

BLACK CHRONICLES II

12 SEPTEMBER – 29 NOVEMBER 2014



Image Courtesy Val Wilmer collection



Autograph ABP presents *Black Chronicles II*, a new exhibition exploring black presences in 19th and early 20th century Britain, through the prism of studio portraiture.

Curated by Renée Mussai and Mark Sealy

Images left to right
 1–3 Courtesy Michael Graham-Stewart collection
 4 Courtesy Jenny Allsworth collection
 5 Courtesy Val Wilmer collection
 6 Courtesy Paul Frecker collection /
 The Library of Nineteenth-Century Photography



Drawing on the metaphor of the chronicle, the exhibition presents over 200 photographs, the majority of which have never been exhibited or published before. As a curated body of work, these images present new knowledge and offer different ways of seeing the black subject in Victorian Britain, and contribute to an ongoing process of redressing persistent 'absence' within the historical record.

For the first time, a comprehensive body of photographs depicting black people in Britain prior to the beginning of the second world war are brought together in this exhibition – identified through original research carried out in the holdings of national public archives and by examining privately owned collections.



A highlight of the exhibition – together with the display of over one hundred original cartes-de-visites and cabinet cards – is the 'discovery' of thirty individual portraits of members of *The African Choir*, who toured Britain between 1891–93. These extraordinary portraits by the London Stereoscopic Company have remained unseen for over 120 years, and are presented alongside those of other visiting performers, dignitaries, servicemen, missionaries, and many as yet unidentified sitters – their presence bearing direct witness to Britain's colonial and imperial history and the expansion of Empire.

The second in a series of exhibitions dedicated to excavating archives,

'The curatorial premise of *Black Chronicles II* is to open up critical enquiry into the archive, continue the debate around black subjectivity within Britain, examine the ideological conditions in which such photographs were produced and the purpose they serve as agents of communication.' *Curators' note*

Black Chronicles II showcases Autograph ABP's commitment to continuous critical enquiry into archive images which have been overlooked, under-researched or simply not recognised as significant previously, yet are highly relevant to black representational politics and cultural history today.

The exhibition is dedicated to the memory of Professor Stuart Hall (1932-2014).

Black Chronicles II is produced in collaboration with the Hulton Archive, a division of Getty Images. A digital slideshow is presented in partnership with The National Army Museum. The exhibition features Autograph APB's 1996 commission 'Effnik' by Yinka Shonibare MBE, as well as the personal collections of Jenny Allsworth, Paul Frecker/The Library of Nineteenth-Century Photography, Michael Graham-Stewart, and Val Wilmer.

Supported by Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

For information and public programme events, visit www.autograph-abp.co.uk

AUTOGRAPH

ABP is a charity that works internationally in photography and film, addressing politics of cultural identity, race, representation and human rights. Established in 1988 with the mission of advocating the inclusion of historically marginalised photographic practices, we achieve this through formal and informal education programmes, exhibitions, publishing and the development of our archive.

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Rivington Place — Home of Iniva & Autograph ABP

THE MISSING CHAPTER

Exhibition Season
at Rivington Place
Autumn 2014

Autograph ABP
presents the first
public showcase
of our current
archive research
project, continuing
the critical mission
of writing Britain's
black photographic
history.



Eleanor Xiniwe, *The African Choir*. London Stereoscopic Company, 1891. Courtesy of © Hulton Archive/Getty Images
Peter Jackson, London Stereoscopic Company, 1889. Courtesy of © Hulton Archive/Getty Images

The Missing Chapter aims to augment the photographic narratives of migration and cultural diversity in relation to Britain's colonial history, and disseminate a visual heritage that is fragmented and often dislocated.

Working in partnership with major cultural institutions and other collaborators, Autograph ABP are researching examples of photographic evidence of black presences in Britain dating back to the earliest images produced since the invention of photography in 1839.

The Missing Chapter builds on the concept of 'animating the past to imagine the future', bringing the photographic archive out of the gallery/museum context and into direct engagement with different communities. It offers a range of participatory activities and public displays, aimed at overcoming recognised social barriers to access; our outreach initiatives provides opportunities for volunteers and young people to become actively involved in producing creative work, while others will receive training in research and curatorial skills, digital preservation or collection care.

A dedicated programme over three years includes a series of temporary large scale image projections in public spaces, pop up and gallery based exhibitions, the development of digital learning tools, online portfolios, an interactive app for mobile devices and a forthcoming publication.

Black Chronicles II represents the first public showcase of *The Missing Chapter* research programme 2013–2016.

Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

For more information, visit Autograph ABP's website or www.themissingchapter.org



Albert Jonas and John Xiniwe, London Stereoscopic Company, 1891. Courtesy of © Hulton Archive/Getty Images