

# Art, Activism, Race and Social Justice from 1976 to today

Thu 16 Feb 2017  
Nottingham Contemporary



© Indian Workers Association (G.B.)

An evening discussion with artists and community activists, examining the role of art and culture at key moments in the struggle for racial justice in Britain.

The Black writer and activist, John la Rose once commented that for Black and Asian people, "we experience things culturally and politically, for us art and culture is not decoration, art came from a certain type of historical experience, art and cultural helps to dream to change the world."

In this event, we will be exploring the history of Black and Asian activism in this country over the past century, and thinking about lessons for the future. The speakers will be exploring the history of Black activism in the UK and its relationship with black artists, how we can use archival material from past activism for art projects now, plus current issues around racism now.

## Programme

6.30pm – Introduction by Panya Banjoko

Historical overview of black activism and how it interacts with art by Jagdish Patel (40 min approx.)

The Grunwck "We are lions" exhibition and using archival material for exhibitions by Poulomi Desai (30 min approx.)

Current issues around tackling racism and Brexit by Suresh Grover (20 min approx.)

Poetry reading by Panya Banjoko (10 min approx.)

Q&A

8.30pm – Approximate ending time.

## Speaker Biographies

Jagdish Patel is a Nottingham based artist and member of the anti-racist charity, The Monitoring Group. He is also part of the international art collective, Blank Atlas; The Nottingham Photographers' Hub; and Primary Studios in Nottingham.

**Panya Banjoko** is a British writer of Caribbean descent whose work reflects her mixed heritage. She has been published in IC3 by Penguin, performed at the 2012 Olympic Games and is the existing co-founder of Nottingham Black Archive. She advocates on behalf of Black writers in Nottingham and is Patron for Nottingham City of Literature. It has been said of her work, 'What you get when listening to Panya is a profound sense of listening to a teacher. Her poetry is hip-hop energy fused with a hymnal element. Her trademark is a penchant for grand themes in small sentences. There's lots of shrewd thought but its poetry we can all grasp without the need to constantly hit the rewind button.' Sable Magazine.

For more info: [panyabanjoko.wordpress.com/](http://panyabanjoko.wordpress.com/)

**Poulomi Desai** is currently a Leverhulme Research Fellow at Heritage Quay archives / British Music Collection - University of Huddersfield, Curator / Project Manager of "We are the Lions" - the first comprehensive exhibition about the Grunwick strike in the 70s and runs the Usurp Art space in Harrow, London. She is self-taught and has been involved in performance, curatorial projects, live art, sound and photography installations interrogating the politics of identity, listening and perception inspired by her activist background and DIY post punk for over 30 years. She creates performances / compositions with modified sitars, electronics and VLF radio - solo, duos and ensembles.

For more info: [www.poulomidesai.tumblr.com/](http://www.poulomidesai.tumblr.com/) / [www.usurp.org.uk/](http://www.usurp.org.uk/) / [youtube.com/usurps](http://youtube.com/usurps)

**Suresh Grover** has been involved in anti-racist civil rights work since his early teens. In the late 1970's and early 1980's, he helped to set up a number of key groups in Outer West London, namely the Southall Youth Movement and Southall Rights. He was also one of the founders of the Southall Monitoring Group, now known as The Monitoring Group. He has extensive knowledge of race related legislation and policy and is recognised nationally for his advocacy work. He is the leading exponent of family and justice campaigns in the UK. The Guardian Newspaper has described him as one of the hundred most influential people in Social Policy in the UK. He continues to develop international public interest campaigns to support communities suffering discrimination, racism and genocide as well as those affected by ecological disasters induced by either state or corporate neglect. He is currently writing his book on race relations in the UK, due to be published next year.

For more info: [www.tmg-uk.org](http://www.tmg-uk.org)

## **Forthcoming events at Nottingham Contemporary**

### **The Time is Now? Screening 2**

**Sat 25 Feb, 2-5pm**

A series of screenings of Black and Asian films from 1980s-today curated by June Givanni. We will show five short films made by women filmmakers followed by a Q&A with artist Suman Bhuchar.

### **Migrant Media Film Night**

**Tue 28 Feb, 6.30-8.30pm**

Screenings of *Who Polices The Police?* (2012) and *Britain's Black Legacy* (1991). Followed by a panel discussion with director Ken Fero, Marica Rigg (sister of Sean Rigg), Lisa Robinson (Bright Ideas Nottingham) and Rob Graham (Nottingham City Monitor).

### **Nottingham Black Archive Presentation**

**Sat 4 Mar, 2-5pm**

Find out what this archive holds in its collection at this talk by Collections Manager Panya Banjoko.

### **Writing Workshop with Panya Banjoko**

**Sat 11 Mar, 2-5pm**

Led by award-winning poet Panya Banjoko, participants in this workshop will write a piece in response to some of the issues and works from the exhibition *The Place Is Here*.