

## Nottingham Contemporary Teacher / Group Leader Notes

Paul Mpagi Sepuya: Exposure  
Dora Budor: Again

27 January – 5 May 2024

**Featuring:** Photography, sculpture, film, installation.

**Curriculum:** Art & Design, Photography, Geography, History, PSHE, SRE, Citizenship, English and creative writing.

**Themes:** Social justice, politics of architecture, design and public space, community, identity and relationships as well as supporting an LGBTQ+ curriculum.

Both Paul Mpagi Sepuya and Dora Budor are interested in looking and social relationships. They play with perspectives and ask the viewer to think about the presence and framing of images or objects. Both reveal and conceal in different ways.

Dora makes artworks about the hidden architecture around us and asks questions about social structures and about who and what spaces are for – who they include and exclude.

Paul uses his camera, mirrors and filters to play with sightlines and reveal (partially) his studio and the friends, lovers and creatives who gather there. We often look at images within images in his work and he uses the objects in his studio to hint at other stories.



Studio Mirror (\_DSF6207), 2023. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich, Paris.

Paul's photographs feature nudity and reference classical poses of Greek sculpture. They are intimate images of people's bodies. Our team can share more information and suggest ways to introduce or navigate content with your group.

The exhibition continues as an opportunity to keep exploring inclusive cross-curriculum learning and conversations about intersectional identities and LGBTQ+ Curriculum.

## Gallery 1 and 2 Paul Mpagi Sepuya: Exposure

*Exposure* is an exhibition showcasing work by LA based artist, Paul Mpagi Sepuya. The exhibition brings together over forty intimate studio portraits and three new sculptural works.



Dark Room Studio Mirror (0X5A3797), 2022. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich, Paris.

The images are full of spontaneous compositions and happy accidents where he often doesn't know the outcome. Within his work, you will see many different types of mirrors. He will take photographs within the mirror, purposely using black cloth to show smudges and smears that highlight the presence of the mirror. The mirror is used to disrupt the gaze of the viewer, acting as another layer within a layer, within a layer. The tripod and camera inside the image act as both the subject and the tool to create images.



Paul Mpagi Sepuya: Exposure Installation shot at Nottingham Contemporary, 2024.

*Exposure* has been designed to use doorways as additional frames - using the space to create additional layers, directing the viewer through corridors, corners and sightlines.

Paul's practice focuses on the mechanics of photography – how images are made. He is interested in the medium of photography itself, his subjects being secondary to the act of image-making. His photographs experiment with photographic processes, lighting conditions and exposures times.

He offers his studio as a social space for play and empowerment, where the people in his images – often a part of his queer and creative communities - can experiment with self – presentation and portraiture.

His works often feature props and furniture seen in early portrait studios – velvet cushions and woven rugs, European pedestals and African stools - objects from the height of Europe's colonial exploits.

## Gallery 3 and 4 Dora Budor: Again

Dora Budor is a Croatian-born artist her work explores architecture as a tool to control public space and its citizens. This site-specific commission responds to the context of Nottingham. Dora was based at Primary Studios (an artist space and former Primary school in Lenton) making artworks and exploring the city. You may recognise local places in her exhibition posters.

Dora has created artworks that resemble Anti Urinary Devices (AUDs) to comment on the way architecture is used to control public behaviour. The AUD sculptures in Gallery 3 are made of pulped cardboard boxes used to transport alcohol to local pubs and shops. Dora often repurposes materials, enjoying reusing materials in a difficult, laborious process to create something special and precious out of materials that might be thrown away or are worthless.

The moulds to create the work are displayed as artworks in Gallery 4. These were created from scans of the AUDs in Fleet Street in London – a place associated with our national press and law courts, which set and disseminate expectations around moral codes. If you pass the National Justice Museum on the way to the gallery, you'll see an example of this architectural device.

The video work in Gallery 4 features a public space in New York, near to where Dora lives. It is designed by architect, Thomas Heatherwick – his designs form the plans for the development of the Broadmarsh Centre.



Image courtesy of the artist

The video work is critical of Heatherwick's work. Dora prompts conversation around private space and public space, and questions who can access and use these spaces.

Wall based artworks, made from powdered placebo tablets, and stretched sandpaper, critique wellness and self-care industries, and a society that values people as merely productive workers. Like Heatherwick's designs, Dora thinks that these, despite seeming to be a solution are in fact a part of the problem.

Much like Paul's work, Dora's work is layered. Throughout the exhibition there are connections and nods to histories that the audience is prompted to try and find. She is interested in how an original source can be lost because of the structures that prioritise some stories and versions of histories over others. This informs the title of the exhibition – *Again*.