



Iniva's Autumn Season at Rivington Place Presents the Work of Two Ground-Breaking Artists

Hew Locke – *The Kingdom of the Blind*
3 September – 20 October 2008

Donald Rodney – *In Retrospect*
29 October – 29 November 2008

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7 August, 2008: Iniva, the leading contemporary arts organisation dedicated to the work of artists from culturally diverse backgrounds, presents two new exhibitions this autumn – a specially commissioned installation by leading British artist Hew Locke and an important re-examination of Donald Rodney's work, a pioneering Black British artist who died at a young age in 1998. The exhibitions also mark the first year anniversary of Rivington Place, the UK's first permanent public space dedicated to culturally diverse visual arts and photography, designed by David Adjaye and a new permanent home for Iniva and Autograph ABP.

Hew Locke – The Kingdom of the Blind 3 September – 20 October 2008
Press Preview: Tuesday 2 September, 10.00hrs – 12.00hrs

Hew Locke will present a major new installation for Iniva at Rivington Place entitled *The Kingdom of the Blind* showing a fictional collection of the possessions of an imaginary ruler. The installation combines a carnivalesque frieze of monumental figures (reaching up to 14 ft tall) with an elaborate backdrop of wall drawings. Depicting this fictional leader's rise to power, Locke's figures, enacting victorious moments in battle, act as elaborate votive objects – composed of intricate combinations of fake leather handbags, miniature plastic animals, doll parts, sequins, chains and fake weaponry.

For the last 10 years Locke's work has explored the visual display of those in power and those who aspire to power. His immense and complex architectural installations and more recently, his monumental wall drawings and figurative sculptures made from the mundane, bright and sparkling ephemera of street markets and pound shops, have adopted, questioned and subverted the iconographies and language of royalty and government in relation to notions of power and cultural identity.

In *The Kingdom of the Blind*, a chaotic and flamboyant commemoration of individual power becomes a poignant parody of today's social and political global climate. Presented through the formal language of traditional museum



display, Locke's allusions to the language of contemporary dictatorships and war assume a powerful commentary on our national cultural institutions and their relationship to the modern constructs of history and society, cultural identity and national pride.

Locke comments on his practice:

"At its heart, my work is both political and highly personal, often taking me on strange dreamlike journeys where the past and the present merge and then separate."

Having spent the first seven years of his life in Edinburgh before moving to the newly independent Guyana and later returning to London in the 1980s, Locke's personal history feeds into his ongoing interest in the links between personal and national identity. The installation for Iniva also draws on the iconography of great historic battles, such as the Battle of San Romano, the Bayeux Tapestry and the British Museum's Assyrian Lion Hunt reliefs.

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Locke has exhibited extensively within the UK, including Tate Britain as part of British Art Show 6, V&A Museum, The New Art Gallery Walsall, The Bluecoat Gallery and The British Museum. His work was featured in Alien Nation, a touring exhibition, Nov 2006-Dec 2007, which was co-produced by Iniva and the ICA. Locke has recently been commissioned to make a permanent installation for the New Art Exchange, Nottingham. In the US he has exhibited at the Luckman Gallery LA, Atlanta Contemporary Arts and at the Brooklyn Museum. Also in Autumn 2008, Locke will present work in the group exhibition 'Second Life' at the Museum of Art and Design, New York.

Sebastian Lopez, Director, Iniva said: *"Hew Locke's first ever "museum display" at Rivington Place will bring a new perspective to his work and creativity. Locke is an immensely talented artist whose work becomes more and more relevant to international politics and the way in which images of power are constructed."*

Donald Rodney – In Retrospect

29 October – 29 November 2008

Iniva's forthcoming exhibition of Donald Rodney's work will present an important opportunity to reconsider his output against a 21st century backdrop. A leading artist of his generation, Rodney was profoundly influenced by the work of artists including Eddie Chambers, Keith Piper, Sonia Boyce and others who were re-examining social and historical narratives from a black perspective. Though his work continually evolved, Rodney never abandoned his use of self-portraiture in which he would often explore recurring themes of black masculinity, the body and the stereotyping of the young black man as "public enemy" and icon of danger. The exhibition will also mark the 10 year anniversary of the artist's untimely death from sickle cell anaemia.

The exhibition examines work executed by Rodney in the last 10 years of his life when his illness, an emblematically 'black' disease, resulted in increasing pain, immobility, hospitalisation and isolation. In many of his pieces of this period, the artist uses his illness as a metaphor through which a wider set of societal interrogations may take place. This is evidenced by some of the works displayed in the exhibition which use illness as a theme.



Included in the exhibition is the work *My Mother, My Father, My Sister, My Brother* (1997), in which Rodney's own skin, discarded from an operation to remove an artificial hip, forms a miniscule house-like structure held together by pins. This fragile work exudes a sense of intimacy and domesticity but also, given the nature of its origins, something disturbing and profound.

However, Rodney's work is not confined to the personal and specific. The exhibition will also include *Doublethink* (1992), a large installation of sporting trophies displayed with plaques showing statements which Rodney termed "half truths and half lies". One trophy is labelled with 'Black History is plagued by reactionary politics'. Another reads BLACK PEOPLE LOOK TO RELIGION AS A RESCUE FROM THEIR SPIRITUAL BARRENNESS, while another carries the message 'Black Women are use (sic) to degradation'. These trophies suggest the idea that Black people have been awarded or had forced onto them, twisted and skewed identities by the dominant society and its media mouthpieces. By using trophies, Rodney was also able to draw fresh attention to the supposed sporting prowess that simultaneously liberated and trapped Black people.

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A new element of the exhibition will be *The Genome Chronicles*, a film commission from John Akomfrah, an award-winning film-maker and friend of Rodney's. Rodney left behind a large amount of super 8 film material, video and audio tapes as well as 48 written notebooks currently held at Tate Britain. The new film uses this archival material as well as popular songs, reconstructed and composed scenes to create an elegiac three part "poem" to his late friend which, as John Akomfrah said when writing about the film, "captures the private drama of a man who, faced with death, turned to a camera for solace, for assurance, for respite, for redemption."

Donald Rodney (b.1961) studied at the Bourneville School of Art and Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham before undertaking a Postgraduate Diploma in Multi-Media Fine Art at Slade School of Fine Art in London. His solo exhibitions include: *Critical* at Rochdale Art Gallery, Rochdale (1990), *Cataract* at Camerawork in London (1991), *9 Night in Eldorado* at South London Gallery (1997) and *Donald Rodney Display* at Tate Britain (2004). Group exhibitions include: TSWA Four Cities Project, Mount Edgcume Park, Plymouth (1990), *Interrogating Identity*, Grey Art Center Gallery, New York (1991), *Body Visual*, Barbican Arts Centre (1996), *Inside Out*, East London Gallery, University of East London (1998), *Here to Stay*, Arts Council touring exhibition (1999), *Give and Take, Works Presented to Museums by the Contemporary Art Society*, Harris Museum Preston and Jerwood Gallery, London (2000), *British Art Show 5* touring to venues in Edinburgh, Southampton, Cardiff and Birmingham (2000), *Century City* Tate Modern (2001) and *Stranger than Fiction*, a Hayward National touring show (2004).

The exhibition is co-curated by fellow artist, sometime collaborator and curator Keith Piper.

Keith Piper, artist, said: "*The political significance of Rodney's work should not be underestimated, nor his legacy which continues to inspire younger artists. This exhibition, which reveals the artist as one of the most complex and talented artists of his generation, highlights that Rodney's premature death was a great loss to the artistic community in this country.*"

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Listings Information

Exhibition: Hew Locke – The Kingdom of the Blind

Dates: 3 September – 20 October 2008

Exhibition: Donald Rodney – In Retrospect

Dates: 29 October – 29 November 2008

Venue: Rivington Place, London, EC2A 3BA

Public opening hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 11am – 6pm

Late Thursdays: 11am – 9pm (Last admission 8.30pm) Saturday: 12noon – 6pm

Sunday, Monday: Closed

Admission: Free

Nearest tubes: Old Street & Liverpool Street

Rivington Place is fully accessible in all public areas

For parking & wheelchair facilities or further information about Rivington Place
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Further information

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Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts) creates exhibitions, publications, multimedia, education and research projects designed to bring the work of artists from culturally-diverse backgrounds to the attention of the widest possible public. (www.iniva.org)

Opened in 2007, **Rivington Place** is Iniva and Autograph ABP's contemporary visual arts space and the UK's first permanent public space dedicated to culturally-diverse visual arts and photography. The building has been realised with thanks to funding from the Arts Council England Lottery Capital 2 Programme and Barclays, the Rivington Place founding Corporate Partner. Barclays £1.1m contribution is part of a much wider programme of community support, which last year totalled over £52.4 million - one of the most substantial in the UK.

The Rivington Place project also gives thanks to London Development Agency, City Fringe Partnership, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Hackney Council and The City Bridge Trust for their support as well as The Foyle Foundation and the Garfield Weston Foundation. Thanks also to Brodksy Centre and Clifford Chance for their in-kind support. (www.rivingtonplace.org)

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