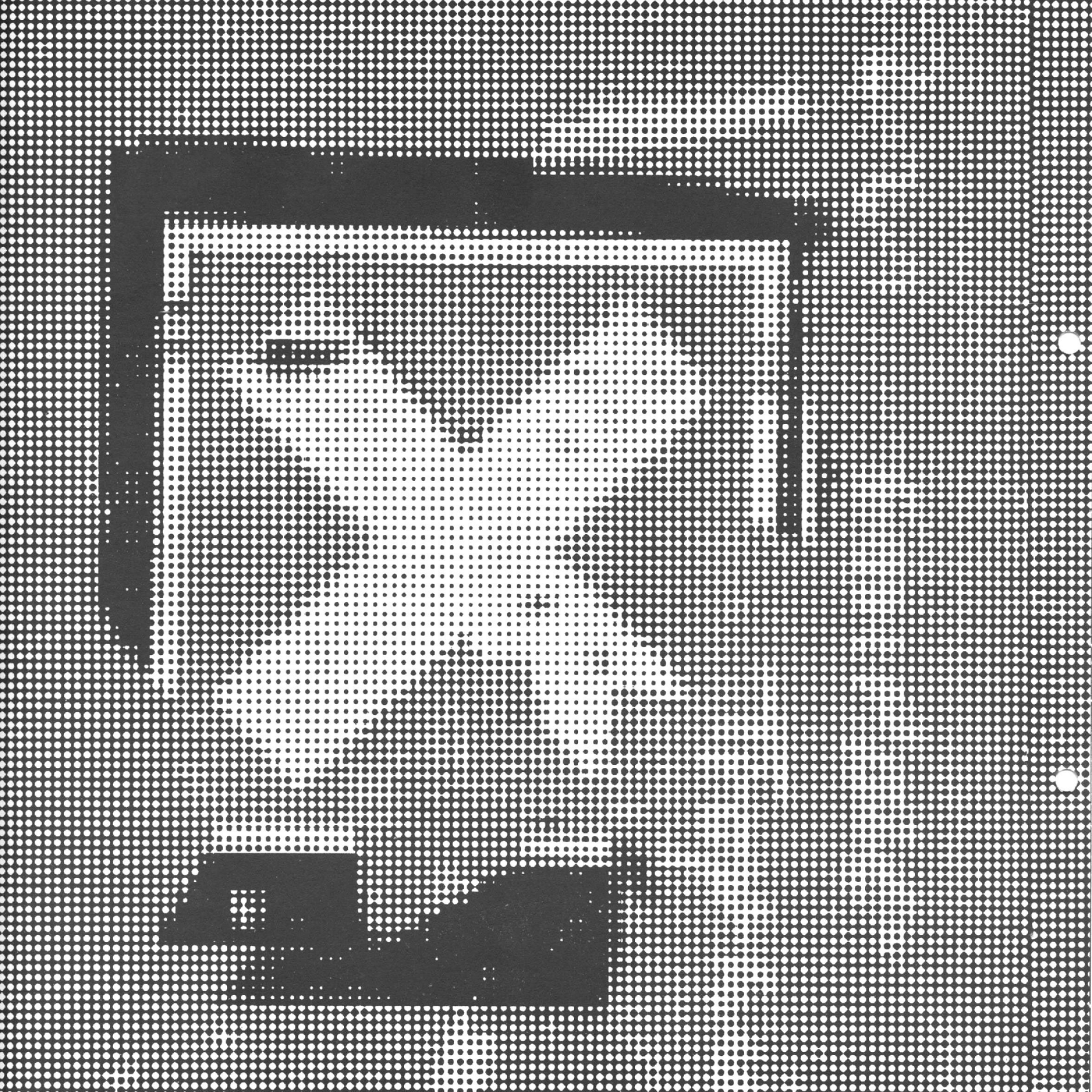
When Hull Time Based Arts first approached me to collaborate on the *Trophies of Empire* commission I was filled with a mixture of excitement and apprehension. Excitement at the prospect of exploring a new medium within Wilberforce House Museum and apprehension as to how the project would work in practice in a social history museum. However I felt that the building, which is notable for being the birthplace of William Wilberforce, with displays on slavery and his role in its Parliamentary abolition, would make an excellent venue for exploring the themes of *Trophies of Empire*. I welcomed the opportunity to introduce an artist with new ideas of interpreting the themes of the museum and challenging some of the concepts raised. I also thought that the widely held misconception that Hull was a great slavery port might finally be challenged.

The project itself raised interesting aspects of how an artist's commission would work in a museum rather than an art gallery context with our very different aims and audiences. As social historians we strive to demystify our museums as institutions, improve accessibility to our exhibitions and provide a context or set of 'tools' by which our visitors can obtain more from our displays. Having an artist in residence was seen as being very much in keeping with these aims whilst also making very practical use of the museum's natural space: education room, courtyard and garden. Nina Edge's installation was site specific and explored the themes of slavery and colonialism, both of which were directly relevant to the house. Nina herself is an excellent communicator, an essential skill, given our aim of improving the museum's accessibility. Over the four week residency she produced the *Multi-Cultural Peepshow*. This installation looked at the products or fruits of labour imported to Britain, the exploitation of labour and profits made from this type of slavery. The piece was visually stunning, the construction itself very labour intensive. By incorporating readily identifiable imports of the Empire such as cotton, cocoa, coffee or tea, the installation provoked the audience to associate the sometimes remote concepts of slavery with their everyday life.

The positive reception the installation received was definitely helped by the residency preceding its display. The public were given the opportunity not only to witness a complicated process of construction but also to meet the artist to discuss the project and its themes in greater depth. One ex-docker was particularly stimulated by Nina's use of PG Tips packaging. He had led campaigns himself on Hull docks boycotting the import of certain products where slavery was still being used. He remembered a ban on importing PG Tips tea when it was revealed that the chimpanzees on the TV adverts were paid more than the tea pickers.

Trophies of Empire succeeded not only in linking in an exploration of the themes of slavery and colonialism to the existing context of Wilberforce Museum, but also in bringing together the aims and ideas of a contemporary art practice and that of a social history museum.

Jayne Tyler, Keeper of Social History, Hull City Museums



SWEET OBLIVION

One day he was looking for the small anvil that he used for laminating metals and he could not remember its name. His father told him: 'Stake'. Aureliano wrote the name on a piece of paper that he pasted to the base of the small anvil: stake. In that way he was sure of not forgetting it in the future. It did not occur to him that this was the first manifestation of a loss of memory, because the object had a difficult name to remember. But a few days later he discovered that he had trouble remembering almost every object in the laboratory. Then he marked them with their respective names so that all he had to do was read the inscription in order to identify them. When his father told him about his alarm at having forgotten even the most impressive happenings of his childhood, Aureliano explained his method to him, and Jose Arcadio Buendia put it into practice all through the house and later on imposed it on the whole village. With an inked brush he marked everything with its name: table, chair, clock, door, wall, bed, pan. He went to the corral and marked the animals and plants: cow, goat, pig, hen, cassava, caladium, banana. Little by little, studying the infinite possibilities of a loss of memory, he realised that the day might come when things would be recognised by their inscriptions but no one would remember their use.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez, from *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

We wander through our city centres, weaving a path through the A to Z of street names and the tourist trail of ceremonial buildings and statues whose significance we as city-dwellers have long forgotten. Beyond the magical realism of Marquez's fiction, in the here and now of the so-called 'real' world, the day has already come when we recognise places and monuments by their inscriptions but no longer recall their original function. The source of street names like 'Black Boy Hill' and 'Whiteladies Road' in the heart of Bristol has become obscured by the clinical banality of a street index. Placed in alphabetical order, assigned a page and grid reference and consigned to the back page of a city map, these semantic traces of the city's past are now no more than geographical markers, evacuated of historical meaning.

A 'white blanket of forgetfulness', as one writer elegantly put it, has been drawn across the material remains of slavery and empire in Britain's once-glorious cities like Bristol and Liverpool.¹ Just like granules of sugar dissolving without trace in a sea of tea leaves, the legacy of Britain's imperial history has all but disappeared from popular consciousness. We would rather succumb to the lure of sweet oblivion than linger over bitter remembrance of things past and now forgotten.

Forgetting, it seems to me, has become the condition of contemporary life in the metropolitan centres of Europe's former imperial nations. Everything depends upon it. Journalists and politicians rely upon our forgetfulness to promote their own versions of the past which almost invariably go unchallenged in the public arena. What Noam Chomsky has christened 'Political Correctness' in a witty but strategic inversion of the now-familiar term is precisely this revision of history whereby we 'put history under wraps' or else eliminate the 'discordant notes from past and present history'.² In the late twentieth-century, it has become a matter of political necessity to forget the uncomfortable and disturbing elements of our past in public life. And, of course, forgetting in no way precludes nostalgia. On the contrary, we persist - as we have for so long - in nostalgic re-visitations of idyllic, often invented versions of our history. Nostalgia

is itself a kind of forgetting. It substitutes a rose-tinted version of times gone by for the reality of lived experience to the extent that we come to draw on a common pool of shared memories irrespective of whether we lived that particular past or not. Through a veil of nostalgia we come to designate as history those fictional and invented narratives which are re-constructed and played out on our film and television screens. We indulge in fond recollections for the heat and dust of an imperial lifestyle that belonged to someone else - if it existed at all. Indeed, what we mistake for historical continuity and age-old tradition, as Hobsbawm, Ranger and others have shown, is often nothing more than an invention of the nineteenth-century created to lend renewed power and legitimacy not only to European ruling elites in decline but also to the rule of empire.³

Against this background, *Trophies of Empire* can be seen in political terms as a project about forgetting and remembering. Collecting and re-collecting the discordant notes from past and present history, artists re-trace the historical lines of slavery and empire in the fabric of contemporary life. The word 'trophy' itself invokes these two essential and Janus-like aspects of memory: forgetting and remembering, absence and presence. For 'trophy' not only refers to the existence of a material object in the here and now (the very object whose function it is to be an *aide-memoire* or trigger to memory), but also to the absence of the event or happening for which the trophy is a symbolic trace.

In this sense, the artwork too is a kind of trophy or souvenir: it exists as an object in its own right and yet its existence is contingent upon the world 'out there' to which it makes reference but from which it is nevertheless distinct. The demarcation between the work of art and the world around it is a delicate and thin line which, like the dividing line between past and present tense, makes it difficult to distinguish between the beginning of history and the end of *actualité* - the here and now, the present. Often fragmentary and multi-layered, the works commissioned for *Trophies of Empire* occupy this ambivalent space between a past which lies beyond the reach of contemporary experience, and everyday life in the present which is infused with the traces of history.

In works like those created by South Atlantic Souvenirs and Trouble for *The Trophy Cabinet*, the evidence of the past is quite literally inscribed upon the everyday world. Re-packaging banal consumer goods like sugar-cubes, tea bags and sweet cigarettes in the wrappings of their own history, they invert the process of 'inventing tradition', substituting for the fabrication of the past, the revelation of a forgotten history, namely, the human cost of slavery and imperial trading. In this context, the words 'souvenir' and 'memento' which fuse together the contingent spheres of history and memory, are invested with a particular inflection which has less to do with sentimentality and nostalgia than with a critical interrogation of the past and its legacy. As works of art, these 'products' and the souvenir set of picture cards and booklet which South Atlantic Souvenirs and Trouble advertise as 'a memento which you and your loved ones will treasure for years to come', are collectable items not unlike the spoils amassed by imperial nations in their museums and trophy cabinets; and, at the same time, disposable, ephemeral objects which may be lost or discarded in the same way that strands of history are relegated to the margins of contemporary life experience.

Edwina Fitzpatrick's *Terra* also contests the established definition of historical continuity and the careless assumption that 'things have always been like this'. Fixed and contained within its static, transparent orb, the terrarium which is

the centrepiece of the work, can be seen as a metaphor for the historical traces which populate our everyday lives in the shape of habitual objects such as this whose original function we have already forgotten. The lines which thread their way out from the central orb to smaller satellite shapes laid out upon the ground mark out the lines of connection (perhaps navigational lines of longitude and latitude, trade routes or even patterns of thought) which tie this unremarkable household ornament to the historical transportation of seedlings across the world and hence to European imperialism. The contradictory status of the terrarium, a living microcosm frozen within glass walls, is underscored by the title of the work, 'terra', and the ambivalence of this word which can refer to a single grain of soil or to the entire globe and which approximates to the word designating fear and intimidation. The sanitised space of the terrarium can be seen to stand for the arena of contemporary life which has been emptied of historical meaning, arresting the past in an artificially-constructed and stagnant sphere. Here, ideas remain fixed and unchanging, at odds with the notion of progress (travel, science, technology, trade) seemingly encapsulated in the terrarium.

History and memory inevitably cannot be divorced from language with which they are intimately related and the nature of this intricate relationship is explored in a number of other works in *Trophies of Empire*. In Donald Rodney's installation the crowded shelves of sporting trophies stacked one on top of the other, each inscribed with a different caption, for example 'Black people are not intellectuals', 'Black people live in derelict parts of the city', 'Black people are sexually obsessed', 'Black people live in a world of confusion and conflicting feelings' identify the fundamental role of language in determining our relationship to the past and present. Each trophy marks a single achievement or conquest (Rodney purposefully maintains the ambivalent status of the trophy). This is not simply a physical or territorial gain but an intellectual and conceptual victory of language over reality. History (and memory), Rodney seems to suggest, is made up of a series of fragments which, viewed in isolation, are slightly discomforting but singular incidents. Seen as a whole, layer upon layer, fragment upon fragment, these single strands make up a dissonant orchestra of Britain's imperial legacy which continues into our present lives. It is worth recalling here the extract cited earlier from *One Hundred Years of Solitude* where Marquez acknowledges the significance of language but also its futility. It is all very well to remember a word or name but what value do these fragments of knowledge have if they exist in isolation, divorced from their original context and meaning? It is, in Rodney's work, as if words (and by extension language) were the objects of collection in this strange cabinet of curiosities. Fastened to the base of the trophies, they remain fixed in time and space like the golden sportsmen above.

The fragmentary and often abstract rendering of history is evoked in Keith Piper's *Trade Winds* installation which comprises a series of recurring visual and linguistic fragments which are apprehended through twelve television monitors encased in rough timber shipping crates. The viewer is compelled to gaze into the body of these crates one at a time (the only way to see all the monitors at one time is suspended from a height above the gallery space so that a total, global view is effectively placed outside the realm of everyday experience). The physical raw materials of maritime trade through time are re-united in the present in Piper's work. Countering the notion that history is a coherent, sequential narrative, Piper paints a picture of the past as a series of overlapping, disconnected fragments which, like disjointed memories, penetrate our consciousness intermittently but repeatedly. The human body and mind

(which the physical structure and imagery of the work constantly invoke) provides the framework for Piper's investigation into the Atlantic Slave Trade and its legacy. It is the human scale of reference, Piper implies, which should of necessity furnish the measure of history and our interpretation of it. Interweaved into the montage of images, the artist introduces passages of text, some less legible than others, like the hand-written fragments of slave ships' log books, invoices and bills of sale for human cargo. As with history, we can choose to unravel the inscriptions of the past and our implication in its text or to wrap it in a shroud of collective forgetfulness.

The tension between personal memory and public memorial plays a critical role in Carole Drake's *Commemoration Day* installation. The body of a man, hanging, casts a dark, ominous shadow over an old photograph of a school event, projected onto the gallery wall. The artist's childhood recollection of a Colston Girls' School Commemoration Day in Bristol, has become inscribed retrospectively with historical meaning. The shape cast by the bronze souvenir effigy of the Bristolian philanthropist Edward Colston (1636-1721) provocatively evokes the racist lynchings of black men in America's southern states, circumscribing the triangular relationship which binds sixteenth-century Bristol to twentieth-century America, philanthropy to slavery, and private memories to shared histories. A bed of chrysanthemums laid out beneath Colston's suspended figure slowly wilts and withers to the sound of a girls' school choir which accompanies the symbolic disintegration of Colston's image as a public hero in the mind of the artist. In this as in other works in *Trophies of Empire*, remembering can be seen as a political act on the part of the individual, often in defiance of officially sanctioned acts of public commemoration and of what Drake calls the 'collective amnesia' of Western culture in relation to imperialism and slavery.

Death and forgetfulness are closely affiliated in *Commemoration Day* and are contingent in turn on the notion of absence which is evoked vividly in Shaheen Merali's *Going Native*. The vacant deckchairs which line the edge of this imaginary shore are peopled with images. Like ghosts they flicker across the deserted seascape made by the artist. The viewer cannot stand outside, but is compelled to enter the space of Merali's installation: at once, spectator and spectacle in the trajectory of Goa's continuing imperial story. We are witnesses, not to 'history in the making' (as news programmes and papers frequently claim) but to history made and being made all at the same time. The past and present appear equally as both fiction and reality as the pre-colonial aspirations of European missionaries in Goa dissolve into the post-imperialist fantasies of today's holiday-makers. Here again, it is within the realm of everyday things - deckchairs, holidays, coca-cola machines, movie theatres - that the artist locates the traces of empire, even as these things hold the promise of transporting us beyond the everyday.

It is affirmatively from the archive of Europe's present that Sunil Gupta constructs his giant visual montages that bear witness to the continent's steadfast forgetfulness. The series of photographic triptychs that make up *Trespass* testify to the historical and continuing non-European presence in the heart of the imperial metropolis, a presence consistently denied in the narratives of social and cultural history. Gupta's eight mural-size images physically resist notions of purity and originality, constructed as they are by means of commercial printing processes and digital image technology. The pure field of a single image is disrupted by Gupta, just as he disrupts the myth of a pure cultural history which is contingent on a denial of the enduring legacy of Europe's imperium. Appropriating the tools of construction and re-

construction, the artist manipulates the representation of Europe's past and present, inscribing his own revisions to create an alternative narrative. The very fabric (and fabrication) of these images contests the fiction of a new Europe where past histories and present realities are erased in order to sustain an exclusive and hegemonic European discourse.

The year 1992 was born carrying the heavy weight of expectation around the creation of a new, supra-national Europe freed from the contingencies of its own history. 1992 also marked the anniversary of Columbus' fateful 'arrival' in the so-called New World, five hundred years earlier. In Europe and across the world, diverse acts of commemoration, television programmes, books and films heralded a very public invocation to recall the past and its inheritance. And yet, it seemed as if the celebration and commemoration of conquest had replaced a critical interrogation of its continuing impact on our lives. Fiction substituted history and the past was staged like an epic Hollywood movie, utterly removed from contemporary experience.

As each year brings with it yet another anniversary (each anniversary eclipsing the previous one), the process is repeated and another episode of history is re-enacted, revised and reinvented as the West fuels its own 'grand' narrative of itself. Divorcing the past from our present in this way, reviewing history as a series of isolated incidents which we re-visit like a favourite film, vaguely remembered but removed from our everyday life, we are condemned not only to forget but to repeat history inexorably without learning the lessons of the past or the value of its traces inscribed in the fabric of our everyday lives...

...Then he was more explicit. The sign that he hung on the neck of the cow was an exemplary proof of the way in which the inhabitants of Macondo were prepared to fight against loss of memory: This is the cow. She must be milked every morning so that she can produce milk, and the milk must be boiled in order to be mixed with coffee to make coffee and milk. Thus they went on living in a reality that was slipping away, momentarily captured by words, but which would escape irremediably when they forgot the value of the written letters.

Gilane Tawadros, October 1993

Gilane Tawadros is a freelance writer and lecturer who has written and lectured widely in Britain and abroad. She is a member of the editorial advisory board of the journal *Third Text* and currently works as Visual Art Education Manager at the South Bank Centre, London.

1 Bernard Smith cited by Ian McLean, 'White Aborigines: Cultural Imperatives of Australian Colonialism', p21 *Third Text* 22, Spring 1993

2 Noam Chomsky, *Year 501: The Conquest Continues*, p243 (London, Verso 1993)

3 Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press 1993)

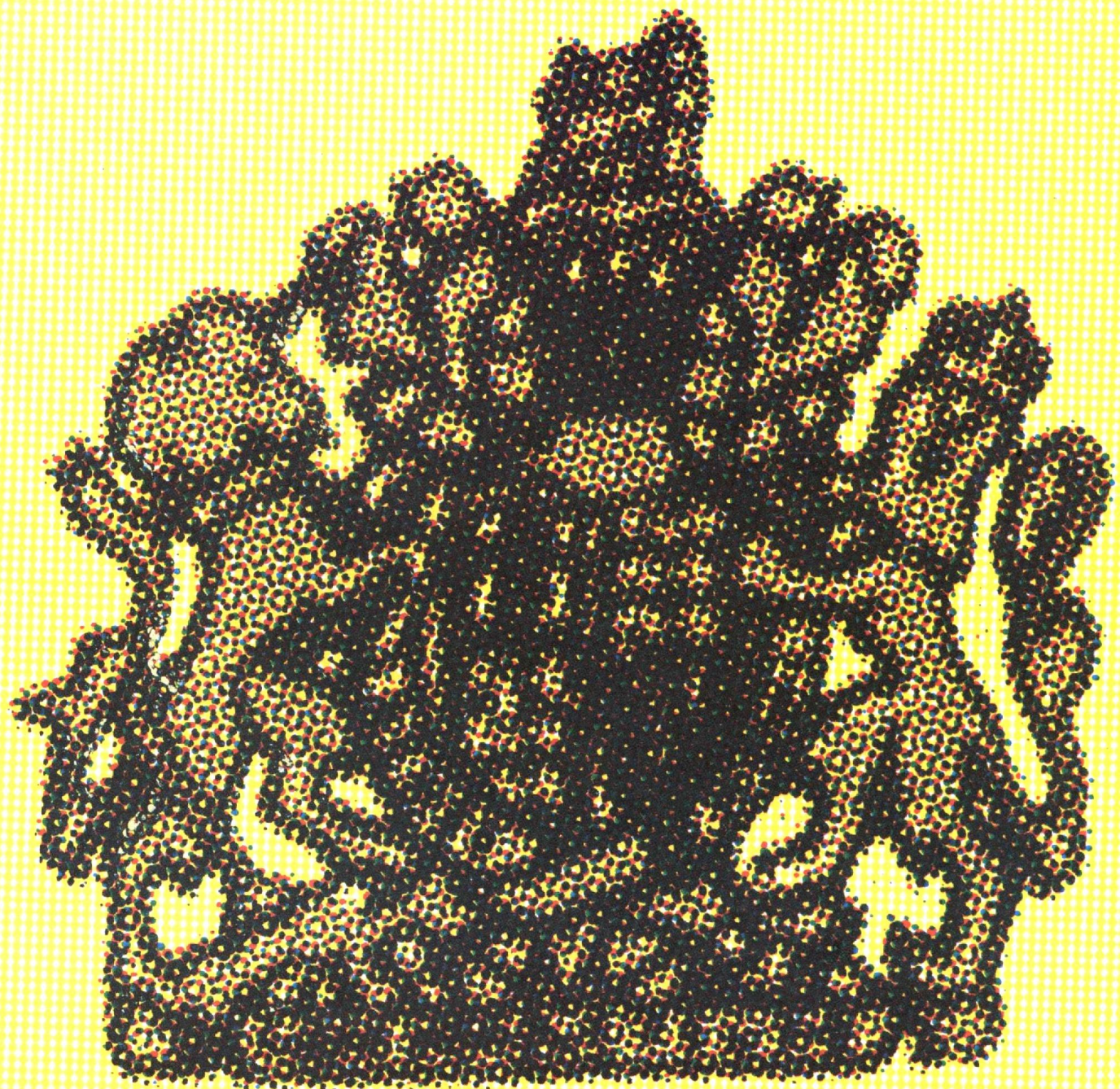
THE BRISTOL EXPERIENCE

For Arnolfini, *Trophies of Empire* not only provided an opportunity to be involved in the commissioning of new work, but also drew together past, present and future issues of the city's identity and notions of civic pride. It has been established already that Bristol enlarged itself first with the proceeds of piracy and then of slavery, resulting in its growth as a port and a trading and industrial centre. Today Bristol's port has shifted to Avonmouth a few miles away, allowing for the 'white blanket of forgetfulness' which Gilane Tawadros refers to, to be thrown across the city all too easily. The recognition and representation of historical sites and legacies are today given little signification, and during the selection process for the exhibition the range of submissions received by artists specifically for Arnolfini particularly reflected this. Most alluded to sites which are reminders of an imperialist past - for example, the use of Redcliffe caves for slave exchange, or the history of Arnolfini's own building as a tea warehouse. No-one chose to analyse the historical significance of sites such as the grave of the young slave, Scipio Africanus, in Henbury Churchyard - one of the city's few tangible 'monuments'. However, Carole Drake's uncovering of the true significance of local historical figurehead, Edward Colston, had particular resonance and impact for local audiences. *Commemoration Day* signified his position in the city's contemporary consciousness as prominent benefactor and revealed the moral ambiguity of his revered position as founder of Colston Girls' School. In tandem with the exhibition, Arnolfini Live commissioned *Footsteps of the Hummingbird* by locally-based artist Bandele Iyapo. Participants were drawn from a range of age, experience and race, to examine the experiences of Bristol's black communities today. Through a rich array of media - film, batik, performance - and 're-enactment' of real-life scenarios, the work was confrontational and polemic, touching nerves and revealing 'truths' to audience and participants alike.

The purpose of the Education programme was to encourage exploration and engender debate about Bristol's imperial legacies, through a range of events - informal gallery tours, projects in local schools, practical workshops, and a more formal panel discussion with participating artists. The outreach projects used a range of methods and processes. These included junior school children producing a video exploring the impact of Columbus' discoveries on the world and on Bristol in particular, a local poet working with primary school children, sharing their experience of Bristol with elderly people from a local centre, and A level and Foundation students looking at how racism manifests itself in contemporary culture, through discussing the exhibition, and analysing Spike Lee's films and events like Rodney King and the trial of the Los Angeles Police Department.

The breadth of activity and response that developed from *Trophies of Empire* lies at the heart of the project's significance and importance. Through wide participation it fostered and encouraged a range of emotional and issue-based responses. It progressed a fascinating dialogue between the tensions present in the demands of each city's specific history and its translation into contemporary interpretation and meaning. The on-going impact of *Trophies of Empire* lies in how we develop this dialogue and whether we choose a way forward by coming to terms with our own histories through tackling the issues raised.

Katherine Wood/Tessa Jackson February 1994

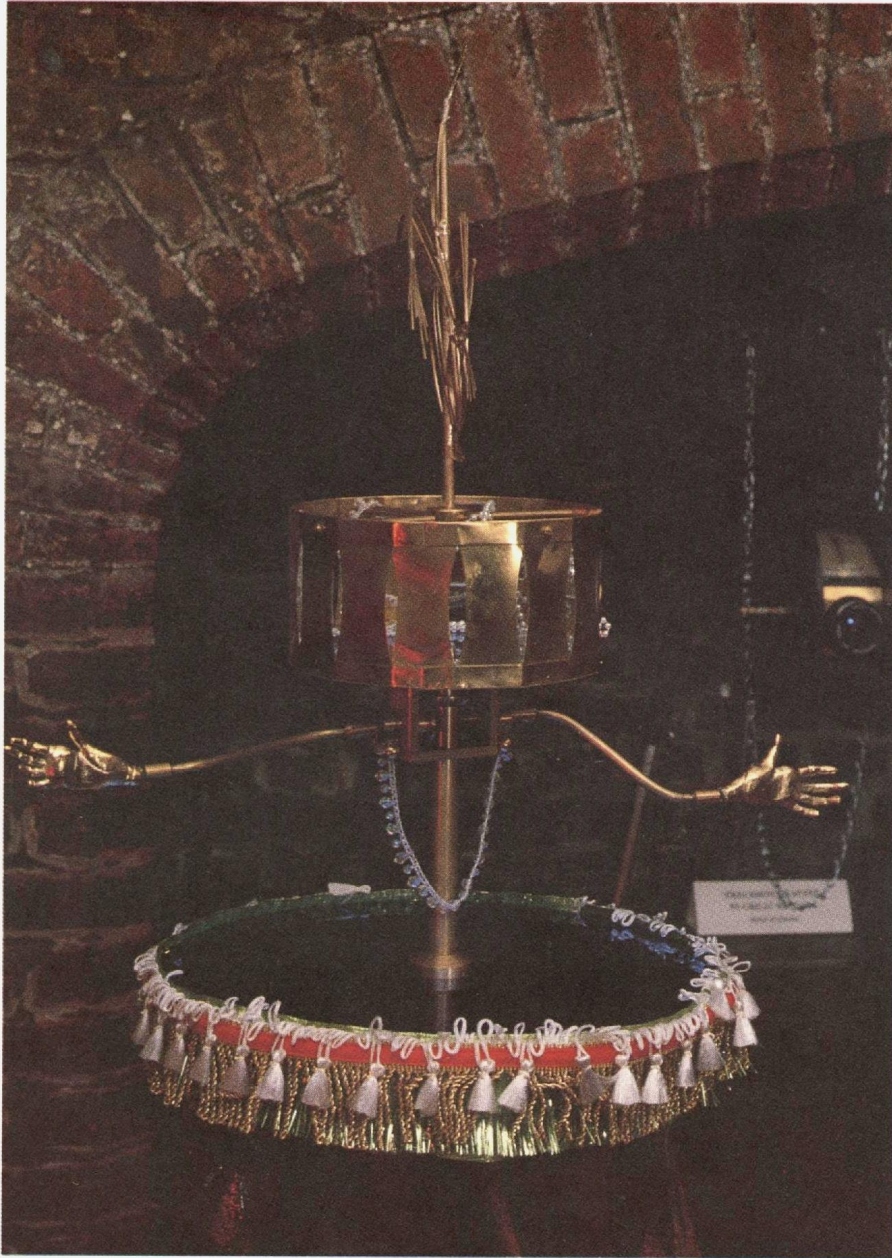




Black Star Window
mixed media painting



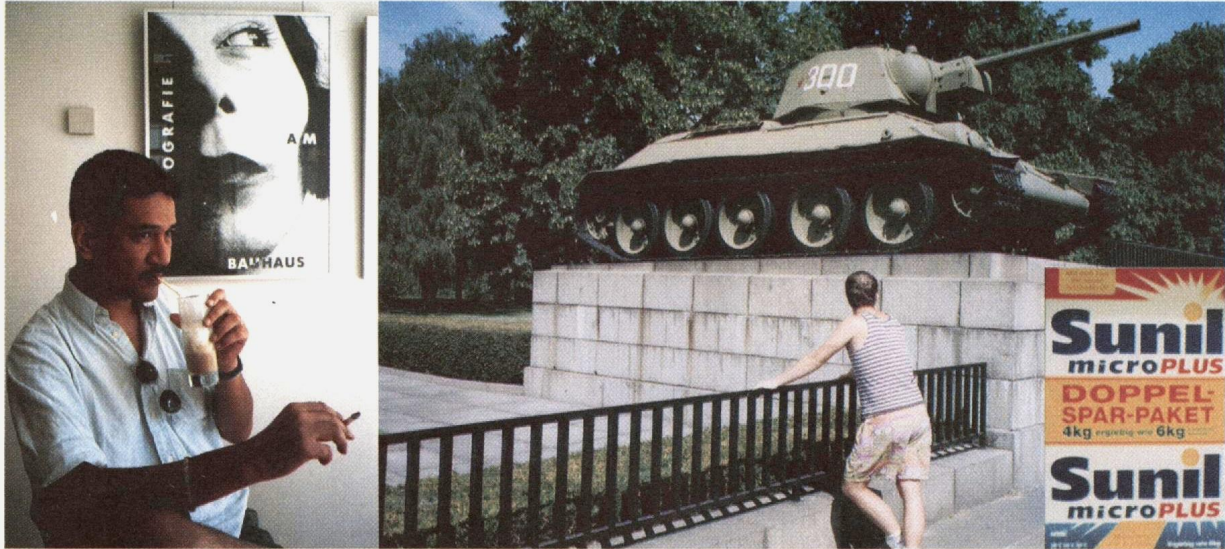
Commemoration Day
mixed media installation



The Multi-Cultural Peepshow
mixed media installation



Terra
mixed media installation



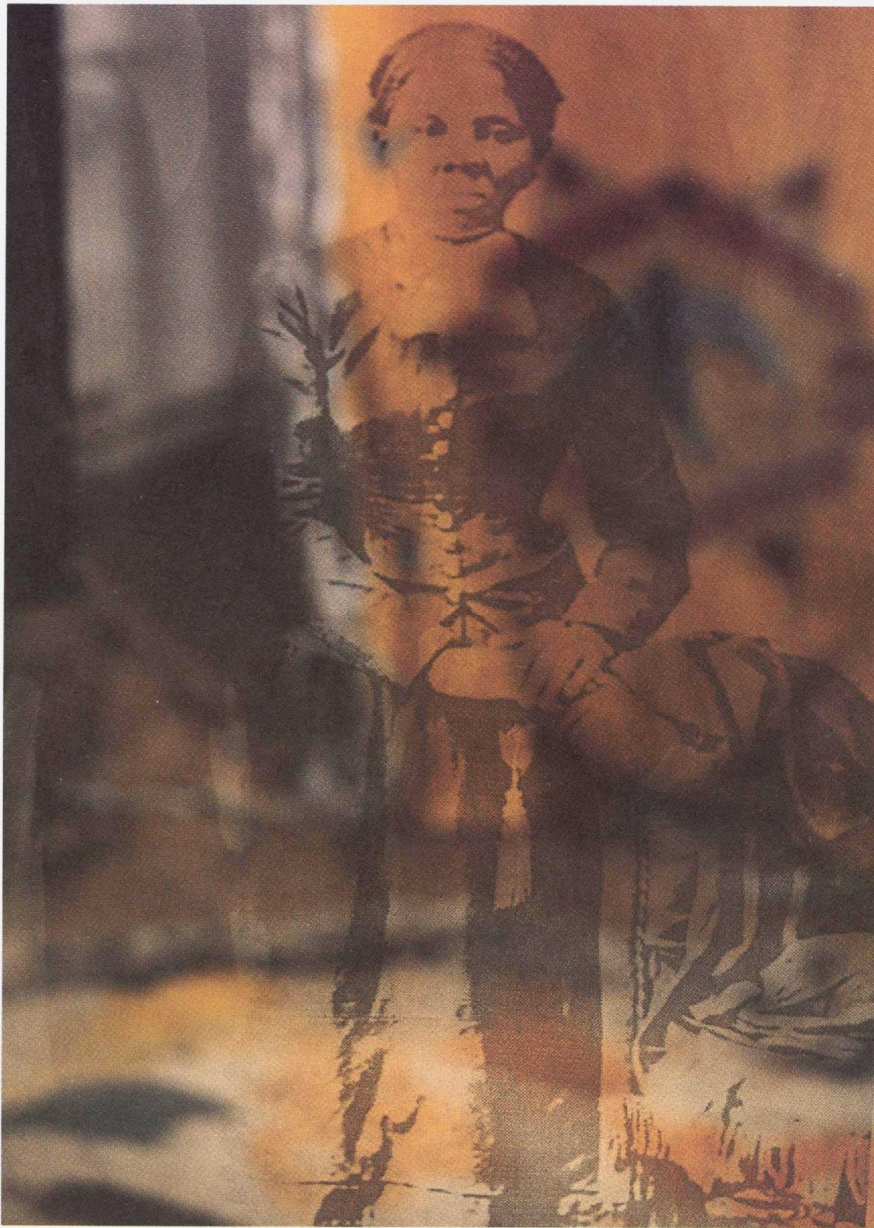
Trespass part 1
digital photo collage



BANDELE IYAPO

Footsteps of the Hummingbird
performance

RITA KEEGAN



Cycles
video/mixed media installation



The Cry
wood/metal



Going Native
mixed media installation



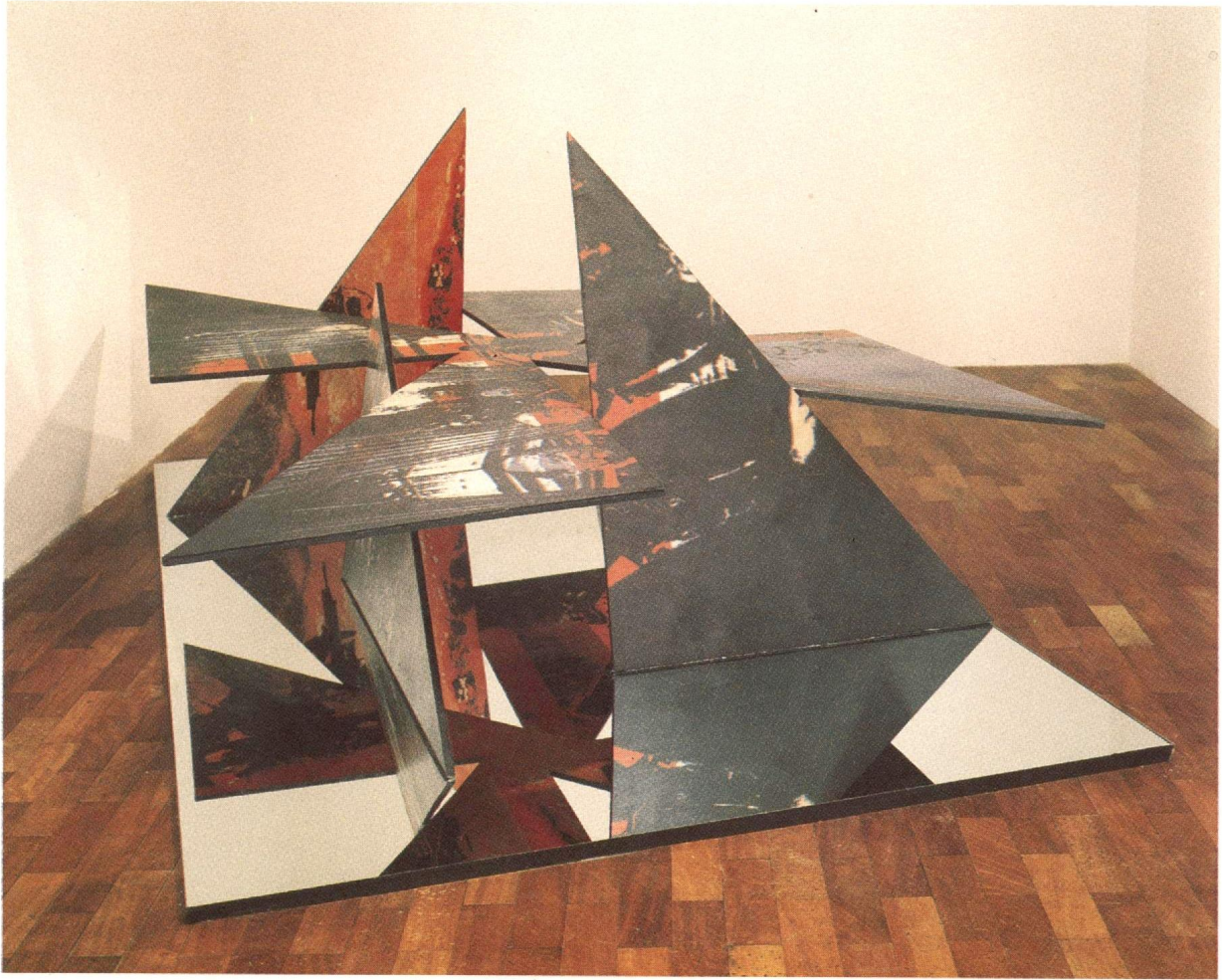
Trade Winds
video installation



Doublethink
mixed media installation



The Trophy Cabinet (detail)
limited edition multiple

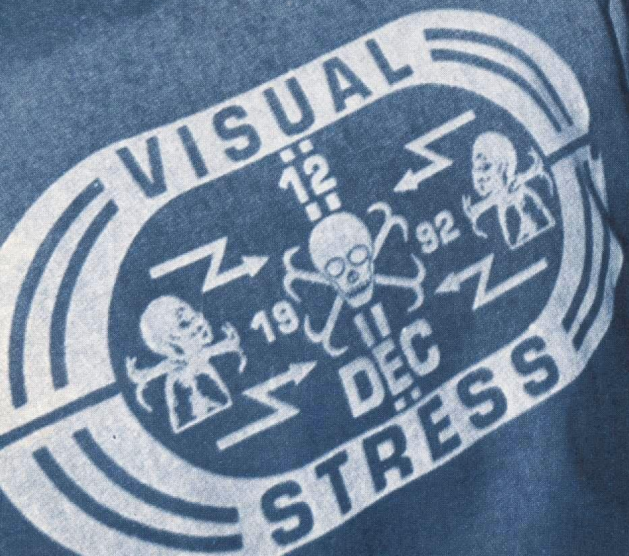


Ring a ring o' roses a pocket full of posies
bubblejet on wood
Details: Thrombosis (left), Boardroom

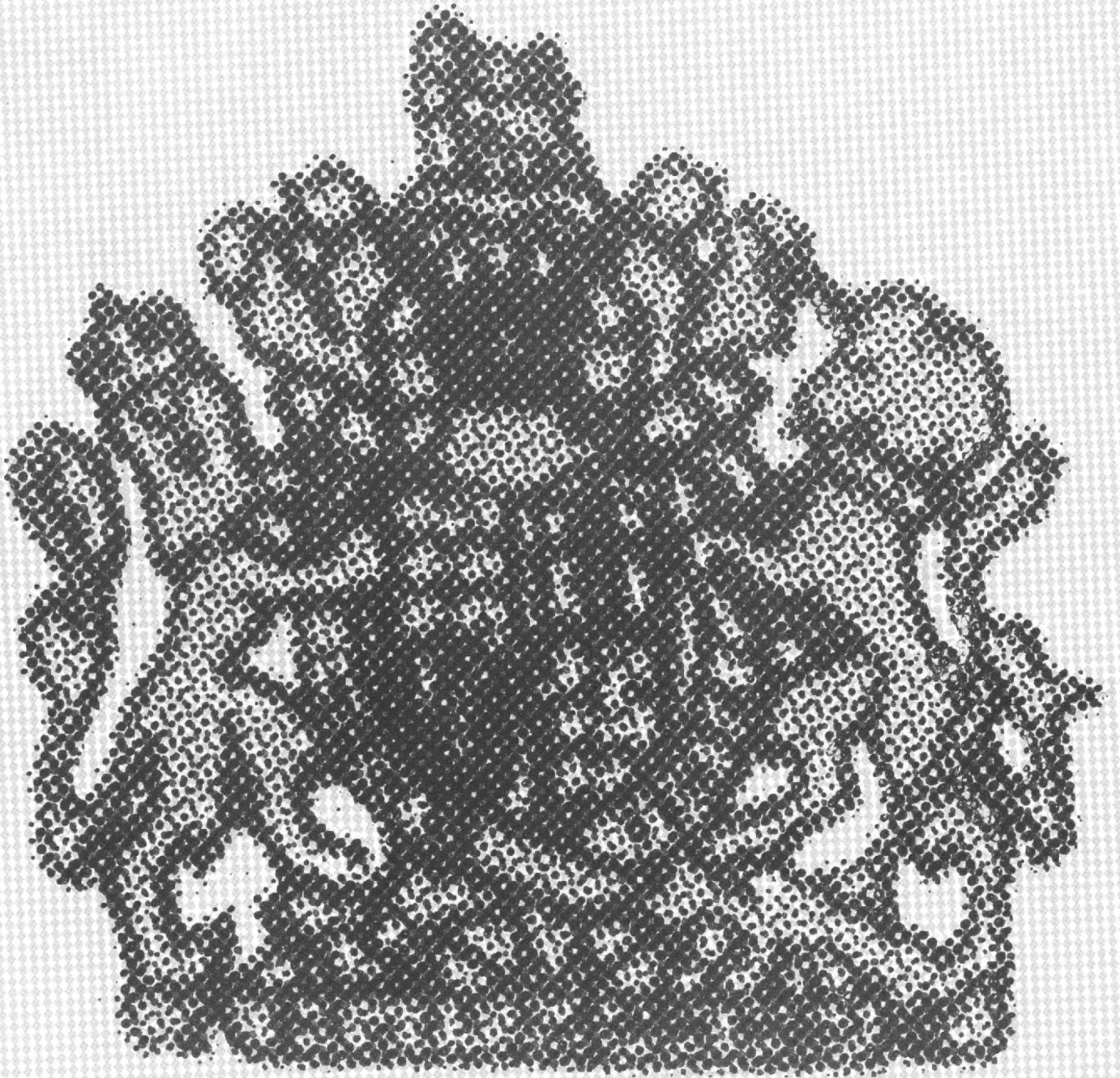


performance

VISUAL STRESS



Mobile Auto Mission
performance



PAUL CLARKSON

THE WITNESS & THE OBSERVER

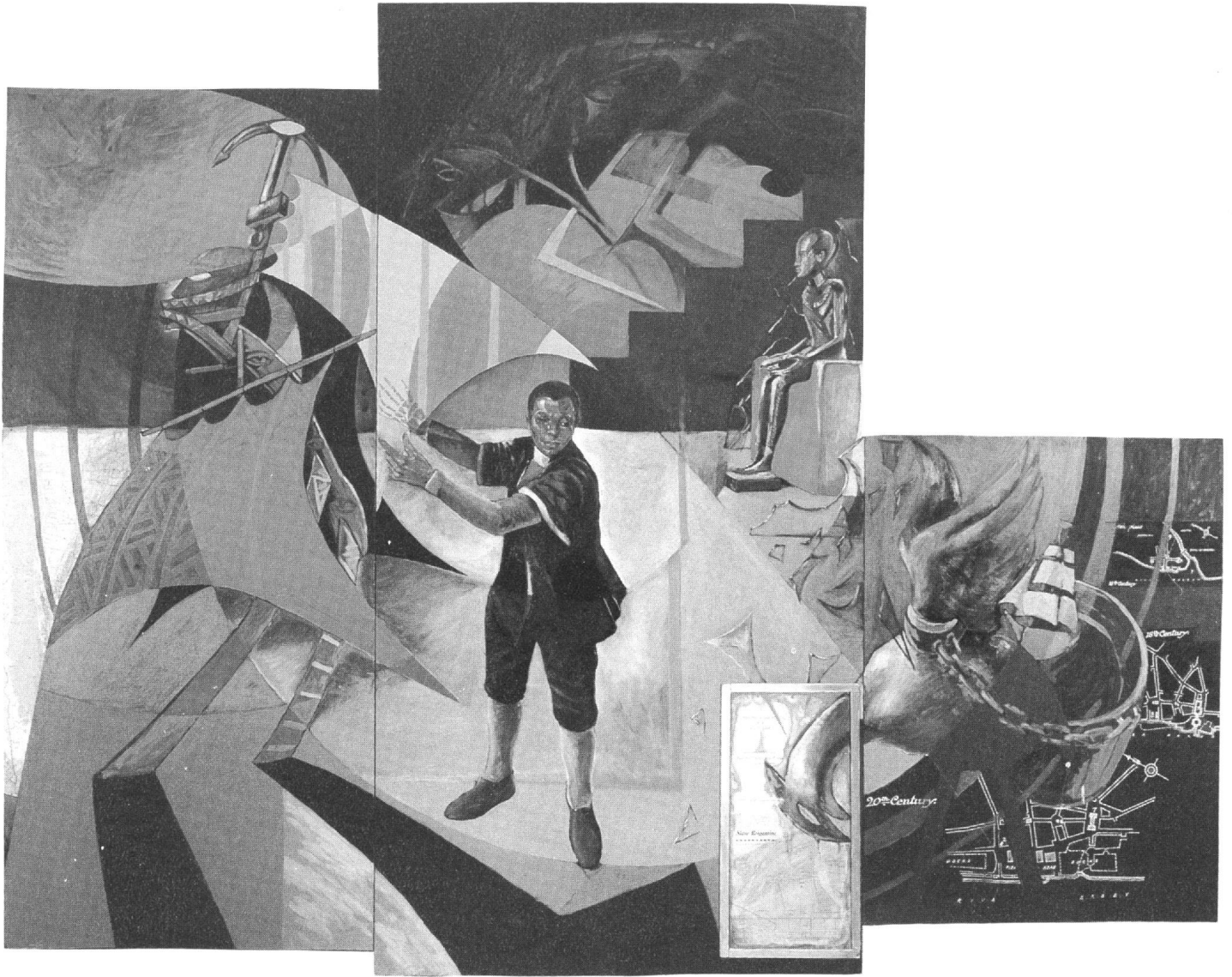
Born in Liverpool, I was inevitably made aware of the history of the city's prosperity at the expense of the suffering of my ancestors. Liverpool to date has refused to come to terms with the full extent of its shameful history regarding the slave trade. *The Witness & The Observer* explores this history and seeks to create an awareness of how, from a moral and realistic viewpoint, interpretations of the past, present and future can question the contemporary attitude of Liverpool's institutions regarding the accommodation of Black people in the diaspora.

James Baldwin once said "The world needs its witnesses." Today the artist no longer merely observes but acts as a witness, and as such is open to cross examination. *Trophies of Empire* provided enough evidence to go under public scrutiny in the High (Art) Court, with the 'trophies' being the exhibits/evidence, and the artists the witnesses for the prosecution. What then was the verdict, was there any recognition of and compensation for the last 501 years of genocide suffered by peoples of non-European origins, their continual marginalisation and silencing as witnesses?

In Liverpool the National Museums & Galleries on Merseyside is developing a permanent gallery due to open in 1994 at Merseyside Maritime Museum, devoted to issues raised by transatlantic slavery and the trade in enslaved Africans, in which Liverpool played a leading role. Are the Museum's organisers to deny any input from contemporary Black artists/curators, contenting themselves with the purchase of 'quaint' 19th Century oil paintings of slave ports painted by European 'observers'?

The deconstruction of the visual representations of official history is where my interests still lie. My new work is an extension of this; that is, the clarification of my own personal and cultural identifications in relation to a more inclusive historical realisation.

Paul Clarkson 1993



CAROLE DRAKE

COMMEMORATION DAY

As a child growing up in Bristol in the 1970s I attended Colston's Girls' School, and every year took part in the ritual of Commemoration Day, the gathering of the school and its associates in Bristol Cathedral to remember and celebrate its benefactor, Edward Colston (1636-1721). On these occasions Colston, Bristolian by birth though he lived in London most of his life, was represented as a benevolent founding father, worthy of the 600 or so girls attending the school bearing his name. But there were intermittent, faint murmurs which questioned this image of Colston, rumours that he was involved in the slave trade. My confirmation of this involvement (Colston had been a member of the Royal African Trading Company) forced a reappraisal of my experience as a part of that school and its activities, particularly Commemoration Day with its insistence on an idealised and partial image of Colston. The installation *Commemoration Day* seeks to expose the denial of Colston's trading in the lives of African peoples, a fact never openly discussed, acknowledged but treated as a skeleton to be kept under lock and key in some musty cupboard.

Hundreds of bronze chrysanthemums, supposedly Colston's favourite flower and worn by all those attending the service, were laid on the floor forming a rectangular mound. These withered and died over the duration of the exhibition. Projected within the space was a photograph, taken circa 1973, of 'Colston's Girls' climbing over his statue in Bristol city centre to cover it with chrysanthemums after the service. His image occupies a triumphal position within the city, sited on Colston Avenue, near the Colston Hall, near the monument to him in All Saints Church. The image was 'holed' by a souvenir-sized replica of the statue hanging in the projector's path. The shadow thus created was a dark figure, the hidden, reverse side of Commemoration Day. Into this dark hole had been sucked the histories of thousands of black children, men and women, sacrificed a second time in order to present an uncomplicated, unsullied image of Colston as a benign patriarch. This absence was filled by the sound tape in which the school hymn, *Rejoice ye pure in heart*, was progressively disrupted by the surfacing of another text, a quiet but insistent and rising whisper citing tabulated details of deliveries of slaves to the West Indies. The celebratory tone of praise was ruptured by the calm recitation of historical documentation.

The installation *Commemoration Day* is a personal re-examination of a particular Bristolian institution of which I was a part, and my position in relation to its history. In a broader sense it refers to the blind spots of Western culture, a collective amnesia which denies the sources of the wealth which built such 'trophies of empire', and the ways in which dominant white culture and its peoples benefit from the exploitation of other cultures and peoples both overseas and at home.

Carole Drake 1993



NINA EDGE

BALANCE OF TRADE

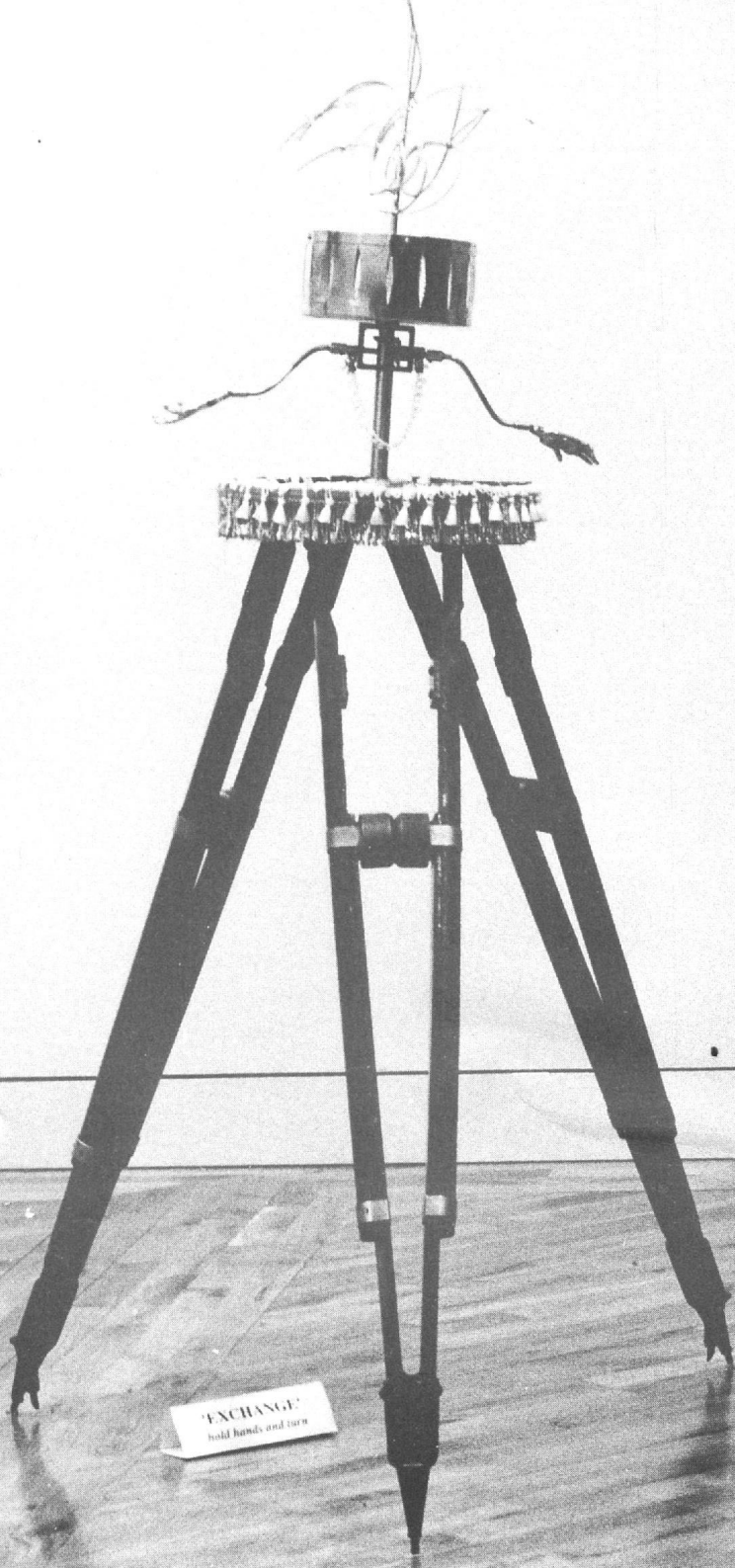
In nineteen hundred and ninety two the Big C was remembered, repeatedly, globally, whilst notions of a single European market were refined. A neat moment to balance the account; five hundred years of trade. Meanwhile in England the transatlantic ports party with the cultural potential of past transactions. In Wales the transatlantic ports edit their past, in the hope of better marketing the future - players also in the saga of creative accountancy. Standing in Cardiff I peep down the channel to glimpse the Atlantic, and attempt to sell five souvenir visuals, a remembrance special at one per century - of these, *Trophies of Empire* commissioned three. Made in England, texts in English, Urdhu, Sierra Leonian Creole and Welsh for those who choose to remember the balance of trade.

POINTS OF CONTACT: The moment of face to face. Europe meets the world, Europe meets the neighbours and each meeting multiplies potentially to infinity. Paper people intimate remembrance of power roles, endemic in contact with European Natives. Language informs simple visual code; the broadly used classification system of skin colour. A series of observed relationships and potentials balance and fall off the wire, if touched even by air.

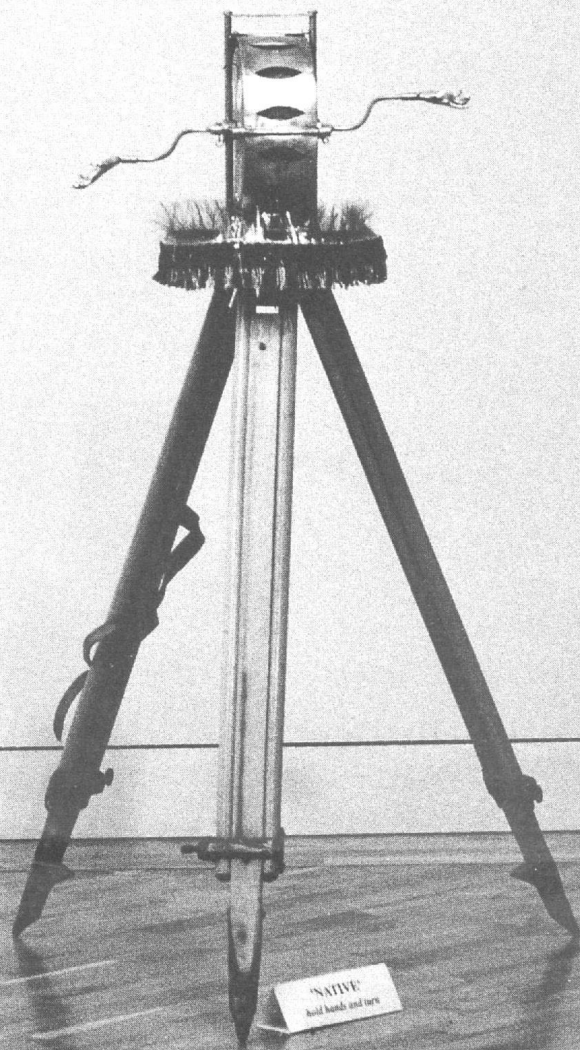
LIMPIEZA DE SANGRE - PURITY OF BLOOD: under the skin. Limpieza de Sangre is a concept invented in Spain, prior to Columbus' voyage. One of Europe's first exports. Five hundred financial years ago prospects were made good for those classified pure of blood. This special blood only to be found in the veins of Spanish Christian descent, unless touched at all by the blood of moors, jews, muslims, gypsies, heretics or those condemned by the inquisition. The Limpieza legislation included decrees for the seas, only pure bloods to seize the Americas. Somewhat outnumbered they struggled to maintain pure stock, but in moments had it all muddled up. Elaborate machinery was devised to keep it in the family, legal and mechanical. This machine could, and did crush. Other European traders with similar market needs took up the concept, tailoring it to fit individual needs. Re-made to measure, right up to the minute, Limpieza de Sangre has worn well, has lasted long. Five hundred years later Europe formally names a single market for itself, each country therein prepares to continue and expand global exports. An edition cloth to commemorate the first.

THE MULTI-CULTURAL PEEPSHOW: The Multi-Cultural Peepshow will return your gaze, will give you the benefit of its golden handshake, take you for a spin. Site specific from the kitchen of the house of William Wilberforce, already site of a curious educational resource. Discover 'what the tripod saw', examine the publisher's wishes, remember the plot with the transmitters of 'knowledge'. Specimens from many lands, multi-lingual captions, viewing enhancement equipment and more, all ripe for the peeping. *TWO-FACE, NATIVE, EXCHANGE, TEACHING AID* and all *PRECISION CRAFTED IN GREAT BRITAIN*. Five devices for the hands on experience of virtual history. Watch the movement of venture capital. Hold hands and turn.

Nina Edge 1993



'EXCHANGE'
hold hands and turn



'NAIVE'
hold hands and turn

EDWINA FITZPATRICK

TERRA

Terrariums are traditionally used to cultivate plants from different parts of the world which would not survive outside this micro-climate. They are visual contradictions - on one hand presenting apparently fecund, lush growth to the viewer, but at a deeper level they are unhealthy environments, stunting the growth of plants and arresting cross-pollination and natural development. They are representations of fixed ideas and communities trapped historically through slavery or within Europe as ghettoised communities.

The terrarium became directly implicated in recent colonial activities as a means of safely and easily transporting seedlings between England and the West Indies and later was used to introduce the tea plant to India (from China). *Terra* plays upon the forgotten historical role of the terrarium as a vehicle for upheaval and change in contrast to its contemporary (sanitised) role as an ornament for American and European households.

Edwina Fitzpatrick 1992

Selected Biography: Coffee (coffee arabica)

- 10000BC Birthplace, Ethiopian highlands.
- 400BC Discovered there by a goatkeeper, who noticed his goats were acting oddly after eating the red coffee cherries.
- 900AD Seeds stolen by Arab countries and christened coffee arabica... which were developed into a coffee house industry. Seeds were stolen on pain of death to retain the monopoly.
- 1615 First beans exported to Europe, which led to the popularisation of coffee houses.
- 1620 Seeds stolen by Dutch which ended the Arabian monopoly. Formal introduction as plantations to Dutch colonies of Java and the East Indies.
- 1658 Systematic cultivation in Sri Lanka by the Dutch.
- 1714 A representative plant was offered by the mayor of Amsterdam to France's Louis XIV as part of a political settlement. Louis sent De Clieu to Martinique, who using a terrarium carried a seedling to the Americas. Further introductions followed (either directly or indirectly) to most of the West Indies in the following decade.
- 1727 Introduced to Brazil through Portuguese governor's subterfuges from Surinam and French Guyana.
- 1730 Introduced by British Governor of Jamaica from Haitian seedlings. (Coffee trade declined after the abolition of slavery).
- 1790 Introduced from French Antilles to Cucuta, Colombia.
- 1830 Systematic cultivation introduced by British into India.
- 1893 Introduced to Kenya by Rev Father Bernhard from a seed from Zanzibar.
- 1948 Introduced as houseplant.
- 1953 British government's Swynnerton Plan enforced commercial coffee growing in Kenya, alongside other developing countries who saw potential in export revenue.
- 1992 Exported by 48 developing countries to 26 developed countries worldwide.



SUNIL GUPTA

TRESPASS

Trespass is the first part in a series of works exploring and challenging notions of a dominant European discourse.

In this *Part I* I am presenting eight mural size images mapping my concern around the notion of the new Europe, given the concrete realities of migrant cultures and the hegemony of Eurocentric cultural traditions.

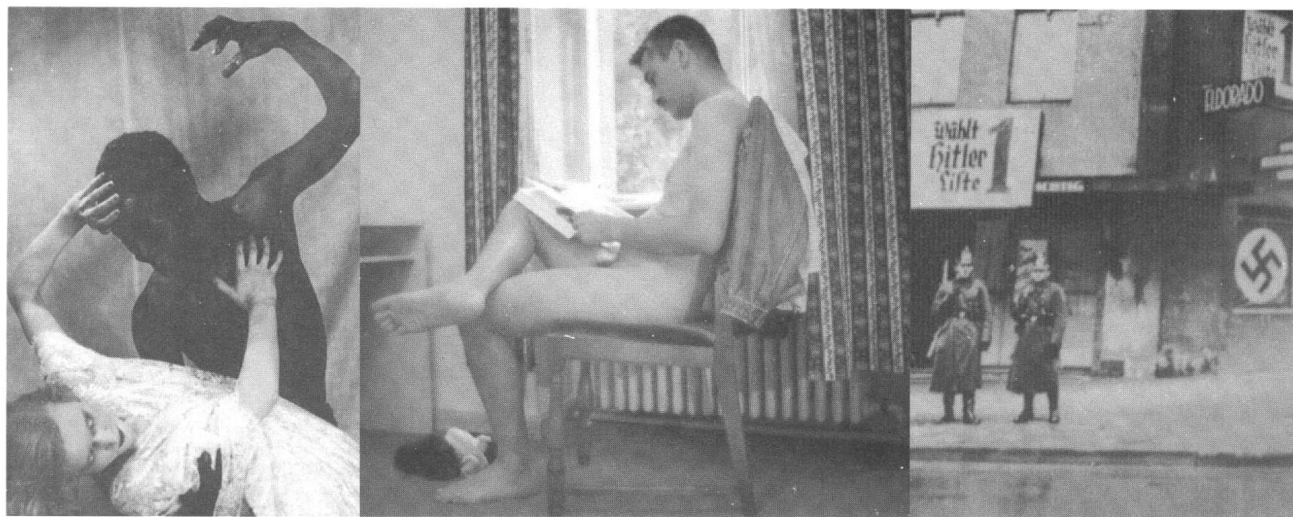
The work is trying to break down assumptions of the purity of cultural history. What after all is art with a nation-state prefix? On the other hand the work is not trying to denigrate the variety of art practices and movements that have gone before it but to engage them in a dialogue on an equal footing.

To this end, the process of the work and the materials used reflect contemporary society, in so far as the dyes and paper used come from commercial printing processes and the images only exist as electronic information in digital code with the potential for endless manipulation, multiple copying and the lack of an original.

Trespass II appeared at NGBK, Berlin in September 1993 in *They Call It Love*.

Part I travels to the Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver in 1994 and three of the images are being developed as billboards for the Havana Biennale also in 1994.

Sunil Gupta 1993



BANDELE IYAPO

FOOTSTEPS OF THE HUMMINGBIRD

Footsteps of the Hummingbird attempted to bring the voice of the black community of St Pauls and Easton to a mainly white middle class audience at Arnolfini. The aim of the production was for the people of Bristol, both black and white communities, to take a look at themselves and try to free themselves from the legacy of the web of lies and deceit they have inherited. The aim was also to make the production as live and real as possible so that audience participation became an integral part of the whole story, as the audience was confronted by the questions and enactments presented.

A large group of Bristol residents was drawn together to create the pieces, inspired by their real life experiences and developed in a series of workshops. The troupe was very mixed in terms of race, sex and age and also in terms of experience, in that some members had been involved in theatre and performance before while others had no experience at all. 1992, of course, was a vintage year - celebration of Columbus' discovery of the Americas on the one hand, and antipathy towards it on the other. Our show was about recognition. We looked back in anger and found that the same things that happened five hundred years ago still happen today. When Columbus discovered the Americas, he saw the footsteps. As he travelled through the land he saw signs of people who had preceded him, but he refused to recognise their presence and claimed the Americas as his own. Today we find a similar situation in Bristol, where 'there is not a brick in the city but what is cemented with the blood of the slave.' Yes, there was slavery. Yes, there are black people. But neither slavery nor black people have been fully acknowledged. We hear the hummingbird, but how many of us have seen its footsteps?

There were two performances of *Footsteps of the Hummingbird*, combining video, film, sculpture, dance, theatre, music and batik, which sought to question our history, our relationship to that history and the footsteps of those that have been before. It was a desperate effort to persuade those who hold power in the city of Bristol to do something to alter the course of events which seemed inevitable if things were left to continue as they were. The audience which came and listened included councillors and others in authority. Some afterwards debated whether or not it was a live art piece, others objected to the strong language and political content. It was a jolting experience for performers and audience alike, but many of the public shared the positive reactions of the company. Nine months later I see new faces added to the old as women walk the night streets for customers, crack is bigger than ever and a group of ten kids have attacked and abused women and ripped their Albany Play Centre apart while the council says it has to cut their funding.

Banделе Iyapo 1993



RITA KEEGAN

CYCLES

The overall theme of this video installation references historical and contemporary issues of the diaspora to demonstrate the initial impact of slavery and the intensity and reverberation it still has today.

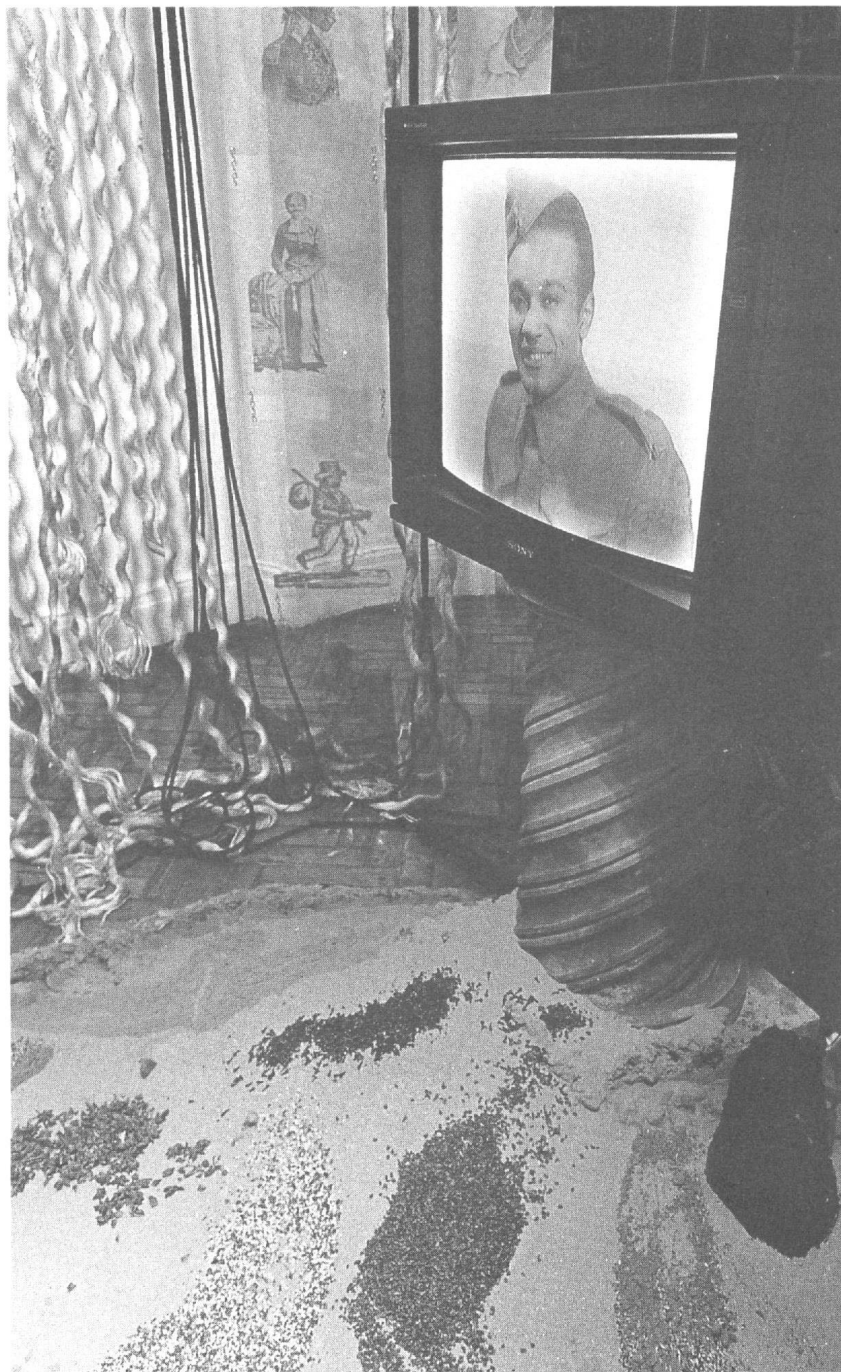
This has particular personal and emotive significance for me and my art practice which has a strong autobiographical base (in which I employ five generations of my family photographs). I include the legacy of my own family history (paternal side) which starts with the birth in 1830 of my great, great grandmother who was the daughter of a white woman and a slave. She was born in the USA but was sent to live in Canada having won her freedom by birth because children of white women could not be held in slavery. The history before her was not recorded and remains unknown. My family legacy therefore begins with her and with the advent of African slavery.

The video itself uses material of my own, such as family photographs and other reference material obtained from visits to Liverpool, as well as historical images of maps, ships, slavery and some traditional paintings of master and servant/slave. By using my own images and new media such as computer generated visuals, I hope to show that the past and present exist side by side and also to personalise the issues of the African diaspora.

The material for the outer circle comprises photocopied and computer generated images on acetate, various ropes and textiles which are assumed as being 'African Prints' - meaning that they are designed by Europeans for the African market.

The materials are English waxes printed and milled in the Midlands. These represent the current issues of economic dependency of underdeveloped countries with the United Kingdom/Europe and the Northern Hemisphere perpetuating economic slavery.

Rita Keegan 1992



JUGINDER LAMBA

THE CRY

The Cry is conceived as a shrine or a temple to all oppressed people of the world who suffered and continue to suffer through slavery, colonisation and the various legacies of Imperialism. History has recorded the facts - its interpretation, however, has often been subjective resulting in the self-glorification of an imperialist national pride where power is equated with military force and conquest, and where 'civilisation' and 'culture' are seen as the prerogative of the European world, and the rest of the world is seen as 'heathen' or 'primitive'. In a nutshell, for the European the rest of the world was there to be 'discovered', grabbed and violated. That is exactly what he did. All the atrocities ultimately beg the same question - through what insanity and arrogance could one small section of humanity completely rape and enslave a much larger part of humanity?

The sculpture poses this question and explores the dichotomy between the New and the Old World, the relationship between Liberty and Suppression, and how these can be two sides of the same coin. It poses questions about the ideals and beliefs of the New World and the reality of the values and aspirations of contemporary culture - a culture built on a bedrock of greed, intolerance and inequality.

Although history has recorded the facts, what it cannot do is record or register the deep-rooted pain, the emotional and psychological injury, inflicted by systematic acts of gross inhumanity on the victims. Additionally, we do not acknowledge that the legacies from this obscene period of our history are very much alive today, influencing almost every sphere of our lives.

The Cry I see as a constant tangible force stretching across the horizon of human existence. It symbolises the collective scream or cry of all the victims - the cries of our ancestors mingled with our own - a cry of such intensity so as to suggest that the horror and pain was so great, that it has penetrated the very fabric of our existence and become a part of our psyche.

Constructed from ancient oak timbers salvaged from barns and from quayside warehouses in Lancaster (themselves made from recycled timbers from the ships of early settlers and traders), a door from an old leper colony near Welshpool, cattle and other shackling irons, the sculpture is given an historical context and an archaeological resonance.

Juginder Lamba 1993



SHAHEEN MERALI

GOING NATIVE

Deckchairs arranged in rows, too regimented to suggest a leisure activity; their usual candy-stripe replaced by 'virgin' white canvas, awaiting the imprint of human bodies. In a metaphorical occupation of 'unexplored' territory, black and white slides of beaches, swimming pools - the usual tourist itinerary - are projected onto the chairs, while they themselves face and presumably watch, a continuous film loop of Christian priests endlessly gathering and dispersing from an otherwise deserted beach.

Behind the chairs, suggesting a refreshment kiosk, is a set of smaller projections repeatedly zooming in and withdrawing from a Coke dispenser until only the letters OK are visible. The installation as a whole reconstructs the leisure activities of holidays, tourism, cinema and consumption, but quite plainly, everything is not 'okay'. The constant interplay of the three sets of images, which in themselves are understated and seemingly innocuous, creates a sense of uneasiness which eventually becomes claustrophobic and eerily unsettling.

The viewer is invited to sit on the empty deckchairs and listen to a soundtrack of breathing and waves rhythmically lapping onto the shore, mixed in with samples of Goan, Indian and Western music. Individual viewers become part of the installation as the slides continue to be projected onto them. By thus engaging the audience, Merali probes their complicity as both active and passive agents in the historical and commercial guises of 'going native'. Although the piece specifically relates to the occupation of Goa by the Portuguese and its subsequent 'colonisation' by tourism, the images used are sufficiently generic to have a broader application. The black and white projections refute our expectations of an exotic, colour-saturated paradise, and present instead a mediated fabrication, including studio reconstruction.

In contrast, the images of the Coke machine are in vivid colour, with an implication that our desires are partly determined by a monolithic multinational industry. 'Multiculturalism' is of the 'we are the world' variety promoted by Coca-Cola. Coke is indicted in the subsuming of indigenous cultures, and having penetrated more backstreets than evangelist Christianity, has become ironically a symbol of globalism. As part of a multinational autocracy, its advertising language has become immediately recognisable worldwide, and its inclusion in *Going Native* acts as a joke on the vaunted universalism of art.

The title, *Going Native*, draws together the numerous readings within the installation as well as alluding to Goa's own history. From the Portuguese policy of concubinage and intermarriage with Goans, to the present 'hippy trail' which culminates on Goa's beaches, 'going native' - whether as acquisition or escape - has always fallen within a wider appropriation of colonised cultures and territories.

Allan de Souza 1992

Going Native music composed in collaboration with Aniruddha Das/Headspace



KEITH PIPER

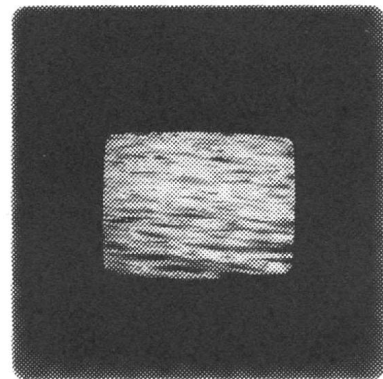
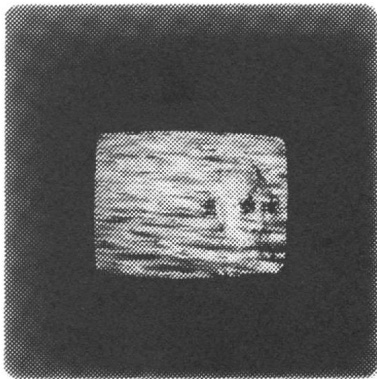
TRADE WINDS

In the preface of his study entitled *Capitalism & Slavery*, Dr Eric Williams, one time Prime Minister of Trinidad & Tobago, writes: 'Every age rewrites history, but particularly ours, which has been forced by events to re-evaluate our conception of history and economic and political developments'.

The above, undoubtedly true at the time of the book's publication in 1964, is doubly true today. In the context of a society struggling to negotiate a path from the myth of a mono-racial to the reality of a multi-racial view of itself, it becomes all the more important that our view of history shifts to fully acknowledge the range of factors which have shaped and constructed our contemporary reality. Key amongst this is an acknowledgment of the central importance of imperial expansion and trade to the development of the industrial base of the British economy. This acknowledgment becomes all the more important against the backdrop of a port such as Liverpool which owes its development in no small part to the massive profits of the Atlantic Slave Trade, within which it rose to become one of Europe's principal centres. This creates a very particular relationship between the maritime history of the port of Liverpool and the development of contemporary global trade and capitalism: a direct link between the physical elements which make up the historic dock area - timber, stone, water - and the high-tech babble of computerised telecommunications which characterises the modern global market place. The juxtapositioning of the above elements provides a backdrop against which an examination of the historical relationships between the Atlantic Slave Trade and the development of contemporary global capitalism are explored in the installation *Trade Winds*.

The installation comprises twelve monitors and four video sources, each monitor contained within its own rough timber shipping crate with its screen facing upwards. The crates are arranged in groups of four referencing four sections of a human body and the four points on a maritime compass. Each group of four crates in turn occupies a point on a larger dislocated triangle. A triangle which references both the triangular slave trade, and the contemporary triangular relationship between the 'first', developing, and so-called 'third world'. The images displayed on these monitors are built around a series of animated computer montages, which are constructed around a range of recurring images: segments of bodies, fragments of memorabilia, commodities and cultural artefacts passing over and under water in slowly dissolving sequences. Passages of text occasionally emerge, some of which are direct statements, others abstract and fragmented; barely decipherable hand written inscriptions which only hint at their sinister origins as the log books of slave ships, invoices and bills of sale for human cargo.

Keith Piper 1992



DONALD RODNEY

DOUBLETHINK

The majority of black endeavour and success is achieved by managing to ignore, or sometimes even motivated by the desire to disapprove, negative stereotyping. In either case it's always there, lurking beneath the surface, waiting to rear its head. A black sportsman can receive both cheers of appreciation and taunts of racial abuse. This truism is entrenched into the contemporary fabric of black life.

In his novel *1984* Orwell wrote of the concept of 'doublethink': 'Doublethink means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously and accepting both of them.'

Tony Smith, the black American athlete, said: "If I win I am an American not a black American but if I did something bad, then they would say I am a Negro."

That is how we live. We are caught up in a maelstrom of white contradictions, half truths and lies.

Donald Rodney November 1992

BLACK WOMEN ARE
FEARSOME

BLACK MEN ARE
SHALLOW

BLACK SPORTSMEN
HAVE SMALL IQS

BLACK SPORTSMEN
TAKE DRUGS

BLACK PEOPLE LOVE
WESTERN LIFE

BLACK PEOPLE HAVE A
LESSER INTELLIGENCE

BLACK HISTORY IS PLAGUED BY
REACTIONARY POLITICS

BLACK PEOPLE ARE
INADEQUATE AND BITTER

SADLY BLACK HISTORY GIVES
POIGNANT CLUES TO BLACK FUTURE

BLACK CULTURE CANNOT MAKE ANY
IMPORTANT ACHIEVEMENTS

BLACK CULTURE HAS BECOME EXCHANGEABLE
BECAUSE IT IS A COMMODITY

BLACK HISTORY HAS A
HORRIBLE ECHO

BLACK CULTURE KEEPS OSCILLATING
BETWEEN HOPE AND FEAR

ALL BLACK MEN
ARE DRUNKARDS

BLACK MEN ARE
SCHEMING

BLACK CULTURE IS TORN
BY CONVULSIVE SHUDDERS

BLACK WOMEN
ARE VICIOUS

BLACK MEN ARE
VIOLENT

BLACK PEOPLE
ARE SLY

SOUTH ATLANTIC SOUVENIRS & TROUBLE

THE TROPHY CABINET

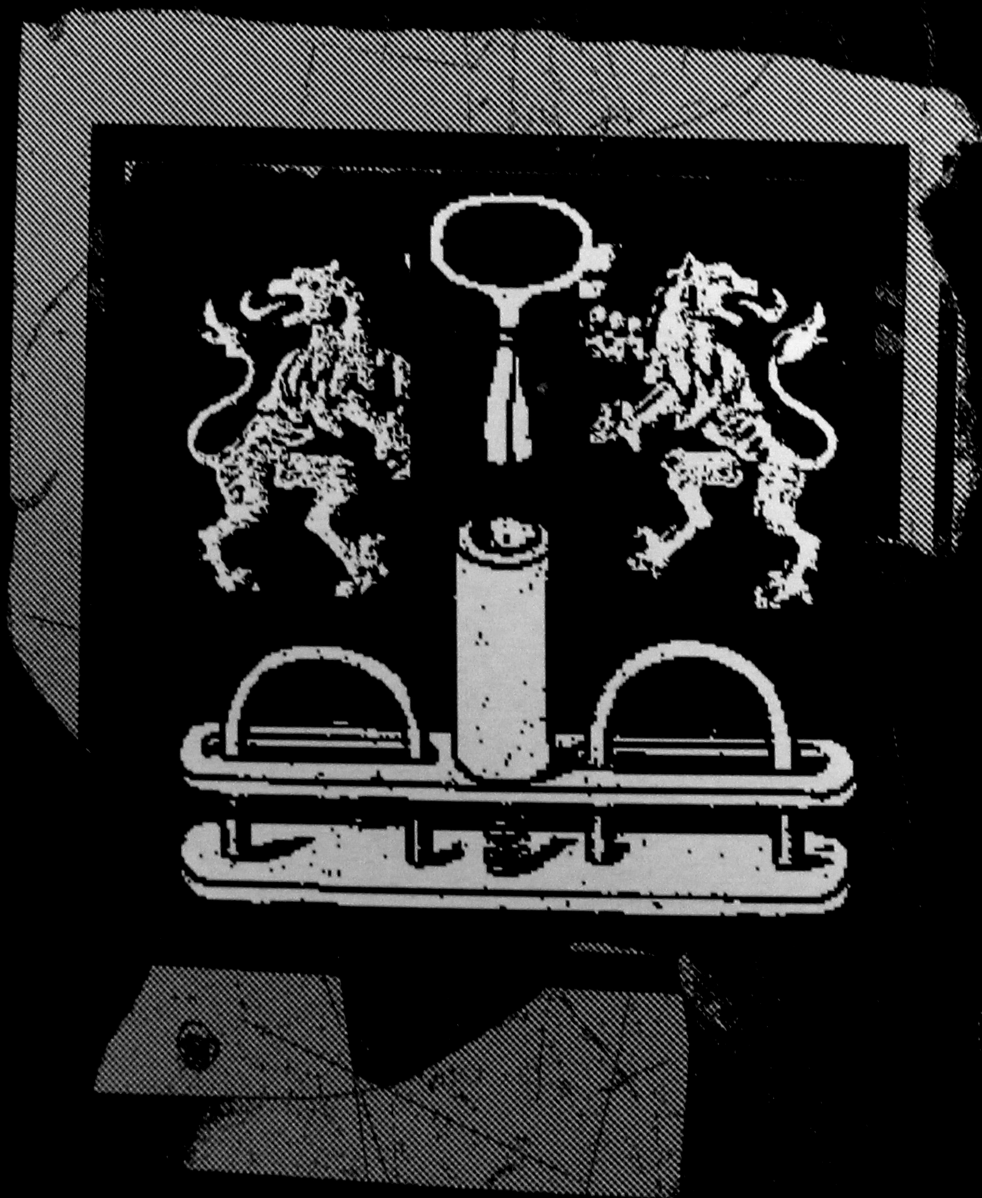
The Conservative government has a recurring dream in which freshly scrubbed children flock daily from their two-parent homes into neatly kept independent schools, the union jack fluttering overhead, to learn about British History from their Back to Basics textbooks, written entirely in Standard English. This version of history is highly selective, rather like the government's education policy as a whole. Relying on the sort of discreet but thorough editing which is second nature to the chaps at the ministry, lessons bear a strong resemblance to pre-war editions of Movietone News.

We hope that our contribution to *Trophies of Empire* did something to awaken visitors from this comfortable reverie. It must be unusual for exhibition organisers to send out an extensive reading list to would-be participants, but so it was with *Trophies*. Like other exhibitors, we became immersed, perhaps morbidly so at times, in the minutiae of the slave trade, European expansionism and their bitter legacy. We reacted with a mixture of revulsion and disbelief, not only at the gruesome detail and grotesque imagery, but at the matter-of-fact and casual reporting of this catalogue of violence, which seemed to be so normal - simply one of the necessities in balancing the books. But *Trophies* is not just a history lesson, because the story comes bang up to date. These days we are a nation of ex-shopkeepers descended from a nation of ex-slave traders. And the shelves of the out-of-town superstores of Fortress Europe bulge with the products first commercially exploited by the use of slave labour, 'Empire Grown'. Astonishingly, many commodities are still cultivated and harvested by modern forms of slavery. These, then, are our trophies of empire. We have always been involved in making things and selling them, quaint though this now seems. So it was appropriate to take some of our most familiar imported foodstuffs, repackage them in an honest fashion (complete with souvenir picture cards) and sell, sell, sell:

An opportunity not to be missed awaits visitors to the Trophies of Empire exhibitions in Liverpool, Bristol and Hull. South Atlantic Souvenirs, in association with Trouble Magazine, have created a delightful range of official produce. Tastefully packaged, our top quality sugar, tea and sweet cigarettes offer a unique shopping experience for you to savour, commemorating as they do the European invasion of the Americas which began five hundred years ago, the boom years of the slave trade (which was the very making of Liverpool and Bristol), the plundering of the Orient and the scramble for Africa. This fantastic story of five hundred years of imperial violence, pillage and mayhem around the globe, a story still unfolding today, is told in the souvenir set of picture cards, some of which can be found in every packet of Trophies of Empire produce. An attractive booklet is available in which you may collect your cards, making a memento which you and your loved ones will treasure for years to come.

Hurry while stocks last.

Rick Walker/Steve Hardstaff/David Crow 1993





VEENA STEPHENSON

RING A RING O' ROSES A POCKET FULL OF POSIES ATISHOO ATISHOO...

The sculptural form of *Ring a ring o' roses...* came about a few years ago in the context of a general exploration distorting the forms of the flag. It began as a rectangle of sheet wood broken along the lines of the Union Jack and reconstructed into a precariously balanced sculpture. The wood, the scale and the way the rectangle was reformed into three dimensions suggested a table.

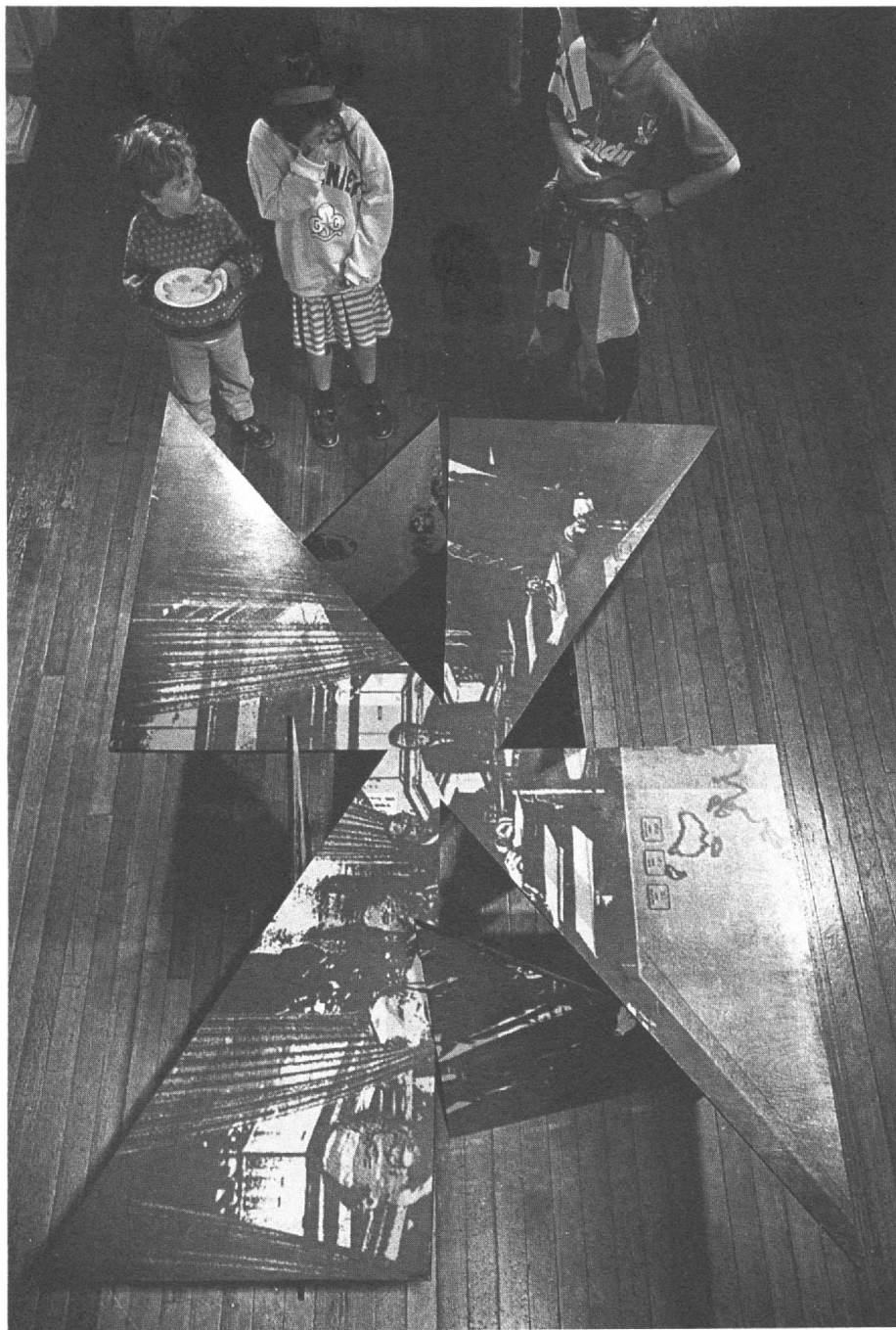
I came across a boardroom photograph in a document celebrating the work of the Crown Agents - the enterprise set up to administer Britain's post-colonial interests, and which employed my father in the years when my family life spanned both the colonies and the 'mother' country. In the same publication was a photograph of the London Stock Exchange. Both caught my eye because their composition contained the rhythms of the linear forms of the flag. I put the two images together, superimposing one upside down over the other and highlighting the structures and lines that conformed with the British flag.

It was while I was researching the practicalities of incorporating this collaged image into the surface of the wood on the top of the 'table' that the *Trophies of Empire* project arose. Once commissioned I set about researching an image for the underside of the 'table'. At the end of a revolting afternoon spent looking through 400 photographs documenting the troops during the Gulf War, I found four which I could use. These were superimposed on an image of a thrombosis.

Both collages were bubblejet printed into the wood, soaking into the grain which was then french polished. When set up the piece balances by itself precariously. The individual images on the surface and on the underneath of the 'table' are fragmented and alternately seem fused or intersected with one another.

I chose the title because it played on the precarious nature of the structure, and because its roots in *The Plague* offered apt metaphors of trade, warfare and disease which cast a line backwards into European history.

Veena Stephenson 1993



VERBAL IMAGES

Verbal Images was a collaboration of different art forms, celebrating the wealth of Black arts in Britain. Based on the Black experience past and present, this amalgamation brought together dub/rap poetry, Indian dance, African/Asian music and visual art, to produce a performance which looked at the effect that the British Empire has had on the peoples of Africa and Asia through slavery, colonialism and neo colonialism. Focusing on how imperial expansion dispossessed the peoples of those continents, dividing their land and diluting their cultures, Levi Tafari's and Muhammad Khalil's powerful rhythmic poetry interacted with the dance movements of Bisakha Sarker, and with Nina Edge's painted installation created during the performance, whilst musical accompaniment was provided by drummers Karl John and Nick Wiltshire.

The artists had worked together in various combinations before. For example, Levi Tafari, Muhammad Khalil and Karl John were members of Liverpool's seminal African dance/drum ensemble Delado. In this instance the central performance was choreographed by Levi Tafari and Bisakha Sarker depicting the effects of five hundred years of movement of peoples. The three shows were all well attended, and well received. The performance in Hull, which was sold out, took place in the Ferens Gallery's Live Art Space, which is next to the gallery space where the *Trophies of Empire* exhibition was showing, including Nina Edge's work. In Liverpool, another sell-out, we tied in with a performance by Benjamin Zephaniah for the 500 Years of Resistance campaign. Scunthorpe was a rather different kettle of fish. There were no other *Trophies of Empire* events there and it was always going to be a question of getting in, doing the gig, and getting out again. What we hadn't anticipated was our reception from the venue. Maybe they don't see many African people in Scunthorpe, maybe it was the Liverpool accents. While we were chilling out in the Green Room, preparing for the show, the management gave instructions for the TV and video, which were there for the benefit of artists, to be removed and locked away for the duration of our visit. This was no mean feat as they were bolted to the wall and we actually had to help out. This little episode provided us with a useful starting point in our discussion of racism with the audience after the show.

Levi Tafari 1993

A seaport sprang from the blood of slave
 In the 'pool of life', a macabre parade,
 African people held in chains,
 Human market place, Black flesh for trade,
 Cargo bought and sold at the Cotton Exchange,
 With gum & rum & sugarcane,
 Branded like beasts who feel no pain,
 And all for 'Merry Old England's' gain.

But things be changing, rearranging,
 Only we can clear our name,
 Growing, knowing, so we're showing,
 Things'll never be the same.

As pirates auctioned and pitched,
 Parliament pitted their wits,
 While the church sold out our soul for gold,
 That's how come the church got rich.
 Then the capital carved a cosy niche,
 For the Lancashire cotton industry,
 And the nouveau riche, I don't mean to preach,
 But black blood, sweat & tears,
 Toil and slave for years,
 To create all the wealth interest free,
 We're talking banking, shipping, industry,
 Banking, shipping, industry.
 Black poverty paved the path to prosperity,
 John Bull cashed in on our posterity,
 With legitimised robbery of African property,
 A legacy of history we still don't see.

History changing, rearranging,
 Only we can clear our name,
 Growing, knowing, so we're showing,
 Things'll never be the same.

Our real contribution, dismissed & forgotten,
 By delusions of grandeur, corrupted & rotten,
 Slaveship to the cotton picking slave plantation,
 Sold down the Swanee to dehumanisation,

Jump down turn around pick a bale of nothing,
 But a bullwhip, noose, or a gun or something,
 Imports & exports, & holiday resorts.
 But the input, mostly ours of course,
 The world's largest ever, unpaid workforce,
 With the most abundant source of natural resources,
 We did not profit one iota more's the worse.
 Our mineral rich land, time, energy and pain,
 Helped to build an Empire that ruled in shame.
 Dismissed go collective claims for credit,
 Or a share in the wealth from that direct debit,
 400 years of shackles and chains,
 Still no respect from the wearers of blame,
 Just more institutional racist games,
 Attitudes, slander, media campaigns,
 With outrageous claims that retard our aims,
 By the trivialised usage of racist names.

But people changing, rearranging,
 Only we can clear our name,
 Growing, knowing, so we're showing,
 Things'll never be the same.

Now if you've ever been on the dole or without a home,
 You might dig when I say that it all began
 With a way of life that's carrying on
 By keeping innocent people down,
 City in a society built on a truth that's cruel,
 Once upon a time you were worn as the nation's jewel,
 Now used and abused as the system's tool,
 With redundant rhetoric and bourgeois rules,
 You've been used and abused like the Slaves of old,
 So by now I guess you got the 'blues' down cold.
 You say you understand, well I guess that's cool,
 Still the song remains the same *Slavepool*.

Muhammad Khalil

VISUAL STRESS

MOBILE AUTO MISSION

UN Convoy, Columbus or the Crusades (Ancient and Modern) cruising the streets, a carnival taking the wrong direction into the uncharted territories of a city in the mad rush up to Christmas. The last Saturday in Advent, that annual saviour of modern trading, ignored for what it is. The motorcade moves on to the next of the 12 pinpointed sites, each revealed and denounced for their collaboration. Planting the flag at Iwo Jima, flogging the slave to the system and resurrecting the memory of those that died on the road to Basra. Recycling the image of the three pointed star, the sugar, slave, spicy triangle. Through town, the Nat West, the Bluecoat, St George's Hall, past Dickie Lewis, he waves, we wave back, nice to have allies, Sir Thomas Street, the Town Hall, down to the Tate in the heart of Granada Land. Those that go down to the sea in ships most definitely have their businesses in murky waters. But the current history won't last for ever. The Grand Tour splutters on, star-spangled celebrities open a monument to nothing, road blocks and outriders trampling all that come their way. Authority underlined by TV crews fluttering by, collecting authentic images as a backdrop for the latest pop phenomenon or faded sleuth. Wonderful darling but could you move those people out of the back of the shot. The cortege winds its way around the walled city, the HQ of one of the War Lords (off creating criminals for the dollar economy) up the hill to find ritualists laying down relics that will mystify when Hope Street becomes just another runway for the third intercontinental G-Land airport. A surge now, the shoppers are retreating, stations ten and eleven, the bigot statues on the avenue seem to have decapitated themselves so onwards procession to Twelve. We'll call it the shrine to the High Fetish priestess, they'd call it Calvary, America, the Mother of Parliaments or some such. Time to party. One cheer each for Christianity, the former USA and Democracy. Hurrah, Hurrah, Hurrah. Thirteen generations of slavery and now I have a car.

Jonathan Swain 1993



THE ARTISTS

Paul Clarkson was born in 1964 in Liverpool and studied at Lancashire Polytechnic and Universidade Technica de Lisbon. He currently has a studio at The Gallery, Sandon Street, Liverpool.

Carole Drake was born in 1963 in Bristol and studied at the University of Reading and Newcastle Polytechnic. She now lives and works in Newcastle upon Tyne and held the Berwick Gymnasium Fellowship 1993/94.

Nina Edge is based in Cardiff and has worked extensively in education, designed for carnival and theatre and written widely. This year she is the Henry Moore Sculpture Fellow at Liverpool John Moores University.

Edwina Fitzpatrick was born in 1961 in Nottingham and studied at Brighton Polytechnic. Now living in London, she lectures in video, photography and multi-media areas at various London colleges.

Sunil Gupta was born in 1953 in New Delhi and studied in Canada, USA and in England at West Surrey College of Art and Design and the Royal College of Art. Based in London, he is independent curator for the INIVA Project.

Bandele Iyapo was born in Trinidad in 1953. For the last six years he has divided his time between Trinidad and Bristol. A batik artist first and foremost, he works in many media. His film about reggae musicians in Bristol will be broadcast by the BBC later this year.

Rita Keegan was born in 1949 in New York and studied at San Francisco Arts Institute. She currently co-ordinates the African and Asian Visual Arts Archive in Bristol.

Juginder Lamba was born in 1948 in Nairobi, Kenya and studied at the University of Lancaster. He now lives and works in Shropshire and was director of the 1993 South Asian Visual Arts Festival in the Midlands.

Shaheen Merali was born in 1959 in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania and studied at Gwent College of Further Education. As part of the London-based *Panchayat* he is an independent curator.

Keith Piper was born in 1960 and studied at Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham and the Royal College of Art. He lives in London and lectures at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Donald Rodney was born in 1961 in Birmingham and studied at

Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham and Slade School School of Art, London. He now lives and works in London.

South Atlantic Souvenirs is a prolific political postcard-producing partnership between Rick Walker in Manchester and Steve Hardstaff, Head of Graphics at Liverpool John Moores University.

Veena Stephenson was born in 1962 in Kenya and currently lives and works in London. She has written for many publications, including *Bazaar*, *Feminist Art News* and her essay 'Rubbing culture's nose in the mud of politics' was included in *Passion: Discourses on Blackwomen's Creativity* (Urban Fox Press 1990).

Trouble is the magazine of no fixed format created by David Crow, freelance graphic designer now lecturing at University College Salford, dealing with the fantasy worlds of advertising, packaging, news media and politics.

Verbal Images comprised two poets and urban griots, Levi Tafari and Muhammad Khalil Eugene Lange, Indian dancer Bisakha Sarker, drummer Karl John (all from Liverpool), visual artist Nina Edge and Bradford-based musician Nicholas Wiltshire.

Visual Stress has presented from its Liverpool base several *Vimbuza* rituals and other public interventions in the city, as well as in Edinburgh, Prague, Lubiana, Zurich, Portugal and elsewhere since 1988.

The artists have exhibited widely in solo and group exhibitions, too numerous to mention in the limited space available here. Several of these exhibitions however focussed on issues pertinent to some of those explored in *Trophies of Empire*. Examples (with catalogues available) include: *Black Art*; *Plotting the Course* Oldham Art Gallery/Bluecoat Gallery/Wolverhampton Art Gallery (1988); *Fabled Territories* Leeds City Art Gallery (1989); *The Other Story* Hayward Gallery and tour (1989/90); *Let the canvas come to life with dark faces* Herbert Art Gallery and tour 1991; *Four x 4* Wolverhampton Art Gallery/Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston/Nottingham Castle Museum/Leicester City Art Gallery/Arncliffe, Bristol (1991); *A Table for Four* Bluecoat Gallery (1991); *A Ship called Jesus* Ikon Gallery, Birmingham/Camden Arts Centre, London (1991); *Crossing Black Waters* Leicester City Art Gallery and tour (1992); *Black People and the British Flag* Cornerhouse, Manchester (1993); *South Asian Visual Arts Festival* various venues in the Midlands (1993).

THE TROPHIES ITINERARY

AUGUST 1992

WILBERFORCE HOUSE MUSEUM, HULL

Residency: Nina Edge

28 AUGUST - 20 SEPTEMBER 1992

MERSEYSIDE MARITIME MUSEUM, LIVERPOOL

Keith Piper

10 SEPTEMBER - 4 OCTOBER 1992

WILBERFORCE HOUSE MUSEUM, HULL

Nina Edge, Juginder Lamba

10 OCTOBER - 14 NOVEMBER 1992

BLUECOAT GALLERY, LIVERPOOL

Paul Clarkson, Rita Keegan, Juginder Lamba, Shaheen Merali,
South Atlantic Souvenirs & Trouble, Veena Stephenson

Live Art: Verbal Images

17 OCTOBER - 15 NOVEMBER 1992

FERENS ART GALLERY, HULL

Nina Edge, Edwina Fitzpatrick, Sunil Gupta, South Atlantic Souvenirs & Trouble

Live Art: Verbal Images

NOVEMBER 1992

BATH HALL, SCUNTHORPE

Live Art: Verbal Images

21 NOVEMBER 1992 - 10 JANUARY 1993

ARNOLFINI, BRISTOL

Carole Drake, Edwina Fitzpatrick, Sunil Gupta, Shaheen Merali, Keith Piper,
Donald Rodney, South Atlantic Souvenirs & Trouble, Veena Stephenson

Live Art: Bandele Iyapo

DECEMBER 1992

LIVERPOOL CITY CENTRE

Live Art: Visual Stress

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The artists were selected from an open submission by the organisers, in collaboration with Keith Khan and Gilane Tawadros, with advice in Liverpool from Dionne Sparks and in Bristol from Eddie Chambers.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

25,32,33,34,36(main picture) Woodley and Quick Photographers
26,31,45,47,55 Tony Scott 30,32 Chris Kennedy 36 (details) Edward Woodman
37,67 Mal Williamson 38 Roger Sinck 53,57,63,65 Sean Halligan 69 Simon Mills.

All other images supplied by the artists in the form of original artwork, photographic prints, transparencies, PMT's, faxes, videotapes or computer disks.

TROPHIES OF EMPIRE



The City of Liverpool



PETER MOORES FOUNDATION



INVESTMENT
SOUTH WEST ARTS



