

YALE
CENTER
FOR
BRITISH
ART

art in context

Claire M. Holdsworth:
“Object, Use, Index:
Archives in and of
Artists’ Moving Images”

OCTOBER 17, 2023



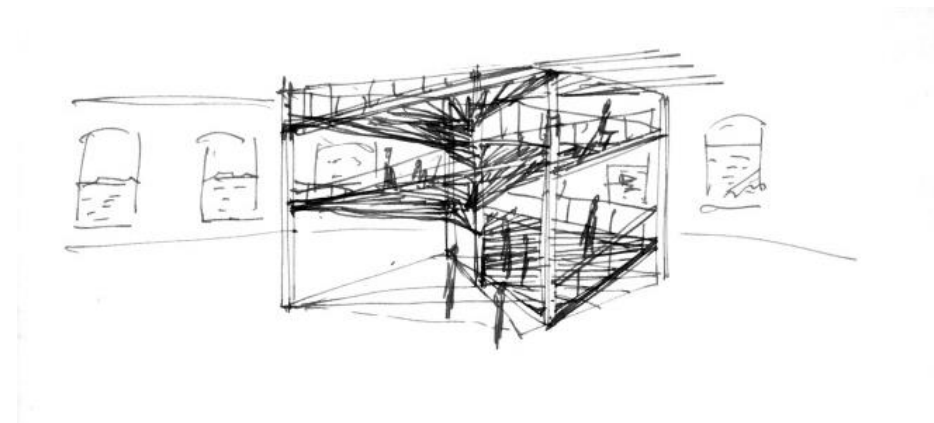
British Film Institute archive, Berkhamsted, UK. Photo by Claire M. Holdsworth

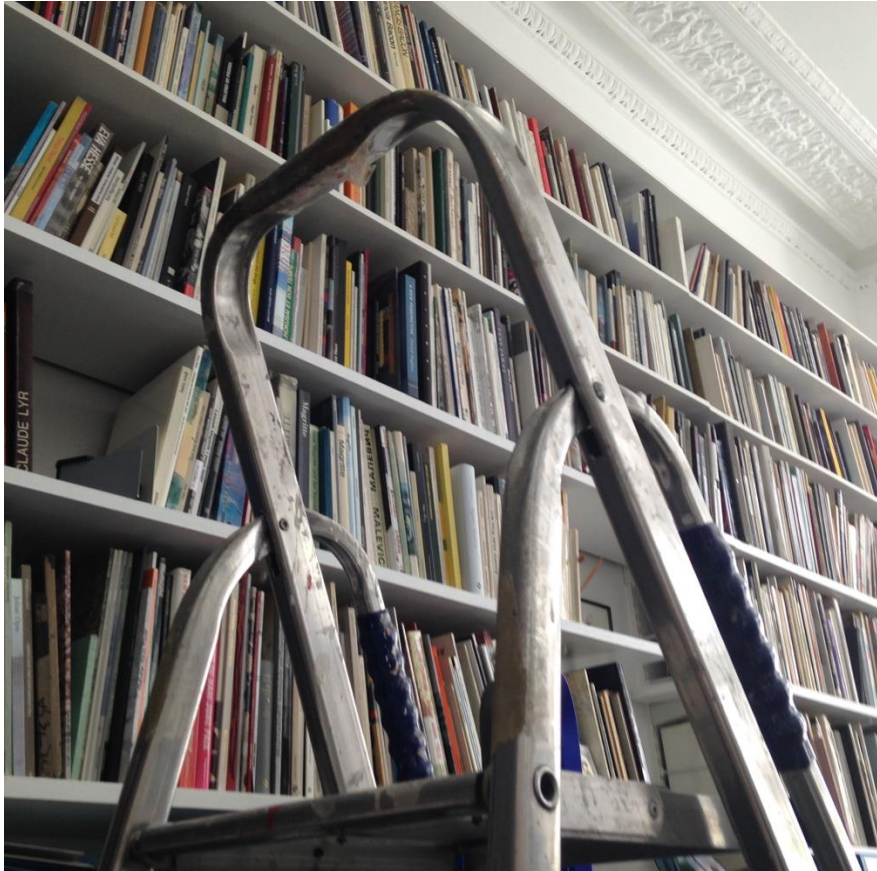
Object,
use,
index.

Image:
British Film Institute archive
(Berkhamstead)

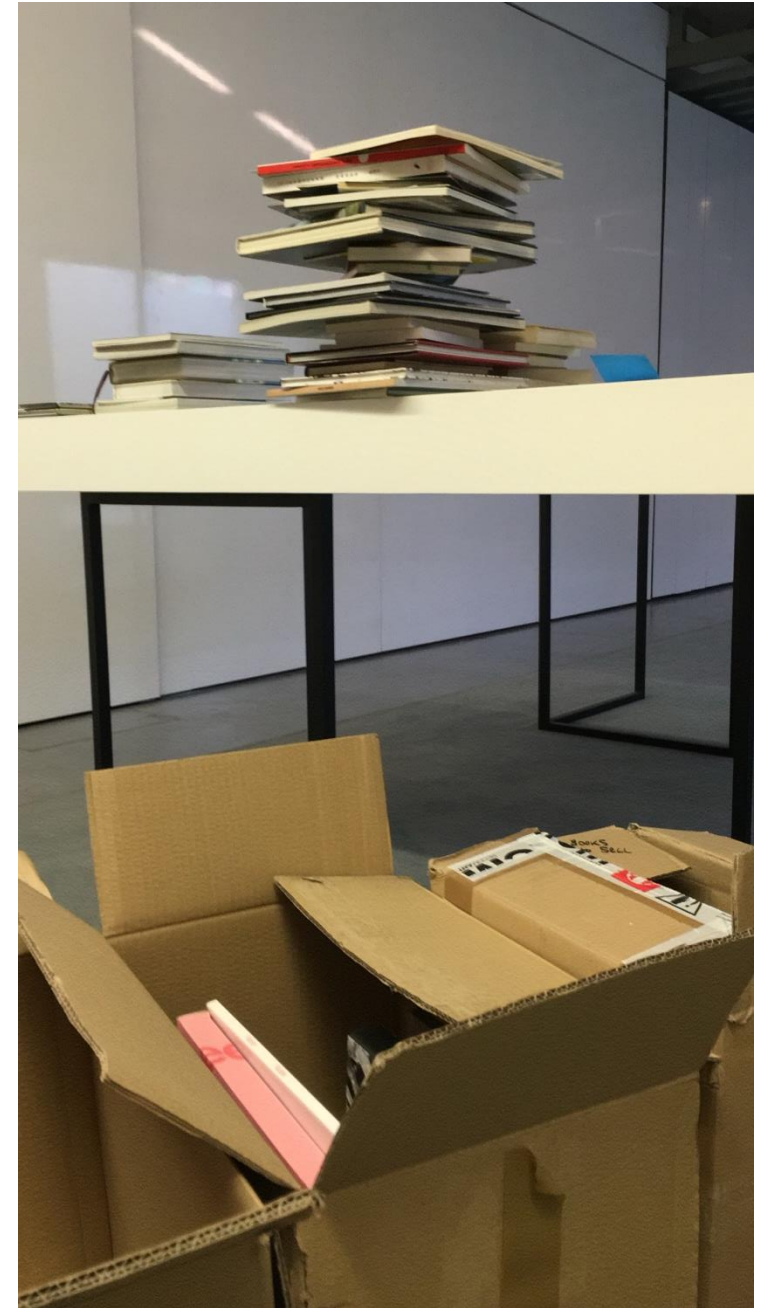


introduction





Images:
Jasia Reichardt archives (London)



Images:
Archive racks, Isaac Julien Studio (London).
Designed by David Adjaye

‘Linear time is a western invention; time is not linear, it is a marvellous entanglement, where at any moment points can be chosen and solutions invented without beginning or end.’

Used in Isaac Julien, *Lina Bo Bardi – A Marvellous Entanglement* (2019 –).

From Marcelo C. Ferraz (1993) *Lina Bo Bardi*. Instituto Lina Bo Bardi e Pietro M. Bardi, p.333.

(i) object(s)

1950s

1957

Julien's parents, Rosemary Bobb and Joseph Julien, emigrate from Saint Lucia to Britain and meet in London.

1960s

1960

3 February, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan delivers his 'Wind of Change' speech in Cape Town, South Africa. He acknowledges the growth of national consciousness' across Africa, and that 'our national policies must take account of it', marking a shift in the Conservative Party's attitude towards decolonisation.

—

21 February, Isaac Julien is born in the East End of London.

1962

The Commonwealth Immigrants Act imposes strict limits on Commonwealth citizens entering the UK.

1964

The US Congress passes the Civil Rights Act.

1967

The Sexual Offences Act partially decriminalises sex between men in England and Wales.

1968

4 April, Martin Luther King is assassinated in Memphis, US.

—

20 April, Conservative MP Enoch Powell delivers his 'Rivers of Blood' speech in Birmingham, England. He calls for the re-emigration of Commonwealth immigrants and their descendants, and criticises plans to legislate against racial discrimination.

—

Stuart Hall, an influential cultural theorist, becomes the director of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham.

1969

28 June, police raid the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York, sparking five days of protests now known as the Stonewall Uprisings.

1970s

1972

1 July, the UK's first Gay Pride march is held in London.

1975

Julien encounters Acme Studios and its community of artists, based close to his family home.

1976

Britain's Race Relations Act passes, aiming to prevent racial discrimination.

—

Julien meets Jenny Fortune, Astrid Proll, Noreen MacDowell and Susan Shearer. They teach him photography and introduce him to filmmaking.

—

London Video Arts is founded, aiming to promote, distribute and exhibit video art.

1977

Julien attends Notting Hill Carnival, witnessing police harassment that leads to rioting.

1978

Julien attends the first Rock Against Racism march and concert in Victoria Park, London.

1979

22 February, Saint Lucia gains independence from Britain.

—

The Conservative Party wins the general election and Margaret Thatcher becomes prime minister.

ISAAC JULIEN

WHAT FREEDOM IS TO ME

1980s

1980

Julien begins studying at Saint Martins School of Art.

—

Julien's painting *Dancing Partners* is exhibited at the Royal Academy summer exhibition. It is the first work he sells, using the funds to buy a Super 8mm motion camera.

1981

18 January, 13 young people die in a house fire in New Cross, London. No one is charged for what many suspect is a racist arson attack.

—

2 March, Black People's Day of Action sees 20,000 people march to protest police failings in the investigation of the New Cross fire.

—

6 April, the Metropolitan Police launch Operation Swamp 81 which sees almost 1000 people stopped and searched over six days in Brixton, London. The action is justified through 'Sus' laws, which permit arrests and charges on the grounds of suspicion alone.

—

10 April, protests and uprisings take place in Brixton in response to Operation Swamp 81. Unrest spreads across the country in the coming months, with uprisings breaking out in towns and cities throughout the UK.

—

The ACTT Workshop Declaration provides financial support for independent film and video workshops and collectives.

—

Sans Soleil, directed by Chris Marker, is released. Julien cites this work as influencing his film *Territories*, on display here.

This timeline highlights some of the social, political and cultural events that have impacted Isaac Julien's life and work. It is not comprehensive, but instead offers further insight into Julien's extensive career and the works in this exhibition.

1982

Blood Ah Goh Run is released, a short film documenting the aftermath of the New Cross fire, directed by Menelik Shabazz. The film ends with the present line, 'This is only the beginning, not the end'.

—

Marina Attili, Maureen Blackwood, Robert Cruz, Nadine Marsh-Edwards, and Julien co-found Sankofa Film and Video Collective.

1983

12 January, 21-year-old Colin Roach dies in Stoke Newington police station and the police are accused of a cover up. The Commission for Racial Equality calls for a full inquiry into policing in the area. Julien makes *Who Killed Colin Roach?* during protests over the police's response.

1984

Julien graduates from Saint Martins, premiering *Territories* at the British Academy of Film and Television Arts alongside other graduates including Adam Finch, who later becomes Julien's editor.

1986

Maureen Blackwood and Julien co-direct *The Passion of Remembrance*, as part of Sankofa Film and Video Collective. The film premieres at the Edinburgh Film Festival and is released in cinemas.

1987

Julien meets Mark Nash, editor of *Screen* magazine, and they begin a lifelong partnership.

—

Nash and Julien attend James Baldwin's funeral. Toni Morrison's eulogy will feature in the opening sequence of *Looking for Langston* (displayed inside the exhibition).

1988

Coco Fusco and Ada Gay Griffin curate the touring exhibition *Young British and Black: The Work of Sankofa and Black Audio Film Collective*.

—

Art historian Kobena Mercer and Julien co-edit an edition of *Screen*, titled 'The Last Special Issue on Race?'

Image:
central room,
*Isaac Julien: What
Freedom is to me*
(Tate Britain, 2023).
Designed by
David Adjaye.



Image:
Installation view of Isaac Julien,
*Lina Bo Bardi –
A Marvellous Entanglement*,
Yale Architecture Gallery (2023).
Photo by Michael Ipsen.



Images:
Installation view of Isaac Julien,
Lina Bo Bardi – A Marvellous Entanglement (2019).

Exterior and glass displays at São Paulo Museum of Art
(MASP), designed by Lina Bo Bardi.



‘archivization produces as much as it records’

Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*,
trans. Eric Prenowitz. University of Chicago Press, 1995, p.17.

Footnote:
'memory boom' – Amy Holdsworth (2008)
' "Television Resurrections": Television and Memory'
Cinema Journal, 47(3), pp.137-44.

Footnote / image:
Still of Jacques Derrida interviewed by Pascal Ogier
in Ken McMullen, *Ghost Dance* (1983)





Images:

documenta 11 (2002).

Park Fiction Archiv (2002) exhibition documenta 11.
 Photo: Ryszard Kasiewicz. documenta archiv.




Footnotes:

Mark Fisher (2014)
*Ghosts Of My Life: Writings on Depression,
Hauntology and Lost Futures*. Zero Books.

Katherine Hayles (2002)
Writing Machines, ed. Peter Lumenfeld. MIT.



Images:
 Stills from Isaac Julien & Mark Nash,
Franz Fanon: Black Skin White Mask (1996)

Why the
white mask?

What is he
hiding?

What does
he fear?

BLACK SKIN, WHITE MASKS by Frantz Fanon, available at last in English, gives the answers. In his boldest, and yet most subtle contribution to the understanding of the present day Negro psyche, the brilliant author of *THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH* shows why the black man must not deny his blackness, and why he must not follow his overwhelming impulse to be "white". And he urges the Negro to stop evaluating himself through the eyes of the white man.

In this book Fanon sees a strong link between hatred for the Negro and the Jew, "my brother in misery". He recalls a remark by his philosophy professor: "Whenever you hear anyone abuse the Jews, pay attention, because he is talking about you." Fanon adds: "I found that he was universally right — by which I meant that I was answerable in my body and in my heart for what was done to my brother. Later I realized that he meant quite simply, an anti-Semite is inevitably anti-Negro."

The late Frantz Fanon was a Negro psychiatrist from Martinique. He joined the Algerians in their war of independence against France, and became one of the most articulate spokesmen for the rebel cause. "He used the insights gained by his professional practice together with his great grasp of contemporary literature, sociology, economics, and philosophy to penetrate the hidden psychological

problems of the contemporary Negro." —PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY

"Should be read by every black man with a desire to understand himself and the forces which conspire against him. Fanon in this attempt to record the reality of blackness renders a service to both black and white."

—FLOYD B. MCKISSICK,
NATIONAL DIRECTOR, CORE

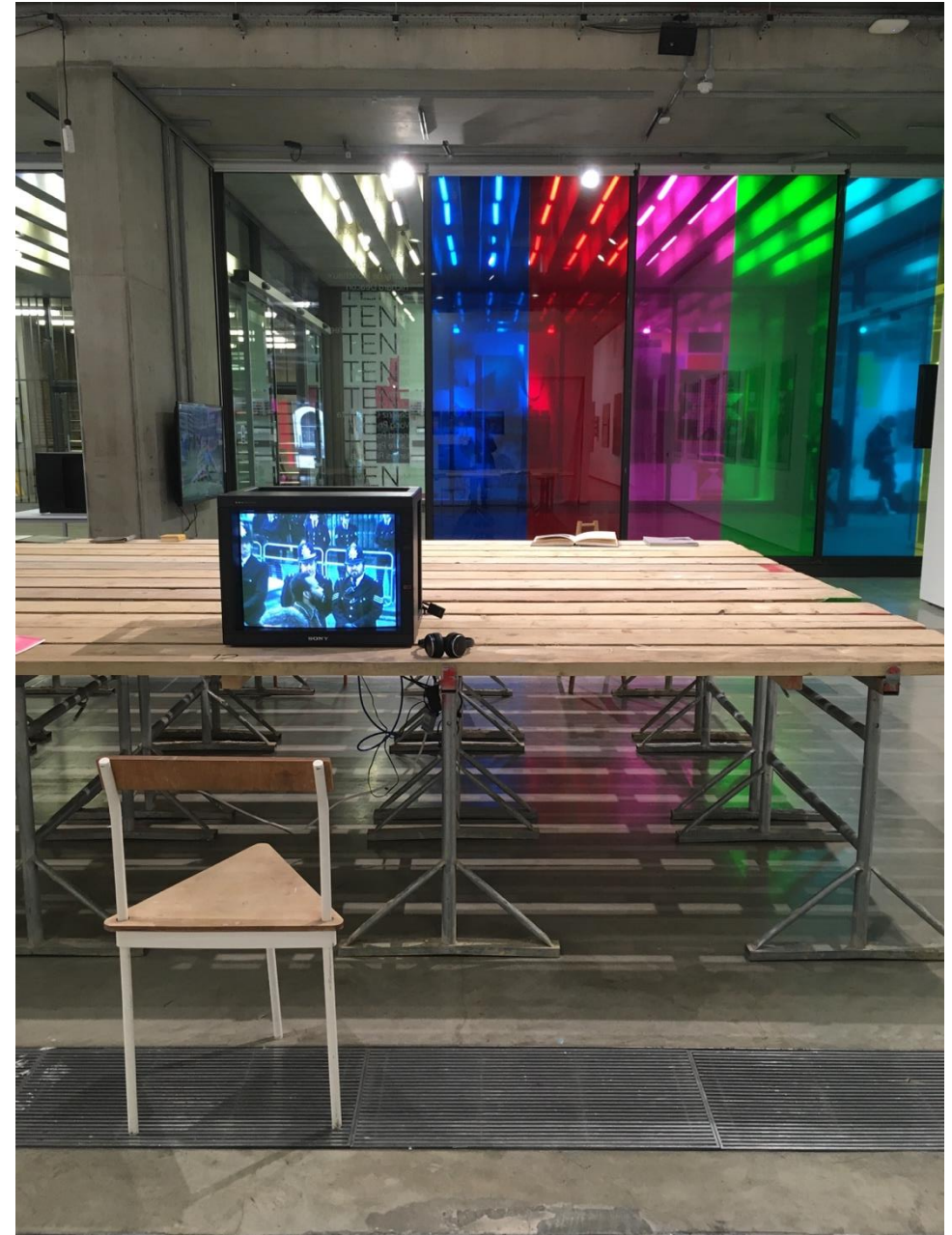
BLACK SKIN, WHITE MASKS
 by FRANTZ FANON. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. \$5, now at your bookstore
 Or order directly from the publisher. (Please enclose payment with order.)
 GROVE PRESS, 315 Hudson St., N. Y., N. Y. 10013

Now in Evergreen Paperback
THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH
 By FRANTZ FANON
 Recognized as the handbook for the black revolutionary movement throughout the world.



Images:
Periodical folders, British Artists' Film and Video Study Collection,
Central Saint Martins Museum (University of the Arts London)

Installation of Isaac Julien, *Territories* (1984) [monitor]
in exhibition *Counter-Acts*, curated by Osei Bonsu,
Lethaby Gallery (CSM, UAL, 2019-20)



(ii) use

Image / footnote:
Sara Ahmed (2019)
What's the Use? On the Uses of Use.
Duke University Press.





Images:
Isaac Julien Studio (London)
(from IJS website)



Image:
Archive racks,
Isaac Julien Studio (London).
Designed by David Adjaye





Image:
Isaac Julien Studio (London)
Source: David Adjaye Architects



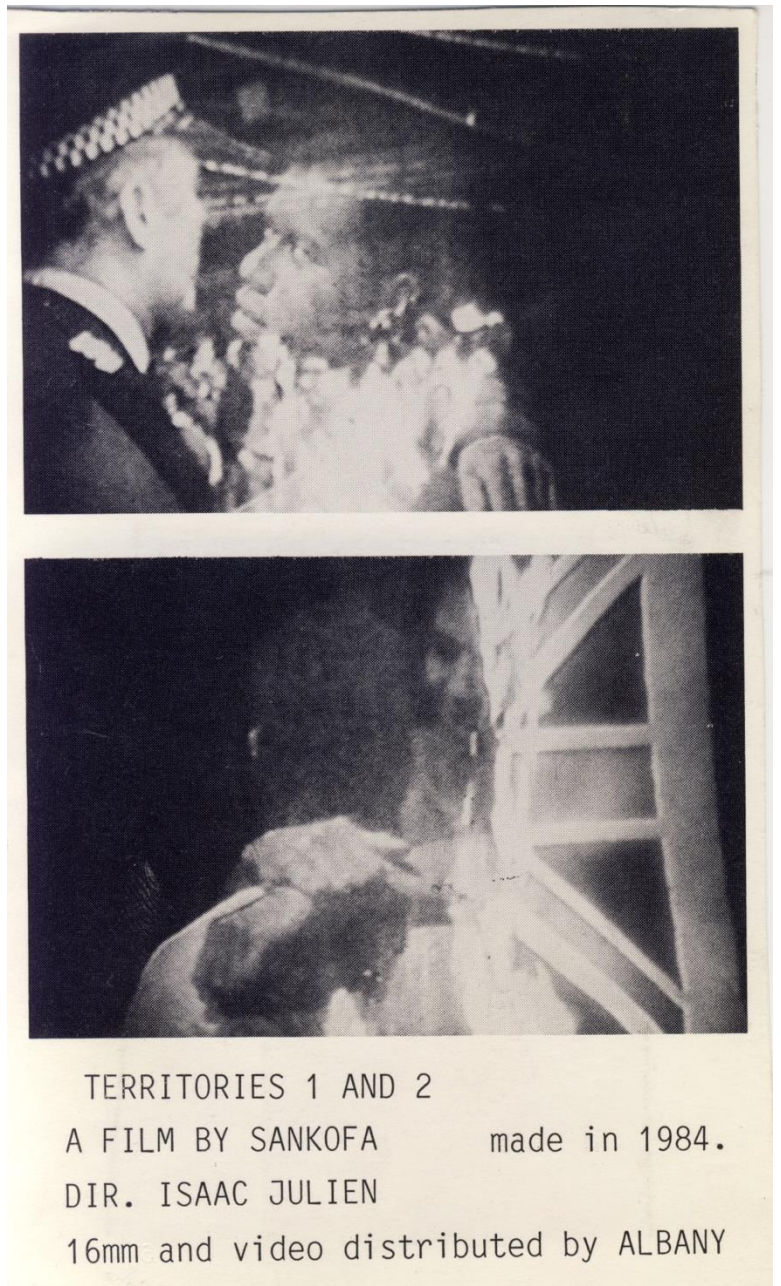
Image:
Installation view of
Isaac Julien,
*Lina Bo Bardi – A
Marvellous
Entanglement*.



Image:
Installation view of
Isaac Julien,
*Lina Bo Bardi – A
Marvellous
Entanglement*.



Image:
Flyer for Sankofa, *Territories* (c.1980s).
British Artists' Film and Video Study Collection, CSM (UAL).



‘not only intent on remembering past strategies of resistance but also on activating them for present struggles; in so doing, it persistently throws into question what constitutes an archive.’

Aimar Arriola, on the queer archival strategies of artist Stuart Marshall, in ‘Touching What Does Not Yet Exist: Stuart Marshall and the HIV/AIDS Archive’, *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, 41 (2016): 54–63, <https://doi.org/10.1086/687087>.

(iii) index

‘archival film practices articulate an historiography of radical memory. The “other reality” of these films is the ethnographic sphere of the image bank in which the body is the indexical sign of historical memory in a culture of amnesia’

Catherine Russell (1999) *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video*.
Duke University Press, p,XV.



Images:
Still from *Who Killed Colin Roach* (1982).

Photographic assemblage, *Who Killed Colin Roach?* (2019)
on display at the Royal Academy London:
32 Black and White Ilford Classic FB silver gelatin prints.

Footnote:
Rebecca Schneider (2001)
'Performance Remains'. *Performance
Research*, 6(2), pp.100–108.
[https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2001.
10871792](https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2001.10871792). pp.105/106.

Image:
Photographic artwork: ALMAS
BELAS, *ALMAS MENOS BELAS /
BEAUTIFUL SOULS, LESS
BEAUTIFUL SOULS* (2019)

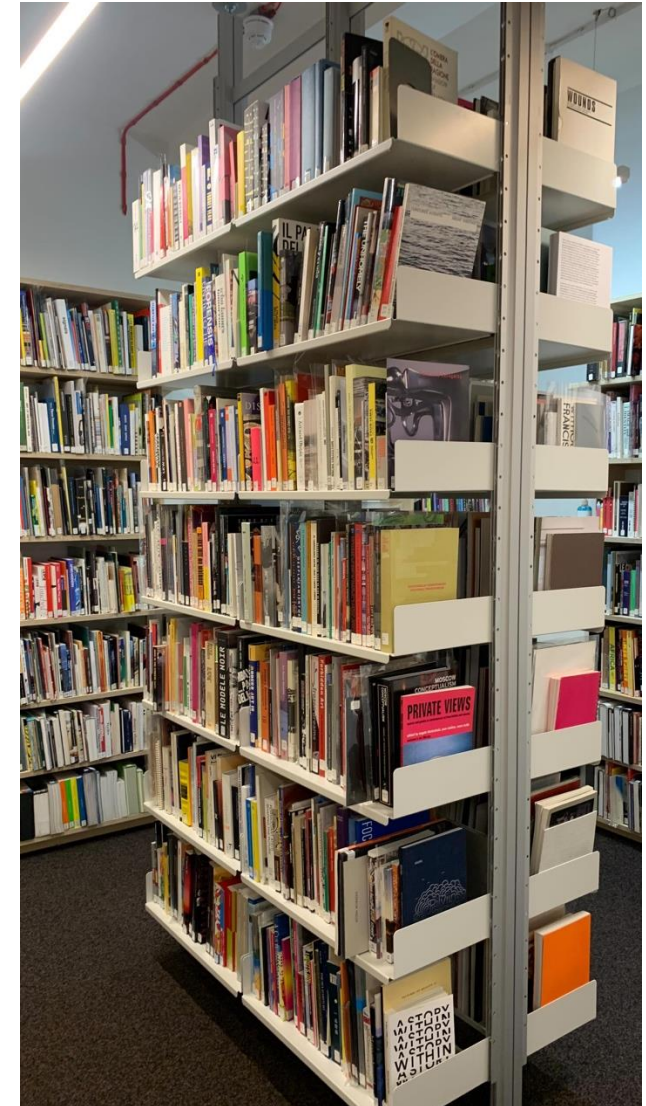


Endnotes

Images:
Exhibition views of *PerAnkh* –
*The June Givanni PanAfrican
Cinema Archive*, Raven Row,
London (15 April – 4 June 2023)



Images:
Institute of International Visual Arts, INIVA (London)





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