

Donald Rodney: Visceral Canker

28 September 2024 – 5 January 2025

Learning Resource

The resource is designed for **primary, secondary and post 16 students**. It can be used to support a range of curriculum subjects, including Art & Design, PSHE, Citizenship, History, Technology.

The exhibitions raise themes of **social justice, media representation, community, activism, colonial legacies, visual language, metaphor and symbolism**.

These activities are designed to be picked up and used around the galleries. We also **encourage you to adapt them to suit the needs and interests** of your group. We'd love to hear about the changes you make and your **suggestions on how they could be developed**.

The activities are **open ended with no right or wrong outcomes**. They are designed to **encourage observation, teamwork, communication and debate, making connections and learning about different perspectives** through doing and making.

There is an activity for use in different galleries with a set of **instruction cards or prompts and packs of materials**. The activities require participants to **work in small groups and then share** with the whole group. Alongside activities there are **discussion questions to encourage students to reflect on the processes and connect to the big themes** within the work.

To allow for smaller groups and numbers in each gallery, more than one activity can take place at a time. It's recommended that **a class of 30 is split into two groups**, with each half doing a different activities or in different galleries.

We encourage students and staff to document responses. We'd love to see your experiences and invite you to share photos and feedback on social media channels **@nottm_contemp**

We hope the resources support connections and enjoyment of the exhibitions.

Please return resources to the reception and let us know about how you and your students experienced them.

Thank you.

Sketch-A-Doodle Gallery 3 (plus Gallery 1 or 2)

Work in small groups of no more than 4

Take a look at Donald's sketchbooks in Gallery 3.

Donald Rodney kept sketchbooks all his life. Inside are a mixture of sketches, designs for future artworks, thoughts and found materials.

Use the prompt cards and inspiration in the galleries to respond to the prompts and develop your collaborative sketchbook.

Share images from your sketchbook with the #NCmaking to contribute to an online digital sketchbook.

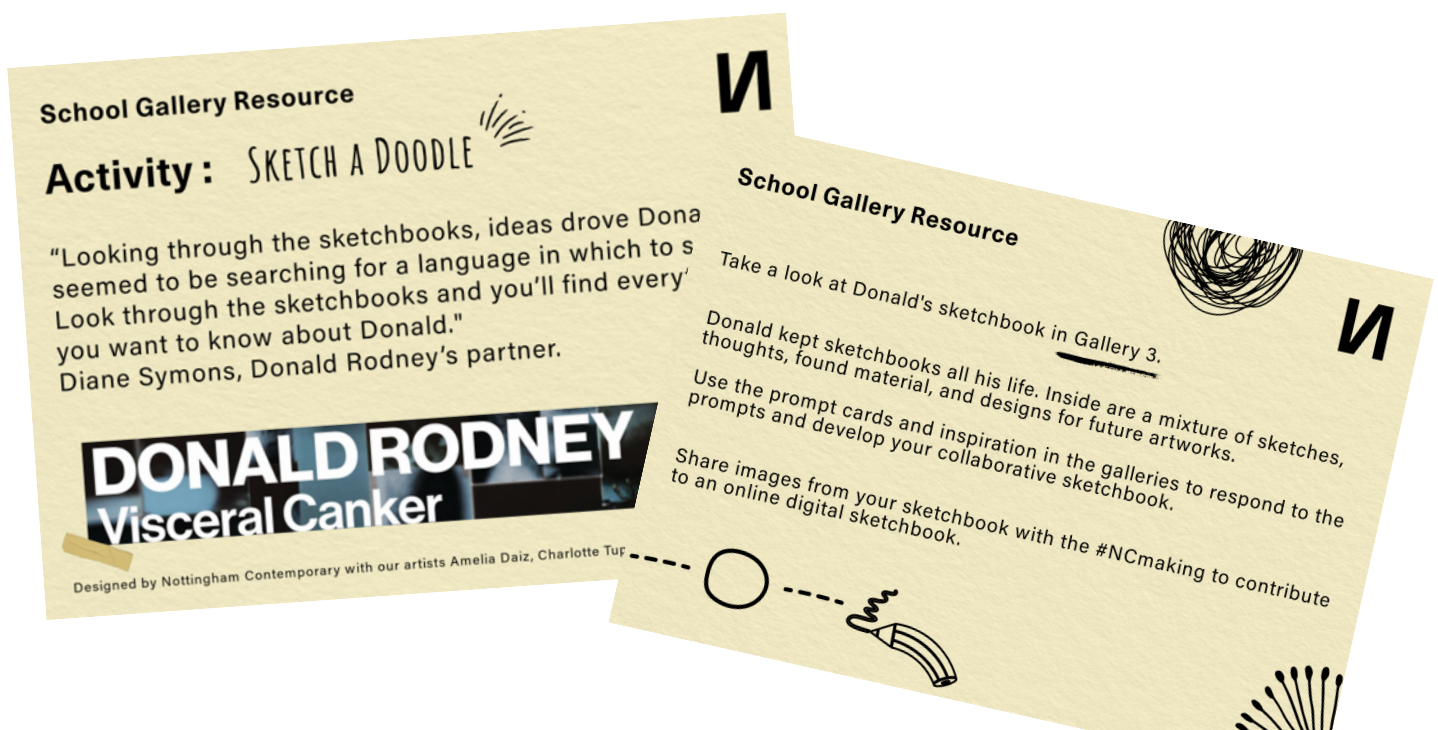
Resources: pencils, prompt cards, sketchbook template, sheet of large paper

Activity:

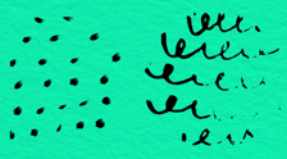








- Unfold your paper flat on the floor
- Choose a prompt card from the bag
- Record your ideas on the paper. Overlap and work across the page
- Now choose another prompt
- Repeat

Back in school:

- Use the guide to turn your sheet of paper into a sketchbook
- Introduce colour
- Add collage elements using our exhibition posters
- Take a photo of your sketchbook. Can you edit it digitally?



Prompt Cards:

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Prompt Card</p> <p>Sketch a section of your favourite piece of art in the exhibition: jot shapes, lines or textures to represent what you noticed and remember.</p>  | <p>Prompt Card</p> <p>Design a symbol that represents something you care about.</p>  | <p>Prompt Card</p> <p>Draw and describe an object you've lost, and still hope to find.</p>  |
| <p>Prompt Card</p> <p>Find a friend and sketch portraits of each other. Choose whether you draw their whole face, parts of their face or different features on separate parts of the page.</p>  | <p>Prompt Card</p> <p>What words do you feel represent you? Sketch, jot, doodle these words. How can you change the way you write the words? Can they be small, in a shape, bubble writing, shaded or drawn in a shape.</p>  | <p>Prompt Card</p> <p>Find a shape in the exhibition. Can you draw this object over and over again to create a pattern? Make it bigger? Smaller? Can you overlap it with another person's sketch?</p>  |
| <p>Prompt Card</p> <p>Doodle something that makes you feel good.</p>  | <p>Prompt Card</p> <p>Map your journey through the exhibition. Note any moments you stopped to look at the artwork.</p>  | <p>Prompt Card</p> <p>Write an instruction for the next person who might use this sketchbook.</p>  |

Donald's Wide Web Gallery 1, 2 or 3

Work in small groups

In this activity you will find out more about Donald's work and the events and experiences that influenced him.

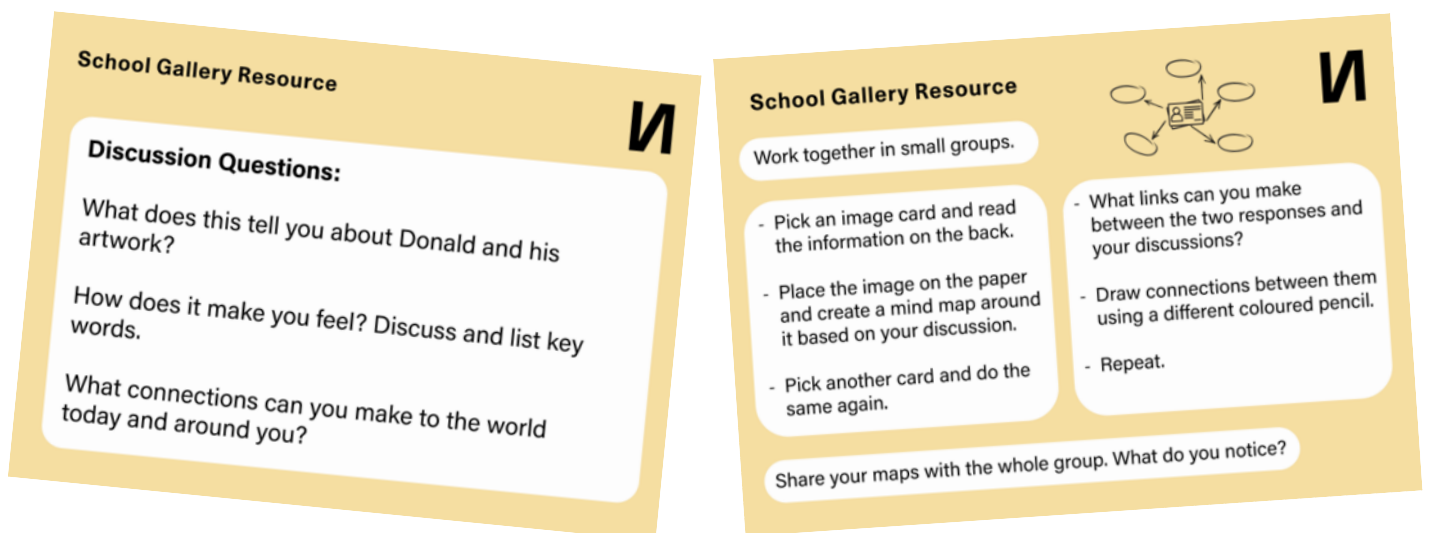
In Donald's artwork you can make connections and see ideas and images being returned to. Find out more and make your own connections.

Work together in small groups to discuss and map what you learn, how you feel and what it makes you think about.

Resources: pencils, image cards, sheet of large paper

Activity:

- Pick an image card and read the information on the back
- Place the image on the paper and create a mind map around it based on your discussion (see prompt card for discussion questions)
- Pick another image card and do the same again
- What links can you make between your two responses and discussions? Draw connections between them using a different coloured pencil.
- Repeat.
- Share your maps with the whole group. What do you notice?



Extension:

- Take a look at the drawings and silhouettes for the artwork **Soweto Guernica**.
- Each person picks a word / phrase from your mind map and creates a pose inspired by it
- Join together and create a line of body poses
- How can you change your body to respond to the word in the most deeply felt way?

Example Image cards:

School Gallery Resource

Mexico Olympics and John Barnes (Gallery 2)



Donald Rodney, John Barnes, 1991. Donald Rodney, Mexico Olympics, 1991 © The Estate of Donald Rodney. Photo © British Council Collection

School Gallery Resource

Mexico Olympics and John Barnes (Gallery 2)

1968 American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos stand on the winning podium and raise a Black power salute in a stand for civil rights for Black citizens in America. They are subsequently banned from the Olympic Village and sent home.

"I met Malcolm X as a child and had the opportunity to run through the streets with him for a year and a half to get as much knowledge from him as I could. He gave me the foundation and Martin gave me the wisdom to present myself in Mexico City where we could make a resounding statement that would reach the far ends of the earth." John Carlos.



School Gallery Resource

Birmingham 1960s



Malcolm X visits Marshall Street in Smethwick, 1965. (Image: Mirrorpix)

School Gallery Resource

Birmingham 1960s

Donald Rodney grew up in Smethwick, on the outskirts of Birmingham in the 60s.

1964 Conservative candidate, Peter Griffin wins the local election in Smethwick. His campaign draws on racist slogans and takes an anti-immigration stance.

1965 Civil Rights campaigner Malcolm X visits Smethwick, Birmingham. His visit gives confidence to local people fighting racism. Later that year the Labour government passes the first Race Relations Act.



School Gallery Resource

Psalms (Gallery 4)

A programmed, motorised wheelchair that moved around the gallery. It was developed when Donald was making work about his father's death and his own experience of sickle cell anaemia. Donald missed the exhibition this artwork was made for due to illness.

2022 University of York is awarded £2.3 million by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Microsoft) for new research for sickle cell anaemia.



School Gallery Resource

Psalms (Gallery 4)



Donald Rodney, Psalms (1997). Courtesy the Estate of Donald Rodney and Tate.



Re-framed Gallery 2

Work in small groups

Look around Gallery 2. What materials does Donald use? What are the different ways he creates artworks? What technologies does he use?

Donald was very experimental in his approach to making artwork. He used x-rays and lightboxes. He said, *“with x-rays you’re looking beneath the surface to see what the structure of things really are”*.

He selected materials and ways of working to help him say the things he wanted to say. Why do you think he chose to use them? He makes mechanisms and structures visible to talk about how systems uphold the ills and injustices in society.

Donald uses images from the media to create layered works that examine how people are misrepresented. He asks people to think about stereotypes and prejudices, especially about race and identity. Through his art, Donald expressed his resistance to racist views in society.

Discussion: As a group pick apart the definition of a stereotype. Discuss together why they can be harmful. What is the opposite of a stereotype? How can we challenge stereotypes and respond when we hear them?

Key word: Stereotype - A belief or an assumption about a person based on part of their identity. Stereotypes are usually negative and always harmful. They stop people being seen as individuals with all the rich layers who make up who they are.

Friendship, community and connection with others were important to Donald. Choose one of these words: **belonging, friendship, community, unique, whole**

Discussion: Take it in turns to generate words you think of when you hear this word. What does this word mean to you?

Resources: lightbox, a selection of images printed onto acetate, tracing paper and coloured paper shapes, pencils and tracing paper

Activity:

- Create a group picture inspired by your words and conversations.
- Use the shapes and images in your pack and add your own words and drawings to create something unique.
- Talk as you create. Find out more about each other. Explore your connections.
- Share your work. What do you notice about the work of each group?

Discussion: How can words and images be positive and empowering?

Nottingham Contemporary Learning Resources



School Gallery Resource



Activity: SKETCH A DOODLE

"Looking through the sketchbooks, ideas drove Donald. He seemed to be searching for a language in which to say that. Look through the sketchbooks and you'll find everything you want to know about Donald."

Diane Symons, Donald Rodney's partner.

DONALD RODNEY Visceral Canker



Designed by Nottingham Contemporary with our artists Amelia Daiz, Charlotte Tupper and Holly Nowak

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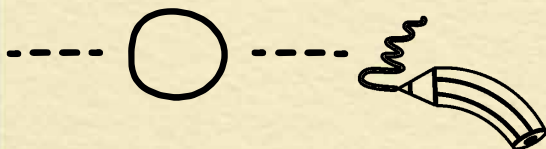


Take a look at Donald's sketchbooks in Gallery 3.

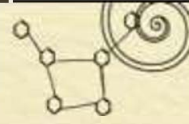
Donald kept sketchbooks all his life. Inside are a mixture of sketches, thoughts, found material, and designs for future artworks.

Use the prompt cards and inspiration in the galleries to respond to the prompts and develop your collaborative sketchbook.

Share images from your sketchbook with the #NCmaking to contribute to an online digital sketchbook.



School Gallery Resource



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Activity:

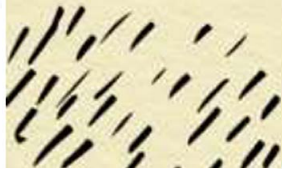


MATERIALS:

- Pencils
- Prompt cards
- Sketchbook template
- Sheet of paper

HOW TO ...

- Work in small groups of no more than 4.
- Unfold your paper flat on the floor.
- Choose a prompt card from the bag.
- Record your ideas on the paper. Overlap and work across the page.
- Now choose another prompt.



School Gallery Resource

N

Back in School...



Use the sketchbook instructions guide to make your sketchbook from the A1 piece of paper.

Introduce colour to aspects of your sketch-doodles

Use your sketchbook to build a layered collage using the exhibition posters

Take a photo of your sketchbook – can you edit it digitally?



Prompt Card

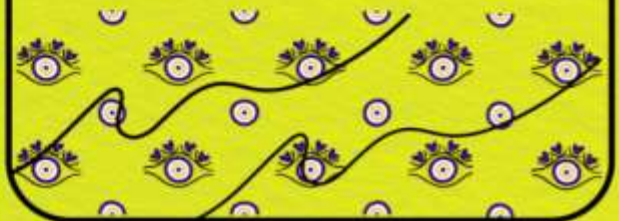
Draw and describe an object you've lost, and still hope to find.



Prompt Card

Find a shape in the exhibition.

Can you draw this object over and over again to create a pattern?
Make it bigger? Smaller?
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Prompt Card

Sketch a section of your favourite piece of art in the exhibition: jot shapes, lines or textures to represent what you noticed and remember.



Prompt Card

Design a symbol that represents something you care about.



Prompt Card

Find a friend and sketch portraits of each other.

Choose whether you draw their whole face, parts of their face or different features on separate parts of the page.



Prompt Card

What words do you feel represent you? Sketch, jot, doodle these words. How can you change the way you write the words? Can they be small, in bubble writing, shaded or drawn in a shape?



Prompt Card

Doodle something that makes you feel good.



Prompt Card

Map your journey through the exhibition. Note any moments you stopped to look at the artwork.



Prompt Card

**Write an instruction for
the next person who
might use this
sketchbook.**



A large, empty rectangular area with rounded corners and a black border, intended for writing an instruction.

School Gallery Resource



Activity : Re-framed Donald Rodney : Visceral Canker

Look around Gallery 2. What materials does Donald use? What are the different ways he makes art? What technologies does he use?

Donald was very experimental when making artwork. He used X-rays and lightboxes. He said, **“with x-rays you’re looking beneath the surface to see what the structure of things really are”**.

Why do you think he chose to use them?

He makes mechanisms and structures visible to talk about how systems uphold the ills and injustices in society.

Designed by Nottingham Contemporary with our artists Amelia Daiz, Charlotte Tupper and Holly Nowak

School Gallery Resource



Donald uses images from the media to create layered works that examine how people are misrepresented. He asks people to think about stereotypes and prejudices, especially about race and identity. Through his art, Donald expressed his resistance to racist views in society.

Key word - Stereotype: A belief or an assumption about a person based on part of their identity. Stereotypes are usually negative and always harmful. They stop people being seen as individuals with all the rich layers who make up who they are.

Discussion: As a group pick apart the definition of a stereotype above. Together discuss why they can be harmful.

What is the opposite of a stereotype?

How can we challenge stereotypes and respond when we hear them?

School Gallery Resource



Friendship, community and connection with others were important to Donald.

Working together in small groups, choose one of these words:

belonging

friendship

community

unique

whole

Take it in turns to generate words you think of when you hear this word. What does this word mean to you?

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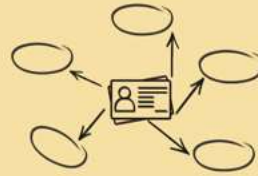


Work in small groups with the box of materials.

- A lightbox
 - A selection of images on acetate, tracing paper & paper shapes
 - Pencils & tracing paper
-
- Create a group picture inspired by your words and conversations.
 - Use the shapes and images in your pack.
 - Add your own words/drawings to create something unique.
 - As you create, talk together. Find out more about each other and explore your connections.
 - Share the work you've created with the other groups. What do you notice about the work of each group?

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Share your maps with the whole group. What do you notice?

School Gallery Resource



Activity: Donald's Wide Web Donald Rodney: Visceral Canker



In this activity you will find out more about Donald's work and the events and experiences that influenced him.

In Donald's artwork you can sometimes see ideas and images being returned to. Find out more and make your own connections.

Work together in small groups to discuss and map what you learn, how you feel and what it makes you think about.



Discussion Questions:

What does this tell you about Donald and his artwork?

How does it make you feel? Discuss and list key words.

What connections can you make to the world today and around you?



Extension:

Take a look at the drawings and silhouettes for the artwork Soweto/ Guernica.

Each person pick a word or phrase from your map and create a pose inspired by it.

Join together and create a line of body poses.

How can you change your body to respond to the word in the most deeply felt way?



School Gallery Resource



Soweto / Guernica (Gallery 3)



Donald Rodney, Soweto/Guernica, 1988 ©The Estate of Donald Rodney

School Gallery Resource



Soweto / Guernica (Gallery 3)

Based on the Soweto Uprising, this artwork no longer exists. Fragments of it and plans of the work are displayed in Gallery 3. At the centre, a figure carries a boy who has been shot. This is taken from a famous image captured when violence erupted.

1976 Black students take to the streets to protest about being taught in Afrikaans - the language of the oppressive white South African state. Police open fire and kill 13-year old Hector Pieterse.

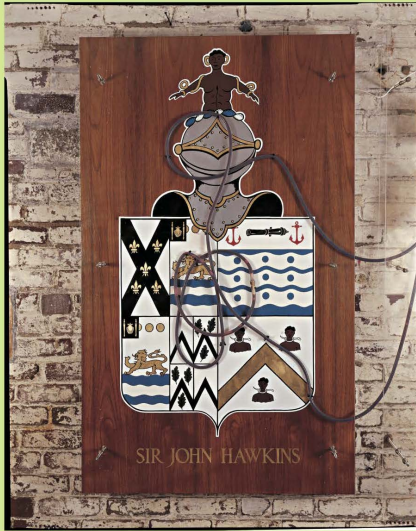
"[The police] started shooting and we were unarmed. We were just students, what we had [were] only pens. So, we retaliated, and we ended up throwing stones back to them."

Personal Account of the Soweto Uprising.

School Gallery Resource



Visceral Canker (Gallery 2)



Donald Rodney, Visceral Canker, 1990(detail). ©The Estate of Donald Rodney Collection Tate.

School Gallery Resource



Visceral Canker (Gallery 2)

The artwork consists of two wooden plaques displaying the coats of arms of Sir John Hawkins and Queen Elizabeth I, linked by medical tubes and electrical pumps that circulate fake blood.

1564 Sir John Hawkins is granted the use of a ship from Queen Elizabeth I's fleet for the trading of enslaved people. His expeditions set the path for what would become the start of the English slave trade.

Much of the current royal family's wealth is owed to the trade of enslaved people, as well as the wealth of the Treasury and Britain's industries.

School Gallery Resource



Windrush



©Joseph Haywood Magee/Getty Images, 1956, West Indian Arrivals

School Gallery Resource



Windrush

Donald's parents moved to England from Jamaica in the 1950s as part of the Windrush Generation.

1948 The ship the Empire Windrush arrives from the Caribbean to Britain.

The Windrush Generation were invited by government to move here to help rebuild the country and fill jobs after the war.

The Windrush Generation were hopeful when they arrived, but they and their children experienced racism in the UK.

School Gallery Resource



Britannia Hospital 3 (Gallery 1)



BRITANNIA HOSPITAL 3

Donald Rodney, Britannia Hospital 3, 1998. ©The Estate of Donald Rodney. Collection of Sheffield Museums.

School Gallery Resource



Britannia Hospital 3 (Gallery 1)

This artwork features a female figure that references Cherry Groce.

1985 Cherry Groce is wrongfully shot by police in her home and left paralysed. Within hours, young people clash with police in the streets of Brixton, South London.

School Gallery Resource



Mexico Olympics and John Barnes (Gallery 2)



Donald Rodney, John Barnes, 1991. Donald Rodney, Mexico Olympics, 1991© The Estate of Donald Rodney.
Photo © British Council Collection

School Gallery Resource



Mexico Olympics and John Barnes (Gallery 2)

1968 American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos stand on the winning podium and raise a Black power salute in a stand for civil rights for Black citizens in America. They are subsequently banned from the Olympic Village and sent home.

"I met Malcolm X as a child and had the opportunity to run through the streets with him for a year and a half to get as much knowledge from him as I could. He gave me the foundation and Martin [Luther King Jr.] gave me the wisdom to present myself in Mexico City where we could make a resounding statement that would reach the far ends of the earth."

John Carlos.

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BLK Art Group Archive Material (Gallery 1)



Donald Rodney, The First National Black Art Convention. Courtesy of Collection of Keith Piper.

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BLK Art Group Archive Material (Gallery 1)

Donald Rodney studied art at Trent Polytechnic in Nottingham and lived in Hyson Green.

1984 Radical Black Art: A Working Convention is held.

Donald co-founded the BLK Art Group that worked to empower Black artists and encouraged artists to be more political. The group shaped art history and included prominent artists.

School Gallery Resource



Birmingham 1960s



Malcolm X visits Marshall Street in Smethwick, 1965. (Image: Mirrorpix)

School Gallery Resource



Birmingham 1960s

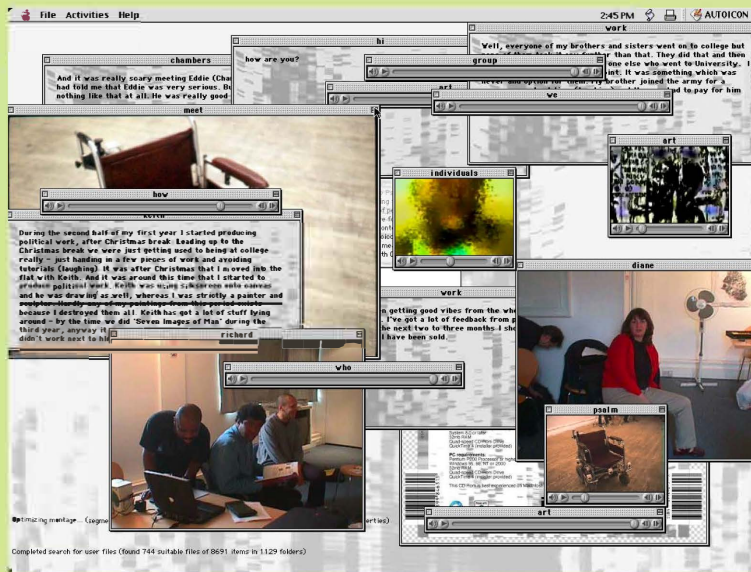
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1965 Civil Rights campaigner Malcolm X visits Smethwick, Birmingham. His visit gives confidence to local people fighting racism. Later that year the Labour government passes the first Race Relations Act.

School Gallery Resource

Autoicon (Gallery 3)



Screenshot of Donald Rodney: Autoicon, 2000, CD-ROM version. Courtesy the Estate of Donald Rodney

School Gallery Resource

Autoicon (Gallery 3)



A pioneering digital interactive artwork. Conceived in the late 90s and made after his death by his friends working together as 'Donald Rodney PLC'

Donald knew that his time was limited, and so wanted to make a virtual version of himself that would outlive him. The work allows visitors to have a conversation with a virtual version of Donald.

2022 ChatGPT, an AI chatbot that can generate human like information and conversation.

School Gallery Resource



Psalms (Gallery 4)



Donald Rodney, Psalms (1997). Courtesy the Estate of Donald Rodney and Tate.

School Gallery Resource



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