



PRESS RELEASE:

UNTITLED: art on the conditions of our time

UNTITLED proposes an open platform to experience artworks by the leading generation of contemporary African diaspora artists in the UK. This significant exhibition produced by New Art Exchange, Nottingham, charts current strategies and modes of creation in a vast range of media including painting, drawing, performance, film, printmaking, bookbinding, socially engaged practice and gaming technology. Through twelve artists' perspectives, these works explore offer unique approaches and viewpoints on our present cultural condition.

The renowned artists within the exhibition map a variety of exciting artistic practices, allowing organic and unexpected connections to be made between the works. It showcases complex forays into some of the most pressing concerns of the present time: from shifting racial, sexual and gendered identities, to investigations of popular culture, social networks and the internet, activism and a critique of institutions, and history and conflict. The exhibition creates a stimulating open platform where ideas can interplay.

Curated by Paul Goodwin (University of the Arts London) and Hansi Momodu-Gordon (Future Assembly), *UNTITLED* proposes a new way to present works by African diaspora artists, with the energy of the exhibition being driven by a focus on the diverse range of practices and thematic concerns generated by the artists and artworks themselves. The exhibition has been formed through extensive dialogue between the curators and artists. Momodu-Gordon explains:

"UNTITLED is conceived as an open platform designed to facilitate direct encounters with the works of art; to foster open ended questions and to invite audiences to seek answers for themselves. The breadth of work on exhibition, from history painting to the use of gaming technology, live performance to sculpture, showcases the multiple, unbound, relational perspectives of contemporary artists in the UK. The exhibition will be an opportunity to experience new and rarely seen works, alongside more iconic pieces chosen to reflect the artists' broader practice."

Goodwin reflects on the key concerns of artists working today and how the artworks relate to current conditions of culture. He explains:

"To be a young artist today, black or otherwise, is to be part of a generation that has more access to information through the internet, taking interest in global issues. In an increasingly visual society where we are constantly looking at phone and computer screens, artists are now drawing inspiration from all kinds of imagery and are questioning who controls these images and what they mean. This is not a show "about" a coherent movement - instead it presents works by British African diaspora artists outside of the usual framing - untitled."

The new exhibition first opens at New Art Exchange, Nottingham- the largest centre for culturally diverse arts in the UK, and features two brand new commissions. **Larry Achiampong and David Blandy** premiere a new instalment of *Finding Fanon, Gaiden*, a series where the artists discover the work of political humanist Frantz Fanon as a way of finding their own relationship to colonialism. **Barby Asante's** socially engaged practice engages with young adults living in Nottingham as co-researchers to map unconventional, yet wholly important, forms of local knowledge about art and culture.

Melanie Kidd, Director of Programmes of New Art Exchange describes the importance of the exhibition to the gallery:

"UNTITLED has been a fantastic opportunity to reflect on our own work as an organisation dedicated to promoting racially and culturally diverse artists as we head towards our 10 year anniversary. The deliberately

‘uncurated’ approach of the show has stimulated important questions about how to support and promote BAME artists without over framing and in turn limiting the potential of the art. We feel the result is a refreshing and contemporary exhibition, and we look forward to sharing the approach with other spaces in England as the show heads out on its national tour later in 2017.”

Through *UNTITLED*, key themes and concerns arise. This includes the world of digital communication and social media which underlies artworks, from **Barby Asante**’s use of mapping technology, to **Achiampong** and **Blandy**’s use of digital avatars in *Finding Fanon*.

Addressing the challenge in how collective memory is preserved, **Kimathi Donkor**’s paintings re-imagine history, and **Barbara Walker**’s charcoal drawings of Black servicemen show their contribution and sacrifices which are often overlooked.

The role of popular culture is analysed through **Harold Offeh**’s humorous re-enactments of iconic album covers, **NT**’s montages of popular films that add layers of criticality, and through **Appau Junior Boakye-Yiadom**’s sculpture where balloons are playfully used to re-enact Michael Jackson’s dance stance.

Themes around the migrant crisis and globalisation prevail in **Pheobe Boswell**’s large-scale drawing of the comings and goings in public space. **Evan Ifekoya** is inspired by night life culture and performative gesture, working in a range of mediums such as drawing, installation and video. **Ima-Abasi Okon** explores material and conceptual connections between minimalism and romanticism through site responsive installation.

UNTITLED adopts a progressive curatorial model, where the focus is on the interplay between a series of exciting contemporary works unmediated by a singular theme, leading the way for new ways of thinking about art by African diaspora artists displacing a fixed curatorial narrative. The partially undefined, open nature of the exhibition makes it a catalyst for the public to gain understanding of our contemporary moment, whilst also looking ahead to the future.

Exhibiting Artists

Larry Achiampong & David Blandy	Kimathi Donkor	Harold Offeh
Barby Asante	Evan Ifekoya	Ima-Abasi Okon
Appau Junior Boakye-Yiadom	Cedar Lewisohn	NT
Phoebe Boswell		Barbara Walker

The exhibition runs 14 January – 19 March 2017

Editor’s Notes

UNTITLED has been produced by New Art Exchange, Nottingham. The exhibition is co-curated by Paul Goodwin and Hansi Momodu-Gordon from a project initiated by Paul Goodwin. It has been supported by Arts Council England Strategic Touring funds and will tour to two further venues following its showing at NAE.

A selection of **images** can be downloaded from Dropbox: <http://bit.ly/2fJOMiH>

For further images and to arrange interviews/photo opportunities contact Laura-Jade Vaughan:
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About New Art Exchange

A contemporary art space committed to stimulating new perspectives on the value of diversity within art and society. New Art Exchange is the largest space in the UK dedicated to culturally diverse contemporary visual arts, and is rooted in the community with a strong history of working with minority communities. Past exhibitors include: Yinka Shonibare, Zarina Bhimji, John Akomfrah, Christian Marclay and Elizabeth Price (British Art Show 7), Rashid Rana, Zineb Sedira, Leo Asemota, Raghu Rai, J. D. 'Okhai Ojeikere, and Hetain Patel. NAE’s mission is to raise the

impact, profile and development of culturally diverse contemporary visual arts and artists in a global context by: nurturing and promoting creative talent locally and worldwide, creating thriving creative businesses, and engaging minority ethnic communities as audiences and patrons of art.

Paul Goodwin is a curator, researcher, and urban theorist based in London. His curatorial and research interests span the fields of contemporary art, migration, urbanism and critical curation with a particular focus on black and diaspora artists and visual cultures. As a curator at Tate Britain (2007 – 2012) he directed the Cross Cultural Programme that explored questions of migration and globalisation in contemporary British art. Goodwin is Professor of Transnational Curating, UAL Chair of Black Art and Design Studies and Director of TrAIN Research Centre at the University of the Arts London.

Hansi Momodu-Gordon is a researcher, curator and writer living in London. Working independently since 2015 she founded the curatorial project Future Assembly, an artists' platform for experimentation and peer-to-peer learning. Momodu-Gordon has developed curatorial and writing projects with Culture+Conflict, Stevenson, The Showroom, Autograph ABP and Rencontres de Bamako 10th edition. As Assistant Curator at Tate Modern (2011-2015) she organised exhibitions, commissions, collection research for the Africa Acquisitions Committee and live events. Previous curatorial positions include Turner Contemporary (2009-2011) and CCA, Lagos (2008-2009).