

Atlantic Xplorers

Fut
— **ure**
LEGACIES

Introduction

This publication outlines Future/Power, a collaborative project between the Fitzwilliam Museum, Soham Village College and Museum X, which ran from September 2023 to May 2024. The project explored the Museum's Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance exhibition, honouring the legacy of formerly enslaved author Olaudah Equiano who lived and married in Soham in 1792, and facilitating a platform for young people to voice their thoughts on aspects of colonial history that are often overlooked in the school curriculum. Highlighting local connections to the transatlantic slave trade and its historical and contemporary impacts, Future/Power emphasised an inclusive approach to research and learning. Central to the project was the formation of a youth collective to engage with and share interconnections between Equiano's life, the narratives presented in the Black Atlantic exhibition, and young peoples' lives in Soham today.

Calling themselves called the @tlantic Xplorers, the collective took part in weekly workshops with project partners to experiment and create within a supported environment, exploring the weight of our colonial past through artistic materials, creative processes and historical research. The Museum's Black Atlantic exhibition, which displayed over 100 colonial objects

and artefacts, inspired debates around significant themes such as the legacies of enslavement, the value of human life, and our personal connections to history. Engaging with Britain's colonial project and connecting local narratives to broader global contexts meant having sensitive, ethical discussions. Guided by the questions, 'How can we tell the life of an object?', 'Can objects tell you the full story?', and 'What stories are not being told?', the @tlantic Xplorers sought to resist stereotypes and explore the power of connection across centuries and experiences, culminating in a live performance, a public exhibition, and a short film.

Throughout Future/Power, the collective utilised 'research as creation', bringing diverse creative practices together to explore their evolving thoughts, questions, and reflections on the themes. In term one they took part in illustration, photography, DJ'ing, zine-making and creative writing to reflect on narratives of empire, race, place, identity, and belonging. In term two, they worked with the acclaimed Gecko theatre company to devise a final physical theatre performance. Informed by research material from term one, the collective encapsulated their insights and creativity using movement, gesture and expression to convey their collective narrative to a live audience in a final performance at the Museum.

We are incredibly thankful to all the artists and practitioners who were part of Future/Power, whose contributions took this project to a different level. Special thanks must go to Museum X, an organisation on a mission to break free from the colonial framing of traditional museums, who came on board as a core project partner – they provided consistent, specialised, sensitive and meaningful support throughout the project. To buttress the complex conversations that we knew would be a necessary part of this collective journey, we invited Take The Space, a consultancy whose work is all about creating an arts and heritage sector that is inclusive, vibrant, diverse and equal, to lead a workshop with the @tlantic Xplorers, teachers, senior leaders and project staff to frame the project at the start. The @tlantic Xplorers' 'working together' agreement stemmed from this helpful early session.

From these foundations of support, we also met with Shereen Jasmin Phillips, Creative Director of Taking Part, the Young Vic theatre's work with young people, schools and the local community, who generously shared some of her own approaches to working with the themes and material in the Black Atlantic exhibition. You'll find some of Shereen's important reflections are in this book - we hope they'll be as helpful and important for

others as they were for us. Lastly, we were lucky to have had critical, creative, and pastoral support from Jemelia Wisdom-Baako, Founder and Director of Writerz'n'Scribez, whose consistency, challenge and creativity throughout somehow opened us all up to the poetry within.

Future/Power serves as a model for how museums, educational institutions and young people can work together to explore complex histories while fostering dialogue, understanding, and creative expression. This project aimed to foster a shared exploration of history and enhance understanding in our institutions, empower students, and promote dialogue around complex issues of race, heritage, and identity in a contemporary context. We're immensely grateful to Soham Village College, Museum X, and all the brilliant project artists and collaborators whose contributions made Future/Power possible.

But most of all, we're filled with gratitude for all the hard work, creativity, innovation, and collaboration put in by the incredible @tlantic Xplorers. Thank you.

Carey Robinson

Deputy Director, Learning & Public Programmes
Fitzwilliam Museum

Atlantic Xplorers

Meet the collective...



Femi

Zoe

Isobel

Ruby

Sam

Divine

Tabby

Ninh


Eilidh

Anaïs



“I’ve learned so much about the Black Atlantic slave trade that I didn’t know before. But also, just everyday skills, like being more confident around people and being able to express my opinion more.”

Quote by student



I think we wanted to establish rules before we got started, just so everyone was on the same page, and it was kind of helping people ease into it, because it made us feel more comfortable because we had them.

"It was good when we were on our own and had control of the situation."

"It's quite interesting meeting all the different people and seeing how they've just turned their passion into a career, and it kind of inspires me to just go on and do what I want."

"I did a lot of personal research on the topic [of enslavement] and I formed my own opinions. But then talking about it as a collective, sort of helped me to see how other people think about it and also made me more comfortable talking about it."

"Studying that topic and understanding what it means to be tolerant, learning how to be tolerant, and knowing why we should be tolerant is really important in our day to day lives, not just in exploring the past of the Transatlantic slave trade, but it's important in looking at all historical events."

"It [new-found knowledge] kind of gives me something more to fight for because there's still obviously racism in the world now. So it just gives me more of a motive."

"When I first heard the word performance about the slave trade, I immediately thought, 'Oh this is going to be insensitive...'"

"It's very important to really have a very deep understanding. Because I feel like a lot of people...either don't care about it, saying jokes about it, or they're like 'that's really bad, but they don't know why it's so bad.'"

"I feel at the start we did a lot of talking, all the topics that we discussed in detail. And I really, really did like the museum trips before we even started all the drama stuff. When you learnt and talked about stuff, it was just very educational. I really did enjoy that."


"I had thought about it [themes such as slavery] and obviously I knew about it, but, like, I've never done it that deeply before. So, trying the new stuff allowed my mind to wander more and think of like, not just the straight facts, but also like, how these people might have felt when this was happening."

"It's like the whole Iran revolution that's going on about women's rights...a more modern revolution but if you look at the similarities, looking from afar, you'll be like, 'Oh, it's slave trade and women's rights, it doesn't link'. But if you look really closely you'll see that we actually haven't come as far in history as we would have thought and how it does link."

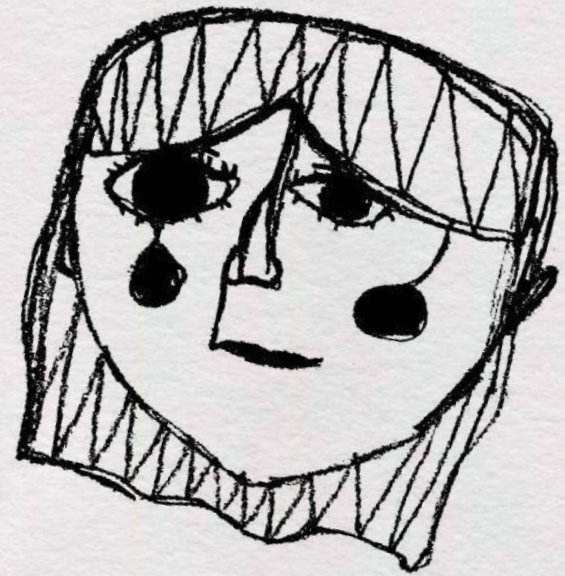
"[The project has] definitely influenced the way that I relate with other people because – this is going to sound weird – I realise just how human everyone else is."

"I definitely have more of an understanding of what happened [enslavement]."

We learnt a lot of new things, especially with the museum visits and all the different specialists we had come to visit, they taught us a lot of things. We got to ask them questions which really broadened my knowledge on certain topics.



Taster Day











The Atlantic Xplorers' Guidelines

Everyone has the right to be heard and respected.

We will use language that won't offend or upset other people.

We will use the correct terms and if we don't know them, we'll ask.

We will comment on what was said, not the person who said it.

We won't share our own, or our friends', personal experiences.

We won't put anyone on the spot.

We won't judge or make assumptions about anyone.

We have the right to pass on questions.

Boundaries and rules in our collective...

- ① Everybody's' opinions should be heard & respected.
- ② Be aware of what you say to words other people in hopes to not offend them.
- ③ Don't make fun of other peoples opinions as it can embarrass others.
- ④ Be ready to apologise to people if you ever make any wrong decisions.
- ⑤ Always listen to other peoples' opinions and give people space if they need to show respect.
- ⑥ Be calm and try to keep your disagreements quiet when you feel offended to ~~not~~ others to try not to lash out.
- ⑦ Always be ready to help others out.

~~- Think about what you say~~

Our Collective ~~Boundaries~~ ^{understanding}

- agree to disagree
- Be aware of other peoples feelings and opinions
- Not sharing outside of the group
- listen to each other / don't talk over each other
- It's ok to get it wrong / ~~as~~ make mistakes

It's a sensitive

don't make fun of other people's opinion, instead debate respectfully.

develop your answers.

Enjoy the debates, hearing other people's opinions can be interesting.

Support one another, you're in a group. Everyone is in the same boat.

Never bring anyone down.

~~Think about what you say~~



knowing when it's right to speak about these things

Our Collective

- If you disagree or find something ask what they mean before taking things personally
- Think about what you say
- Always be open other's opinions even if disagree
- No one being aggressive or judgmental
- Open to new ideas and changing you but don't have to
- Willing to get things wrong and own up to

~~Envy~~ We will listen and respect one another.

We will be mindful of our words and always apologise if sentences so by don't offend.

We will strive to use correct terminology at all times and ask for the right word if we don't know it.

We will not comment on each other

We won't share experiences of others without their permission.

We will not put unnecessary pressure upon each other

We will not judge or make assumptions about anyone.

We have the right to pass

You should respect and listen to everyone and if you don't agree then try to understand what they think, and give your opinion

Be mindful of what you say but if you get something wrong then just apologise.

Don't judge others if they accidentally get something wrong.

Don't make other people feel uncomfortable giving their opinion.

Try to be open to different ideas.

We should respect other people's boundaries and don't force opinions on others

- Reassure people when they make mistakes
- Share ideas and get involved
- Use other people's ideas to help with your own
- Be open-minded and not judgemental
- Accept other people's perspectives even if you disagree.
- Don't be scared to ask questions.

My journey has been exhilarating and highly creative, and it has filtered into my everyday practice a little bit, thinking about how to use multimedia, use different theatre styles, principally Gecko's work, but also how to make our drama curriculum a little bit more diverse.

TEACHER QUOTES

"I do believe that the students have also become much more affirmed in their understanding of what they can do to make a difference within their education, and how they can guide others with their understanding."

"Being more open to allowing the group the freedom to explore ideas and also the variety of different ways the students were learning has helped to remind me of the variety of ways that they can learn, or where they can develop ideas from."

"I think from my perspective it's enabled me to become much more active in pushing diversity within the framework of the national curriculum. This doesn't give much wriggle room unfortunately, but perspectives have become a much greater influence in my teaching."

"I'm more keen to develop my [teaching] capacity - develop work in responding to objects, and using museums and art, actually."

"Some of those people [external creative practitioners] will have inspired those young people to see beyond where they are at their age, not growing up in a big city..."

"I feel much more confident having those conversations [about race] in terms of recruitment following that initial set of meetings and having that workshop to begin with. It's made me more racially aware of different groups of students in my school. In terms of actually just looking at the heritages and the backgrounds of students... particularly from a Black British background, I'm thinking about how diverse are our texts that we use?"

CREATIVE PRACTITIONER QUOTES

"I think it has helped a lot of practitioners think about their practice and think about how else they could work with other cultural institutions."

"It's great to see there's this kind of connection between institutions and that this doesn't just stand alone, and that they [Fitzwilliam Museum] are becoming part of a community... connecting with the school and also with Gecko, with me coming in as well and connecting to a professional institution. That was really nice to be a part of."

"There were different teaching styles [among project staff]... part of the process was coming together to an agreement within that, on how to lead the young people forward and empower them."

If you're in the classroom teaching, you're controlling stuff. So letting go has been challenging - but not in a negative way - just kind of a learning way.

Poetry & Drumming

Ideas:

Song 1 - like a plantation of slaves singing to communicate.
acapella
making songs in native languages
for communication

Yeh

Song 2 - more rebellious
finalising the plan
fighting back against
the slavers
Clapping
dynamics were louder



Can be sung
anytime anywhere.

a capella

meaning no
instruments

Dynamics

Voice

Her voice is
really powerful
& dominating

She has incredible
range, going from bass
notes to the high Soprano
keys/octaves



the days feel long
each white scar on my body
a different bone.

the lost lives of a place
each vessel a different story
the ancestors of these hearts
laid to rest under their youth

I feel like a vigilante
~~people~~ I am an escape for freedom
but a murderer of life.

The days feel long

Eilidh



Come my child
 See what i can do
 a free escape
 come let me hold you
 Under the coashies
 large water skins
 refuge for the weary
 I'm here can you see me
 I'm a cave for your thoughts
 I'm always wide open
 so close me shut
 don't try to resist
 lay out with bones and flesh

Come my child
 Zoe

The drops flying through the air
 Cashes on the sand
 Diving in, plunging in
 Into the welcome embrace
 Water, all around

Above the surface laughter
 Underneath, frantic movement
 Two parts, opposite actions
 One scene
 Water, all around

Water, all around
 Ava

The Playlist

Isobel

Hazel Eyes by Sabrina Jordan
Lost Boy by Ruth B

Divine

Call Me What You Like by lovejoy
Grapes by James Mariotte

Femi

Notion by The Rare Occasions
Uptown Funk by Mark Ronson

Ninh

Billy Jean by Michael Jackson
Daddy Issues by the Neighbourhood

Sam

You belong with me by Taylor Swift

Ruby

Last Friday Night by Katy Perry
Stitches by Shaun Mendes

Ava

As It Was by Harry Styles
Light Up by Harry Styles

Tabbi

Hips Don't Lie by Shakira
Paparazzi by Lady Gaga

Zoe

Lush Life by Zara Larson
Iskaba by Wande Coal

Eilidh

Wicked Ways by Hailstorm
Souls on Fire by Mad Gallicher



“With the DJing, when we were mixing things together, it sort of was relating to how different stories can be so different, like they can merge into the same sort of story. And I think that when we do these things that don’t have a clear link, it makes us think deeper about the link and then we find the link. It teaches us a really deep lesson.”

Student quote

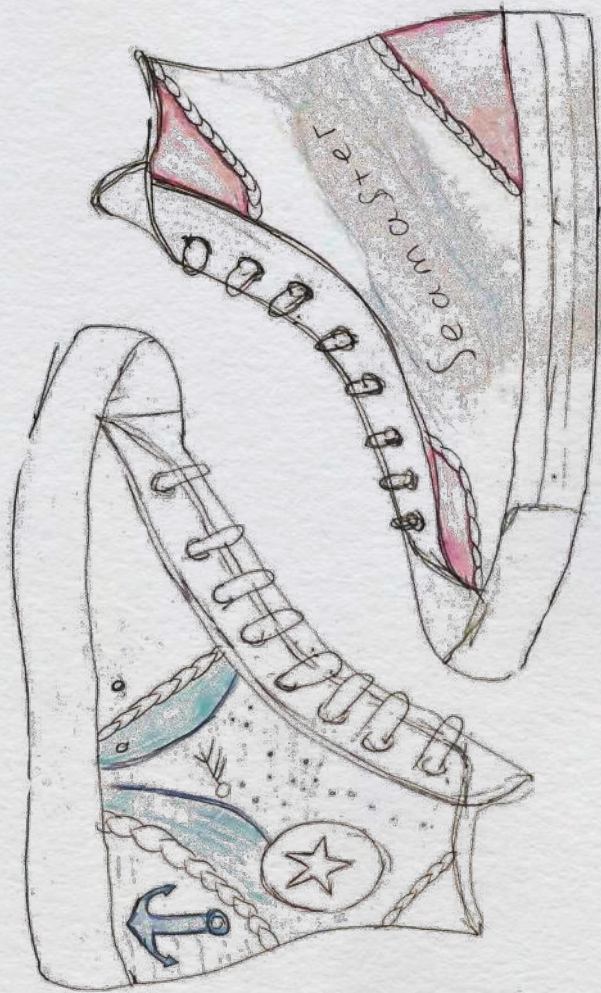


Walk A Mile in My Shoes





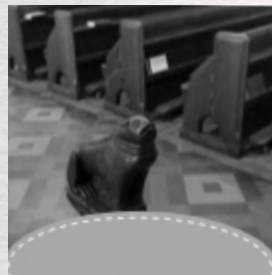
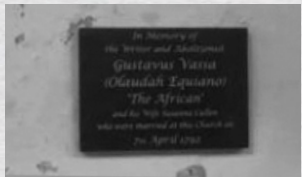




Visual Media: In the Footsteps of Equiano



A photo from the past of the church compared to how it looks now.



With my pictures I wanted to explore how although time passes, there is still evidence of the past and our history is all around us without us realising.

Some of the very same structures remained the same in the church from when Equiano was in Soham and got married there.



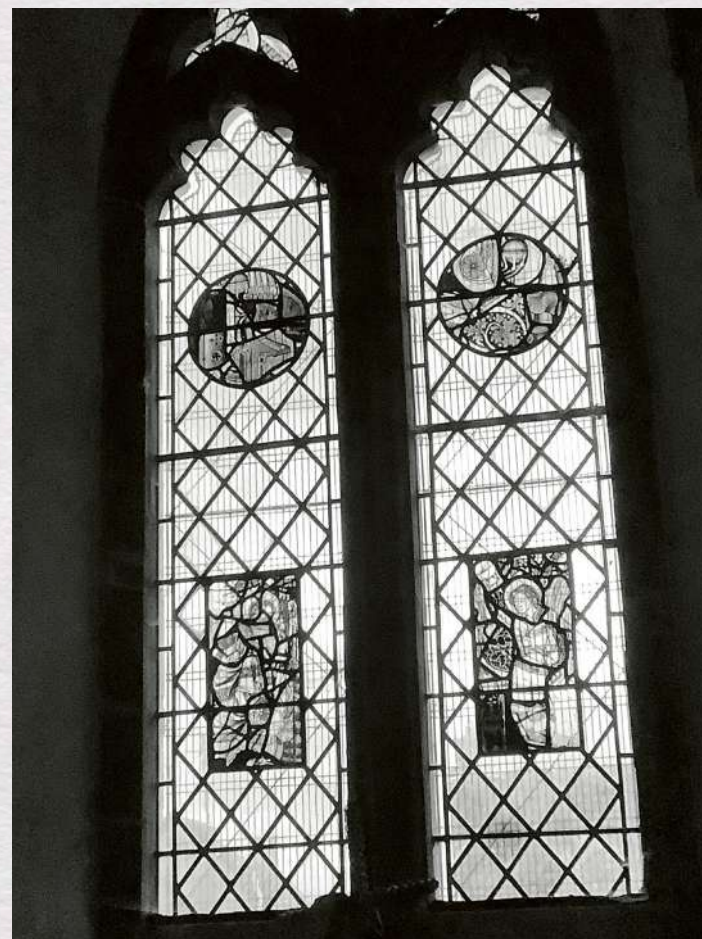
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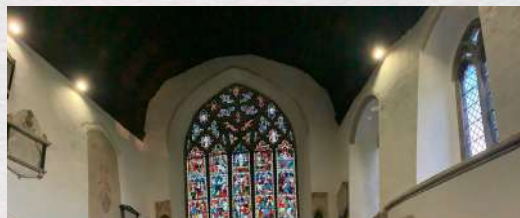
I feel like the links with Equiano and the church, you kind of start to think, ‘Oh, it's a bit deeper than it was before’. And I think if that's only one thing, and that's like something that's quite local to us, then think about how many, how many more stories there are and how many more things there are, ways to tell them.

”

Student quote







I have chosen the stained glass window photo as this would have been something that would have still been there when Olaudah would have been there. Its a strong representation of history and would have told stories he himself would have seen. This creates a connection between us now and him as we all would have witnessed so much happen and so much changing but that remaining and being the way it was when it was created. additionally, it uses a lot of colour that is still very prominent today and hasn't changed much over time. Colour is also used for beauty and art which is important in creating what we aim to make at the end.



Creative Writing

THE ATLANTIC XPLOREERS CHOSE THEIR FINAL LOGO,
MADE BY ISOBEL AFTER A DESIGN SESSION.



The Way by Femi

In the gentle cascade of leaves, beneath the verdant canopy of trees,
I find myself adrift, xploring the currents of time,
A spectator to the ebb and flow of past and present.

Like Equiano, I stand on the riverbanks of history,
Tracing the courses he once charted,
Immersed in the waters of his lingering spirit.

A figure in front of a light,
despite his face being invisible
I could see hope resting upon his countenance,
like a dove upon a branch.

Embarking on a voyage, into the future,
A distant dot on the horizon, mirroring the ripple of a pond disturbed,
Yet, hope persists—a steady stream in the vast expanse of an ocean of dread.

The past, a collection of leaves drifting on the water's surface,
Whispering tales of bygone seasons, carried by the current,
Their descent, a dance synchronised with the rhythmic flow.
We pick up lessons from the past,
Dead leaves fall, a quiet reminder.

Bad things, sometimes needed for change,
Leaves drop as seasons rearrange.

In the light, a figure stands,
Face veiled, a mystery for anyone's hands.

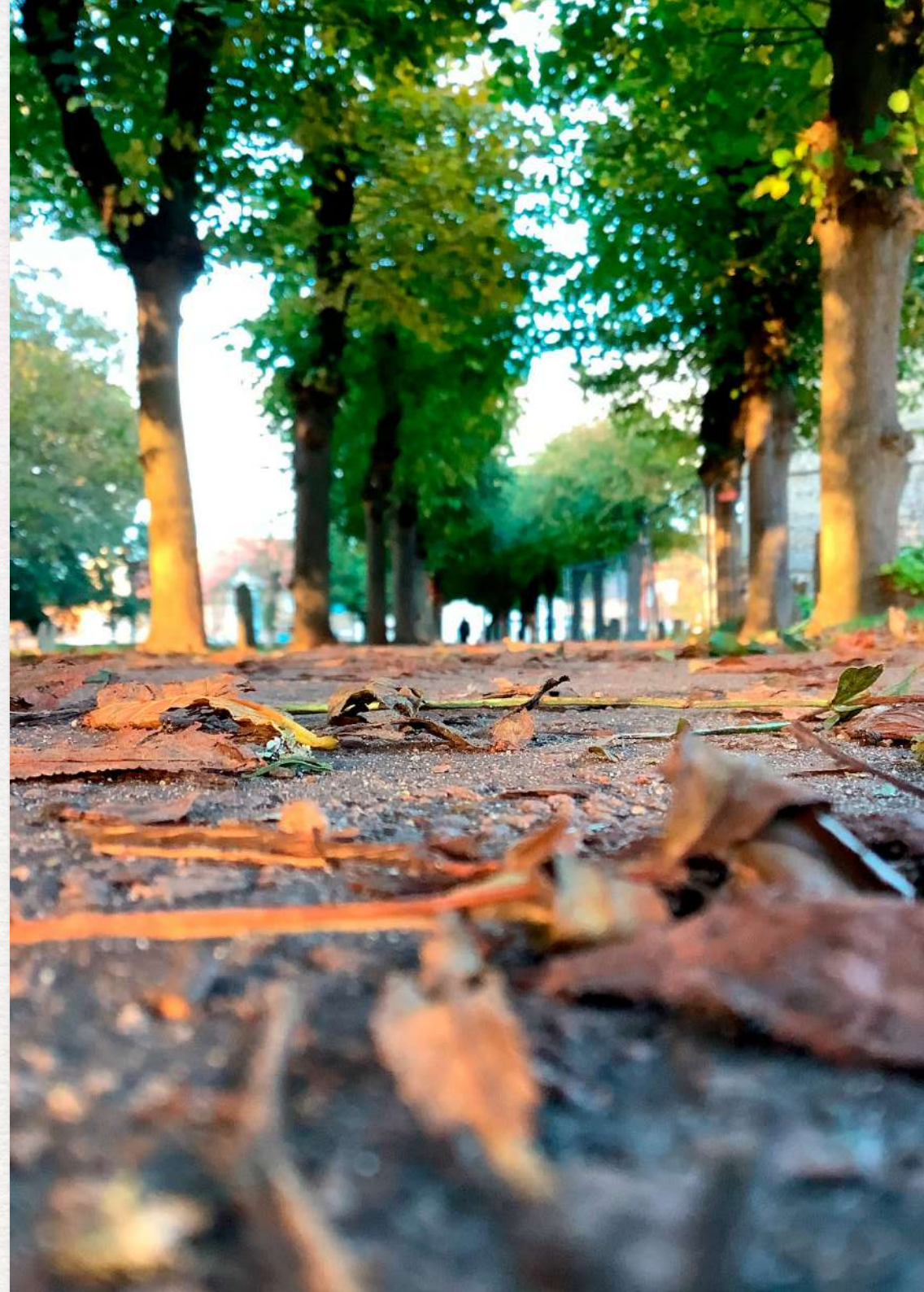
Equiano, you, me—each in our own way,
Exploring the uncharted waters of the future, day by day.

The face concealed, a universal screen,
For anyone can be that person, a truth unseen.

**Everyday we try to find,
The Way.**

This is my picture and when we took it I didn't really think much of it. First, I just thought it might be interesting to get a picture of the path from a low perspective. And then I looked at it a bit more and I realised that there is actually some deeper meaning to this. So as you can see, there's a figure standing in front of a light. That was just a random person

walking down the path and I was like, "Oh, no, I've got a person in my picture", but I just realised that that is like a metaphor for how Olaudah Equiano was at his time. He was a figure walking towards the light - walking towards a better future for people that suffered being enslaved, so that other people wouldn't have to deal with that in the future.



I think that it is really interesting to look into different places such as the church in Soham as they all hold different significance for different people. They hold so many personal connections and memories as well as physical remains. Although it seems that our past ~~as well as other people's~~ ~~people's~~ is behind us now, it is always there. For example: in Soham church there are still many aspects in it from the past such as the wooden carvings and the reminiscence of the paint on the walls which shows how the past is always present and we can't escape it whether it is good or bad. We got to see some of the same sights as Equiano which connects us to him and gives us an insight on him his life as the church was very important to him due to his marriage and the baptism of his daughters taking place there and many of the beautiful and traditional aspects could trigger special memories of for him. so we are able to develop an understanding of his life and connection to him.

Today was finally the day, the day i've been looking forward to. While getting ready all the things we could do in the future flooded my mind having children, getting our own homes. This felt like a luxury after all the horrors i've lived through coming over here, the pain and the misery. The cries in the boat, the ~~the~~ appalling smell and the awful conditions. The way the women were treated.

But to the kind regards of my final master i was able to leave.

Walking out of my dressing quarters it felt like a new life the aromatic smell of the flowers. the beautiful sight of the cathedral, the sun shining on ~~at~~ the side of the church. The crunch of the autumn leaves under my feet, the beautiful flowers surrounding me.

Seeing my soon to be wife was like a dream, she looked... she looked, wow! the most gorgeous woman i've ever seen. We did the ceremony and it was brilliant. the best time of my life. ~~for~~

*and will always be

As I approach the the Stone building With a huge Wooden opening, ~~I am hit with~~ the feeling of Overwhelmed. I am about to Start a whole new Chapter of my life With the Person that I care about the most in the World. I Step into the Magnificent building Which although is extremely cold I can't help but feel warm as the Sound of Peoples Chatter and laughter Reverberates off the Walls Along With the Sound of People talking I can also hear the Sound of my shoes tapping on the mosaic pattern of the floor. As I make my Way to the front of the Church past the Wooden pews until I see the huge Window at the back of the Church When I finally reach the end and turn around and see everyones eyes on me it really hits me that I'm getting married but it doesn't matter, this is what I want. Then everything seems to blur together until the huge organs in the back of the room Start and thats When I see her. The most beautiful Vision ever.



Devising the performance

After revisiting Black Atlantic: Power, People Resistance, the young people discussed the issues of most importance to them and reflected on research themes.

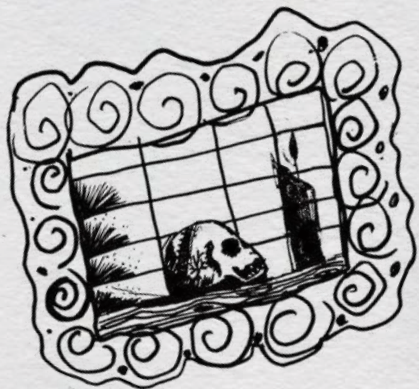
In term two, they used their creative research to develop a script with Physical Theatre company Gecko, leading to a final performance for family and friends at the Museum.

1. I will tell a story about the experience of someone who was on the slave ship and how they were treated while being a slave.

- Invented categories
- Plantation bell
- Highlighting black people in history
- The keeping of records and violence
- The fear of slaves

2. More research about the slave ship and the treatment of them on the ships.

Why people really thought they were superior to others.



Things 4 the Performance

- Multi-rolling
- Characters are representative of POC
- a full

What stories will you tell with the material you've created / found?

1) I will keep researching by looking on social media and different peoples points of view and different experiences they have had.

2) I would like to tell peoples stories from the artwork that is in the exhibition as many different artists have different experiences and different points of view and tell different stories with their art. Some examples are:

- The Coloureds' Codex - Invented Categories
- The White Painting background with the one coloured person
- Ringing across time - a bell that used to signify the start and end of the day.



- Spotlight - Barbra Walker
* re works paintings to
highlight the black people
and not to hide them
away
* Brain to signify how
smart black people
are.

- Equiano
Sheep b...
with no...
sex or...
like
outaway
for

Colour thing:
Whites above blacks
Making original (race-based
science)

- Children almost suffo-
cated on chains.

Barbra Walker art
highlights issues +
not hiding the truth

Equiano:
- he was 12 when he
was put on the ship
- was shocked by the
complexions of white
people.

Equiano:
folk like

Transatlantic trade
In the north Sea

Punishing
captive

200

Pro-Slavery
Dutch born
Made in
Transatlantic

Equiano's
Story

Equiano's
Story

Equiano's
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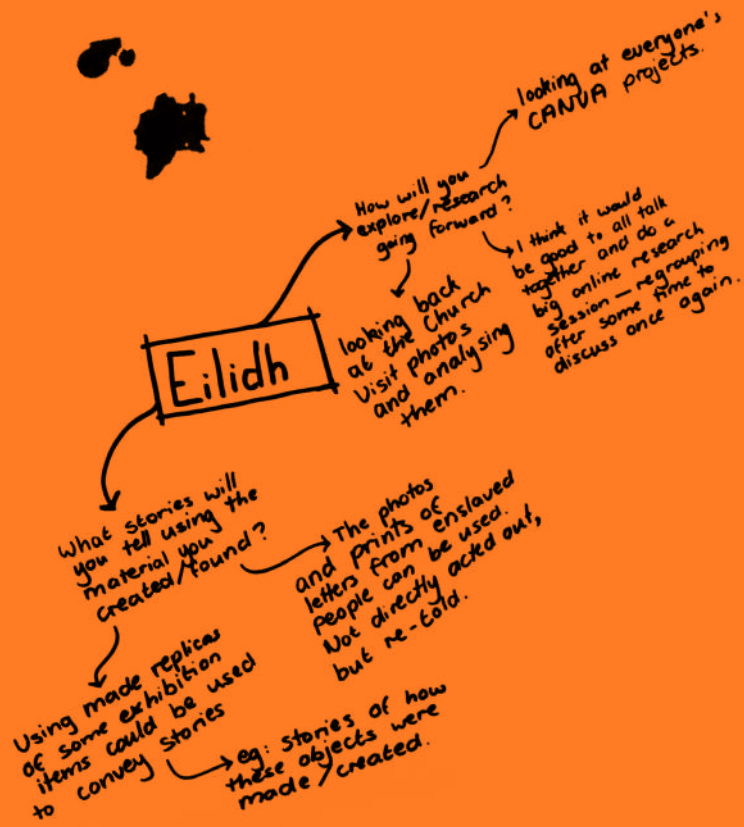
Equiano's
Story

Equiano's
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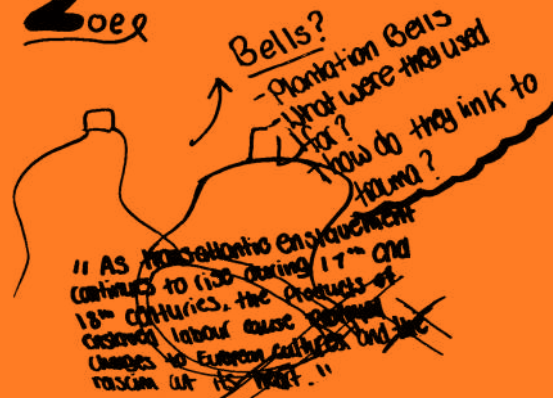
Equiano's
Story

Equiano's
Story

Equiano's
Story



Zoe



How will you explore + research going forward?

I will continue to explore going forward by hearing things from people of colour as Dr Eva said rather than just people speaking for them as they can offer personal insights.



"a sound signifying brutality"

I want to tell stories shared by people through art as we look at the deeper meaning of them. For example, the embossed pieces I think are really interesting and it is interesting to think about the artist's intentions and the message it conveys.

@atlantic Xplore's Schedule

- 10am - hello! Snacks!
- 10.15am - Dr. Eva Namukoke introduces the African Collection Futures Project.
- 10.35am - Research & Curation Lab
 - What stories will you tell with the material you've created?
 - How will you explore & research going forward? *had chance to see BA exhibit
- 11.30am - Small group interviews
- 12.00pm - lunch upstairs
- 12.30pm - Gecko workshop
- 3.20pm - pack up
- 3.30pm - end of day! See you next year!

we can look back at our past sessions and do feedback on them.

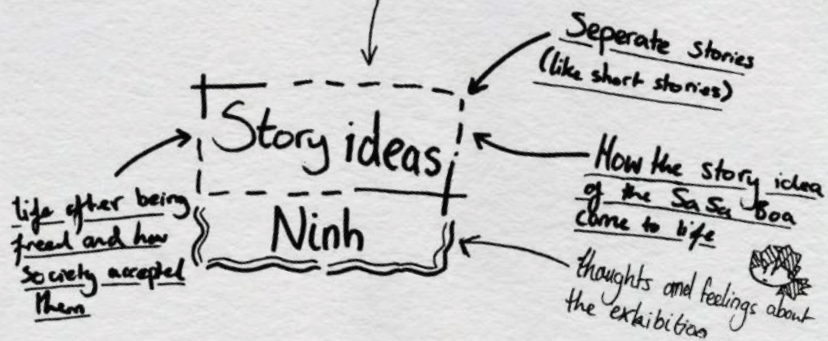
I think going forward with research we could focus on what we liked the best and look deeper into it. Then see if we can add it into the performance.

Ruby

we could also use the shoes and put them in an order to tell a story through artistic work.

With the materials provided we could act out enslaved Peoples stories that they never got to tell.

how different objects are linked to the past



~~Think about what your story~~

1. I will attempt to narrate the broader story of the process that led to the end of the Atlantic Slave Trade. I would also like to narrate the change in ideas concerning Africa and African people.
2. Research
 - Articles
 - Literature
 - Artifacts

Sam

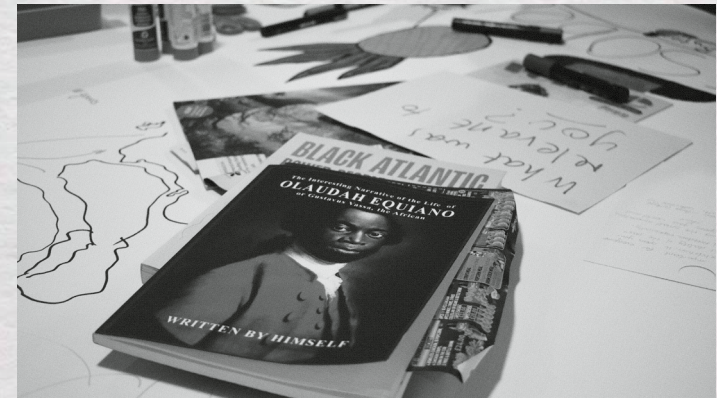
1. How those that were enslaved are represented in Paintings. (Historical)

2.

Podcasts
Documentaries
Artifacts & relics
Paintings
Statues
Museum visits
Literature
eg. wall taken
Screen writing

• monologue of literature
• miming the waves
• Physical transitions
• Multi-rolling
• Flashcards
• flashbacks
• Narrator
• music
• Freeze frames
• Slow motion for effect

• Dialogues
• Find a stimuli to work from



Zines

Power

1. Black people or people of colour coming together, ~~and~~
A group of people that fight for the same cause.
2. I'm a person that fights for a lot of things, I have strong opinions and I will do anything in my power to change others opinions about things.
3. Other people may share the same opinion as me so talking more about something may let others come out about it and bring our power together to change things.

~~Think about what you say~~

People

- My people.
- No labels needed (we're all people at the end of the day)

It's important to me because I want to know my own history more - that starts with my people.

It should be important to other people because learning your own heritage is beautiful and really makes you think about how your family helped and affected others.



Resistance

1. Freedom/Finding yourself
2. You get to be your own person. French Revolution
3. Resistance doesn't just help one individual, it's a grouped action with a grouped affect.



TABBY




R
NEVER holding back
S
I
S
COMETOGETHER
A
N
C
We are in it TOGETHER

20E


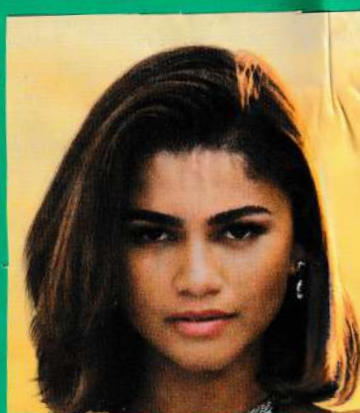
Resistance



Virtual
reminder
to
come
TOGETHER
together



So that EVERYONE can know that we are in it
TOGETHER!



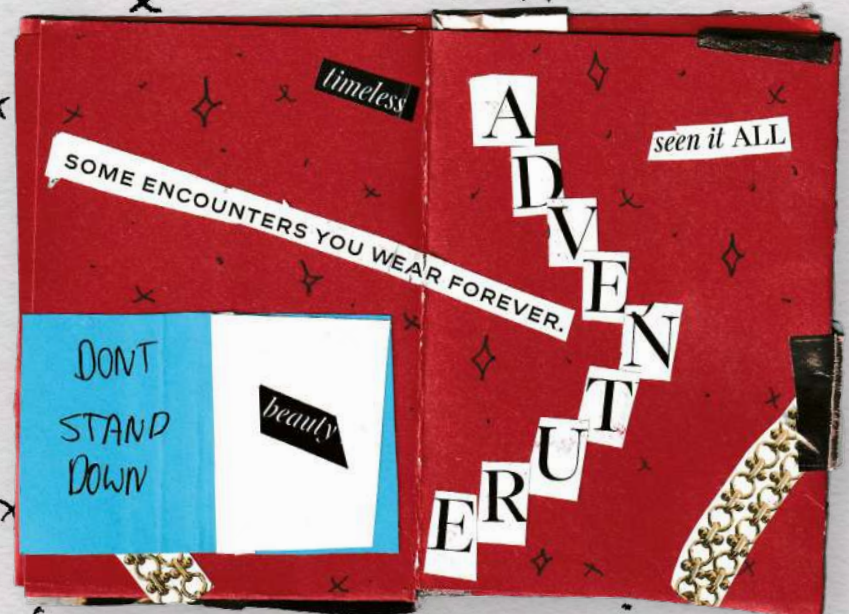


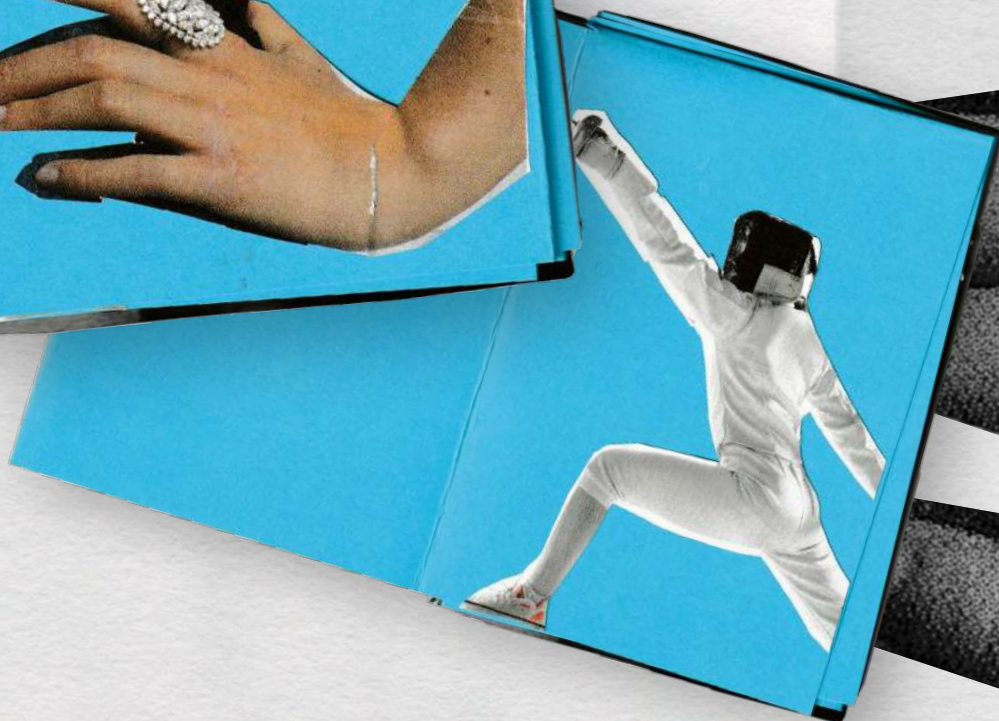
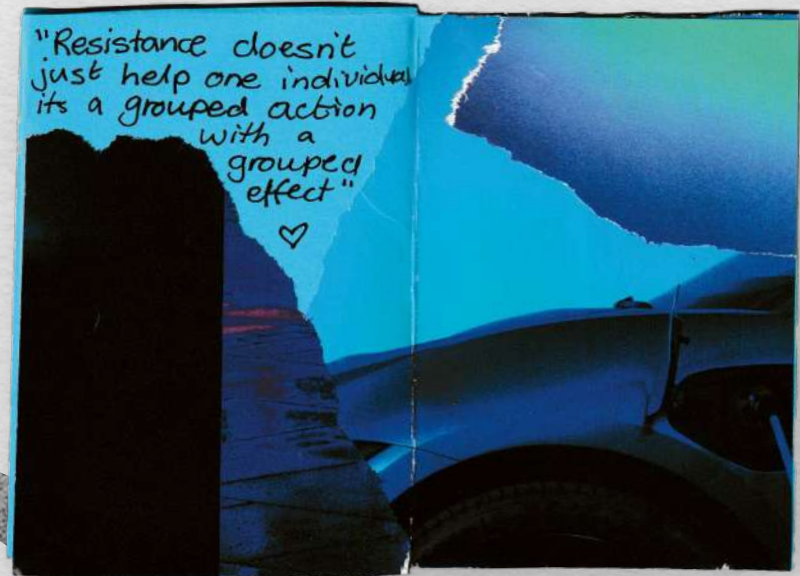
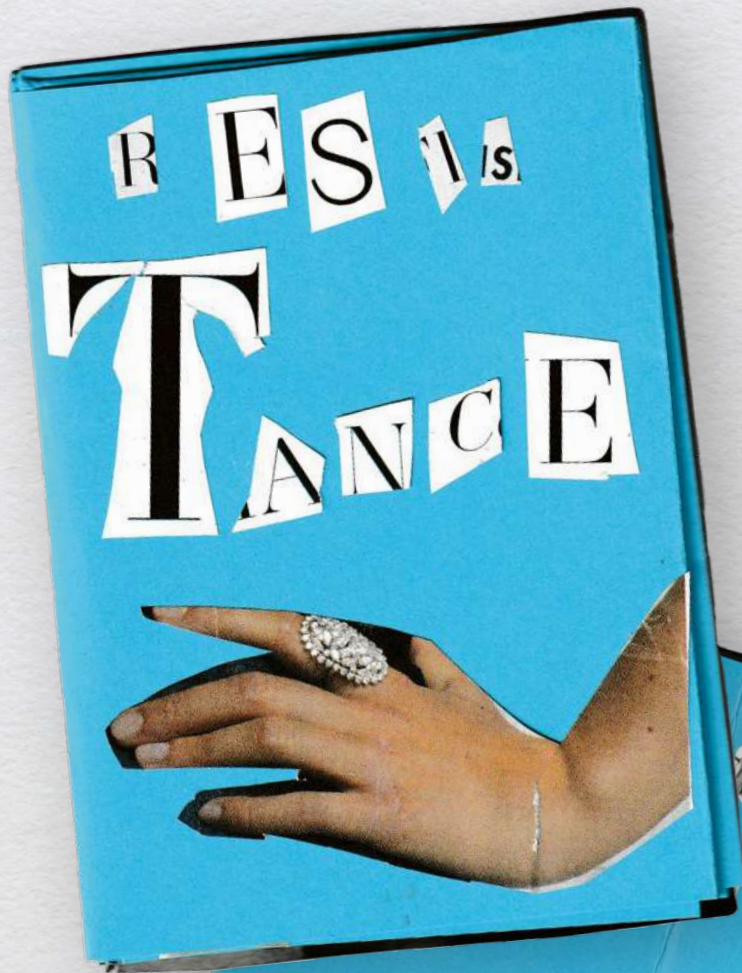
Ruby





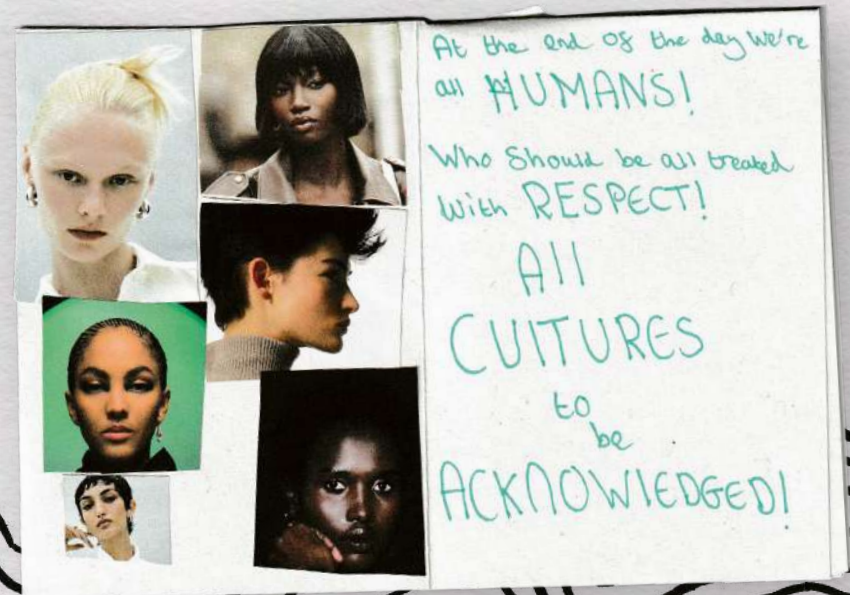
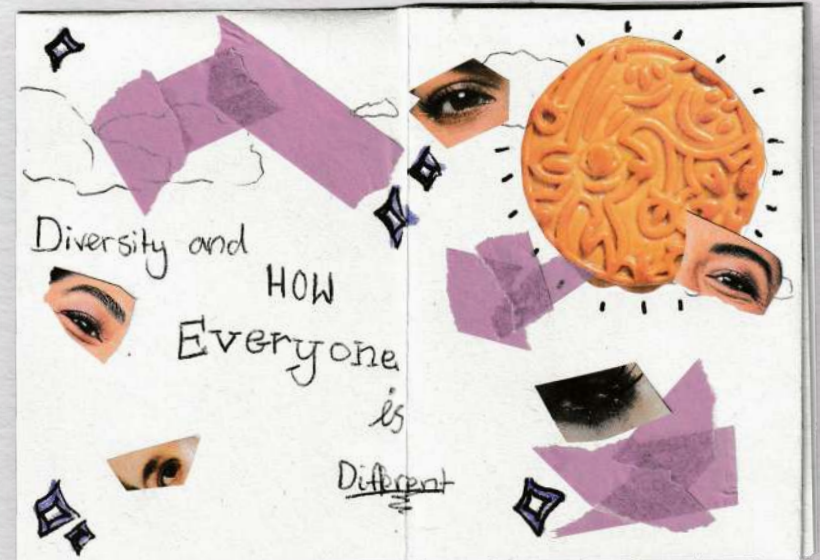
Isobel





SAM

Ninh



EILIDH

P *people* 

1. What comes to mind when
you think of this word?

VISION

MUSIC

CULTURE

Luxury

2. Why is it important to you?



I want to
know my
own history
...

United

Evie

HERITAGE

... That
starts with
my
people



S, morality - how
e should
impot
use
rong
stand
s and
sare
ours

"I think my fans can
relate to me being
unapologetically
myself..."



Femi



This should be important to others because
we are here to be aware of how our
-ACTIONS- affect others...

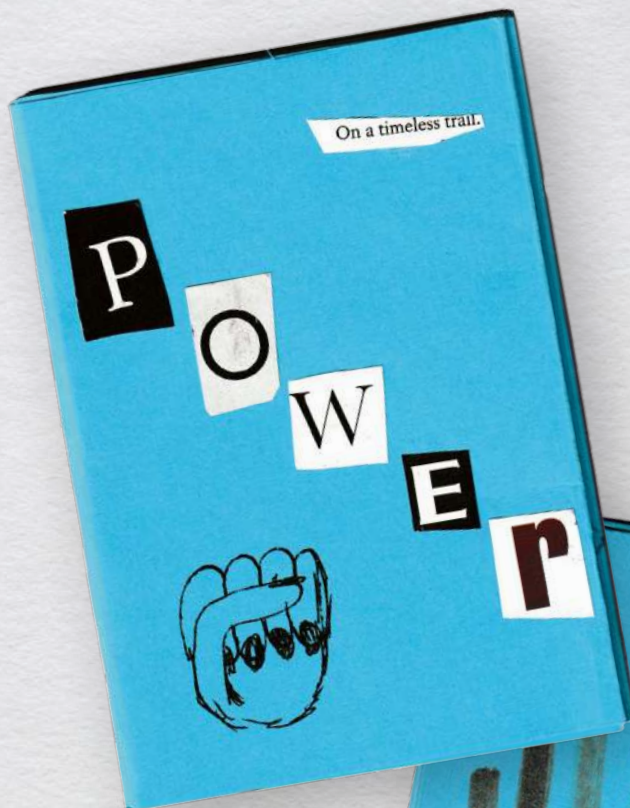


Believe

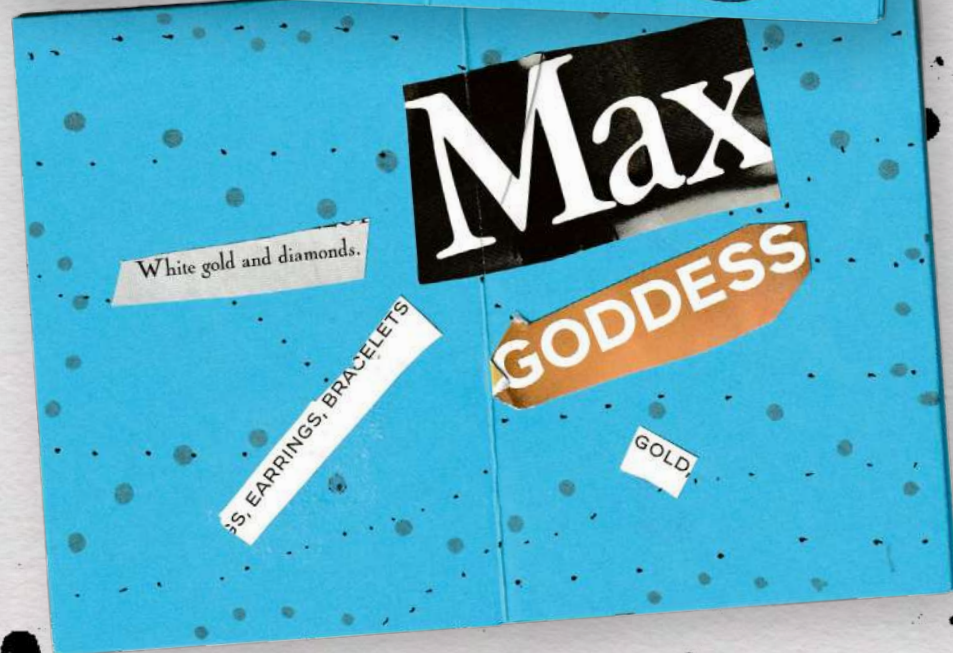
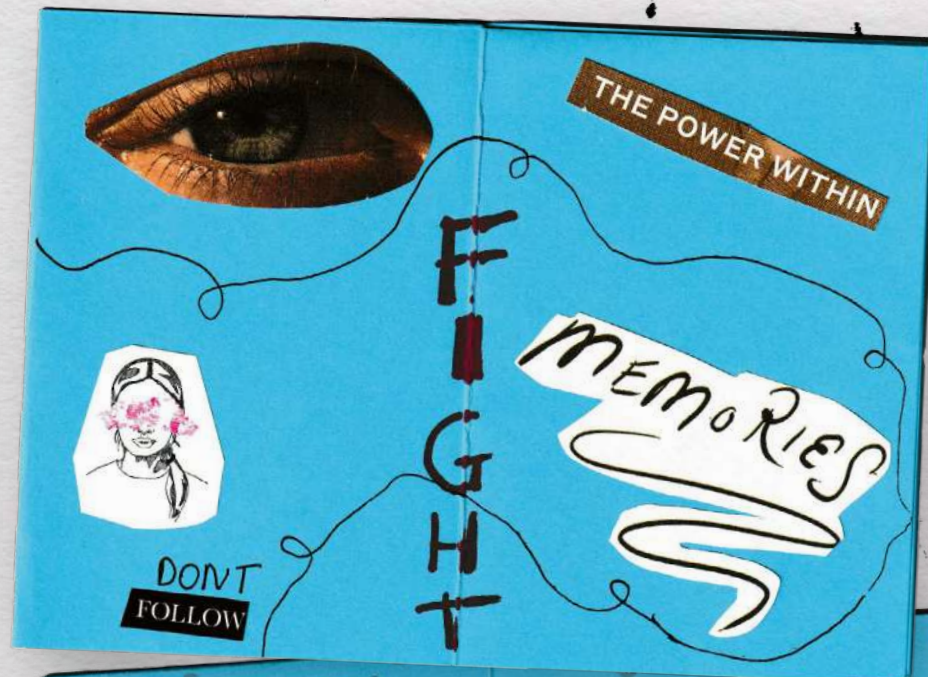
@
Strong understanding
of ethics and morality
for a society to

Flourish

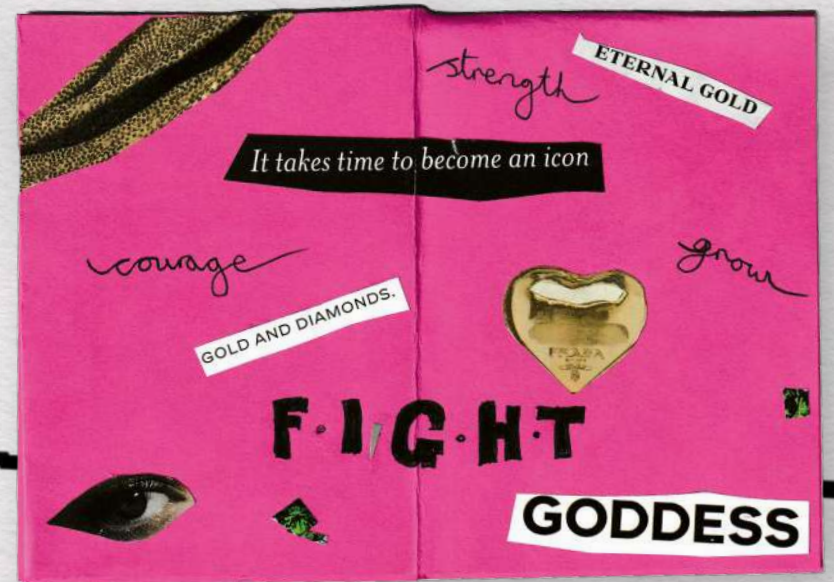
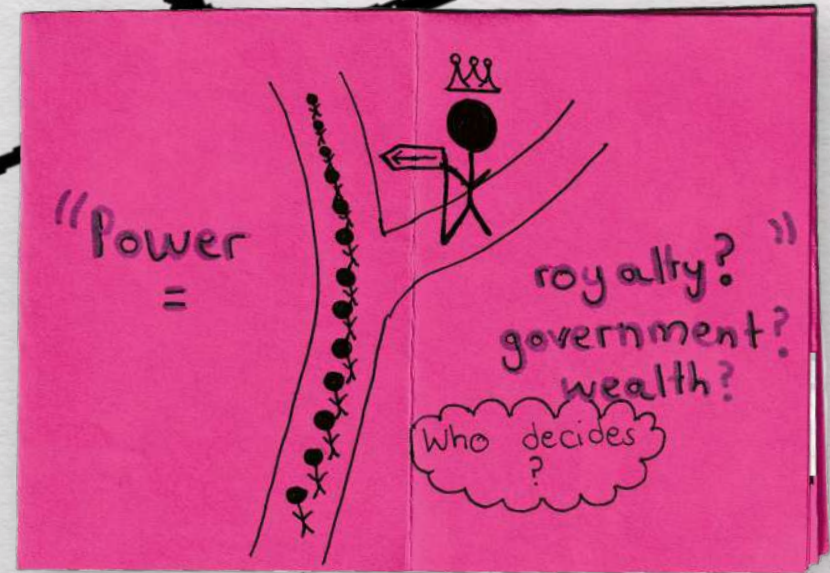




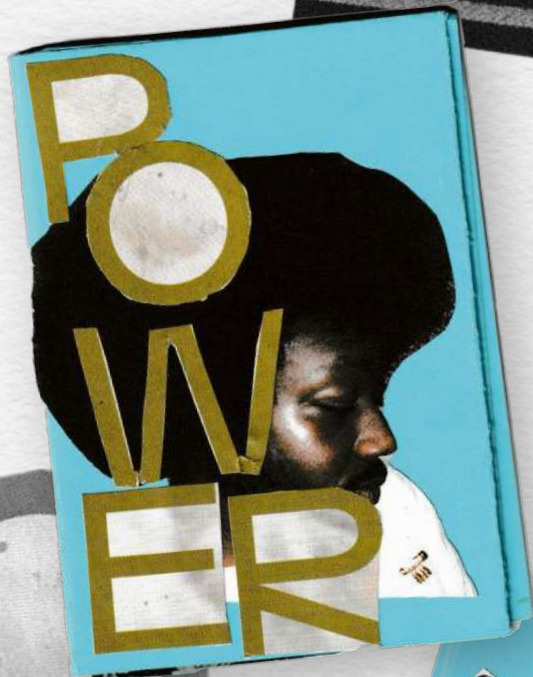
Ava



ANAÏS



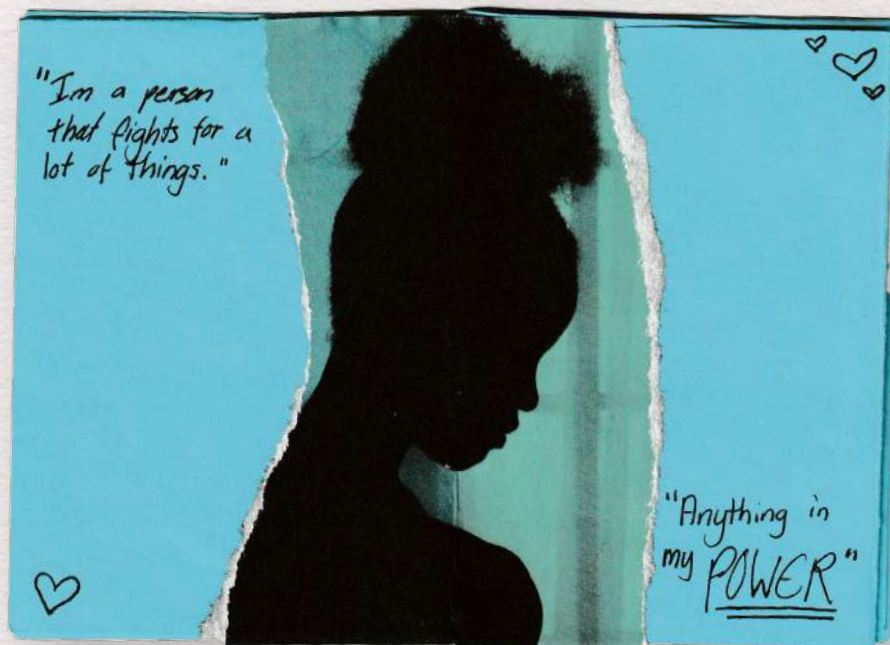
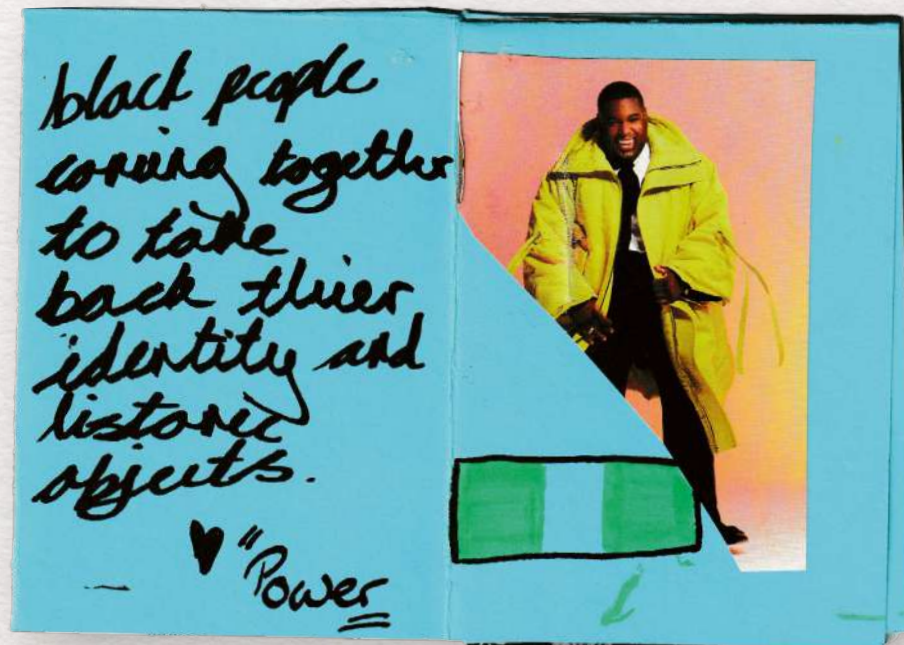
DIVINE



A

n

G



Performance

“After the last artist-led workshop in December 2023, the Collective revisited the Black Atlantic exhibition to review the co-research themes they had explored together. Refining and shaping these themes led to the scripts and storyboards that were devised for the final physical theatre performance.”







During Future/Power, we met with Shereen Jasmin Phillips, Creative Director of Taking Part, which is the Young Vic theatre's acclaimed work with young people, schools and the local community.

Shereen shared thoughts and insights she's developed when working with young people and devising theatre with complex historical themes which may be useful for both educators and museum practitioners:

- All stakeholders must be on the same page and understand each other's terminology – a teacher's understanding of an outcome and how it's measured may be quite different from an artist's interpretation.
- Clear communication is key, and is often best when all oral agreements are followed up immediately in writing.
- Set clear parameters and directives for the young people transparently. Offer young people a framework within which they have agency.
- Employ a critical friend or advisor, someone slightly removed who looks from the outside in and holds you to account. Ensure they hold the necessary knowledge to contribute to problem-solving if need be. Hold regular project check-ins with them at pre-planned intervals.
- Consider working with an early career practitioner who's closer to the students in age who can be a brilliant conduit between a youth collective and older adults working on the project. Ideally, find someone who has lived experience both of building agency in young people and the project's themes.
- When collaborating with external theatre companies, seek out those who have knowledge and experience of the project's themes to avoid reproducing stereotypes.
- Work together with young people to define your collective guidelines, methods, and objectives - and be sure that everyone sticks with this approach consistently, including adults on the project. With a set of guidelines and a commitment to work together, you can work through complicated conversations collectively, with trust and respect.
- Care for, and a commitment to, your aims and outcomes is invaluable. Mechanisms should be designed into the project to ensure that space is made to have regular, open and honest check ins for project stakeholders.
- Mental health must be considered in all participatory projects and is especially important when exploring complex content. What mental health/emotional support can you provide? Is there a drama therapist in the room in increments or throughout? Is there another therapeutic offer you or one of your stakeholders can provide? This may be already within the structure of an institution such as a school counsellor.
- It's important to consistently consider everyone's well-being when doing this kind of work. Know what your offer is for students, staff and partners, and make sure everyone is aware of it.
- Some teachers can worry about approaching colonial history if they haven't worked in this area before. What approaches can be devised in advance to help teachers and students cover any unfamiliar material? Dorothy Heathcote's 'mantle of the expert' approach may support everyone to feel more confident.



This programme was funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and delivered by the Museums Association in partnership with The Liminal Space and the Association for Science and Discovery Centres. The 'Mindsets + Missions' programme uses the concept of 'future citizens' to bring together diverse and plural perspectives at participating spaces such as the Fitzwilliam Museum. It encourages young people to engage with, influence and develop the knowledge our future societies will be built on.

With huge thanks to the Atlantic Xplorers youth collective: Zoe, Isobel, Anaïs, Ninh, Femi, Tabby, Sam, Divine and Eilidh.

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Thank you to all the staff involved from Soham Village College and at the Fitzwilliam Museum.

The
Fitzwilliam
Museum
CAMBRIDGE