This one-day symposium will unearth the stories behind exhibitions that have put the practices of African and Asian descent artists on Britain’s cultural map. Lucy Steeds (Afterall Journal), artists Sonia Boyce and Keith Piper, and international curator Paul Goodwin are amongst the speakers discussing ground-breaking exhibitions such as *The Other Story*, *The Image Employed*, and *Trophies of Empire*, bringing to light how they came about, what their impact was and how the artworks in them have peppered and punctuated major developments in twentieth-century art.

#WorkBetweenUs @AHRC_BAM
Since the 1980s there have been numerous exhibitions involving black British artists that have been central in illuminating the relationship between black British artistic practices and prominent narratives in art’s histories. One such exhibition was *The Other Story*, which broke ground as the first retrospective exhibition of modernist works by British artists of African, Asian and Caribbean descent, and moreover as the first to attempt to initiate a broader and more cosmopolitan perception of British modernist art. Although *The Other Story* is often referenced in the historicisation of black British art, particularly in relation to its reception by black artists, scholars and in the press, its position in global discourses of art is often overshadowed by a perception of the exhibition as a parochial event in art history.¹ Such an understanding of *The Other Story* may have resulted from what Jean Fisher identified in her 1997 essay ‘The Work Between Us’ as our inability to assess ‘the truth of an event’ as a consequence of ‘prefabricated interpretations of reality and opinions circulated by media channels’.² If the truth of an event – or the significance and impact of an exhibition – is to be brought to light, we must first do the vital work of revisiting exhibitions as objects of study, and in a much deeper and more nuanced way.

Taking Fisher’s plea to attend to the work between us as a starting point, this one-day symposium seeks to establish a discourse within exhibition studies around black British artistic and curatorial practices through a range of exciting presentations that will examine key, but often overlooked exhibitions involving black British artists. Given that artworks are intimately bound up with the mode of their appearance in exhibitions, such a focus is essential in ensuring that black artistic practices are framed within central discourses of art and its histories, and not in the parochial spheres that their concomitant exhibitions often have been.

Issues for consideration within this might include:

- how curatorial knowledge of black British artistic practices has been constituted, and who the principal informants have been
- how certain exhibitions and the works in them have played a role in critically and historically positioning black British artistic practices in relation to central narratives in art’s histories, including modernism
- whether particular exhibitions or practices impacted the attitudes and work of galleries and organisations in the UK
- how and why certain exhibitions have been overlooked in the historicisation of British and international art
- the subsequent historiography of significant exhibitions involving black artists
- the ways artists and art institutions have since made use of certain exhibitions
- how to address the absence or omission of certain artists and artworks from these exhibitions and histories

The symposium is organised by Black Artists and Modernism (University of the Arts, London and Middlesex University) - a 3-year, AHRC funded research programme investigating the often-understated connections and points of conflict between black British artistic practices and objects and their relationship to modernism.

¹ At a 2009 symposium titled ‘Exhibitions and the World at Large’ (2009) which focused on the year 1989 and the exhibitions *Magiciens de la Terre, The Other Story* and the 36th Havana Biennale, a participant questioned the inclusion of *The Other Story*, stating that it was ‘so provincial’.
Symposium Programme

9am  Registration, Tea/Coffee

9.30am  Welcome and introductions  
Marie-Anne McQuay, Sonia Boyce, Anjalie Dalal-Clayton

10am  Lucy Steeds, Keynote  
Retelling The Other Story Now

The Other Story, curated by Rasheed Araeen in 1989, sought to represent ‘Afro-Asian Artists in Post-War Britain’. At last celebrated for challenging the racism of British art history, criticism and mainstream exhibition-making at the time, it still rewards careful revisiting now. While the catalogue takes conventional narrative form, with artists tidily grouped within a linear succession of chapters, the show itself progressively offered more complex interrelationships, with modernism first posed strongly and then updated (via postmodernism) or exceeded (via postconceptual art). Taking a tour of the exhibition on the basis of visual documentation, we will together explore the relevance of its sophisticated arguments today.

Questions and discussion

11am  Part One
The Other Story: Origins, Opinions and Outcomes  
Introduced and moderated by Anjalie Dalal-Clayton

Paul Goodwin  
Eleven Years: Notes Towards A Pre-History of The Other Story

The Other Story exhibition, curated by Rasheed Araeen, opened at London’s Hayward Gallery in November 1989 and ran until February 1990. One of the most significant and contentious exhibitions of the past thirty years, the far reaching consequences of its radical re-reading of the history of modernism in Britain are still being debated (and perhaps also still denied) today. Relatively little work, however, has been undertaken on the pre-history of this seminal enterprise. In a letter to the Arts Council in October 1978 Rasheed Araeen suggested the ‘possibility of organising a survey exhibition of the works of black artists in Britain’. Undeterred by initial delays and rebuffs to his proposal – a veritable ‘theater of refusal’ – Araeen doggedly pursued his mission of researching, curating and organising his ground breaking exhibition over a period of eleven years until its opening at the Hayward just over a decade later. This paper will suggest ways of thinking through this complex pre-history of The Other Story. This includes commentary on the voluminous correspondence between Araeen and the Arts Council; the institutional context of the relationship between discussions around modernism, exhibitions and black artists in Britain during this decade; Araeen’s approach to research and exhibition making during this period and a consideration of the notion of a ‘pre-history’ in relation to the emerging historiography of exhibitions relating to black artists’ practices.
Sophie Orlando (presented by Ella S. Mills)

*The Other Story, La Méprise*

The *Méprise* is a French term that evokes Godard’s major film *Contempt* (1963), relating tradition and modernity in cinema’s history. It also means ‘to disregard’, as well as ‘to be mistaken’. Recent analyses on *The Other Story*’s reception have developed in relation to concomitant events, such as *Les Magiciens de la Terre*, in Paris and the *Havana Biennial* in Cuba, as simultaneous and opposite sites to address the West’s sudden awakening or need to redefine contemporaneity and modernity (Jean Fisher, 2012). This paper attempts to question how the reception of *The Other Story* has established different kinds of refusal and disregard towards Black British Art in the years that followed the exhibition, and also a resistance against the discourse on artistic modernities that Rasheed Araeen proposed through the exhibition. Indeed, the press reviews reveal more about conflicts within curatorial discourse than they do about the artworks, which are barely discussed. Looking at Charles Gaines’ *The Theatre of Refusal* (1994), this paper will discuss the nature of refusal, disregard and ‘méprise’ in relation to the press reviews of *The Other Story* and how the reception of the exhibition *Plural Modernities* (2013) might help us to understand the continued refusal of *The Other Story*, long after 1989.

Alice Correia

*Where are the South Asian Artists? The Horizon Gallery Responds to The Other Story*

Between January and April 1990 The Horizon Gallery, London, staged a series of four exhibitions, showing the work of sixteen South Asian artists. Under the title, *In Focus*, the exhibitions were a response to the exclusion of young South Asian artists from Rasheed Araeen’s large-scale exhibition, *The Other Story*. Although ten artists included in *The Other Story* originated from the Indian subcontinent, including Araeen himself, Anish Kapoor and Dhruba Mistry famously declined to participate and in her review of the exhibition Rita Keegan observed that “No Asian women were included”. This paper will pay particular attention to The Horizon Gallery’s *In Focus* exhibitions: why they were deemed necessary; who, and what, was exhibited; and will conclude with some thoughts on the importance of The Horizon Gallery to broader discussions of South Asian art histories in Britain.

Questions and discussion

**12.30pm**  
Lunch

Collection points for pre-ordered ‘grab & go’ lunch bags to be announced.
Part Two
Spotlight on the North West
Introduced and moderated by David Dibosa

Anjali Dalal-Clayton
Re-Cognising Black Skin/Bluecoat

*Black Skin/Bluecoat* was a four-week exhibition staged at the Bluecoat in Liverpool in 1985, and showcased the work of four black British artists: Sonia Boyce, Eddie Chambers, Tam Joseph and Keith Piper. It frequently sits alongside *Into the Open* (1984) and *The Image Employed* (1987) in the historiography of exhibitions in the 1980s that displayed work by black British artists in the group show format. Yet, the circumstances through which the exhibition was organised and the way in which the artworks shown in it reflected new trajectories in British and modern art is largely unknown to scholars in the fields of exhibition studies and black British art history. This paper presents the critical and unique exhibition history of *Black Skin/Bluecoat*, using archival material and recent first-hand interviews with its curator and the artists that participated in it.

Bryan Biggs
*Trophies of Empire*

*Trophies of Empire* was a series of commissions that Bluecoat, working with partners in Liverpool, Bristol and Hull, presented in 1992-93 against the backdrop of the Columbus Quincentenary and the Maastricht Treaty that would herald the European Union. The commissioned artworks were made in response to the legacies of British imperialism and colonial expansion and the traces of these processes are still evident in the three English port cities. This presentation will describe the project’s curatorial process. This developed from an initial idea by artist Keith Piper whose own video installation, *Trade Winds*, created specifically for Merseyside Maritime Museum, drew on research about Liverpool’s slave trade legacy and global capital, which then broadened out into a series of 15 commissions selected from an open submission. This paper will reflect on the work in the exhibitions and the performances, using documentary images, texts, press responses and a subsequent publication, to analyse the extent to which ‘*Trophies*’ offered a different model to the ‘black group exhibition’, not least in being open to any artist; and how, taking as a starting point a highly charged anniversary, artists were able to interrogate histories that continue to impact on and inform our political, economic and cultural realities. The presentation will conclude with an overview of another collaborative exhibition that followed in 1997, *Independent Thoughts*, initiated by Bluecoat in partnership with galleries in the North and Midlands. This adopted a similar curatorial model - interrogating political and cultural histories and their continuing legacies – and was staged on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Indian Independence and the Partition of Pakistan. The exhibition concept was also initiated by an artist, Juginder Lamba, and commissions were selected from an open call, open to any artist.

Jean Hui Ng
30 years of exhibitions at the Centre for Contemporary Chinese Art

In March 1988, The Arts Council of England published a Cultural Diversity Action Plan wherein it defined Black Arts as African, Asian, Caribbean and Chinese. Since then,
debates, seminars and conferences have emerged to tackle and untangle the discourse that is inevitably tied to the new vocabulary and vernacular in British Arts. The Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art (CFCCA) stands amidst the history, chronology and narrative of such developments. Through sessions such as ‘The Impact of Mainland China on British Art and British-Chinese Artists’ in 1996, ‘A New Vocabulary for Chinese Arts’ in 1998, and ‘New Moves – Chinese Arts Conference’ in 1999, as well as a range of gallery exhibitions, CFCCA has been thoroughly engaged in the conversation surrounding the culture, content and diaspora of Chinese Art produced in and around the UK. In the past three decades, the Centre has built a track record of exhibitions, educational programmes, workshops and symposiums by, in, and around British Chinese Arts, British-Chinese artists, and a diaspora of Chinese artists from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Focussing mainly on the exhibitions The Desires of the Golden Lotus, Seeing:Out of Time, Made in China, Xu Bing and Harmonious Society, this paper will use the history of CFCCA as a case study in uncovering and discovering the evolution of Chinese Arts in the UK as subsumed within the definition of ‘Black Arts’.

Questions and discussion

The Image Employed (moderated by Alice Correia)
Bev Bytheway, Keith Piper & Marlene Smith in Conversation

The Image Employed: The use of narrative in Black art was a 5-week exhibition staged at the Cornerhouse, Manchester, in June-July 1987. Selected by artists Keith Piper and Marlene Smith, the exhibition was one of the first displays of Black art that sought to move away from a generalist, and uncritical, survey-approach to exhibiting the work of African, Caribbean and Asian diaspora artists. Instead Piper and Smith selected the theme of ‘narrative’, and sought to interrogate the varied strategies of story-telling, testimony, polemic and documentary, as well as the diverse formal techniques and modes of expression, being used by contemporary Black artists. The exhibition’s catalogue survives as a vital resource for understanding the contexts in which Black artists were exhibiting in the early 1980s, and the individual artists’ pages provide insight into their aims and working practices. However, little other archival material or documentation of the show survives, and despite its significant departure from earlier curatorial approaches to Black art, The Image Employed remains under-examined within exhibition histories of (Black) British art. This conversation between Smith, Piper and Bev Bytheway, then Exhibitions Organiser at Cornerhouse, will go some way to redressing this neglect.

Questions and discussion

3.40pm  Tea

4.10pm  Plenary Session, with questions and discussion
David Dibosa (chair), Nina Edge, Lindsey Fryer, Leon Wainwright (respondents)

5.30pm  Drinks Reception: Bluecoat Bar
Biographies

Bryan Biggs is Artistic Director of Bluecoat, Liverpool’s contemporary arts centre, and has curated extensively. He also writes about culture, his books including Malcolm Lowry: From the Mersey to the World, Art in a City Revisited and Liverpool City of Radicals. He does a drawing a day.

Bev Bytheway is a London-based independent arts consultant and curator, with strong connections to Manchester and Liverpool and a long track record in exhibition-making and project management. She worked at Cornerhouse, Manchester as part of the exhibition programming team for a then brand new centre for contemporary art and film, in its first decade from 1984-94. At Cornerhouse, she contributed to a dynamic programme of curated shows, artist commissions, live and time-based work and off-site projects for the city. From 1994-2009, She ran New Contemporaries, with Sacha Craddock and more recently, she is advising on the John Moores Painting Prize and its sister project in China, with Shanghai University. She served as a Trustee of FACT and Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art.

Sonia Boyce emerged as an artist in the early 1980s as a key figure in the Black-British art scene, with artworks that spoke about race and gender. Since the 1990s out of the spontaneous performances of others she uses the documented process to make multi-media artworks. Recent exhibitions include: Speaking in Tongues, CCA-Glasgow (2014); S/N: Signal to Noise, Whitney Museum of Modern Art/The Kitchen, New York (2015); Liberties – 40 Years Since the Sex Discrimination Act, Collyer Bristow Gallery, London (2015); and, All the World’s Futures, 56th Venice Biennale (2015). Boyce is Professor of Fine Art at Middlesex University, Chair of Black Art and Design at the University of the Arts London and is the Principal Investigator for a 3-year AHRC-funded project ‘Black Artists and Modernism’.

Alice Correia is a Research Fellow at the University of Salford. Her current research examines South Asian diaspora art and she has recently been awarded a mid-career fellowship from The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art in order to undertake a project titled “Articulating British Asian Art Histories”. She received her doctorate from the University of Sussex in 2006; her thesis examined contemporary art, (post)colonial identities and Britishness. She curated the exhibition Being British at the Stephen Lawrence Gallery in 2009. She has extensive experience teaching under- and post-graduate Art History and has also worked at the Government Art Collection, and Tate Britain, where she undertook a two year research project on Henry Moore.

Anjalie Dalal-Clayton is an art historian working on the AHRC-funded research project Black Artists and Modernism at University of the Arts London and Middlesex University. As part of the project, she is focusing on the work of artists such as Keith Piper and Uzo Egonu, and exhibitions such as Afro Modern (Tate Liverpool, 2010) and Black Skin/Bluecoat (The Bluecoat, 1985). She undertook her PhD at Liverpool John Moores University, which examined how recent exhibitions have critically and historically positioned black artists in relation to modernism and British art, and which also presented the first in-depth history of the Bluecoat’s work with black artists. Anjalie has held positions at Tate, London Borough of Southwark’s cultural development agency, and at other museums, galleries and cultural organisations in London.
David Dibosa is co-author of Post-Critical Museology: Theory and Practice in the Art Museum (Routledge, 2013). He trained as a curator, after receiving his first degree from Girton College, Cambridge. He was awarded his PhD in Art History from Goldsmiths, University of London, for a thesis titled, Reclaiming Remembrance: Art, Shame and Commemoration. During the 1990s, David curated public art projects, including In Sight In View, a billboard project in Birmingham City, England, as well as a sculpture park in the English West Midlands. From 2004-2008, he was Senior Lecturer in Fine Art Theory at Wimbledon College of Art, University of the Arts London. He remains at UAL, where he is now Course Leader for MA Curating & Collections at Chelsea College of Arts.

Nina Edge originally trained as a ceramicist and is renowned for her collaborative projects involving local communities. She has written for publications including Third Text, International Journal of Art & Design Education, Liverpool University Press and Feminist Art News. Exhibitions include Virtual Duality (Bluecoat, 1994), Mirage (ICA, 1995) Transforming the Crown (Studio Museum in Harlem, 1997), The Fifth Floor: Ideas Taking Space (Tate Liverpool, 2008), Turning FACT Inside Out (2013) as well as many site specific and live works. She is currently delivering her art and society course at Tate Liverpool and continuing a long term project on housing in Liverpool’s Welsh Streets.

Lindsey Fryer initially trained in art history and literature, and has 30 years’ experience working in gallery education. She has been Head of Learning at Tate Liverpool since 1999, where she is responsible for developing audience participation in the arts throughout the city and the region. Lindsey is also co-convenor of the Tate Liverpool Research Centre: Curatorial Practice and Museology, which has two main research strands; exploring how exhibitions can produce new forms of understanding and can facilitate its dissemination, decoding and interpretation, and, exploring the interrelation between art and life and its connection to pedagogy. Most recently Lindsey has joined the Board of Open Eye Gallery in Liverpool and has taken up the role of Chair.

Paul Goodwin is Professor of Transnational Curating, Joint Chair of Black Art & Design (with Sonia Boyce) and Director of the University of the Arts London Research Centre on Transnational Art, Identity and Nation (TrAIN). He is currently Senior Research Fellow for the AHRC Black Artists and Modernism research project based at University of the Arts London and Middlesex University.

Jean Hui Ng is the Research Curator at the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art (CFCCA) where she manages the Research Network, archive and writing within the Centre. Her research interests include Asian Art historiographies, curatorial histories, cultural policy and post-colonial discourse. She has presented and published work across various platforms including the 2014 AAH Conference, the 2015 annual UCL Stadtkolloquium, and the Quarterly Literary Review of Singapore. She was trained at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the University of Oxford.

Ella S. Mills’ doctoral research involves the 1980s surge of creative practice and activity now referred to by many as a British Black Arts Movement, focusing specifically on the negotiations and interventions of women artists of colour. Her thesis is centred on the early careers of artists such as Sutapa Biswas, Sonia Boyce, Lubaina Himid, Claudette Johnson, Ingrid Pollard, and Maud Sulter, and their participation in/relationship to the 1985 ICA exhibition, The Thin Black Line alongside the 2011/12 exhibition, Thin Black Line(s) at Tate
France. Ella holds a BA English Literature (University of East Anglia), BA Fine Art & Art History (University of Plymouth), and an MA Art History from University of Leeds.

**Sophie Orlando** is art historian, art critic, and associate professor at The Villa Arson in Nice, France. She is also a researcher at Black Artists and Modernism. She holds a Ph.D in Art History at Paris Sorbonne University (2010) looking at British Art and Britishness from 1979 to 2010, and she is the editor of *Art et Mondialisation*, Paris, Centre Pompidou, 2013. This pedagogical book constitutes the critical resources behind the rehang of the national collection, curated by Catherine Grenier and called ‘Plural Modernities from 1905 to 1970’ (23 October 2013-26 January 2015). She has worked on a critical study of a selection of canonical artworks from the Black Art Movement (*British Black Art Works: a debate on Western Art History*, Dis Voir, 2016), and on monographic research dedicated to the collaborative practices of Sonia Boyce (Residency, commission and exhibition at the Villa Arson, Nice and a publication of *Sonia Boyce, Improv!*, Villa Arson, 2016).

**Marlene Smith** is an artist, curator and UK Regional Manager for the AHRC funded, Black Artists & Modernism research project: a collaboration between Middlesex University and the University of the Arts, London where she is also a PHD candidate. Born in Birmingham, she became a member of The Blk Art Group, led the West Midlands’ “minorities arts service” and London’s Black Art Gallery. She was Director of The Public Gallery Ltd, and a NESTA fellow before returning to her artistic and curatorial practice, and in 2011, setting up The Blk Art Group Research Project with Claudette Johnson and Keith Piper. In 1986 she collaborated with Keith Piper to curate The Image Employed: the use of narrative in black art.

**Lucy Steeds** is a writer, editor and teacher specialised in exhibitions of contemporary art. Based at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London (UAL), she is Editor for Afterall’s *Exhibition Histories* research and publishing project and Pathway Leader for the MRes Art programme in Exhibition Studies. Lucy has a doctorate in cultural history from Goldsmiths College, University of London and her recent publications include *Exhibition* for the *Documents of Contemporary Art* series (Whitechapel Art Gallery and The MIT Press, 2014). Convenor of RNUAL, the doctoral research network at UAL, she is a member of UAL’s TrAIN Research Centre (committed to Transnational Art Identity and Nation).

**Keith Piper** is a visual Artist, Associate Professor of Fine Art & Digital Media and Joint Programme Leader for BA Fine Art, Middlesex University. He was a founding member of The Blk Art Group (1979-1984) and with Claudette Johnson and Marlene Smith created the Blk Art Group Research Project. As an artist he adopts a research driven approach to respond to specific issues, historical relationships and geographical sites. Over the past 30 years his work has ranged from painting, through photography and installation to a use of digital media, video and computer based interactivity.

**Leon Wainwright** is a Reader in Art History at The Open University, and recipient of the Philip Leverhulme Prize for the history of art. He is the author of *Timed Out: Art and the Transnational Caribbean* (Manchester University Press, 2011); co-editor of the book anthologies *Triennial City: Localising Asian Art* (Cornerhouse 2014) and *Objects and Imagination: Perspectives on Materialization and Meaning* (Berghahn 2015); and the journal collections ‘Disturbing Pasts: Memories, Controversies and Creativity’, and ‘Sustainable Art Communities: Creativity and Policy in the Transnational Caribbean’. His book *Phenomenal Difference: A Philosophy of Black British Art* will be published by Liverpool University Press in 2016.