



LUX Scotland and Black Radical Imagination present: *Collective Blackness*  
Sunday 3 December 2017, 12–5pm  
Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh



Members of Black Audio Film Collective, 1986. Courtesy of Smoking Dogs Films.

*Collective Blackness* is a one-day symposium that explores the visibility and work of global black film collectives and the intersections of black conscious creativity within the history of cinema. The event is organised by Amir George of Black Radical Imagination and presented in partnership with Talbot Rice Gallery and LUX Scotland as part of the public programme for John Akomfrah's exhibition *Vertigo Sea*, which continues at Talbot Rice Gallery until 27 January 2018.

Beginning in 2013, the notion of the **Black Radical Imagination** stemmed from a series of discussions around the boundaries and limitations that are historically given to people of colour in the realm of the cinematic. An artistic movement and school of thought, Black Radical Imagination is curated by Amir George and Erin Christovale.

This event is presented with support from Film Hub Scotland (part of the BFI's Film Audience Network) and Creative Scotland. With thanks to Talbot Rice Gallery and Transmission Gallery.



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## Schedule

- 12pm      **Introduction**
- The Black Radical Sankofa Historiography: Performative lecture by Amir George**
- In this performative lecture Amir George will present his research on black film collectives and how they have emerged over time.
- 1pm        **Break**
- 1.15pm    **Film Screening: *Collective Transitions***
- This screening will feature short films from various black film collectives. Artists include: John Akomfrah (Black Audio Film Collective), Ephraim Asili (Black Radical Imagination), Ja'Tovia Gary (New Negress Film Society), Lauren Kelley, Anansi Knowbody, Lewis Vaughn, Darren Wallace and Julian Walker (Kinfolk Collective).
- 2.45pm    **Presentations by Christian Noelle Charles, Irineu Destourelles, Jenn Nkiru and Alberta Whittle**
- Each artist will each give a presentation on their practice and its intersections.
- 3.30pm    **Break**
- 3.45pm    **Panel Discussion: *Aesthetic Algorithms*  
with Christian Noelle Charles, Irineu Destourelles, Amir George, Jenn Nkiru and Alberta Whittle**
- A dialogue around global black aesthetics and how it reflects representational black consciousness. Drawing from the work of Christian Noelle Charles, Irineu Destourelles, Jenn Nkiru and Alberta Whittle. Moderated by Amir George.

## ***Collective Transitions: Programme Notes***

### **Ephraim Asili, *Many Thousands Gone*, 2015, 16mm film transferred to digital, 7 min**

Filmed on location in Salvador, Brazil (the last city in the Western Hemisphere to outlaw slavery) and Harlem, New York (an international stronghold of the African Diaspora), *Many Thousands Gone* draws parallels between a summer afternoon on the streets of the two cities. A silent version of the film was given to jazz multi-instrumentalist Joe McPhee to use an interpretive score. The final film is the combination of the images and McPhee's real time 'sight reading' of the score.

### **Darren Wallace, *Savage vs The Void*, 2014, 18 min**

An afro-surreal voyage into the night of Troy Davis' execution

### **Lauren Kelley, *Get The Bones From 88 Jones Because She Also Eats Meat*, 2008, video, 7 min**

An aerial view of the disposable nature of intimate relationships. This short, stop-motion animation tale scrutinises the gestures that occur between an invisible librarian and a capricious peacock – both are bookworms. Throughout this anti-love story, the familiar 'predator and prey' narrative elements are liquefied when what seems solid to a smitten protagonist cracks and falls apart.

### **Anansi Knowbody, *Quiescence Interrupted... Adumbrate*, 2013, video, 6 min**

The piece is an introduction... part of a work in progress. The starring character, Buddah is a regular guy with very irregular dreams or some might perceive as nightmares... The intent is to play on the ideas of distraction, disruption, fear and premonition. The relativity of dream. The hope is to generate interest through technique and mystery.

### **Ja'Tovia Gary, *An Ecstatic Experience*, 2015, video, 6 min**

To be beside oneself.

### **Julian Walker, *Third Timothy*, 2015, 17 min**

A duo of runaway brothers struggle with loyalty and loss while peddling holy water on a journey through the rural South.

### **Lewis Vaughn, *The Baptist*, 2012, 7 min**

A fallen spirit seeks redemption after a life of compliance and misguidance. After being forced into an afterlife state, he attempts to navigate through a vivid forest while a mysterious creature taunts him.

### **John Akomfrah, *Memory Room 451*, 1997, video, 22 min**

In its silhouettes, shadow, depth of field and chromatic stylisation, *Memory Room 451* is the most extreme example of the neo-Expressionist aesthetic the Collective pursued throughout the 1990s. Originally entitled Hair, *Memory Room 451* is a bitter fable of a world in which dreams become the media platform of the future century and time travel is shiftwork in the graveyards of tomorrow.

## Contributors

**Christian Noelle Charles** is a Black Female Artist currently living and working in Glasgow, Scotland. A Syracuse, New York native, Charles's work is an exploration of female representation and self-love in a contemporary world. Charles takes inspiration from today's pop culture, modern performance techniques and personal experiences. She also derives inspiration as a performance artist from the relationship between performer and audience member. By using the mediums of printmaking, video, and performance her work demonstrates a celebration of self-love and individuality.

Working across and in the interstices between moving-image, text, painting and drawing **Irineu Destourelles** reflects on issues of identity, construction of meaning, discursive recurrence, the uncanny and iconoclasm. He was born in the Cape Verde islands in West Africa, grew-up in Lisbon, Portugal and lives and works in Edinburgh, Scotland, UK.

**Amir George** is a practicing alchemist working as an artist and film programmer. He creates work for cinema, gallery spaces and live performance. Born and bred in Chicago, his moving image work and curated programmes have been shown internationally. In addition to founding a grassroots film programming organisation called Cinema Culture, George is the co-curator of Black Radical Imagination, a touring experimental short film series.

**Jenn Nkiru** is a visionary artist and director from and working out of Peckham, London. An MFA graduate of Howard University, her first film *En Vogue* shot by Bradford Young & Arthur Jafa screened internationally. Recent credits include a documentary series on music subcultures, a campaign with photographer Rankin where he selected Nkiru as one of 20 of the 'industry's top directors and most creative talent' and *Rebirth is Necessary*, a dreamlike film centred on Blackness past, present and future premiering on [NOWNESS.com](http://NOWNESS.com). Nkiru has previously been longlisted for the Brilliant Filmmaker 1.4 Award, Aesthetica Art Prize and was a winner at the 2016 Encounters Film Festival.

**Alberta Whittle's** creative practice is informed by diasporic conversation and working collectively towards radical self-love. She considers radical self-love a key method in decolonisation for people of colour to battle anti-blackness. Her practice involves choreographing interactive installations, interventions and performances as site-specific artworks in public and private spaces. Performance has begun to provide important moments for negotiating reciprocity, coercing and demanding that audiences participate in their own discomfort. Often insisting on some level of audience participation, Whittle's performances attempt to reveal our complicity with systems of oppression, systems that we often choose not to see or acknowledge.

Underpinning her research is encouraging linkages between active collective unknowing/ unlearning and decolonisation through activating new ways of rethinking relationships to the past, present and future, based on unravelling concepts of history and memory. Key to these processes of unknowing and unlearning is working collectively in collaborative networks. Foregrounding these conversations is an analysis of creative strategies employed to question the authority of postcolonial power, its implications and its legacy.

**LUX Scotland** is a non-profit agency dedicated to supporting, developing and promoting artists' moving image practices in Scotland. Working at the intersection of the contemporary visual arts and film sectors, our core activities include public exhibition and touring projects, learning and professional development for artists and arts professionals, distribution, commissioning and production support, research and sector advocacy. From our offices based in Glasgow, we work with a growing network of national and international partners, including museums, contemporary art organisations, film festivals and educational institutions, to deliver our programme. One of our current priorities is the establishment of a new distribution collection of artists' moving image based in Scotland.

<http://luxscotland.org.uk>