

Press Release

Thursday 28 April 2016

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH AUTOGRAPH ABP PRESENTS UNIQUE 'SNAPSHOT' OF BLACK LIVES AND EXPERIENCES IN 19th AND 20th CENTURY BRITAIN

Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund

18 May - 11 December 2016, National Portrait Gallery, London, Free Admission



Sarah Forbes Bonetta (Sarah Davies), by Camille Silvy, 1862 © National Portrait Gallery, London; **Eleanor Xiniwe, of the African Choir, by the London Stereoscopic Company 1891** ©Hulton Archive/Getty Images; **Peter Jackson, by London Stereoscopic Company, 1889,** Courtesy of ©Hulton Archive/Getty Images

An important display of photographs, which will reveal some of the stories of Black and Asian lives in Britain from the 1860s through to the 1940s, opens next month at the National Portrait Gallery, it was announced today, Thursday 28 April 2016.

Black Chronicles: Photographic Portraits 1862-1948 (18 May-11 December 2016), organised in collaboration with Autograph ABP, a London-based arts charity that works internationally in photography and film, will bring together some of the earliest photographs of Black and Asian sitters in the Gallery's Collection.

These will be exhibited alongside recently discovered images from the Hulton Archive, a division of Getty Images. The display of over 40 photographs will highlight an important and complex black presence in Britain before 1948, a watershed moment when the Empire Windrush brought the first group of Caribbean migrants to Great Britain.

In addition, ***Black Chronicles: Photographic Portraits 1862-1948*** will highlight new acquisitions including a series of portraits by Angus McBean, of Les Ballets Nègres, Britain's first all-black ballet company and a selection of photographs of the pioneer of classical Indian dance in Britain, Pandit Ram Gopal, by George Hurrell.



Berto Pasuka, by Angus McBean, 1947 © Harvard Theatre Collection, Harvard University; **Pandit Ram Gopal, by George Hurrell, 1948** © reserved; collection National Portrait Gallery, London

Individuals with extraordinary stories, from performers to dignitaries, politicians and musicians, alongside unidentified sitters, will collectively reveal the diversity of representation within 19th and 20th century photography and British society, often absent from historical narratives of the period.

They will include the celebrated portraits by Camille Silvy of Sarah Forbes Bonetta, one of the earliest photographic portraits of a black sitter in the Gallery's Collection. Born in West Africa of Yoruba descent, Sarah was captured at the age of five during the Okeadon War. She was thought to be of royal lineage and was presented to Queen Victoria, as if a gift, from King Gezo of Dahomy. As Queen Victoria's protégée, Sarah was raised among the British upper class and educated in both England and Sierra Leone. In 1862, she married the merchant and philanthropist James Pinson Labulo Davies.

Black Chronicles: Photographic Portraits 1862-1948 will also feature Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, a celebrated British composer of English and Sierra Leonean descent who was once called the 'African Mahler'; Dadabhai Naoroji, the first British Indian MP for Finsbury in 1892; members of the African Choir, a troupe of entertainers from South Africa who performed for Queen Victoria in 1891; international boxing champion Peter Jackson a.k.a 'The Black Prince' from the island of St Croix; and Ndugu M'Hali (Kalulu), the 'servant' of British explorer Sir Henry Morton Stanley, who inspired Stanley's 1873 book *My Kalulu, Prince, King and Slave: A Story of Central Africa*.



Albert Jonas and John Xiniwe of the African Choir, by the London Stereoscopic Company 1891 © Hulton Archive/Getty Images; **Ndugu M'hali (Kalulu), by London Stereoscopic Company, 1872**, Courtesy of © Hulton Archive / Getty Images

Black Chronicles: Photographic Portraits 1862-1948 will include original albumen cartes-de-visite and cabinet cards from the Gallery's permanent Collection, presented alongside a series of large-scale modern prints from 19th century glass plates in the Hulton Archive's London Stereoscopic Company collection, which were recently unearthed by Autograph ABP for the first time in 135 years and first shown in the critically acclaimed exhibition 'Black Chronicles II' at Rivington Place in 2014.

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director, National Portrait Gallery, London says: "We are delighted to have the opportunity to collaborate with Autograph ABP and present this important display - bringing together some of the earliest photographs from our Collection alongside new acquisitions and striking images from Hulton Archive's London Stereoscopic Company collection."

Renée Mussai, Curator and Head of Archive at Autograph ABP, says: "We are very pleased to share our ongoing research with new audiences at the National Portrait Gallery. The aim of the *Black Chronicles* series is to open up critical inquiry into the archive to locate new knowledge and support our mission to continuously expand and enrich photography's cultural histories. Not only does the sitters' visual presence in Britain bear direct witness to the complexities of colonial history, they also offer a fascinating array of personal narratives that defy pre-conceived notions of cultural diversity prior to the Second World War."

Liz Smith, Director of Participation and Learning, National Portrait Gallery, says: "Beyond the significant display, the partnership with Autograph ABP will enable the National Portrait Gallery to provide a rich programme for schools, families and young people and a one-day conference. This will enable a fuller exploration of perspectives on identity and representation and for the images to reach a wider audience."

DISPLAY

Black Chronicles: Photographic Portraits 1862-1948 (18 May - 11 December 2016). The display is shown across three Collection rooms: Floor 1, Rooms 23, 31 and 33. Admission free

Les Ballet Negres (On display from 18 May – 4 September 2016) in Room 31

Pandit Ram Gopal (On display 5 September – 11 December 2016) in Room 31

EVENTS:

In conjunction with the display will be a programme of events to engage young people and schools, including talks, lectures and a conference.

For further press information and image requests please contact: Ailsa Mellor, Press Manager, National

Portrait Gallery, London Tel: 020 7321 6620 (not for publication) Email: amellor@npg.org.uk Press images: npg.org.uk/press

National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place WC2H 0HE, opening hours Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday: 10am – 6pm (Gallery closure commences at 5.50pm) **Late Opening:** Thursday, Friday: 10am – 9pm (Gallery closure commences at 8.50pm) **Nearest Underground:** Leicester Square/Charing Cross **General information:** 0207 306 0055 **Recorded information:** 020 7312 2463 **Website/Tickets:** npg.org.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Gallery is working in partnership with Autograph ABP, a charity that was established in 1988 and works internationally in photography and film, cultural identity, race, representation and human rights. The partnership was developed as part of Autograph ABP's *The Missing Chapter* project, a three year programme supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund to research, contextualise and present photographic images including earliest photographic examples of black presence in Britain before 1945 in national collections. As well as collaborating with the National Portrait Gallery and other partners, Autograph ABP is working closely with the Hulton Archive, a division of Getty Images – www.gettyimages.co.uk/collections/hulton-archive

Autograph ABP is supported using public funding by Arts Council England.

www.autograph-abp.co.uk