

PAST



FUTURE



**AN EXHIBITION OF WORK BY
KEITH PIPER**

JUNE 7 - JULY 22 1984

OPENING TIMES:
Tues Wed Thur 11-7
Fri 11-9 (Late night)
Saturdays 11-7 Sundays 2-7
Closed Mondays

The Black-Art Gallery

225 SEVEN SISTERS ROAD LONDON N4 TEL: 01-263 1918
(Finsbury Park Station, Opposite Rainbow Theatre)

Parminster Vir OBE BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE
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'PAST - IMPERFECT, FUTURE - TENSE'

An Exhibition of work by Keith Piper

A brother in America named Ron Karenga once wrote:

'So what then is the use of art - our art, Black-Art? Black art must expose the enemy, praise the people, and support the revolution.'

The revolution he's dealing with is a revolution of ideas, a revolution of Black consciousness. It is about brothers and sisters reasoning over what it means to be Black in this time. It is about brothers and sisters coming to the conclusion that our struggles here in Britain is part of the struggles of all Black peoples worldwide against imperialism and racism. It is about us coming to the realisation that we are in fact 'Africans abroad' and that the struggles of our brothers and sisters throughout the so-called 'third world' are our struggles.

The works on display in this exhibition are concerned with the struggles of Black people for equal rights and justice. They aim to examine the tribulations under which we now live as a product of the past brutalities and exploitations which our peoples have faced. They also seek to suggest various ways and means by which Black people can deal with these tribulations through organisation and resistance.

You see, we must now realise that the situation faced by Black peoples in this time demand that we organise today, or perish tomorrow: As Malcolm X once said,

'I believe that there will ultimately be a clash... between the oppressed and those who do the oppressing.'

We see that this clash is already upon us, and we see that our Past-imperfect, has created our Future-tense.

Serious Ting....

CIRCUIT

THE CREAM OF
THE WEEK

Piper at the gates of dawn

Raised and 'miseducated' in Birmingham, Keith Piper is one of the most exciting figures within today's black art scene. He talked to NIGEL POLLITT in his Nottingham council flat...

City Limits: What made you feel miseducated?

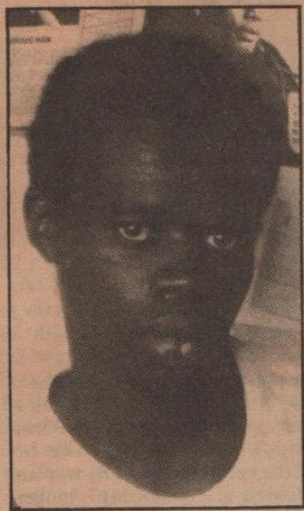
Keith Piper: Miseducated just refers to that process of teaching children in a way which will equip them only to support the establishment. But like, by the time I'd left school, all I'd wanted to be was an artist in a totally western sense.

CL: So it was meeting Eddie Chambers (co-founder of the BLK Art Group) that put you on the road?

KP: Eddie, when I met him on a foundation course, was already working as a black artist. I know I was still extremely interested in art for art's sake. We worked side by side in the same room. But our work was poles apart. It was only after that year I started reading Eldridge Cleaver's 'Soul on Ice'—for all the wrong reasons. I read it for the rude bits. But apart from all that, there were interesting essays. That was the start.

CL: This thing, the 'black cultural explosion', it's been mostly ignored by the white media. Do you think that is merely a question of racism?

KP: It is a question of racism—plus I think there is very little happening of any interest within the so called 'mainstream'. All the exciting stuff happening is either coming from black artists or women artists or socialist artists. I think the mainstream is extremely aware of that. And so there is a deliberate tac-



Piper (inset) and his work...



tic to keep those new influences out of any position of real influence...

CL: It's partly a question of power then?

KP: Yes. Racism—all those barriers are placed to continue to disenfranchise certain groups from real economic or social or political power.

CL: When you talk about the need to create a black visual aesthetic, it sounds as if it's completely separate from white culture. Is that the case?

KP: I'm not sure about the words completely separate. The aim of black art is to exist as a component part of the overall black consciousness movement. Which is a movement specifically to do with black people analysing their blackness through an examination of history, culture, economics etc.

CL: Are you saying the black visual arts in this country are behind compared to say the music?

KP: Oh yes. The reasons why the black visual arts have not as yet

developed similar strength I think can be seen in the fact that there was the break of continuity between the black visual arts in Africa and us here in the west, in that the slaves were denied all access to the building of material culture.

CL: Whereas they could still sing...

KP: Music yeah was part and parcel of their daily lives. One of the essential things within a black visual aesthetic is to reconstruct links between what we are doing now and the visual arts which were, and are, happening on the African continent. Which isn't like a straightforward apeing of that, but using it as a starting point towards us responding directly to the issues which face us here.

CL: What's your attitude towards black artists who are working a more isolated way within the mainstream?

KP: Within the Black Art Group we attempted to develop a philosophy which saw black art as being part of the black consciousness move-

ment. We realised that is an extremely contentious thing. There are lots of artists who are black who are producing work which responds in some way to their cultural background as black people, but it may not be seen in specifically education-related terms.

CL: But don't you feel the mere presence of black artists, whatever the content of their work, presents a threat, to a degree, to the art establishment?

KP: I don't think one or two or eight or nine of those within the art world will do anything to challenge those assumptions. If anything they'll just reinforce the whole liberalistic, tokenistic thing.

CL: How would you react if the Arts Council or Tate made an approach to you with a chequebook?

KP: They have (the Arts Council), they've been fucking me about for about a year. Something rotten.

CL: About purchasing?

KP: Yeah Working for London

CL: But is it important to you?
KP: I could do with the money! But you see I feel that a piece of work should be able to stand on its own. That is why I attempt to load each piece with political content which cannot be overlooked.
CL: Several of your works, particularly the 'Black Assassin Saints', seem to be saying there will be a time in Britain when a new form of black activism will emerge in this country. Is that a literal prophesy?
KP: It would be dangerous to speculate or dictate the form such action would take. That would be up to the black people who actually engaged in that and who had a clear grasp of the aims, the objectives, the tactics and the possibilities.

CL: You particularly show women as active in revolutionary struggle. Is that a conscious resolve to take on board the political demands of black women?
KP: I would leave detailed definitions of the role of women within the struggle to women. I can only touch on that area.
CL: How do you avoid becoming An Artist?
KP: There's no specific tactic to avoid that. Our understanding of the way the art world operates tells us that they will never do that to us.
CL: Are you sure about that?
KP: I'm not absolutely sure... But I think it will be possible to avoid certain excesses that have occurred within western art. Like if an artist touches something it becomes valuable.

CL: How do you feel about white artists portraying black people? It seems to me that very often the images they use show black people as vulnerable.
KP: More important than that is the fact that the analyses which white people, white artists, give to black topics, is often given more weight and more outlets than the work and self-definition of black people.
 That is why we stress the first demand is to be able to define ourselves. But the whole topic of the portrayal of black people as victims is not something which is exclusive to white artists. A lot of black artists have done that, and I know for certain that the major downfall in a lot of my earlier work was that it dwelt far too heavily on this. And one has to ask exactly who was that for? Black people already know about it, they are living through it. So is it to inform white liberalism?
 That is why in the show which is on now, the attempt has been either leave out the images of black people as victims or to place them in a direct historical context.

CL: Are there any signs of life you find encouraging on the white art scene?
KP: I was extremely interested in all of that a few years back. Since then I have largely lost interest in looking, reading about white mainstream art. I find myself most interested in the work of a lot of women artists. A lot of that uses the same combination of image and texts.
CL: And what about other black artists?
KP: I remember being extremely impressed with the work of Sonia Boyce at the Battersea show last

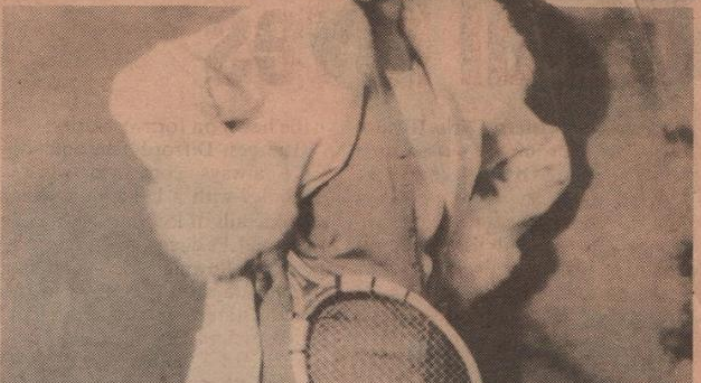
year. Simply because the piece which was there dealt with what is an extremely emotive subject.
CL: Having a white boyfriend?
KP: Yeah. Well it didn't communicate what is or what would be the popular line of thought among so-called black radicals.
CL: Which would be that it was a bad thing?
KP: Or that it wasn't revolutionary, wasn't a positive contribution. But the way it was done, I felt, addressed all of those things. Whether you agree or disagree it was extremely brave.
CL: Have you had critical reactions from people who would regard themselves as first British, then black?

KP: It's amazing that the only place that we have encountered that kind of review is amongst black art students. Eddie had the idea of taking a slide talk to various art schools about black art. The resistance came out of those black art students who wanted to be Artists rather than black artists.
CL: But what about people just visiting the galleries?
KP: There've been one or two people who've come in and attempted to articulate certain strong views, that this will generate more tension or whatever. But the bulk of the black people who've seen the show seem to recognise that all that is happening in there is an examination, an accounting of the history of social forces, and have reacted to it on that level.

CL: Africa is very much part of your thinking. An Africa returned to the power of Africans. Do you envisage the return of the whole diaspora?
KP: I think they should have the option of moving to Africa or elsewhere in the world. The situation as it stands is that black people in no part of the world command the respect which, it is argued, they would do if the African continent was able to benefit from the labour of its peoples and its resources, which at the moment are being siphoned off by multinational companies.
 All that we advocate is that the labour and the resources of the African masses, to use that phrase, is directed and organised in a way so they benefit. So that Africa can start to develop some kind of independent political muscle. In that way it could pressurise the West to recognise the basic rights of black people.

CL: OK we need some sort of intro. How shall I describe you? Left Trent Poly last summer. One of the most exciting...
KP: ...a troublemaker whose work is messy...
CL: That's great, pure City Limits!
KP: Hey that's just a flippant statement.
CL: But the interview hasn't got any flippant statements. A black artist who describes himself as a troublemaker whose work is messy...
KP: (laughter) Hey, no, no... ■ 'Past Imperfect, Future Tense', Keith Piper's first one-person exhibition, is at the Black-Art Gallery until July 22. See Visual Arts for details and review.

SPORT



Success at women's tennis may depend on skill, strength and strategy, but fashion still plays an unusually central part in a sport so implicated in feminine spectacle. And, as the game moved from stags to sweatbands, in came that other concomitant of pure spectacle, the star system—dating back to the legendary Suzanne Lenglen (above), who invariably arrived on the courts of the '20s accoutered in full-length fur, a silk flapper-style shift, hair wrapped in a bandeau and a flask of brandy for that charge at change-over. A different study of Wimbledon might have looked beyond this succession of court queens to the lower ranks in the competition, for instance, or the composition of its audience. But 'Ladies of the Court: A Century of Women at Wimbledon' by Jean Rafferty and Virginia Wade (Pavilion £10.95) is the stuff of the classic fanzine—pure Hollywood, and Hollywood Babylon at that. Thus we learnt that the pioneer players' corsets were 'often blood-stained after use' and their female hysteria only kept at bay by 'invigorating outdoor exercise'; that an umpire leapt down from his chair to congratulate Helen Wills' first championship victory with a 'bitterly resented' kiss; that Margaret Court found herself mesmerised by the 'dark beauty' of Maria Bueno; and that 'horrible mental lesbianism' was being inflicted on young players as early as the '50s! (if not earlier, neither the first nor third Wimbledon women champions ever married...). There is also, to be fair, a certain amount of Jean Rafferty's very competent sportswriting in this volume. But I suspect that the true Kenneth Anger in us may prefer Virginia Wade's spectacularly bitchy remark about Martina on page 179... (Mandy Merck)

CIRCUS



Gerry Cottle wants a central London site for his circus and to be resident there throughout the summer. This way, he says, he can build towards a circus of the future. What he wants is the cult success of Germany's Zircus Roncalli. What he's got is definitely in the right direction. One thing he is certain of: 'Circus has to change if it is to survive. Like Roncalli, Cottle wasn't born into the life; both 'jossers', they're extending the boundaries of the art. Surviving bankruptcy in 1980 and an extended tour abroad, Cottle returned last year to plot his next move—the British School of Circus Arts whose first graduates are now working towards his ambition for an old fashioned dream circus.
 The widening ban on animal acts isn't the only cause of his re-appraisal: 'Circus has got to become fashionable again'. At Cottle's circus atmosphere overwhelms you on arrival: lovingly restored wagons, old fairground organs, confetti and clowns. The show itself offers act tumbling after act through three integrated sequences. The professionals curiously enough suffer by comparison with the infectious charm of the School's graduates who, after only a few months training, share with us their delight in such recently acquired—and sometimes botched—skills. It seems fitting that the circus, whose traditions have systematically been plundered by the fringe, should now look to the fringe for a new lease of life. (Christine Eccles). Cottle's Circus is at Victoria Park, E9, this Friday and Saturday.

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BBC 1

BBC 2

pm Fax!
 s the day for much-
 ng, wailing and
 ng of teeth as, for the
 e in the present
 the Fax-folk -
 die, Wendy Leavesley
 r Trivia' Billy Butler -
 n the fount of
 edge and then suddenly
 the world to its former
 f chaos and confusion.
 e Faxline with your
 ents on 061-814 3222
 nchester

ix O'Clock News
 ue Lawley
 cholas Witchell
 ed by
 er News

Regional
magazines
 ails see Monday)

ogan
 y title left unawarded
 erence, baronetcy or
 hood - he's not fussy.

Blankety Blank
 g Les Dawson, the host
 comedy quiz game
 one can play at home.
 l guests this week are
 a Benjamin
 Boyle, Susan Hanson
 Marks
 n Norvelle
 Stringfellow
 ed in association with
 DODSON and TALBOT TV LTD
 TONY NEWMAN
 STANLEY APPEL (R)
 FAX SUBTITLES

9.0 The Colbys
 on Heston as Jason
 a Stanwyck
 stance
 anes as Jeff
 ctive Ross as Francesca
 amms as Fallon
 ed Caulfield as Miles
 nie Beacham as Sable
 Scoggins as Monica
 Yariett as Bliss
 Campanella as Hutch
 to Montalban as Zack
 oward as Garrett
 orsythe as Blake
 an Carroll
 minique
 eunion
 bid to get her hands on
 fortune, Sable puts her
 marriage at risk and
 Jason into the arms of
 er woman. Monica's
 ntentions threaten to
 onnie's relationship
 hutch, while Fallon is
 ed with her son and
 m-well father.
 McAllister

CHARLES VAN EMAN
 PHILIP BROWN
 TITOS VANDIS
 ANK PURINO
 ERUME C. COURTLAND
 FAX SUBTITLES

5.30 pm Rhino!
F continues a season
I of animal films
L for the family.
M Today starring
 Harry Guardino
 Robert Culp
 Shirley Eaton
 While on safari, Dr Jim
 Hanlon, a scientist devoted to
 saving African animals from
 extinction, finds himself at
 war with the big-game
 poachers - in particular the
 unscrupulous Alex Burnett.
 Alex Burnett

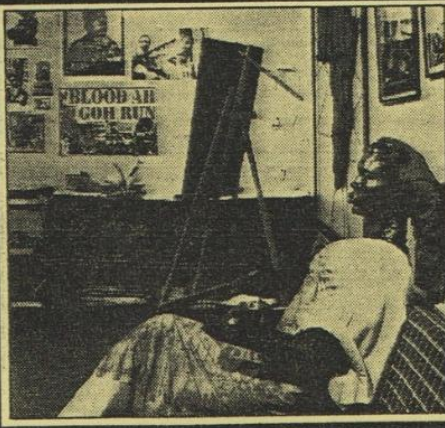
HARRY GUARDINO
 Dr Jim Hanlon....ROBERT CULP
 Edith Arleigh...SHIRLEY EATON
 Jopo.....HARRY MEKELA
 Haragay.....GEORGE LANE
 Screenplay by
 ART ARTHUR and ARTHUR WEISS
 from a story by ART ARTHUR
 Produced by BEN CHAPMAN
 Directed by IVAN TORS
 ● FILMS: page 22

7.0 Micro Live
 Computers have undoubtedly
 changed the way many
 people work since they were
 first introduced into business
 in the 1950s. Technology is
 poised to be much more
 widely used.
 Speculating with
 Ian McNaught-Davis and
 Fred Harris about the future
 effects of computers on work,
 are The Rt Hon Shirley
 Williams, who is also a
 director of the Turing
 Institute for artificial
 intelligence, and Bob Latin
 of Standard Telephones
 and Cables.
 Studio director TERRY MARSH
 Series editor DAVID ALLEN
 (Shown again next Monday)

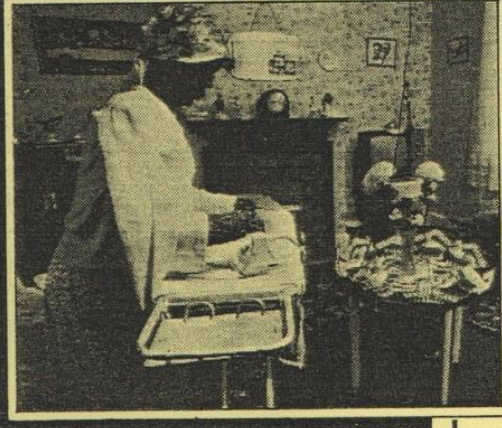
7.30 Ebony
Arts Special
 With the GLC's arts funding
 programme coming to an end
 this moth, an *Ebony* special
 looks to the future of the
 performing and visual arts
 and at the development of the
 black arts movement from
 the 1950s to today.
 Key moments in the artistic
 and political struggle are
 highlighted in discussion of
 the Spaghetti House siege
 and with the dub poetry of
 Linton Kwesi Johnson.
 Producer JULIAN HENRIQUES
 Executive producer JOHN WILCOX
 BBC Pebble Mill

NEW SERIES

8.0 Sporting Butler
 The first in a new series of
 programmes in which Tony
 Butler gets involved in some
 of the Midlands' sporting
 activities. This week he's
 keeping fit, building up his
 body - and going to the dogs.
 Producer CAROL PROUDLOVE
 BBC Midlands



OUR ROOM



PARENTS' ROOM

From Generation to Generation, a two-room exhibition depicting the changing black experience of Britain, is featured in tonight's *Ebony* devoted to the arts. The programme traces the political and artistic struggles for funds, new forms of expression and recognition, from the 1950s to the present, with Linton Kwesi Johnson (left) and others.

BBC2-7.30pm *Ebony*: Arts Special

8.30-9.0
Gardeners' World
 from Raby Castle Gardens,
 County Durham
 with Roy Lancaster
 and Geoff Hamilton
 By the standards of many
 estates, Lord and Lady
 Barnard are a bit behind in
 the development of their
 garden - 200 years perhaps.
 Head Gardener, Neil Ord,
 shares their enthusiasm for
 transforming the handsome
 walled kitchen garden, which
 already has fine herbaceous
 and shrub borders, into a
 place where visitors can
 enjoy good plants and
 planting in a tranquil setting.
 Production assistant JANE DON
 Executive producer JOHN KENYON
 BBC Pebble Mill

TODAY'S PROGRAMMES CONTINUE OVERLEAF

BBC2 Variations
NORTH
 8.0-8.30 An Englishman's
 Home: Burton Agnes Hall
NORTH WEST
 8.0-8.30 Banned for Life: the
 split in the world of rugby
WEST
 8.0-8.30 Day Out: Angela
 Rippon explores the South East
 Cotswolds
EAST
 8.0-8.30 East on Two: with the
 people; the stories and issues
 affecting the eastern counties
LONDON
 8.0-8.30 Moment of Truth: with
 photographer Richard Cooke

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Julian Stapleton

BBC 2

5.30 pm Rhino!

F continues a season of animal films for the family. Today starring Harry Guardino, Robert Culp, Shirley Eaton

While on safari, Dr Jim Hanlon, a scientist devoted to saving African animals from extinction, finds himself at war with the big-game poachers - in particular the unscrupulous Alex Burnett. Alex Burnett

HARRY GUARDINO

Dr Jim Hanlon.....ROBERT CULP
Edith Arleigh ..SHIRLEY EATON
Jopo.....HARRY MEKELA
HaragayGEORGE LANE
Screenplay by
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Speculating with Ian McNaught-Davis and Fred Harris about the future effects of computers on work, are The Rt Hon Shirley Williams, who is also a director of the Turing Institute for artificial intelligence, and Bob Latin of Standard Telephones and Cables.

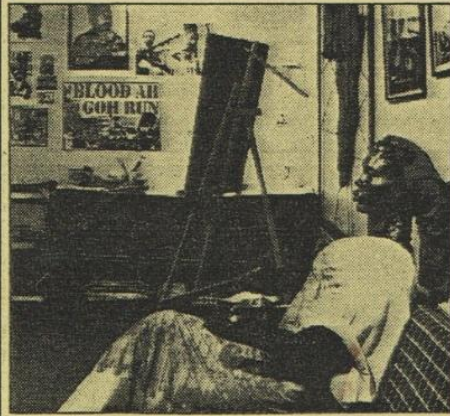
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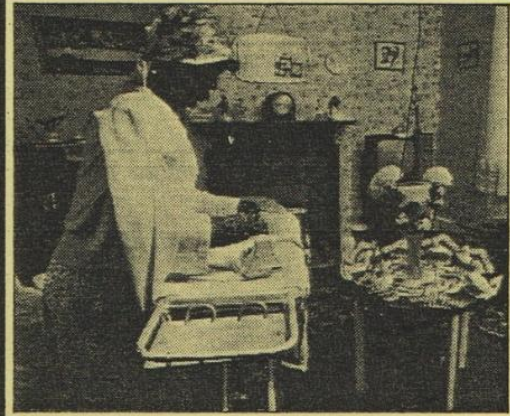
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Producer JULIAN HENRIQUES
Executive producer JOHN WILCOX
BBC Pebble Mill



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Julian Stapleton

BBC2. 7.30 pm *Ebony: Arts Special*

8.30-9.0

Gardeners' World

from Raby Castle Gardens, County Durham with Roy Lancaster and Geoff Hamilton

By the standards of many estates, Lord and Lady Barnard are a bit behind in the development of their garden - 200 years perhaps. Head Gardener, Neil Ord, shares their enthusiasm for transforming the handsome walled kitchen garden, which already has fine herbaceous and shrub borders, into a place where visitors can enjoy good plants and planting in a tranquil setting.

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John

1st Black Art Convention. 2 1/2. Wolverhampton
Wolverhampton

Last summer:

Nottingham

2nd Black Art Convention.

Protest

about 6 weeks ago

From Pan African Councils : Shaka Day. De
- or Black Art Group. CED

Positive images of Africa life.
with political focus
George Jackson.

- 4 members. (Clawette)
- Keith Piper
- Eddie Chambers
- Donald Johnson
- Marlene Smith.

African Folklore.

Southern activist, mounting 6.

lives Bristol.

Nottingham

Bristol

130 City Road, St Pauls, Bristol

3 LINDSEY Walk

Hyson Green

North NG7 6BJ.

Meet with members,

Rasheed Arain Gavin Santjes

Shaka Day

Jan





The Black-Art Gallery

225 SEVEN SISTERS ROAD LONDON N4 TEL: 01-263 1918
(Finsbury Park Station, Opposite Rainbow Theatre)

October 17th - November 18th

or

November 21st - December 23rd.

Harce & Huronic

2nd Anniversary

Oct Sept. 5 - Oct 19.

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Closed Mondays

