

HUMBER
STREET
GALLERY

EXHIBITION GUIDE

*IN CONVERSATION AS
COLLECTIVE STRATEGY*

OTHER CINEMAS
W/
AN UNTOLD STORY – VOICES
BLACK HERITAGE COLLECTIVE
CINENOVA

ORGANISED BY GUEST CURATOR LOUISE SHELLEY

15 SEPTEMBER – 09 JANUARY 2022
SPACE 2

INTRODUCTION

In Conversation as Collective Strategy uses space 2 at Humber Street Gallery to connect and support Hull-based collective work through the act of film making. The project aims to put on record, to share and platform the work of community education, campaign, and transformative justice organising that exists in the city.

Two new films have been produced for the exhibition by community focused film collective, Other Cinemas, in collaboration with two Hull-based groups, Black Heritage Collective and An Untold Story-Voices. The newly commissioned films are shown alongside material compiled and presented by both Hull based collectives as well as historical works from the Cinenova collection. *In Conversation as Collective Strategy* uses film to think through our histories, our connected sense of place, politics and the specificities that produce these – a politics of race, class, gender, care, collective loss and futures.

These new films exist in dialogue with others and with histories of organising, resistance, documenting and platforming grassroots solidarity and struggle. The exhibition is a chance to reconsider the role that conversation plays in our collective future.

The development for this project began in 2020 and introduced a six-month period of research and meetings between Other Cinemas, Black Heritage Collective and An Untold Story-Voices. These conversations developed plans for a week of filming in the summer of 2021. The two newly-produced films record group conversations, spaces and sites in and around the city and time spent together, the films are introductory documents of the work and commitment these collectives have to organising, resistance and platforming grassroots campaign and education work.

Recording group work in a moment in time is to signal to the importance of sharing and connecting conversations towards collective futures and transformative potentials. By exhibiting these films and practices together with historical works from Cinenova you are invited into a process to ask how can we connect our positions, our ways of being together, of organising, of work and our collective strategies as experimental creative practice?

The walls of the gallery have been curated by each collective to expand on their work and further share who they are, their journeys and the issues at stake which they organise around for change.

An Untold Story-Voices have designed and painted a timeline mural which visualises the intersections of their lives and collective work with the state, community, mental health services, economics and the law. The work is personal and political. Also on display is a digital version of their publication *An Untold Story*, created by 12 members of the collective in 2017, it tells the stories of their lives through poetry, interviews, prose and artwork. Reprinted and pasted on the end wall of the gallery is 'Absence of Evidence' a collaborative project between artists Henry/Bragg and An Untold Story-Voices produced in 2019 honouring 14 of their fellow workers who have died. The collective will also host two public events in the exhibition space in November.

Black Heritage Collective have used the gallery wall to introduce the collective members and invite gallery visitors to show alliance by stepping up and marking the wall with a handprint. A show of commitment to the anti-racist movement and to keeping the conversation visible in our families, communities and cities. Black Heritage Collective have programmed a whole month of free events and discussions for October's Black History Month.

FILM DESCRIPTIONS

Women's Work, 2021

17 mins

A film by Arwa Aburawa & Turab Shah (Other Cinemas)

Women's Work is filmed after five years of collective work by An Untold Story–Voices. This self–organised group of women with lived experience of street sex work in Hull, and their supporters have worked with Other Cinemas to produce a document of friendship, care, resistance and resilience. Their film tells the story of how they came together, their campaign work and its connections to systemic marginalisation on the basis of class and gender.

In 2014, Hull became the UK's only city to ban sex workers from its red–light district, effectively making prostitution a criminal offense, known as Section 222. This legislation served to make the situation for sex workers in the city even more precarious, isolated and dangerous. An Untold Story–Voices seeks to address the multiple and complex disadvantages faced by many women who are involved in street sex work, created and compounded by all forms of marginalisation, the misapplication of legislation, and punitive policies which further impoverish those who struggle the most. In 2020, the collective's campaign achieved a huge success when a Judicial Review against the section 222 brought by the collective resulted in Hull City Council's retraction of the order. They are now working in collaboration with the Council for a better system.

This empowered and articulate collective, whose ongoing commitment to transformative justice for sex workers and women in Hull promotes understanding via human stories, and working together as an inclusive community to shift cultural perception and effect justice and systemic change.

In Conversation: Hull's Black Heritage Collective, 2021

15 mins 40 secs

A film by Arwa Aburawa & Turab Shah (Other Cinemas)

In Hull, when we was younger, we didn't see a lot of people that looked like us. I didn't have anyone on hand to me, that I could basically have a chat with and say you know, this happened, or this is how I'm feeling or this is my option etc. Whereas now, I can do that. You can't really appreciate the value of that until you actually have it. I suppose it's a powerful thing to be able to sort of relate to people around you. – Bax Mundoba

A Hull–based collective formed in 2020, Black Heritage Collective work to identify institutional racism in society, promote opportunities for all people of black heritage and to offer advice and support to anyone of black heritage.

This new short film introduces the members of the collective, what they each bring to the group work and campaign, how their positions are shared whilst holding difference, how they come together, to listen and reflect on their experience of growing up in Hull.

The work of Black Heritage Collective embraces radical creativity, holding space for expanding anti-racist work in the city, an embodied and engaged commitment to ending systemic racism in our communities and platforming and learning from shared lived experience.

One year into their collective work, initiated through the urgency of the events that have unfolded over the past year: the death of George Floyd and subsequent Black Lives Matter protests; and the inequalities made evident through Covid-19. The work of the Black Heritage Collective is forming through collective moments, both privately as a group and through public events which centre creativity and ways to share and come together, to platform and form collective resistance and change.

A Tribute to Black Women: They Don't Get A Chance

Ann Carney/ Barbara Phillips/Black Women's Media Project/W.I.T.C.H
UK, 1986, 20mins

A video made as an educational resource for schools in the late 1980s, *A Tribute To Black Women* was produced by the Black Women's Media Project and W.I.T.C.H (Women's Independent Cinema House) — a collective based in Liverpool in the 1980s that supported the scripting, editing and distribution of films by women. The film shows a group of young women on the streets of Liverpool using vox pop interviews, to ask people, "How many famous Black women can you name who aren't either sportswomen or entertainers?" Mostly the people of Liverpool draw a blank — making the point that too little is known or taught about Black women. The video investigates why this is so, pointing to inadequate media representation and bias in the education system which Black women have to overcome to uncover their own history. The video focuses on the careers of two women seldom mentioned in school history books — Harriet Tubman and Mary Seacole. This short film is both informative and entertaining, and is particularly aimed at schools and universities because of the major part they play in the current practice which generally ignores or misrepresents the reality of black women's existence. The video was made in conjunction with the Community Relations Council, the Liverpool Black sisters and various individual members of the community.

Time and Time Again: Women in Prison

Nina Ward / Women and The Law Collective
UK, 1986, 35minutes

Time and Time Again focuses on the lives of women in prison through interviews with four ex-prisoners. It looks at the offences women commit and the reasons why they commit them. It examines the realities of everyday life in prison — the violence, the racism, the forced medication. It explains why women go back: the feelings of worthlessness, of losing confidence and institutionalisation. *Time and Time Again* shows the need for organisations like Women in Prison and the Black Female Prisoners Scheme which give help and support to women inside and aid the slow process of building a new life outside.

Women & the Law Collective were active the late 1980s and in 1986 produced three films: *Time and Time Again* with Nina Ward, *Women in Prison & the Black Female Prisoner's Scheme*, *Who Takes the Rap – Immigration* with Lai Ngan Walsh and *The Life and Hard Times of Susie P Winklepicker* with Deborah Hall. This incredible body of work, all produced in the space of one year, explored the state of the UK legal system and its means of control through prisons, immigration law and forced economic dependency to maintain race, class, and gender hierarchies.

The films are part documentary, part educational and signal to active ports of support at the time, variously Women in Prison, Black Women's Prisoner Scheme, Southall Black Sisters and Bethnal Green Claimants Union, many are still running today. We see the works as collectively conceived and produced radical pedagogical campaign tools that not only call for fundamental change but put forward immediate pragmatic tools for resistance organising and support.

Sweet Sugar Rage
Sistren Theatre Collective
Jamaica, 1985. 42mins.

Sweet Sugar Rage is a 1985 documentary by Sistren Theatre Collective, the working class women's theatre collective founded in Kingston, Jamaica in 1977. In plays, workshops and film Sistren stage the histories and experience of black Caribbean women at the intersection of patriarchal oppression, racism and social class, to promote education, employment rights, unionisation, reproductive rights and decolonisation.

Sweet Sugar Rage exposes the exploitation of women's labour in Jamaica's sugar cane fields and shares the themes and methods of Sistren's workshops and theatre in the context of their wider efforts in education, employment rights and community activism. The film combines the testimony of women that work in the cane fields with evidence of their working conditions and their employers' attitudes as the basis of drama workshops that bring rural and urban women into dialogue to analyse the exploitation of working class women's labour and to challenge the patriarchal attitudes of employers and unions alike. Following the methods of Freire's 'conscientization' and Brecht's 'alienation method', we see the women collectively take charge of staging and re-staging ways to challenge the systems that oppress them, which offers methodologies of learning together to acquire the feminist and decolonial tools to effect social change.

Sistren Theatre Collective was founded by working class women in the social, cultural and political context of Jamaica's socialist experiment of the 1970s that followed the first decade of Jamaican independence. The Collective was forged through a government initiative to improve employment skills in Jamaica's poorest communities. In recent years, the emphasis of their activity has shifted from cultural to community work, which continues to address the ways that black Caribbean women are impacted by their working and living conditions, systemic racism, poverty and government inaction.

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

Other Cinemas is a project dedicated to sharing films in ways and spaces which aren't alienating to black and non-white communities. As part of this work, they share and support films made by black and non-white filmmakers through dedicated community film screenings, and also create an open space for discussion with the filmmakers. Other Cinemas, which is run by Turab Shah and Arwa Aburawa, is also interested in creating spaces and networks to help support filmmakers.

Cinenova is a volunteer-run charity preserving and distributing the work of feminist film and video makers. Cinenova was founded in 1991 following the merger of two feminist film and video distributors, Circles and Cinema of Women, each formed in 1979. Cinenova currently distributes over 300 titles that included artists' moving image, experimental film, narrative feature films, documentary and educational videos made from the 1910's to the early 2000's. The thematics in these titles include oppositional histories, post-colonial struggles, representation of gender, race, sexuality, and other questions of difference and importantly the relations and alliances between these different struggles.

An Untold Story-Voices, is a collective of women with lived experience of street sex working in Hull, and their supporters. The collective are concerned by the multiple and complex disadvantages faced by many women who are involved in street sex work, created and compounded by all forms of marginalisation, the misapplication of legislation, and punitive policies which further impoverish those who struggle the most. An Untold Story-Voices exist to support the raising of voices of lived experience of those sex workers most at risk of these challenges and injustices – promoting understanding via human stories, and working together as an inclusive community to shift cultural perception and effect justice and systemic change. An Untold Story-Voices aim to see greater equality for current street sex workers, women at risk and therefore for all of us.

Black Heritage Collective formed in 2020 to identify institutional racism in society, promote opportunities for all people of black heritage and to offer advice and support to anyone of black heritage.

Louise Shelley is a London based Curator interested in collaborative processes of research and production, her curatorial work has included the programmes Structures That Cooperate at Cubitt and Communal Knowledge at The Showroom, London. Council.

THANK YOUS

An Untold Story–Voices and Black Heritage Collective would like to thank the following people for their continued support:

Cathy, Carrina and all at LankellyChase Foundation
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Niki and Cari from English Collective of Prostitutes
Andrew Dorton
Lucy Chiddick
Julie and Debbie of Henry/Bragg
Darren from Expert Citizens
Dave, Louise and Lauren from Humber Street Gallery
Arwa, Turab and Funke from Other Cinemas
Mark Kensett, Photographer
All the women whose stories and experiences continue to inform and motivate us.

Here are organisations that can provide support and guidance:

24 hr National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247

Hull Women's Aid: 01482 446099

ReNew Hull – Drug and Alcohol support for individuals and families: 01482 620013

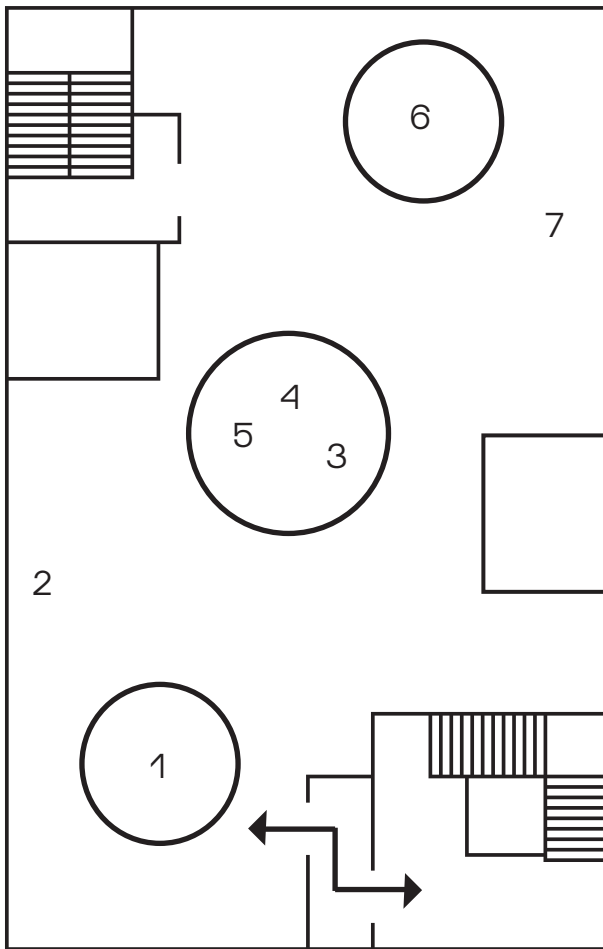
Samaritans 24/7 support line: 116 123

Shelter – for urgent housing advice: 0808 800 4444

Text SHOUT to 85258 if struggling to cope, for 24/7 text messaging support and signposting.

Streetlink.org.uk – if you're worried about someone you've seen sleeping rough.

WORK DETAILS, SECOND FLOOR



4. Sweet Sugar Rage, 1985
42 mins
Sistren Theatre Collective, Jamaica

Courtesy of Cinenova
5. Time and Time Again – Women in Prison, 1986
35mins
Nina Ward / Women and The Law Collective, UK

Courtesy of Cinenova
6. Women's Work, 2021
17 mins
Arwa Aburawa & Turab Shah (Other Cinemas)
7. Display: An Untold Story–Voices, 2021
Various materials
Members of An Untold Story–Voices

IN CONVERSATION AS COLLECTIVE STRATEGY: SPACE 2

1. In Conversation: Hull's Black Heritage Collective, 2021
15 mins 40 secs
Arwa Aburawa & Turab Shah (Other Cinemas)
2. Display: Black Heritage Collective, 2021
Various materials
Members of the Black Heritage Collective
3. A tribute to Black Women: They Don't Get A Chance, 1986
20 mins
Ann Carney / Barbara Phillips / Black Women's Media Project / W.I.T.C.H, UK

Courtesy of Cinenova

RELATED ACTIVITY

Access our in person and online public programme to learn more about the artists and the exhibition. You can book access all of the related activity by following the links on the [exhibition page](#).

THURSDAY LATES: CHIEDU ORAKA
THURSDAY 28 OCTOBER, 7– 9PM
GALLERY CAFÉ
BOOKING REQUIRED

Rap artist Chiedu Oraka will perform an intimate set alongside his DJ and guest artists, comprising new work and previous tracks exploring themes of growing up in north Hull, perceptions of identity and the importance of community solidarity, themes which are shared within the exhibition *In Conversation as Collective Strategy* on from September at Humber Street Gallery.

"SPEAK UP, SPEAK OUT" SPEAKEASY!
WEDNESDAY 3 NOVEMBER, 6–7PM
SPACE 2
FREE, BOOKING REQUIRED

Come and join An Untold Story–Voices for an easy evening of pokey poetry, maybe music and guaranteed good conversation. Feel free to bring a piece of your own creative stuff for a bit of an open mic malarkey.

IN CONVERSATION WITH AN UNTOLD STORY–VOICES
WEDNESDAY 17 NOVEMBER, 6–7PM
SPACE 2
FREE, BOOKING REQUIRED

Why the concerns of street sex work has everything to do with all of us.

An opportunity to join the An Untold Story–Voices collective to hear some of the stories, inspiration and thoughts behind the exhibition.

An informal gathering and open and honest discussion, with free flowing Q&A.

PUBLIC ASSEMBLY
SATURDAY 11 DECEMBER, 1–3PM
SPACE 2
FREE, BOOKING REQUIRED

As part of the exhibition *In Conversation as Collective Strategy*, we will be hosting a public assembly, which will be a large meeting, open to all, especially those who represent collectives within the region. The purpose of Public Assembly will be to identify practices and struggle in common and to connect with other individuals and groups who are working for change within the city. It is a space for sharing, conversation and platforming collective work together.

Public Assembly will be facilitated by TimeBank Hull and East Riding.

ABOUT US

Humber Street Gallery is an Absolutely Cultured project. Originally established in 2017 as part of the City of Culture programme, it has developed into a vibrant, high-quality contemporary visual art space for Hull. It is now a significant contributor to the contemporary visual arts offer in the north.

Our ambition for Humber Street Gallery is to further develop the venue into a multi-artform and multi-functional creative centre, showcasing a wide range of art and activities providing something for everyone from visual art, dance, music to spoken word. Increasingly the space will be used to showcase more work by local as well as national and international practitioners.

OPENING TIMES

GALLERY

WED – SUN: 10:00 – 17:00

GALLERY CAFÉ

Wed – Sun: 10:00 – LATE

CONTACT US

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