

Keith Piper, Rex Whistler and the Dialogic Work of Art Museum Interpretation

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This article considers how artist-led interpretation can address racist and imperialist artworks in museum collections. Taking Keith Piper’s film commission *Viva Voce 2024* as a case study, it discusses how research-driven art practices can engage audiences intellectually and emotionally with colonial histories, while raising important questions about institutional responsibility.

In 2020, amid the converging pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resurgence of Black Lives Matter protests, images began circulating on social media of racist scenes painted on the walls of the restaurant at Tate Britain. They depicted details from *The Expedition in Pursuit of Rare Meats* 1927, a wraparound mural by Rex Whistler (1905–1944), long installed but little scrutinised due to its discreet basement location (fig.1). Although not a formally accessioned work, the mural forms part of the museum’s Grade I-listed interior. While the mural had been the subject of internal concern at Tate for decades, its sudden visibility in 2020 brought institutional debates into public view and transformed the work into a focal point for wider discussions about racism, imperial legacies and the responsibilities of museums.

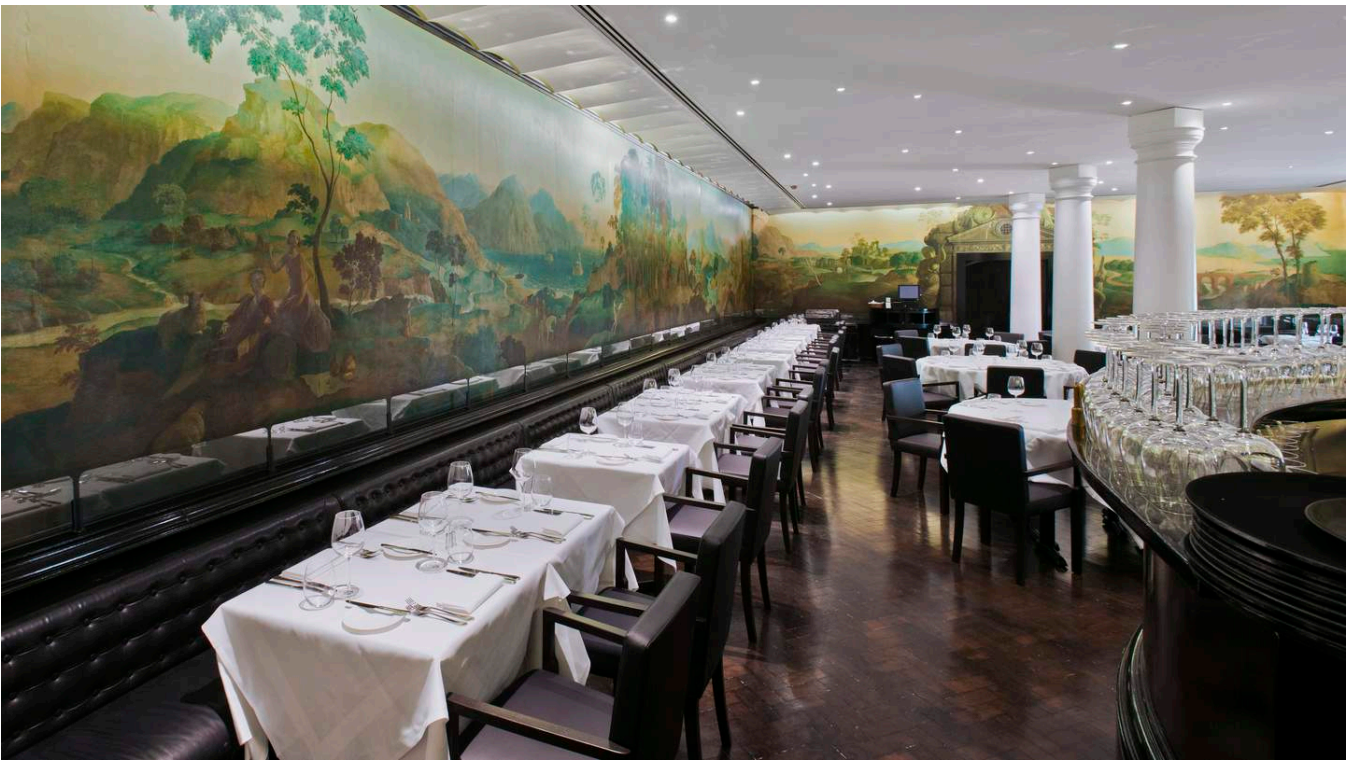


Fig.1
Installation view of Rex Whistler, *The Expedition in Pursuit of Rare Meats* 1927 in the Tate Britain restaurant, 2013
Photo © Tate

Commissioned to enliven a dining space, Whistler’s mural presents a fantastical hunting scene shaped by imperial aesthetics. Embedded within its decorative surface are scenes including racist caricatures and depicting colonial brutality. Although Tate had previously addressed the mural through a succession of leaflets and wall texts, these variously replicated the imperial language of their time or downplayed the work’s racism through euphemism and deflection. Even a relatively recent interpretative text, written in 2019, framed the mural’s imagery as a matter of ‘current cultural sensitivity’ rather than as historically constituted within racist and imperial worldviews, thus exposing the limits of institutional self-scrutiny. It was against this



backdrop that Tate, following sustained public pressure, permanently closed the restaurant in 2020 and announced an artist commission to respond to the mural: a two-screen film installation by Keith Piper (born 1960) titled *Viva Voce 2024* (fig.2).



Fig.2

Keith Piper

Viva Voce 2024

Video, 2 channel, colour and sound

21 mins 40 secs

© Keith Piper

Photo © Tate

This article examines *Viva Voce*, a critical artwork that combines close visual analysis, documentary evidence and historical speculation to interpret and interrogate Whistler's entanglement with empire. By tracing Tate's history of interpreting Whistler's mural and analysing Piper's film, I explore how *Viva Voce* reconfigures relationships between artist, institution and historical accountability. I argue that, as an artist-led, research-based approach that expands interpretative authorship, the commission can be understood as part of a dialogic turn in art museum interpretation, in which didactic, authoritative labels are avoided in favour of participatory and collaborative meaning-making. Within this approach to interpretation, institutions act as facilitators of conversations rather than arbiters of knowledge.

At the same time, the commission raises critical questions about responsibility. When institutions invite artists to undertake this work, are they fostering genuine collaboration, or delegating the difficult task of confronting their own imperial histories? Taking *Viva Voce* as a case study, the article proposes artist-led interpretation as a distinctive and potentially transferable methodology: a productive practice that is dialogic rather than declarative, grounded in evidence and close reading, and ethically engaged with the afterlives of empire in the museum.

The Whistler mural and its interpretation history

The Tate Gallery opened in 1897, and a basement restaurant was added in 1909. The restaurant was considered 'dreary' due to its location in the depths of the building and its lack of natural light.¹ It was therefore decided in 1925 that decoration in the form of a mural would help to improve its ambiance.² Rex Whistler, who was a student at the Slade School of Fine Art at the time, was commissioned to paint a mural around the space in 1926. The redecorated restaurant opened to the public in 1927 to positive reviews, including one by Whistler's former tutor, Henry Tonks, who described it as 'the most amusing room in Europe'.³

The 16.7-metre-long mural unfolds as a panoramic narrative journey around all four walls of the former restaurant, depicting seven travellers from the fictional Duchy of Epicuria setting out in

search of exotic delicacies (fig.3). The expedition moves through an imagined landscape populated by pagodas, mansions, bridges, lakes, waterfalls, valleys, forests and architectural landmarks, while the travellers intermittently hunt unicorns, leopards and other animals. Drawing on picturesque landscape traditions and incorporating an eclectic blend of baroque, rococo, Palladian and chinoiserie-inspired motifs, the mural constructs an arcadian world that combines fantasy, imperial travel and aristocratic escapism (fig.4). The travellers are depicted in a mixture of Georgian- and Victorian-inspired dress and move through the landscape by chariot, bicycle and on foot, appearing repeatedly across the mural as the narrative develops.

The 1920s was a period of profound existential anxiety for the British aristocracy. The First World War had fractured royal and noble lineages and agricultural depression led to the dissolution of large ancestral estates.⁴ For some members of the aristocracy this prompted relocation to the colonies where, free from tax burdens and changing social hierarchies, they could recreate a decadent, quasi-feudal society and rule over vast landscapes.⁵ For those who stayed behind, the lavish hunting party came to symbolise that the ruling class was still firmly in control and projected an illusion of unaltered stability.⁶ But in the context of a global colonial circuit of aristocratic leisure, the boundary between a weekend hunting party in England, a shikar in India and a safari in Kenya was porous.⁷ *The Expedition in Pursuit of Rare Meats* is evocative of this intersection of a reassertion of class hegemony through the iconography of the aristocratic hunting party; escape to the colonies depicted through jungle scenes and East Asian landscapes; and the aesthetic of a romantic adventure.

Embedded within the mural is a sense of imperial confidence at a time when Britain ruled over a fifth of the world's population, before anti-colonial movements such as Pan-Africanism and the Indian struggle for independence seriously challenged the legitimacy of empire within mainstream British political culture. The brazen juxtaposition of Chinese pagodas, Georgian mansions, lush jungles and Palladian bridges, alongside scenes of hunting and acquisition, constitutes an imperial visual assemblage in which architectural, cultural and natural forms from other continents are appropriated and reimagined for elite British consumption.⁸ Beneath this lies the widespread assumption among sections of British society during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that Britain's imperial dominance was legitimate and beneficial.

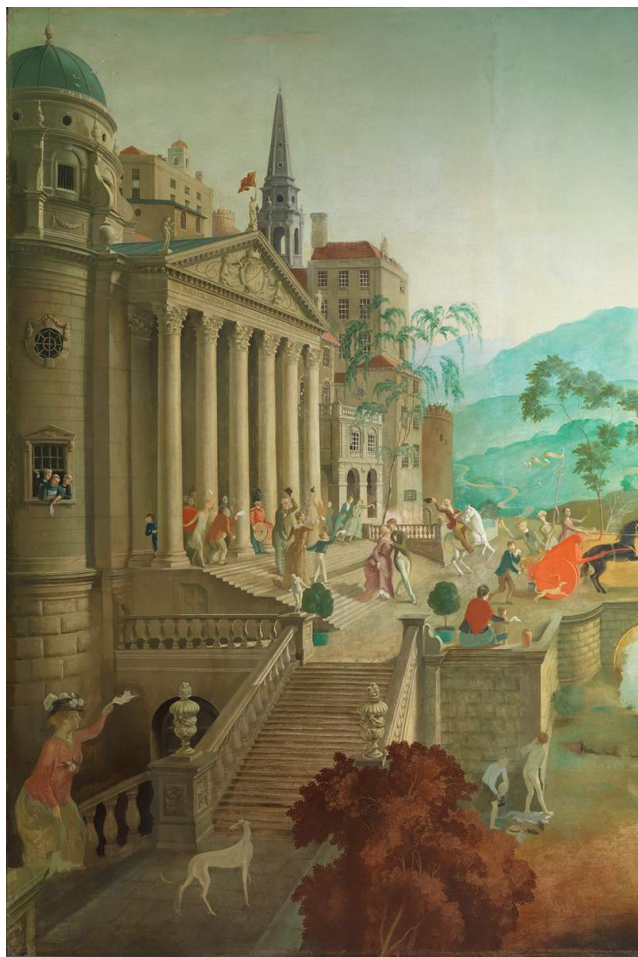


Fig.3
Rex Whistler
The Expedition in Pursuit of Rare Meats 1927 (detail)
Oil paint, wax and turpentine paint
on canvas
Photo © Tate

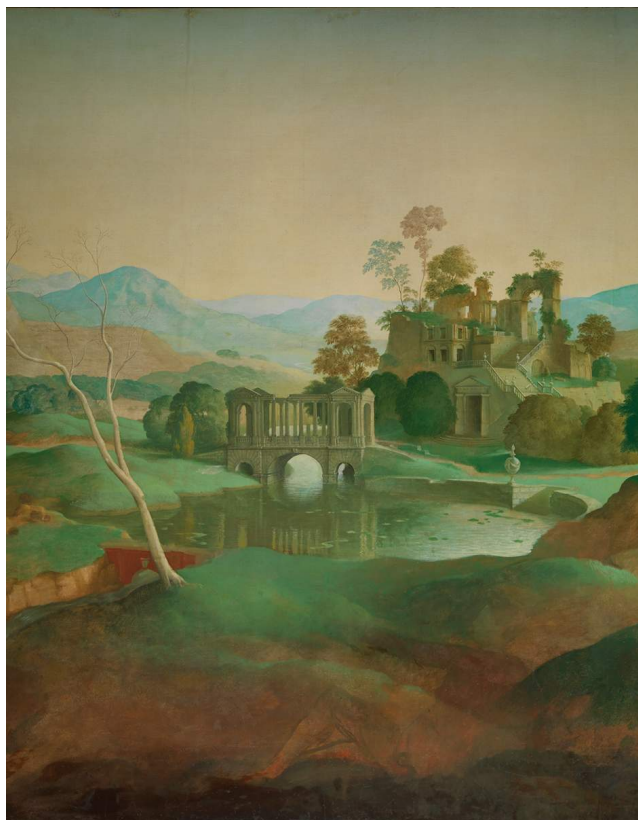


Fig.4
Rex Whistler
The Expedition in Pursuit of Rare Meats 1927 (detail)
Oil paint, wax and turpentine paint
on canvas
Photo © Tate

What brought the mural to notoriety in 2020 are three scenes in which Whistler depicts colonial violence and uses racist stereotypes. The first scene includes representations of Chinese people that are painted with exaggerated physical features. These depictions lean heavily into nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Western tropes of ‘orientalism’ that strip subjects of their individual humanity. The second scene depicts a nude Black child using the racialised ‘piccaninny’ caricature dominant in interwar European media. The child is shown being captured in the forest and dragged by a rope held by a white woman wearing a dress and bonnet (fig.5). The child’s facial expression shows distress, which is compounded by the depiction of his mother nearby. Shown entirely naked, clinging to a tree overhead, she is watching her child being taken (fig.6). This framing visually associates Black people with monkeys, using a deeply rooted, dehumanising racist trope. In another scene, the same child appears running behind a cart, his neck attached to it by a chain (fig.7). The inclusion of the child in an artwork about hunting and exotic commodities frames Black human beings as ‘spoils’ of Empire. The offense of the imagery is amplified by its location in a museum restaurant, where guests were fine dining among these images of child abduction and enslavement.



Fig.5
Rex Whistler
The Expedition in Pursuit of Rare Meats 1927 (detail)
Oil paint, wax and turpentine paint on canvas
Photo © Tate



Fig.6
Rex Whistler
The Expedition in Pursuit of Rare Meats 1927 (detail)
Oil paint, wax and turpentine paint on canvas
Photo © Tate



Fig.7
 Rex Whistler
The Expedition in Pursuit of Rare Meats 1927 (detail)
 Oil paint, wax and turpentine paint on canvas
 Photo © Tate

For nearly three decades the mural was displayed without description or interpretation, although this was not unusual for the time. Before the 1970s labels in art museums contained little more than essential information, such as the artist's name and the title and date of the work. Extended interpretation was often delegated to catalogues, guides or public programmes. As an artwork not part of Tate's collection, Whistler's mural would not likely have been given even a basic label.⁹ Thus, although the work was enthusiastically received on its opening – reviews published at the time described it as 'playful', 'humorous' and 'entrancing' – the mural's ongoing status as unlabelled decoration may have contributed to the lack of scrutiny it received in the decades following its unveiling.¹⁰

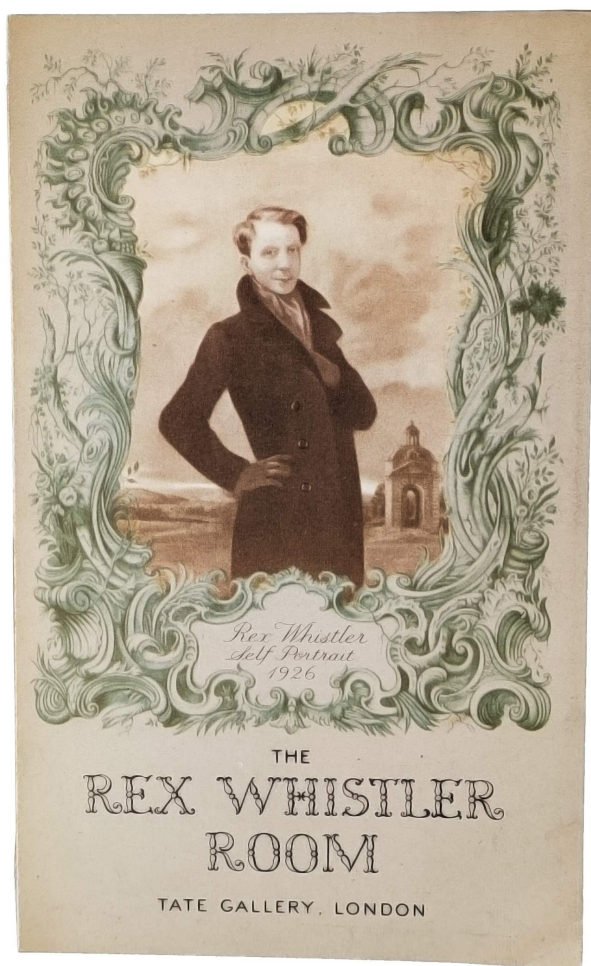


Fig. 8
The Rex Whistler Room, Tate Gallery, London,
leaflet, Tate Britain, London, 1954

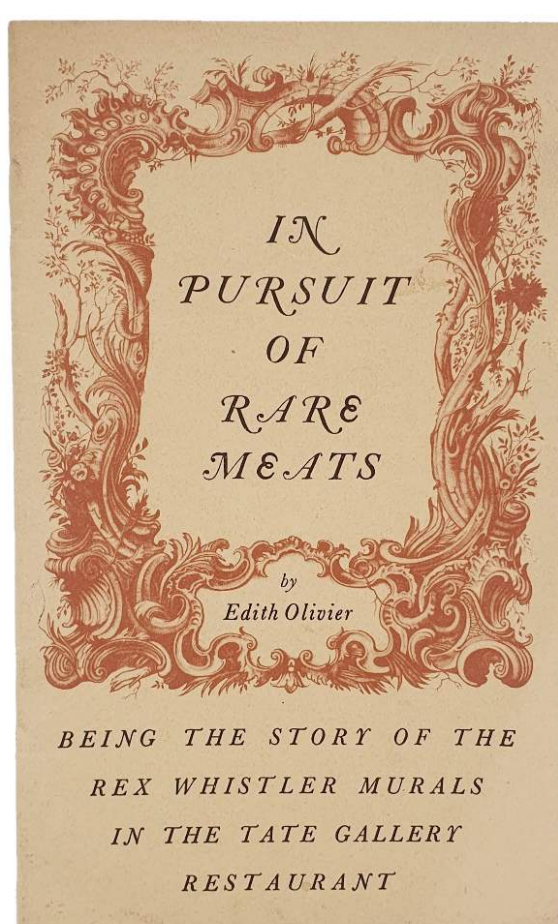


Fig. 9
Edith Olivier, *In Pursuit of Rare Meats: Being the Story of the Rex Whistler Murals in the Tate Gallery Restaurant*, 1954

That changed in 1954, when Tate published a leaflet offering a narrative description of the mural's scenes (fig. 8). The text was based on a 1927 short story by Whistler's friend, the socialite Edith Olivier (1872–1948), titled *In Pursuit of Rare Meats: Being the Story of the Rex Whistler Murals in the Tate Gallery Restaurant* (fig. 9). Olivier's twenty-page text, written collaboratively with Whistler while he was painting the mural between 1926 and 1927, combines the themes of the fairy tale, the picturesque tour and the mock travel narrative, constructing an idyllic world organised around pleasure, consumption and aristocratic leisure. In her description of the kidnapping of the Black child, Olivier uses a racial slur and characterises the mother as shouting 'negroid curses' at the hunting party.¹¹ While these particular elements were omitted from the Tate leaflet, the racist trope of the 'neglectful' or 'unfit' Black parent, which is rooted in nineteenth-century slavery and eugenics, is invoked when the leaflet describes the child as being 'unassisted by his mother'.¹²

The short story and the leaflet remained the only textual resources on the mural's origins, narrative and style for decades. Concerns about the content of the mural raised by visitors and staff are reported to date back to the 1970s, but it was not until 2003 that Tate took formal action involving light revisions to the leaflet to remove the most offensive terms.¹³ Specifically, the scene showing the abduction of the Black child was described using the terms 'capture', 'negro boy', and 'acquisition' in the 1954 leaflet; this was revised, respectively, to 'seizure', 'black boy' and 'addition' in the 2003 version (fig. 10). Additionally, the segment depicting the hunting party's encounter with Chinese characters underwent modification. In 1954 the party was described as being 'startled' by the figures – language drawn from Olivier's narration, in which the author uses a racial slur to refer to the Chinese characters, describing them as 'antagonistic' and 'threatening'. In the 2003 leaflet implications of threat or surprise were removed and replaced with a more neutral description in which the two groups simply observe one another. However, the problematic nature of the mural's scenes of colonial violence and racist stereotyping remained unacknowledged.

In 2013 the work underwent restoration. Its newly cleaned surface made its imagery more visible, and once again prompted discussion about its problematic content within the institution, and another round of minor leaflet revisions (fig. 11).¹⁴ The verb 'seizure' in the description of the kidnapping scene was reverted to 'capture' in 2013. A further change concerns the child's mother and her response to her child's abduction. Olivier's description of the mother cursing the hunting party had been omitted from the 1954 and 2003 leaflets but was reinstated in 2013 –

‘His mother’s distress is shown as she curses the party from a tree for enslaving her child’. This revision may be read as an attempt to acknowledge her humanity and subjectivity within an otherwise dehumanising narrative.

In 2019 a further review of the mural by senior Tate staff resulted in a significant shift in its interpretation. The leaflet was replaced with a wall text outside the restaurant, informed by the gallery’s revised approach to interpreting racist works in the collection, including proactive, easily accessible warning and contextualisation.¹⁵ However, the wall text suggested there was unresolved tension regarding the work within Tate. While acknowledgment of the mural’s racist content appears later in the text, it opened by describing Whistler as ‘one of the leading mural artists in Britain’ and *The Expedition in Pursuit of Rare Meats* as ‘one of Whistler’s most important artworks’, foregrounding the cultural value of the work for its audience. The text later identifies the ‘appropriation of Chinese design’ as central to the mural’s visual language, and the terms ‘caricature’, ‘stereotyped figures’ and the ‘enslavement of a Black child’ were, for the first time in Tate’s interpretation of the mural, explicitly named.

However, the text’s invocation of ‘difficult and offensive histories’, alongside its vague references to past ‘misrepresentations’ of ‘perspectives’ and to scenes ‘now’ being ‘acknowledged as unacceptable’, also suggests a degree of hesitation in articulating the mural’s racism in unequivocal terms. This raises broader questions about the capacity of textual interpretation to engage fully with artworks that are simultaneously revered and repudiated, as well as about the limitations of institutional self-scrutiny in the museum.¹⁶

Institutional constraints and museum interpretation

Such limitations reflect broader tensions within museum interpretation. Museums have historically presented knowledge through an authoritative and ostensibly neutral voice, positioning themselves as objective arbiters of cultural value and historical meaning. As the cultural theorist Tony Bennett and the feminist scholar Carol Duncan have argued, museums derive their legitimacy from these claims to authority, making self-scrutiny that requires questioning the values and narratives they have traditionally upheld difficult.¹⁷ The artist Andrea Fraser has suggested that critique itself can become absorbed into institutional practice, functioning as evidence of progressiveness while leaving underlying structures intact.¹⁸ Research into anti-racist and decolonial museum practice has similarly demonstrated how institutional inertia, governance structures, white fragility and concerns about audiences, donors and other stakeholders can constrain the language through which racism is publicly addressed.¹⁹ This may result in what the anthropologist Dan Hicks describes as forms of acknowledgement that



Fig.10
In Pursuit of Rare Meats: The Rex Whistler Mural, Tate Britain Restaurant, leaflet, Tate Britain, London, 2003

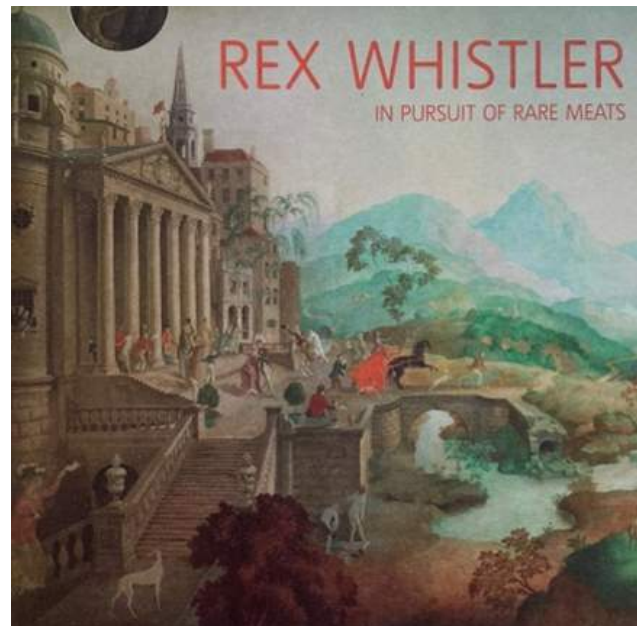


Fig.11
Rex Whistler: In Pursuit of Rare Meats, leaflet, Tate Britain, London, 2013

recognise histories of colonialism or racism without fundamentally disturbing established institutional narratives and preserving their authority as cultural custodians.²⁰

These institutional constraints become particularly visible in gallery interpretation. Labels and wall texts are typically constrained by word limits and writing styles adjusted to audience needs. They are also limited by expectations that authors address multiple dimensions of an artwork while maintaining a balanced, non-positional tone. This makes it difficult to confront racism directly: where artworks are contested, texts often pass through multiple rounds of revision by numerous staff members, with the resulting interpretation risking oversimplification and essentialisation. The changing interpretation of *The Expedition in Pursuit of Rare Meats* should therefore be understood not simply as a series of individual choices, but as the product of wider institutional conditions and constraints. Accordingly, my analysis seeks to underscore the need for alternative interpretative strategies that move beyond the limits of institutionally authorised texts and constraints imposed by tone and word count.

One year after the installation of the 2019 wall text, Tate Britain closed to the public as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was during this period that the Black Lives Matter movement was reignited on a global scale following the murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin on 25 May 2020. Protests against police violence and anti-Black racism took place across the United States and internationally, while the movement's demands increasingly expanded beyond policing to encompass broader questions of structural racism, historical injustice and institutional accountability.

Within the cultural sector, museums, galleries and heritage organisations responded with public statements of solidarity, anti-racist commitments and declarations of institutional support. Yet these responses were increasingly characterised as forms of performative allyship, questioning whether public declarations of solidarity were being matched by substantive institutional change.²¹ In the United Kingdom, the Black Lives Matter protests prompted renewed scrutiny of the colonial foundations of museums, their collecting histories, governance structures and interpretative practices.²² Although the longer-term consequences of this moment for British museums have yet to be fully assessed, it was within this wider climate of institutional reckoning that images of the disturbing scenes in Whistler's mural began to circulate on social media.

In July 2020 the White Pube – the collaborative identity of the UK-based art and culture critics Gabrielle de la Puente and Zarina Muhammad – received images of the mural from an anonymous Instagram follower. In a social media post accompanying the images the pair exclaimed,

How does this restaurant still exist? What interior decoration is THIS? How do these rich white people still choose to go there to drink from 'the capital's finest wine cellars' with some choice slavery in the background? @Tate you are all deranged.²³

As the images circulated, public outcry increased, culminating in a petition calling for the mural's removal, which gained 7,511 signatures. The text on the petition webpage asserted that,

Tate Britain allowing this overtly racist painting to remain for diners [sic] enjoyment is not acceptable. Changes need to be made in either removing the painting from the restaurant or removing the restaurant from mural room itself - there simply should not be a dining experience open in this modern and multicultural Britain, where all races are not respected.²⁴

While Tate had, over many years, addressed the mural's content in a relatively quiet and limited manner, the events of 2020 compelled the institution to confront the work in a far more explicit and public way.²⁵ In 2020 Tate's Directors and Trustees agreed that the room containing the mural should no longer be used as a restaurant. In 2021 a series of consultations and internal discussions co-chaired by Alex Farquharson, Director of Tate Britain, which involved artists, art historians, cultural advisors, civic representatives and young creative practitioners, was held. The group reviewed the mural alongside feedback received from visitors and colleagues and determined that a much bolder approach was needed to create an appropriate and inclusive context for the mural. In 2022 Tate announced that a contemporary artist would be commissioned to produce a site-specific installation in response to the mural.²⁶

This approach was not unprecedented: the commissioning of artists to interpret museum collections and historic objects has become an established strategy within contemporary museum practice. Such interventions frequently seek to challenge institutional authority, surface marginalised histories and provide emotional or sensory forms of engagement that go beyond the limits of conventional interpretation. Artists have been invited to reconfigure collections, produce alternative labels or audio guides and create new works that function as interpretative lenses through which historical objects may be reconsidered.

The exhibition *Mining the Museum* 1992 by the artist Fred Wilson is a foundational example, using curatorial juxtaposition to expose histories of slavery and racial violence embedded within museum collections. Grayson Perry's large-scale installation *The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman* 2011 employed subjective narrative – of an anonymous individual – and personal association to challenge the classificatory logic of the British Museum. More recently, Tate commissions such as Kara Walker's public sculpture *Fons Americanus* 2019 (fig.12) and Hew Locke's *The Procession* 2022 (fig.13) have used contemporary art practice to address histories of empire, enslavement and colonialism in ways that exceed the explanatory capacities of traditional interpretive texts.



Fig. 12
Kara Walker
Fons Americanus 2019
Cork, softwood, plywood, steel, Jesmonite,
bromide salt and water filtering and pumping
equipment
Dimensions variable
© Kara Walker
Photo © Tate



Fig. 13
Hew Locke
The Procession 2022
Cardboard, fabric, glue, PVA, plastic, fibreglass,
wood, metal, resin and paint
Dimensions variable
© Hew Locke
Photo © Tate

Such projects acknowledge that artists can articulate difficult or contested histories in ways that museums, constrained by institutional authority and conventions of neutrality, may struggle to achieve. While many artist interventions rely upon juxtaposition, subjective response or symbolic critique, Tate's commissioning of Piper, whose practice is notably research-driven, introduced a distinct mode of engagement with Whistler's contested mural. Piper's commission proposed a shift in interpretative authority, reintroducing the work to the public through the perspective of a sustained, critically informed investigation into the mural's histories, meanings and conditions of production.

Viva Voce as an act of historical investigation

Keith Piper is a British artist and academic who explores history, race and politics through a research-driven practice. Drawing on archival materials and documentary sources as well as

digital media, Piper critically engages with the past, excavating hidden histories and examining their contemporary echoes. Across painting, installation and video, his visual essays confront questions of power and historical memory. In *The Nation's Finest* 1990, he uses archival images and footage of Black athletes to critique British national identity. In *Go West Young Man* 1987, Piper combines archival photographs and historical references to explore the migration of Black people in relation to the colonial past and the African diaspora (fig.14, Tate T12575). And in *Unearthing the Banker's Bones* 2016, he blends archival research with speculative fiction to critique capitalism and racial injustice. Across much of his output, Piper uses historical evidence to interrogate and reframe dominant narratives, which made him an apt choice to respond to Whistler's mural.



Fig.14
Keith Piper
Go West Young Man 1987
14 photographs, gelatin silver print on paper mounted onto board
Each: 840 x 560 mm
Tate T12575
© Keith Piper
Photo © Tate

During the production of *Viva Voce*, I had the opportunity to conduct two interviews and one ‘in-conversation’ event with Piper, as part of Tate Britain’s ‘Late’ event *Museum x Machine x Me* in October 2024. These conversations allowed me to develop the following analysis, which is interwoven with Piper’s own insights and reflections.²⁷ Piper did not disclose the precise terms of his brief to me, instead indicating that he was afforded considerable freedom. Nevertheless, he described a strong sense of responsibility to support viewers in making sense of both the historical and cultural contexts of the mural’s production and display, and the racism embedded in its imagery.



As part of his preliminary research, Piper examined other problematic depictions of Black figures within Tate’s collection – specifically John James Baker’s *The Whig Junto* 1710 (fig.15, Tate T15046) and Stanley Spencer’s *The Resurrection, Cookham* 1924–7 (fig.16, Tate N04239) – and expressed frustration with the partiality of their captions. In Piper’s assessment, these texts acknowledged issues of race and

Fig.15
John James Baker
The Whig Junto 1710
Oil paint on canvas
support: 3190 x 3649 x 37 mm
T15046

representation yet struggled to integrate them fully into the interpretation.

The gallery caption for *The Whig Junto*, for example, identifies the Black figure in the painting as a marker of the white sitters' wealth and power and situates the work within Britain's imperial ambitions, but leaves

unresolved the significance of the figure's anonymity and absence from the historical record.²⁸

Similarly, the caption for *The Resurrection, Cookham* notes Spencer's generalising depiction of Black figures, based upon images reproduced in *National Geographic*, but largely separates this observation from discussion of the painting's religious and art-historical significance.²⁹ For Piper, these examples illustrated the difficulty of reconciling aesthetic, historical and ethical forms of interpretation within a single institutional voice.



Fig.16
Stanley Spencer
The Resurrection, Cookham 1924–7
Oil paint on canvas
support: 2743 x 5486 mm
N04239

An adequate understanding of Whistler's mural, by contrast, depends upon holding these interpretative registers together, allowing the work's artistic significance, historical context and problematic imagery to remain in productive tension. Piper acknowledged the practical impossibility of presenting such interpretative breadth within a single label, as well as the limited capacity of museum staff to undertake sustained research as part of their core responsibilities.³⁰ Drawing on his research-based practice, Piper understood his role in the commission as undertaking a deep reading of the mural and producing an interpretative form comparable to an extended gallery label. He determined that film, by virtue of its capacity to layer meaning and to integrate image, voice and archival material, enabled a form of sustained critical reflection that exceeded what a wall text could accommodate. Piper likened the process of interrogating Whistler's rationale, influences and methods to the viva voce examination of a doctoral thesis, where candidates are asked to defend their work aloud, in real time. The comparison informed the work's eventual title and is a fitting metaphor for a film that 'speaks back' to the mural, and to history.

Piper's work on the commission began with an intensive period of research. In past works, such as *The Coloured's Codex*, *An Overseers' Guide to Comparative Complexion* 2007, Piper fabricated evidence and invented fictional histories to challenge history, knowledge and the authority of the museum. For Tate's commission, however, he felt a responsibility to ground his work in verifiable fact. Amid the controversy surrounding the mural and the broader political context – specifically the UK government's 2023 directive to 'retain and explain' problematic public artworks – creating a work informed by rigorous historical research was, for him, essential.³¹ Piper's methodology closely resembles that of an art historian: it involves sustained visual analysis, contextualisation through primary and secondary sources, and attention to Whistler's

personal, political and aesthetic networks. This orientation reflects an understanding of Whistler's mural as a site of ongoing historical scrutiny.

Piper read Olivier's short story, which proved instrumental in clarifying the mural's narrative framing. In addition, he consulted a doctoral thesis on Whistler's patrons, shedding light on the social and institutional networks that shaped the artist's career.³² Piper also drew on Anna Thomasson's book *A Curious Friendship: The Story of a Bluestocking and a Bright Young Thing* (2015), which explores the intimate relationship between Whistler and Olivier and offered insights into the social and cultural values underpinning the mural's production. Thomasson's biography also introduced Piper to Whistler's friendship with the socialite Stephen Tennant (1906–1987) and their shared enthusiasm for cinema, prompting Piper to investigate films Whistler may have seen. Among these, the silent film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), which glorifies the Ku Klux Klan and employs Blackface to depict African Americans through grotesque caricature, stood out. Piper considered it highly likely that Whistler saw the film, raising the disturbing question of whether such widely circulating imagery might literally have 'coloured' Whistler's perceptions of Black people.

With this contextual groundwork established, Piper moved into production, working collaboratively with scriptwriters, producers, actors and cinematographers to create the site-specific, two-screen film installation. Positioned at the centre of the former restaurant, which had been cleared of its tables, *Viva Voce* can be viewed from both sides. The screens are encircled by the mural, which produces an immersive encounter, setting Whistler's work in dialogue with the historical narratives it simultaneously discloses and obscures (fig.17).



Fig.17
Keith Piper
Viva Voce 2024
Video, 2 channel, colour and sound
21 mins 40 secs
© Keith Piper
Photo © Tate

Envisaged as an extended form of interpretation, *Viva Voce* invites close attention to its essayistic form, layered temporality and investigative tone. The twenty-minute film presents an imagined conversation between Whistler and a fictional Professor Shepherd, who is there to interrogate the artist about his influences and motivations in creating the mural. She stands in for both Piper as researcher and the contemporary viewer, and it is probably by no coincidence that Piper selected 'Shepherd' as the character's name, alluding to her role in guiding viewers through the mural's most troubling sections.

The dialogue takes place in the former restaurant, with the mural visible around them. This allows viewers to see close-up, well-lit details of the mural – something not possible when

standing in the actual space, which is kept in near-darkness to highlight the projection. It begins with the professor asking Whistler about the contexts surrounding the mural's production. She probes his training at the Slade, his friendships with fellow artists and the wider social milieu he was part of. From there, she moves into his artistic influences and touches on events such as the 1926 General Strike, an unsuccessful effort to prevent wage reductions and deteriorating conditions for approximately 1.2 million locked-out coal miners. Shepherd suggests that because Whistler worked through it, he was disengaged from the wider social and political issues of the day.

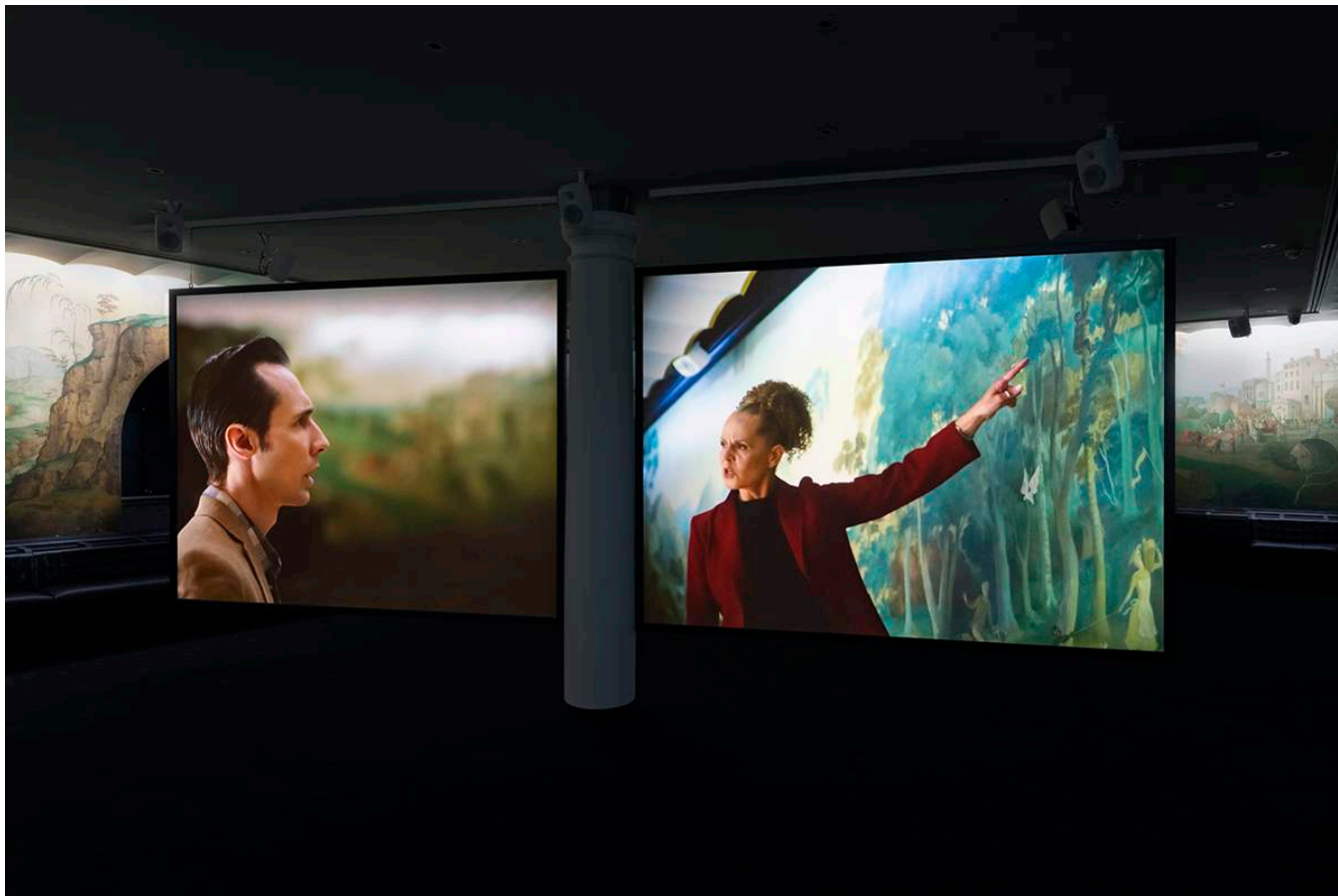


Fig. 18

Keith Piper

Viva Voce 2024

Video, 2 channel, colour and sound

21 mins 40 secs

© Keith Piper

Photo © Tate

About halfway through the film, the professor shifts focus to the mural's content, and her questioning becomes sharper and more direct. She challenges the depiction of the kidnapped Black child and his mother (fig. 18). Whistler refuses to answer her questions about this and other racist imagery in the mural. Piper has said this was intentional – without records of Whistler's response, the goal was to rely on evidence, not speculation:

I didn't want to put any words into his mouth ... we don't know what his response is ... he's just there to describe the history ... I don't even attempt to get into his mind, because ... basically, I'm not interested.³³

To reinforce this evidentiary approach, Piper intercuts scenes of the professor working in the Tate archive (fig. 19) and overlays the film with documents from its holdings. By incorporating archival footage of African American performers of the Harlem Renaissance and Black soldiers in the First World War, Piper establishes not only that Shepherd's questions are grounded in research, but also that Whistler lived in a racially heterogeneous culture. As the art historian Elisabetta Garletti observes, this approach precludes 'any redemptive narrative that might attribute [Whistler]'s stereotypical portrayals to ignorance'.³⁴



Fig.19
Keith Piper
Viva Voce 2024
Video, 2 channel, colour and sound
21 mins 40 secs
© Keith Piper
Photo © Tate

Frustrated by Whistler's evasions, the professor summons the spectre of Edith Olivier to read aloud the passage from her short story detailing the capture of the child, hoping it might illuminate the intended narrative of the mural. Then, the professor returns to the wider cultural landscape of the 1920s, referencing the British Empire Exhibition in 1924–5 and other moments of imperial spectacle. She also draws attention to a version of the mural Whistler produced for a London Transport poster, which prominently features the image of the child's mother hiding in a tree using the same racist trope as the original painting (fig.20).

Finally, she points to other racist caricatures and drawings from Whistler's personal archive, which further expose his troubling visual language. The film ends with Whistler looking at an unfinished section at the end of the mural, which is populated by pencilled, ghostly outlines. This section was intended to show the expedition returning home, where the abducted Black child was to be granted his freedom in thanks for his contributions to the expedition.³⁵ Whistler did not complete the painting of the resolution of the story, leaving the scenes of colonial violence as the dominant visual narrative. In the film Whistler declares he will finish it – an apparent gesture towards revision or atonement. To this, the professor responds, ironically, 'In 100 years' time, will anyone even notice?' With that, the film ends.



Fig.20
Rex Whistler
The Tate Gallery 1928
Colour lithograph
1022 x 635 mm
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Artist-led research and interpretation as method

Viva Voce adopts a structure that closely parallels that of an academic essay. It opens by establishing historical context, before proceeding through close visual and iconographic analysis and ultimately addressing questions of reception. In this respect, Piper's role aligns with what Elena Cologni has described as an interface mediating between histories, institutions and audiences through dialogic processes. *Viva Voce* operates less as a response to the mural than as a methodological intervention, one that stages interpretation as a form of research in action.³⁶ In doing so, the film exposes the imperial logic embedded within the mural while clarifying the conditions that shaped Whistler's practice.

At the same time, some of the film's most compelling interventions emerge through Piper's deployment of formal and narrative strategies, which extend and complicate its analytical ambitions. One way this occurs is through the characters. The figure of Rex Whistler is primarily a source of information, offering insight into the mural's production and the worldview that shaped it, whereas the professor assumes the role of investigator. While Whistler remains anchored in his historical moment, the professor speaks from the present, articulating the questions that surround the mural today.

The character of Olivier, as Piper himself has observed, sits less comfortably within the framework of a *viva*, given that she does not engage with Whistler or examine the mural. Her inclusion, however, serves a distinct interpretative function, giving voice to her now-obscure short story and treating it as a historical document. Through Olivier's recitation of her story, the film reconstructs the narrative logic through which she and Whistler had imagined the mural, and, as Garletti observes, 'incontrovertibly exposes the racist and colonial ideology structuring the work's narrative'.³⁷ The device provides access to the mural's cultural and ideological framework in a manner that would be difficult to achieve through a wall text. In redistributing interpretative voice across historical, fictional and contemporary figures, *Viva Voce* unsettles the authority traditionally vested in curatorial interpretation. As Scott Marsden has argued in relation to dialogic and insurgent curatorial strategies, such practices shift interpretation from institutional pronouncement toward a shared, investigative process – a dynamic that Piper's film explicitly enacts.³⁸

The archival clippings and research materials included in the film signal the extent to which social art history underpins Piper's engagement with the mural. Although these documents often appear only fleetingly, their cumulative effect widens the film's interpretative frame. They situate the mural as a work embedded within a dense network of historical, social and institutional conditions that shaped its production and its reception. The inclusion of Tate's own archival holdings introduces an element of institutional reflexivity, positioning the museum simultaneously as custodian, historical witness and object of critique.

Garletti has argued that the film's excavation of archival material and its direct engagement with the mural's racist imagery contribute to processes of institutional redress.³⁹ Piper himself, however, did not frame his role in reparative terms. He has consistently emphasised the work of assembling evidence, tracing contexts and making visible the research necessary to understand how the mural was produced and how its imagery functions. This resonates with Sara Wilson McKay and Susana R. Monteverde's account of dialogic looking as an interpretative mode oriented towards questioning rather than resolution. From this perspective, *Viva Voce* does not seek to resolve the violence embedded within the mural, but rather to expose its conditions of possibility and equip audiences with the historical knowledge necessary to confront it. The film privileges investigation over repair, refusing the finality that institutionally authored interpretation often seeks to impose.

One of the film's most compelling features is its temporal ambiguity. Whistler's and Olivier's costumes, speech and mannerisms consistently evoke the 1920s. The professor, by contrast, is marked by modern dress and patterns of speech. At times Whistler struggles to understand the professor's phrasing, for example, asking her to explain what she means by the term 'stereotype'. This temporal disjunction produces a deliberate slippage, staging a dialogue across time, as though the professor were addressing a spectral presence rather than a contemporaneous interlocutor. The effect is heightened by moments of partial comprehension

and misalignment, which underscore the limits of communication across historical distance. When Whistler refers to his own death during the Second World War, it becomes clear that he is unaware of how his work has been interpreted or challenged in the decades since.

The film's foregrounding of the asymmetry between historical production and contemporary reception may also be understood in dialogic terms, recalling Mikhail Bakhtin's insistence that meaning remains perpetually unfinished.⁴⁰ From this perspective, *Viva Voce* aligns with what Ariella Aïsha Azoulay has described as a refusal of interpretative closure: a commitment to keeping historical questions open rather than resolved within authorised institutional frames.⁴¹

The temporal ambiguity in *Viva Voce* operates as a methodological principle. Temporal slippage allows contemporary perspectives and values to enter into dialogue with the mural's historical context, staging interpretation as a dynamic exchange rather than a settled account. *Viva Voce* sustains contradiction, accommodates multiple temporal positions and allows interpretation to unfold over time. In doing so, it demonstrates how artist-led interventions can engage the complexity of problematic historical artworks, exceeding the formal and rhetorical limits of institutionally produced interpretation. Seen within the longer history of museum interpretation, this approach reflects a broader shift from monologic curatorial voice toward dialogic exchange – a trajectory identified in museum studies since the late twentieth century, but one that remains unevenly realised in practice.⁴²

Dialogic interpretation and institutional responsibility

Viva Voce demonstrates how contemporary artists can operate as critical historians within the museum, not simply responding to contested works but actively reshaping their public afterlives. Through a sustained combination of archival research, close visual analysis and speculative reconstruction, Piper's film performs the labour of art history while remaining grounded in artistic practice. In doing so, it proposes a form of historical accountability enacted through a dialogic, time-based medium rather than compressed institutional text. It is within this context that the film may be situated within a broader dialogic turn in museum interpretation, one that prioritises process, plurality and accountability over authoritative closure.

The dialogic turn in museum interpretation emerged from a broader shift away from models of learning in which museums communicated authoritative knowledge to passive audiences towards approaches that understand meaning as actively produced through interpretation and encounter. George Hein has argued that visitors make sense of exhibitions by relating them to prior knowledge and experience, while Eilean Hooper-Greenhill has similarly advocated forms of interpretation that recognise multiple perspectives and position the museum as a site of cultural dialogue rather than expert instruction.⁴³ Within this framework, interpretation is understood less as the delivery of definitive meanings than as the facilitation of enquiry, conversation and reflection. Such ideas have increasingly found expression in artist-led interpretation projects. The Metropolitan Museum of Art's *Artist Project* (2015–6) invited contemporary artists to respond to works from the collection through short films, while Perry's *Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman* juxtaposed the artist's own works with collection objects through a highly subjective interpretative framework.⁴⁴ Both projects sought to redistribute interpretative authority and acknowledge the plurality of responses that artworks may generate.

Within this context, *Viva Voce* offers a form of engagement that accommodates affect, temporal complexity and competing historical perspectives while allowing the mural's artistic, historical and ethical dimensions to remain productively unresolved. Its combination of moving image, performance, archival material and speculative reconstruction encourages audiences to engage both emotionally and intellectually with the mural's imperial logics and racist imagery. Rather than delivering a definitive account, the film creates the conditions for sustained reflection and demonstrates how artist-led approaches can expand the interpretative capacities of the museum.

Although *Viva Voce* is a substantial commission that may not be replicable in every institutional context, the methodology it models is potentially transferable. The film demonstrates how artists might operate as researchers, undertaking archival investigation, examining institutional

histories and producing parallel accounts to those offered in museum interpretation. It suggests that contested artworks may require forms of engagement that employ extended formats capable of accommodating complexity and competing perspectives. Crucially, the value of such approaches lies not in offering alternative authoritative interpretations, but in making visible the research processes through which historical understanding is produced. *Viva Voce* proposes a model of interpretation that allows aesthetic, historical and ethical questions to remain productively in tension. At the same time, the commission raises difficult questions about institutional responsibility. Piper conducted more sustained and detailed research into Whistler's mural than any Tate staff member before him, and his film consolidates that knowledge into a powerful interpretative intervention. Yet this artist-led approach exposes a potential risk: that institutions may come to rely on artists to undertake the uncomfortable work of historical reckoning without ensuring that the resulting knowledge is embedded within institutional memory.

As scholars such as Sylvia Theuri and Eddie Chambers have argued, anti-racist and decolonial engagement by museums too often takes the form of temporary programmes rather than long-term structural change. This stands, as Garletti has noted, 'in stark contrast to the permanence granted to discriminatory artworks that continue to be deemed worthy of institutional care'.⁴⁵ Further, without mechanisms to archive, retain and operationalise the research generated through commissions like *Viva Voce*, there remains a danger of institutional amnesia, whereby critical insights dissipate once an artwork is de-installed or staff move on.

This tension between collaboration and delegation, between shared authority and institutional divestment, sits at the heart of contemporary debates on museum interpretation. While *Viva Voce* demonstrates the potential of artist-led, research-based practices to confront imperial legacies with depth and nuance, it also raises questions about where responsibility ultimately resides. Reflecting on the positioning this entails, Piper described himself as, 'the person who sticks his hand down people's u-bends to pull out the gunk, like the plumber that you call into your house. You know, you wouldn't do it yourself'.⁴⁶ This metaphor captures both the necessity of the work and the discomfort it entails, pointing to the risk that institutions may come to rely on artists to perform forms of critical labour they are unwilling or unable to undertake internally.⁴⁷ As debates on dialogic and participatory interpretation have repeatedly shown, the redistribution of interpretative authority does not in itself resolve questions of institutional responsibility. Rather, it sharpens them, making visible the conditions under which dialogue is enabled, constrained or strategically delegated.

Viva Voce ultimately exposes a central paradox of contemporary museum practice: institutions increasingly seek dialogic and collaborative approaches to difficult histories, yet the labour of historical reckoning is often externalised to artists, researchers and temporary projects. If artist-led research is to effect lasting change, museums must move beyond commissioning interpretation as a temporary solution. Institutions must instead develop infrastructures capable of preserving, integrating and sustaining the knowledge generated through such interventions, embedding this work within institutional memory and everyday practice. If museums are to meet the ethical demands placed upon them today, interpretation cannot be treated as a finite product or delegated activity, but as an ongoing institutional responsibility requiring shared authority, long-term commitment and a willingness to confront, rather than outsource, the difficult histories displayed on their walls.

NOTES

1. 'An Amusing Room', *The Art Digest*, vol.2, no.7, 1 January 1928, p.3, https://archive.org/details/sim_arts-magazine_1928-01-01_2_7/page/n1/mode/2up, accessed 19 January 2026.

2. *The Expedition in Pursuit of Rare Meats*, leaflet to accompany Rex Whistler's mural, Tate, London 2003.

3. 'An Amusing Room', 1928.

4. David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, New Haven and London 1990.

5. Dane Keith Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890–1939*, Durham, North Carolina 1987; and Dane Keith Kennedy, *The Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British Raj*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1996.

6. John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism*, Manchester 1988.
7. Ibid.
8. For an understanding of how European culture appropriated and reordered non-European cultures into systems of representation, see Edward Said's foundational text, *Orientalism*, London 1978.
9. On the emergence of interpretation as a professional specialism in UK museums, see Helen Wilkinson, "'The Dawning of Museum Professionalism': Constructing the UK Museum Profession in the 1970s and 1980s", *Enquire*, vol.5, no.1, 2012, pp.41–59. For a Tate-specific analysis of the introduction of wall texts and display captions, see Sylvia Lahav, *Interpretation in the Art Museum: Authority and Access*, unpublished PhD thesis, University College London 2011, <https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10019985/>, accessed 21 January 2026.
10. Heather Birchall, "'The Most Amusing Room in Europe": The Mural by Rex Whistler in the Tate Restaurant', *British Art Journal*, vol.6, no.2, 2005, pp.58 and 61.
11. Edith Olivier, *The Pursuit of Rare Meats: Being the Story of the Rex Whistler Mural in the Tate Gallery Restaurant*, London 1954 [1927], p.16.
12. For a historical analysis of this trope, see Dorothy E. Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*, New York 1997.
13. Customer concerns regarding the mural were discussed by Tate staff prior to its closure, and complaints were reportedly recorded in the minutes of a Tate Ethics Committee meeting in 2019 (exact date and published minutes unavailable). These concerns were later acknowledged in the minutes of a Tate Board of Trustees meeting on 16 September 2020, which refer to 'historic criticism' of the mural. 'Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Tate Gallery, Wednesday 16 September 2020', redacted document, Tate website, 2020, https://www.tate.org.uk/documents/1678/september_2020.pdf, accessed 20 January 2026. Staff concerns surrounding the mural were subsequently reported by Alex Marshall, 'Racist Mural Puts Tate Galleries in a Bind', *New York Times*, 11 June 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/11/arts/design/tate-mural-rex-whistler-racism.html>, accessed 20 January 2026. During the public talk 'The Fictional Account: Keith Piper and Michelle Williams-Gamaker in Conversation' at Tate Britain on 25 April 2024, Piper noted that archival research into Whistler's mural had uncovered letters of complaint sent to Tate during the 1970s. An audio recording of the event was briefly available on Tate's SoundCloud channel but is no longer accessible. 'The Fictional Account: Keith Piper and Michelle Williams-Gamaker in Conversation', event page, Tate website, April 2024, <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/piper-and-whistler/the-fictional-account>, accessed 21 January 2026.
14. Marshall 2021.
15. In 2018 Tate launched its 'Talking about our Collection' initiative, which sought to pluralise and democratise its approach to interpretation by asking members of the public to identify text on the gallery walls and website that 'overlooks or misrepresents an important perspective, or uses language which you suggest we should improve or change', 'Talking about our Collection', Tate website, 2018, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/talking-about-our-collection>, accessed 14 July 2026. This initiative was developed in conjunction with a new research strategy for the institution, published in 2019, which acknowledged the 'problematic legacy of history' in the museums sector. One of the stated priorities in the strategy was 'Contested museum practices and histories', specifically, 'decolonisation, representation, diversity, identity politics, ecology and sustainability; their impact on art museum collections, practices, structures and audiences'. 'To deepen and widen knowledge and understanding of Tate's collection, through increasing access to, and supporting greater diversity in the information provided and the interpretation of it', 'Research Strategy', Tate website, October 2019, archived at <https://web.archive.org/web/20201129183717/tate.org.uk/research/strategy>, accessed 21 January 2026.
16. A new interpretative wall text was installed outside the former restaurant in 2024 to accompany Piper's installation. As this was introduced after the primary research for this article had been completed, it is not included within the present analysis.
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18. Andrea Fraser, 'From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique', *Artforum*, vol.44, no.1, September 2005, pp.278–83.
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20. Dan Hicks, *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution*, London 2020.
21. Mariah L. Wellman, 'Black Squares for Black Lives? Performative Allyship as Credibility Maintenance for Social Media Influencers on Instagram', *Social Media + Society*, vol.8, no.1, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221080473>; and Fidèle Mutwarasibo, 'Beyond Open Doors and Performative Allyship: A Subaltern Autoethnographic Account on "White" Allyship in the Post-2020 BLM Protests Era', *London Journal of Research in Management and Business*, vol.24, no.3, 2024, pp.1–23, <https://oro.open.ac.uk/98606/>, accessed 23 June 2026.

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24. 'Remove the Racist and Harmful Pursuit of Rare Meats Mural at Tate Britain', petition, <https://www.change.org/p/tate-britain-remove-the-racist-and-harmful-pursuit-of-rare-meats-mural-at-tate-britain-s-rex-whistler>, accessed 19 January 2026.
25. While Garletti describes Tate's engagement with the mural's racist imagery as historically defined by 'silence', the evidence presented here suggests a more uneven trajectory, in which limited but discernible attempts at acknowledgement were made in interpretative materials between 2003 and 2019, prior to Piper's commission. Elisabetta Garletti, 'Imperial Heritage on Trial: Keith Piper's *Viva Voce* at Tate Britain', *Visual Culture in Britain*, vol.24, no.1, 13 June 2025, p.2, doi:10.1080/14714787.2025.2494958.
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28. 'John James Baker, *The Whig Junto* 1710', Tate Artwork page, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/baker-the-whig-junto-t15046>, accessed 24 June 2026.
29. 'Stanley Spencer, *The Resurrection, Cookham* 1924–7', Tate Artwork page, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/spencer-the-resurrection-cookham-n04239>, accessed 24 June 2026.
30. Reflecting on Tate's partial interpretative texts, Piper commented, 'You can't really have one without the other ... But then, how do you carry that amount of information on a wall text?', quoted from the author's unpublished interview with the artist, 2024.
31. 'Because of the controversy around the work ... it was really important that the assertions made in the work were grounded in evidence. So, evidence had to be there, had to be clear. So therefore, it demanded a very rigorous research process', Piper quoted from the author's unpublished interview with the artist, 2024; and 'Guidance for custodians on how to deal with commemorative heritage assets that have become contested', 5 October 2023, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-custodians-on-how-to-deal-with-commemorative-heritage-assets-that-have-become-contested>, accessed 14 July 2026.
32. Nikki Frater, *Rex Whistler (1905–1944): Patronage and Artistic Identity*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Plymouth, 2015, <https://researchportal.plymouth.ac.uk/en/studentTheses/rex-whistler-1905-1944-patronage-and-artistic-identity/>, accessed 22 January 2026.
33. Piper, quoted from the author's unpublished interview with the artist, 2024.
34. Garletti 2025, p.2.
35. At the very end of Olivier's story, we are told that 'the Sailor and the Negro were both made Freemen of the State of Epicurania, a privilege which was secured to all their descendants, male and female, for ever'. Olivier 1954, p.27.
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37. Garletti 2025, p.2.
38. Scott Marsden, 'An Insurgent Curatorial Strategy: Using Dialogue and Collaboration to Create Meaning in Public Art Galleries and Museums', *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, vol. 37, no.1, 2018, pp.134–46, doi:10.1080/02601370.2017.1406545.
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41. Ariella Aisha Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*, London and New York 2019.
42. Kathleen McLean, 'Museum Exhibitions and the Dynamics of Dialogue', *Daedalus*, vol.128, no.3, Summer 1999, pp.83–107.
43. George E. Hein, *Learning in the Museum*, London and New York 1998; and Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and Education: Purpose, Pedagogy, Performance*, London and New York 2007.

44. See *The Artist Project*, 2015–6, Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://www.metmuseum.org/met-publications/the-artist-project>, accessed 24 June 2026; *Grayson Perry: The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman*, British Museum, London, 6 October 2011–19 February 2012, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/grayson-perry-tomb-unknown-craftsman>, accessed 24 June 2026; and Grayson Perry, *Grayson Perry: The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman*, London 2011.
45. Sylvia Theuri, 'From Institutional Racism to Duties of Care: Moving Interventionist Practices Away from Racism and Colonial Dominance', in Dalal-Clayton and Puri Purini 2022; Eddie Chambers, 'Institutional Antics', *Art Journal*, vol.82, no.4, 2023, pp.5–7, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.2023.2309117>; and Garletti 2025, p.3.
46. Piper, quoted from the author's unpublished interview with the artist, 2023. Piper is similarly reported as having said that the commission was like "being approached by the Tate and them saying there's a foul smell coming from the basement and I'm the plumber, the person who can stick his hand down the u-bend and grasp it, pull it out and say 'that's what it is'", cited in 'Artist defends Tate Britain's display of "undeniably racist" Whistler mural', interview with Lanre Bakare, *The Guardian*, 11 March 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2024/mar/11/artist-defends-decision-to-display-undeniably-racist-tate-britain-mural>, accessed 23 January 2026.
47. This point has been similarly raised by the philosopher Amia Srinivasan, a co-chair of Tate's internal consultations on the mural, 'Tate Announces Next Steps Regarding Rex Whistler Mural', press release, Tate website, 16 February 2022, <https://www.tate.org.uk/press/press-releases/tate-announces-next-steps-rex-whistler-mural>, accessed 19 January 2026; Rachael Minott, 'The Past Is Now: Confronting Museums' Complicity in Imperial Celebration', *Third Text*, vol.33, nos.4–5, 2019, pp.559–74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2019.1654206>; and Sumaya Kassim, 'The Museum Will Not Be Decolonised', *Media Diversified*, 15 November 2017, <https://mediadiversified.org/2017/11/15/the-museum-will-not-be-decolonised/>.

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