

**Donald Rodney**

**Visceral Canker**

**28 Sep 24 – 5 Jan 25**

**Donald Rodney was born in 1961 in West Bromwich to Jamaican parents, and grew up in Smethwick, on the outskirts of Birmingham. He studied art in Bournville, Nottingham and London throughout the 1980s, and first gained visibility as a member of the BLK Art Group: an association of young Black artists, critics and curators formed in Wolverhampton in 1982.**

**Rodney's practice was marked by a commitment to artistic experimentation, and so he worked with new materials and technologies throughout his life, from**

drawing, painting and installation to photography, animatronics, and digital media. His work is known for being incisive, acerbic and evocative in how it addresses issues around racial identity, Black masculinity, chronic illness, and Britain's colonial past.

Nottingham was a key location in Rodney's education. From 1981 – 1985 he was a student on the BA Fine Art Course at Trent Polytechnic, now Nottingham Trent University (NTU). This period was especially formative, seeing a shift from an early painting practice to a more experimental approach across a range of media, becoming deeply engaged with the social and political context of the time.

**Rodney suffered from sickle cell anaemia throughout his life, which meant persistent pain, regular invasive treatments and increasing immobility. Though these were extremely challenging experiences, he chose to actively incorporate them into his work, often as a metaphor for the illnesses and injustices of society at large.**

**Developed with the support of the Donald Rodney Estate since 2020, *Visceral Canker* brings together nearly all that survives of Rodney's work from 1982 to 1997, the year before he passed away. Also on view are sketchbooks, rare archive materials, a video by the Black Audio Film Collective, and a digital artwork completed posthumously by a group of Rodney's close friends.**

**The exhibition aims to introduce a new generation of audiences to Rodney's life and work, cementing his place as a vital figure in British art. The title comes from a 1990 work by the artist, which exemplifies both the visceral nature of his work and politics, and his persistent scrutiny of the canker, or disease, at the heart of society.**

**Nottingham Contemporary is a registered charity and dependent on the generosity of our visitors, partners and supporters. Donate today to directly support our ambitious exhibitions, and the vital work we do with artists, schools, young people, and our local community.**

**Suggested donation: £5**

## **RELATED EVENTS**

**Bonington Vitrines #25: Donald Rodney in Nottingham**

**Friday 27 Sep – Saturday 14 Dec 2024**

**An accompanying display of archival material connected to Donald Rodney's time in Nottingham is displayed in the Bonington Vitrines at NTU's Bonington Gallery.**

### **Exhibition Walkthroughs**

**Wednesday 2 Oct, 12pm**

**Welcome Walkthrough**

**Explore the exhibition with our team and community partners My Sight and**

**Communities Inc, followed by refreshments and conversation in the café.**

**Wednesday 23 Oct, 1pm**

**Curators' Walkthrough**

**Join the curators of *Visceral Canker*, Robert Leckie and Nicole Yip, for a tour of the exhibition.**

**Wednesday 20 Nov, 1pm**

**British Sign Language Exhibition Tour with Martin Glover.**

**Wednesday 27 Nov, 1pm**

**With Alinta Sara, curator.**

**Wednesday 11 Dec, 1pm**

**With Jade Foster, artist and curator.**

**12.30pm every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, starting Tuesday 8 Oct**

**Join one of our friendly Gallery Assistants for a short exploration of our current exhibition.**

**Panel Discussion**

**Saturday 2 Nov, 2 – 4pm**

**A panel discussion led by Richard Birkett, exploring the impact and legacy of Donald Rodney's experimentation with technology-based media.**

**The Screen at Contemporary**

**Our strand of arthouse, cult and classic cinema continues in October and November.**

## **Free Family Activities**

**October Half-Term: Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays, 22 – 31 Oct Explore the themes in the exhibition through making and play.**

**We Are Wonderlings: Early Years workshops  
Mondays 7 Oct, 4 & 18 Nov and 9 Dec**

**For more information about the exhibition, related events and learning programmes, visit [nottinghamcontemporary.org](http://nottinghamcontemporary.org) or scan here:**





**Donald Rodney *Visceral Canker* is generously supported by the Weston Loan Programme with Art Fund, The Henry Moore Foundation, the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, the Pilgrim Trust, the Donald Rodney Exhibition Circle & those who wish to remain anonymous.**

**The exhibition is presented in partnership with Spike Island and Whitechapel Gallery.**

**The exhibition is curated by Gasworks Director Robert Leckie and Spike Island Director Nicole Yip.**

**The exhibition would not have been possible without the guidance and support of Diane Symons and Keith Piper from the Donald Rodney Estate.**

**The archival display at Bonington Gallery has been researched and developed in collaboration with Bonington Gallery.**

**Exhibition graphics by Waste Studio.**

**If you would like a quiet space to reflect during your visit, please visit Gallery 0 (room adjacent to Gallery 1).**

**If you would like to use any alternative forms of interpretation, we have a range of accessible versions on our Access Wall beside Reception.**

**Environmental: Nottingham Contemporary is committed to advancing sustainability within the organisation and aims to explore and embed sustainable working practices and habits within our workplace and across the sector. This includes standardising environmental considerations at all stages of decision making.**

**The artworks in *Visceral Canker* all belong within UK collections and throughout the tour of the exhibition between Spike Island, Nottingham Contemporary and Whitechapel Gallery they will be transported solely by road freight. The vitrines used in the *Doublethink* (1992) installation have been purchased and reused from a previous exhibition at the ICA London. The archival**

**vitruines are on loan from Spike Island, and following the close of the tour they will be returned to the lenders and re-used in future exhibitions. The 35mm slide projectors used in *Cataract* (1991) have been loaned from local artist Frank Abbott and the archival slide reproductions used in the work have been produced by a regionally based expert Infinity Visual Communications. Where possible other materials have been borrowed, re-used or re-purposed. The exhibition graphics have been produced and installed by local suppliers Hayman Creative. Our exhibitions are always built and installed by local fine art technicians. This document is printed on FSC Mix paper (Forest Stewardship Council ® certified products**

**manufactured with a variety of sources including FSC- certified virgin fibre, controlled wood and/or recycled materials). Please return to a member of staff or recycle should you not want to keep after your visit.**