

THE STATE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN BRITISH PHOTOGRAPHY

ARTISTIC LITERACY,
EDUCATIONAL ACCESS &
INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

*Organised by De Montfort University
in partnership with Black Country
Visual Arts and ReFramed with
support from the Paul Mellon Centre
for Studies in British Art*

THURSDAY 27 OCTOBER 2022, 10:00-15:00 BST / UTC+1

THE STATE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN BRITISH PHOTOGRAPHY

Artistic Literacy,
Educational Access
& Institutional Policies

Organised by De Montfort University in
partnership with Black Country Visual Arts and
ReFramed with support from the Paul Mellon
Centre for Studies in British Art

27 OCTOBER 2022
ALL TIME SLOTS UTC +1

10.00-10.15 INTRODUCTION

Anand Chhabra and Gil Pasternak

Welcoming Remarks

10.15-11.30 PANEL I Unpacking British Photography

Justin Carey

Visual Erasure and the Rise of Advocacy

Kamal Badhey

Image-making Practices of Migrant and

Diaspora Communities in the Midlands:

Expanding the Canon

Lydia Caston

Revisiting "Staying Power": A Case Study on

Collaborative Collecting

Jermaine Francis

A Post-industrial Daydream

11.30-11.45 BREAK

11.45-12.45 PANEL II Educational Empowerment and Restraints

Jagdish Patel

Race, Class and the Photography Curriculum

Anand Chhabra and Gil Pasternak

Digital Community Archives, Local History

Education and Britain's Photographic

Imagination

Giya Makondo-Wills

How to Empower Minority Students When

Undertaking a Body of Work

12.45-13.30 BREAK

13.30-14.30 PANEL III Institutional and Community Endeavours

Laura Phillips

Participation and Power: A View from Derby
Museums

Sebah Chaudhry

Photographers of Colour Navigating the Art
Scene

Ismail Khokon

At the Crossroads

14.30-15.00 CLOSING REMARKS

THE EVENT IS OPEN TO ALL

Bookings will close 1 hour prior to the start of the event. Registrants will receive a link to join the livestream via their provided email address. Registrants will also receive links for the recordings of the talks after the event.

For post-event queries contact:

Professor Gil Pasternak

Chair of Photographic Cultures and Heritage

De Montfort University

gpasternak@dmu.ac.uk

THE STATE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN BRITISH PHOTOGRAPHY

Artistic Literacy,
Educational Access
& Institutional Policies

Organised by De Montfort University in partnership with Black Country Visual Arts and ReFramed with support from the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The State of Cultural Diversity in British Photography intends to explore how artistic literacy, educational access, and institutional policies have conditioned the participation of British communities of colonial heritage in the production of British art and visual culture.

- How have culturally differentiated approaches to artistic literacies within British society influenced access to formal photographic training?
- What strategies have British citizens of colonial heritage developed to introduce and normalise the presence of their photographs in public?
- To what extent has the rising interest in safeguarding the diversity of British cultural heritage both enabled and limited the ability of British photographic practitioners of colonial heritage to participate in British culture as equals among equals?

Bringing together practitioners, curators, community activists, scholars, and policymakers from UK culture and heritage institutions, the workshop will consider such and related questions. In doing so, it will establish a platform for discussion of the realities experienced by culturally marginalised photography practitioners in their attempts to operate within British culture.

Presenters will focus on three key lines of inquiry while drawing on historical and theoretical sources as well as on personal and professional experiences. They will endeavour to unpack the notion of British photography. They will consider the role photography plays in educational empowerment. They will also analyse institutional and community photographic initiatives geared towards enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion in the development of British culture.

Special attention will be given to photographic initiatives, projects, and collections developed by British cultural minorities in England's multi-ethnic region of the Midlands as a means of claiming their right for cultural recognition in British society and its culture institutions.

It is also hoped that *The State of Cultural Diversity in British Photography* will form a productive occasion for knowledge exchange about the implications for current academic and third-sector organisations endeavouring to decentralise/decolonise art and visual culture.

Livestreamed online, the event will enable discussion and debate among the participants while also providing the means for engagement with comments and questions from the public.

THE STATE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN BRITISH PHOTOGRAPHY

Artistic Literacy,
Educational Access
& Institutional Policies

Organised by De Montfort University in
partnership with Black Country Visual Arts and
ReFramed with support from the Paul Mellon
Centre for Studies in British Art

ABSTRACT AND SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY



Justin Carey
Photographer

Based in Birmingham, UK, Justin was the recipient of a 2020 ReFramed bursary to create work about the COVID-19 pandemic. The outcome of this was exhibited at FORMAT photography festival in 2021 and published the same year in the book *The Travelling World is Not Arriving*. His *Reaching Out into the Dark* project was shown at Studio1.1 gallery in London in 2018 and has been featured on the Photo Ethics Podcast.



27 October 2022, 10.15

Visual Erasure and the Rise of Advocacy

This talk aims to demonstrate how the current moment invites photographic practitioners to empower underrepresented social groups to speak for themselves. The British photographic landscape has historically reflected a homogenous perspective. But, due to the rise of right-wing political discourse and the disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on minority communities, in recent times this landscape has been challenged by desires for more accurate reflections of the current demography of British society and its diverse cultural concerns. Drawing on photographic imagery from national institutions and Midlands-based artists, the talk will explore how the landscape of British photography is gradually becoming more reflective of the experience of marginalised British socio-cultural groups and how contemporary practitioners respond to this transformation.

THE STATE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN BRITISH PHOTOGRAPHY

Artistic Literacy,
Educational Access
& Institutional Policies

Organised by De Montfort University in
partnership with Black Country Visual Arts and
ReFramed with support from the Paul Mellon
Centre for Studies in British Art

ABSTRACT AND SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY



Kamal Badhey

Educator, researcher and
photographer

Kamal is an educator, researcher and photographer from New York with an MA in Photography and Urban Cultures, awarded by Goldsmiths, University of London. She is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Brighton working with the Midlands-based Apna Heritage Archive and the Punjabi Workers Collection. Kamal's work centres on slow forms of storytelling and unpacking complex personal narratives with family objects, photos, and stories.



27 October 2022, 10.30

Image-making Practices of Migrant and Diaspora Communities in the Midlands: Expanding the Canon

This talk will look at the ways in which family snapshots and professional “everyday photographs” of migrant and diaspora communities in the Midlands have expanded the British photographic canon through their gradual integration into local professional and community archives. More specifically, it will consider both the representation of sitters from these communities and the public circulation of photographs created by their members to examine the impact such photographs exert on the notion of British photography and on the emergence of a photographic seeing within a decolonial perspective. Drawing on a number of local photographers, community initiatives and institutional archives, the talk will demonstrate the ambiguity and socio-political characteristics of the idea of British photography and its history.

THE STATE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN BRITISH PHOTOGRAPHY

Artistic Literacy,
Educational Access
& Institutional Policies

Organised by De Montfort University in
partnership with Black Country Visual Arts and
ReFramed with support from the Paul Mellon
Centre for Studies in British Art

ABSTRACT AND SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY



Lydia Caston
Victoria and Albert Museum

Lydia is Exhibitions Project Curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. She joined the museum in 2018 to work on fashion photography projects and was the Assistant Curator of *Tim Walker: Wonderful Things* (displayed at the V&A between September 2019 and March 2020). Her recent publications include "Yellow" in the *V&A Book of Colour in Design* (2020) and two essay contributions for *Another Country: British Documentary Photography Since 1945* (2022).



27 October 2022, 10.45

Revisiting "Staying Power": A Case Study on Collaborative Collecting

In 2015, the V&A opened *Staying Power: Photographs of Black British Experience*. The exhibition was the culmination of a 7-year project between the V&A and the Black Cultural Archives that aimed to collect photographs taken by Black photographers or which document the lives of Black people in Britain. Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the partnership included research, events and acquisitions ranging from Yinka Shonibare's *Diary of a Victorian Dandy* (1998) to Raphael Albert's depictions of Black beauty pageants. This paper will take *Staying Power* as a case study to explore British museums' collaborative approaches to collecting and community engagement, questioning the project's challenges and legacy today. It will also consider the V&A's current "Collecting Policy" and ambitions to focus on African and African Diaspora artists.

THE STATE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN BRITISH PHOTOGRAPHY

Artistic Literacy,
Educational Access
& Institutional Policies

Organised by De Montfort University in
partnership with Black Country Visual Arts and
ReFramed with support from the Paul Mellon
Centre for Studies in British Art

ABSTRACT AND SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY



Jermaine Francis
Photographer and writer

Jermaine is a London-based photographer and writer. His work explores the physical and psychological negotiation of everyday spaces. Acting as a stimulus for an investigation of gender, race and class, it has been exhibited at various venues worldwide, including the International Centre of Photography (New York) and at the National Portrait Gallery (London). He recently published two books of his work, *Something that Seems So Familiar Becomes Distant* (2020) and *Rhythms from the Metroplex* (2021).



27 October 2022, 11.00

A Post-industrial Daydream

In this artist talk, Jermaine will explore some of the factors that have affected the invisibility of the working black experience and its subsequential absence in British photography. While showcasing his ongoing project, *A Post-industrial Daydream*, Jermaine will consider how the idea of “the working class” has usually applied exclusively to the white working population and how the presence of immigrants in Britain has conventionally been perceived as one of the causes for the decline of white working classes. In this sense, the talk intends to demonstrate that such a perception emanates from political positions whose roots could be traced to colonialist ideologies and that it challenges the myth about the ability of documentary photography to undermine hegemonic ideas on race.

THE STATE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN BRITISH PHOTOGRAPHY

Artistic Literacy,
Educational Access
& Institutional Policies

Organised by De Montfort University in
partnership with Black Country Visual Arts and
ReFramed with support from the Paul Mellon
Centre for Studies in British Art

ABSTRACT AND SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY



Jagdish Patel

Artist, educator, and writer

Jagdish is a socially engaged artist, educator, and writer. He mainly works on long-term projects around themes connected to human rights, anti-racism, community, and well-being. Currently a PhD candidate at Coventry University, Jagdish is researching the intersections between anti-racism activism in the Midlands and socially engaged art practice.



27 October 2022, 11.45

Race, Class, and the Photography Curriculum

This talk will explore the changes in the British photography curriculum over the past 50 years. The increasing interest in socially engaged photographic practice—particularly with people from Black and Global Majority backgrounds—raises numerous challenges for the development of the photography curriculum. These challenges include issues around challenging existing hegemonies, addressing epistemic injustice and addressing antagonism. Engaging with a wide range of scholarly research, the talk will unpack the implications of these challenges and explore ways to address them in the current climate of conflict between ethnic populism and national diversity.

THE STATE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN BRITISH PHOTOGRAPHY

Artistic Literacy,
Educational Access
& Institutional Policies

Organised by De Montfort University in
partnership with Black Country Visual Arts and
ReFramed with support from the Paul Mellon
Centre for Studies in British Art

ABSTRACT AND SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Anand Chhabra
Black Country Visual Arts



Gil Pasternak
De Montfort University

- Anand is the incumbent Chair of Black Country Visual Arts. In 2016-18, he created and profiled the Apna Heritage Archive, declared UK Best New Archive by Community Archives and Heritage Group in 2017.
- Gil is Professor of Photographic Cultures and Heritage at De Montfort University, investigating intersections of photography, cultural heritage and politics.



27 October 2022, 12.00

Digital Community Archives, Local History Education and Britain's Photographic Imagination

In our talk we will consider the potential role of community created photographic databases—and especially the challenges facing them—in endeavours to expand, complicate and contest perceived identities of national photographic histories. Focusing on the example of the Black Country based Apna Heritage Archive, we will demonstrate how photographic digitisation has empowered the local community of Punjabi migrants to document their self-identified heritage, but also how reliance on digital technology has hindered their ability to integrate their heritage into mainstream British culture and cultural memory. We will showcase our co-created Key Stage 3 student workbook *Picturing Untold Migration Experiences* (2022) to explore ways to draw on community photographic archives as a means of diversifying understandings of "British photography" through local history education.

In 2022, Anand and Gil co-produced the photography-based local history workbook *Picturing Punjabi Migration Experiences in the Black Country*. Designed for Key Stage 3 students, it was the result of their collaborative project on the same theme, which received Participatory Research funding from UKRI – UK Research and Innovation.

THE STATE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN BRITISH PHOTOGRAPHY

Artistic Literacy,
Educational Access
& Institutional Policies

Organised by De Montfort University in
partnership with Black Country Visual Arts and
ReFramed with support from the Paul Mellon
Centre for Studies in British Art

ABSTRACT AND SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY



Giya Makondo-Wills
Photographer and educator

Giya is a British-South African documentary photographer, visual artist and educator. Her practice centres on an urge to challenge visual culture and the Western gaze. Recognising the history of the camera and its role in writing new histories, Giya is working around themes such as identity, race, colonisation, the Western gaze and systems of power. She is a lecturer on the Photography BA programmes at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague (KABK) and at the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam.



27 October 2022, 12.15

How to Empower Minority Students When Undertaking a Body of Work

This talk will explore how to develop artistic practice as a minoritized photographer in British educational institutions. It will discuss the methods and tools available for educators to create safe and fruitful learning environments, with focus on students from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Considering issues such as the Western gaze, collaboration and community, curriculum diversity and the positioning of students when preparing them for industry, the discussion will also draw on Giya's photographic practice to provide an insight into how she has developed her work with decolonial thinking at the forefront of her practice.

THE STATE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN BRITISH PHOTOGRAPHY

Artistic Literacy,
Educational Access
& Institutional Policies

Organised by De Montfort University in
partnership with Black Country Visual Arts and
ReFramed with support from the Paul Mellon
Centre for Studies in British Art

ABSTRACT AND SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY



Laura Phillips
Derby Museums

Laura is Head of Interpretation and Display at Derby Museums, where she works across the Museum and Art Gallery, Pickford's House and Museum of Making sites. Prior to this, she developed community relationships and co-developed programmes at the British Museum. Particularly interested in how to make museums relevant and valuable to their local communities, her work focuses on exploration of age friendly/intergenerational practice, ways of working that connect culture, health and wellbeing, participatory practice and building mutually beneficial relationships. Laura is also East Midlands Champion for the Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance.



27 October 2022, 13.30

Photographic Collections, Participation and Power: A View from Derby Museums

This talk will explore how Derby Museums manages photographic collections and acquisitions in the context of societal change and concerns such as social diversity and cultural inclusivity. Employing a comparative approach, it will consider the history of regional museums, their values, and governance to examine how participatory community engagement connects to decision making around photographic display, interpretation and acquisition. As a means of reflecting on the value, challenges, and power dynamics entailed by collaboration with members of the public and community organisations, particular attention will be given to the project *The Centre that Powers the Road*, a partnership between Derby West Indian Community Association, Derby Museums and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, comprising artistic commissions, oral history collection and new portrait photography.

THE STATE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN BRITISH PHOTOGRAPHY

Artistic Literacy,
Educational Access
& Institutional Policies

Organised by De Montfort University in
partnership with Black Country Visual Arts and
ReFramed with support from the Paul Mellon
Centre for Studies in British Art

ABSTRACT AND SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY



Sebah Chaudhry

Creative producer and curator

Sebah has over 15-year experience as a creative producer and curator. She has worked at international world-class festivals, projects and events and she is also Co-Founder and Co-Director of ReFramed. Currently producing projects for Photoworks, Open Eye Gallery and FORMAT Festival, she is also on the Jury for UNSTUCK, the Ian Parry Scholarship and the RPS Women in Photography Bursary. Sebah is also a Steering Group member for FORMAT Festival, a Board Member for Redeye Photography Network and an RPS Trustee.



27 October 2022, 13.45

Photographers of Colour Navigating the Art Scene

This talk will consider the question of how much ethnic diversity there is in photography institutions in the Midlands and around England. While this topic has received some attention from scholars and policymakers, ethnic inequality in culture organisations continues to persist and define their activities. What effect does this reality have on fine art photographers, and why does widening ethnic representation matter? A board member of various photography organisations, Chaudhry will consider these and related questions to explore what improvements could be made. Drawing on her professional expertise, she will especially look at the methods used for diversifying workforces and offer advice for fine art photographers of colour about how to navigate their aspirations in the museums and culture sector.

THE STATE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN BRITISH PHOTOGRAPHY

Artistic Literacy,
Educational Access
& Institutional Policies

Organised by De Montfort University in
partnership with Black Country Visual Arts and
ReFramed with support from the Paul Mellon
Centre for Studies in British Art

ABSTRACT AND SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY



27 October 2022, 14.00

At the Crossroads

Ismail Khokon

Photographer

Ismail is a British visual artist of Bangladeshi origin based in Nottinghamshire, working to platform the experiences of communities whose members have been systematically marginalised. His work has most recently been featured in LOOK Photo Biennial (Liverpool 2022), Format 21 International Photography Festival (Derby 2021), and Diffusion International Photography Festival (Wales 2021). In addition to his artistic practice, Ismail is also on the Steering Group for Contemporary Visual Arts Network East Midlands (CVAN) and one of the Resident Associate Artists in the New Art Exchange (Nottingham).

Ismail embarked on a journey to Britain from Bangladesh to study for a Master's degree in Visual Art. Having endeavoured to use his artistic practice to make a living since he graduated (2010), in 2020 he received support from the ReFramed network; his artistic career began to take off. In this artist talk, Ismail will share first-hand experiences about the challenges he encountered along his way, while presenting the photographic projects he produced during his journey. Also considering how art organisations can work with migrants looking to establish themselves as artists in Britain, part of the talk will discuss the way Ismail now approaches the creative industries to make a space for his work in the British cultural sphere.

For post-event queries contact:
Professor Gil Pasternak
Chair of Photographic Cultures and Heritage
De Montfort University
gpasternak@dmu.ac.uk

*The State of Cultural Diversity in British Photography:
Artistic Literacy, Educational Access & Institutional
Policies* received support from the Paul Mellon Centre
for Studies in British Art