

PRESS RELEASE

A Missing History: 'The Other Story' re-visited

Rasheed Araeen, Sutapa Biswas, Sonia Boyce, Chila Kumari Burman, Avinash Chandra, Uzo Egonu, Lubaina Himid, David Medalla, Keith Piper, Saleem Arif Quadri, A.J. Shemza, F.N. Souza, Aubrey Williams

30th June - 24th July 2010

Private View: Tuesday 29th June, 6.30pm - 9.00pm

Aicon Gallery presents 'A Missing History: "The Other Story" re-visited'. This group exhibition re-visits the seminal exhibition 'The Other Story' that closed twenty years ago in June 1990. The show features 13 artists, 11 of whom featured in the original show.

'The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Post-War Britain' curated by Rasheed Araeen, opened at the Hayward Gallery on 29 November 1989. The show's premise was to present artists working in Britain with an African-Caribbean, African or Asian cultural background whose works were ignored by dominant accounts of Modernism. The exhibition subsequently toured to Wolverhampton Art Gallery and finally the Cornerhouse in Manchester where it closed on 10 June 1990. Along with 'Magiciens de la Terre', the 1993 edition of the Whitney Biennial and Documenta XI, 'The Other Story' is one of the key exhibitions that over the last twenty years have impacted on the ways in which a previously closed art world was opened up to issues around post-colonialism, migration, exile, diaspora and globalization. Unsurprisingly each of these exhibitions generated controversy, with heated discussions taking place at the time of each one. 'A Missing History: "The Other Story" re-visited' is an opportunity to look back on these debates at the twenty-year anniversary mark as well as to exhibit the works of 11 of the 24 artists in the original show and two artists who were not in the show.

'The Other Story' generated fierce debates. Some artists refused to participate - nervous of being part of a culturally-specific exhibition which was likely to generate controversy. Critics who are now widely associated with reactionary tastes such as Brian Sewell and Peter Fuller denounced the 'quality' of the works. More pertinently critics such as Homi Bhabha and the artists Sutapa Biswas and Rita Keegan questioned the gender imbalance of the show, with Bhabha arguing that Araeen had replicated the "masculinism" of Modernism. Twenty years on the 'quality' argument seems at best naïve; many of the artists in the show such as Rasheed Araeen, Sonia Boyce, Avinash Chandra, David Medalla, Keith Piper, Saleem Arif Quadri, F.N. Souza and Aubrey Williams (all of whom are in 'A Missing History') are now in the Tate Collection. The debate around gender holds water - hence the inclusion in 'A Missing History' of Sutapa Biswas and Chila Kumari Burman, two artists who in the late 1980s were associated with the Black Women's Art Group.

36 Great Jones Street, New York NY 10012 • +1 212 725 6092 • newyork@aicongallery.com

8 Haddon Street, London W1B 4BU • +44 207 734 7575 • london@aicongallery.com

In one of the most nuanced readings of 'The Other Story' Jean Fisher has argued that one of key questions raised by 'The Other Story' was "less a demand for inclusion as such than an exposure of the inherent *lack* in an institutional structure whose very coherence depended on exclusionary practices." (J. Fisher, 'The Other Story and the Past Imperfect', Tate Papers Issue 12, 2009). Fisher ends her paper by asking: "Twenty years on, is the story any different? Has justice finally been served?" It is possible to argue that twenty years on the exclusionary mechanisms of the institutional canon are in the process of being dismantled in response to key exhibitions such as 'The Other Story'. The sustained academic critique on canonical art history from feminist, Marxist and post-colonial accounts has also fed into this process. Moreover, the relentless march of global capitalism which does not take into account colour or nationality when working out which artists will hold the attention of collectors has played its own part. Yet this bright new dawn is in danger of ignoring history in favour of embracing a bright new future of biennials and art fairs in every other city; a history of the overlapping generations of artists whose work prompted the debates which fed into radical changes in the cultural landscape.

The debates generated by 'The Other Story' are not over. In helping choose a title for this show Rasheed Araeen pointed to a quote by the former Secretary of State for Culture, Chris Smith, who in 1999 argued that "[C]ultural professionals should be aware of how narrowly based their own interpreters of history can be....They need both to employ people with a wider visions and undertake projects that focus on a missing history." Furthermore a feisty footnote in Fisher's essay rightly detects "the malodorous trace of this privileged Western canon" in one of the 21st century's best-known anthologies of twentieth century art. Much has been done, but much remains to be thought through, analysed and written about. 'A Missing History: "The Other Story" re-visited' allows us to re-visit these debates as well as see works by a number of the artists from the original show - and hopefully will provide a spur to re-engaging the critical thinking that the original show gave rise to.

For further information about the exhibition, please contact Niru Ratnam at Aicon Gallery London

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7734 7575 / london@aicongallery.com

For further information about sales from the exhibition, please contact Jagroop Mehta at Aicon Gallery London

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7734 7575 / jagroop@aicongallery.com

Aicon Gallery London is open 10am – 6.00pm Tuesday – Saturday: www.aicongallery.com

35 Great Jones Street, New York NY 10012 • +1.212.725.6092 • newyork@aicongallery.com

8 Haddon Street, London W1B 4BU • +44.207.734.7575 • london@aicongallery.com

A Missing History: "The Other Story" re-visited

Rasheed Araeen, Sonia Boyce, Chila Kumari Burman, Avinash Chandra, Uzo Egonu,
Lubaina Himid, David Medalla, Keith Piper, Saleem Arif Quadri, A.J.. Shemza, F.N.
Souza, Aubrey Williams

Exhibition Works List

Ground Floor: Clockwise on walls from left of entrance

F.N. Souza

Spain, 1959

Oil on board

24 x 48 inches (61 x 122 cms)

Chila Kumari Burman

Global Fiddle, 2009

Medium bindis, Indian and Thai stickers, fluorescent glitter, collage, gold leaf, fake
gems, felt tip and inkjet on Somerset velvet

30 x 22 inches (76.2 x 55.9 cms)

Chila Kumari Burman

Into the Vortex Out in the World, 2009

Medium bindis, Indian and Thai stickers, fluorescent glitter, collage, gold leaf, fake
gems, felt tip and inkjet on Somerset velvet

30 x 22 inches (76.2 x 55.9 cms)

Lubaina Himid

Lancaster Ghosts, 2007

Acrylic on newspaper

18.5 x 24.5 in (47 x 62.2 cm)

Keith Piper

Body Type One & Two, 1982

Ink on paper

36 x 48 inches (91.4 x 121.9 cms) each

Saleem Arif Quadri

Geometry Without Gravity 1,

Watercolour and gouache on paper

28.2 x 28.2 in (71.7 x 71.7 cm)

Saleem Arif Quadri

Geometry Without Gravity 2,
Watercolour and gouache on paper
28.2 x 28.2 in (71.7 x 71.7 cm)

Aubrey Williams

Sun Hieroglyph (Olmec Maya series), 1983

Oil on canvas
47.2 x 70 inches (120 x 178 cms)

David Medalla

MMMMMMM..... Manifesto, 1965

Giclee print on canvas
50 x 25 inches (127 x 64 cms)

David Medalla

Down with the Slave Trade, 1972

12 digital scans from negative
Each 16 x 24 in (40.6 x 61 cm)

Uzo Egonu

Restaurant at Bad Orb, 1980

Oil on canvas
49 x 70 inches (124 x 178 cms)

A.J. Shemza

Faces, 1957

Indian ink on paper
14.3 x 20.9 in (36.2 x 53 cm)

A.J. Shemza

Berne, 1957

Indian ink on paper
14 x 20 in (35.5 x 50.7 cm)

Ground Floor: works in gallery space

Saleem Arif Quadri

Invocations, 1999-present

Hand-made book with gouache on paper drawings
12 x 24 in (30.5 x 61 cm)

Saleem Arif Quadri

Caressing with the Constellations, 2002-2006

Hand-made book with gouache on paper drawings
12 x 24 in (30.5 x 61 cm)

Keith Piper

Go West Young Man, 1996
Single channel film on DVD
3min 50sec

Rasheed Araeen

Char Yar (Four Friends), 1968
Wood and paint
24 x 48 x 48 in (61 x 121.9 x 121.9 cms)

Chila Kumari Burman

Cornets and Screwballs, 2007
Cornet biscuit, plastic and glitter
Dimensions variable

Basement: (Clockwise from left of stairs)

Sutapa Biswas

Satan's Sieve, 1990
Graphite on paper
69 x 93 inches (175 x 237cms)

Sutapa Biswas

Magnesium Bird
Single channel film on DVD
9 minutes 27 seconds

Avinash Chandra

Landscape Jamaka, 1986
Oil on canvas
22 x 50 in (55.9 x 127 cm)

Sonia Boyce

Devotional Wallpaper,
Ink on wallpaper
2 runs each 31.1 x 77.6 in (79 x 197 cm)

Uzo Egonu

Exodus, 1970
Oil on canvas
42 x 56 inches (107 x 142 cms)

Viewing Room:

Rasheed Araeen

Installation photographs of *Zero to Infinity*
Each photograph 25 x 33 inches (63 x 83cms)