

inIVA



Alien Nation

17 Nov 2006 – 14 Jan 2007

*Laylah Ali, Hamad Butt, Ellen Gallagher & Edgar Cleijne, David Huffman,
Hew Locke, Marepe, Henna Nadeem, Kori Newkirk,
Yinka Shonibare MBE, Eric Wesley and Mario Ybarra Jr.*

The first project of its kind, **Alien Nation** is a timely, ambitious and thought-provoking exhibition co-produced by the **Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA)** and the **Institute of International Visual Arts (inIVA)** that explores the complex relationship between science fiction, race and contemporary art.

Much has been written about the connection between sci-fi cinema of the 1950s and '60s and the Cold War, where fear of invasion, communism and nuclear war was played out in films that projected the anxieties of the present onto the future. In recent years many artists have similarly used science fiction and extra-terrestrial forms as a way of exploring racial difference and as a potent metaphor for the threat of the outsider.

Alien Nation is curated by John Gill, Jens Hoffmann and Gilane Tawadros and presents the work of twelve contemporary international artists all of whom explore themes of 'otherness' and 'difference' through the language and iconography of sci-fi. The witty and provocative artworks on display encompass film, sculpture, photography, multi-media installations - even 3-D painting - and expose a disturbing contemporary narrative in which the media perpetuate a terror of 'invasion' from immigrants, asylum seekers (indeed any racial, cultural or ethnic 'other') and position such 'outsiders' as the dominant threat to both family and national stability.

The exhibition includes, **Laylah Ali's** cartoon-like drawings which show bizarre, part-human/part-alien, creatures living in a unfamiliar world; **Hamad Butt's** visceral, disconcerting experience of viral invasion from his video work, *The Triffid* (part ii of the *Transmission* installation (1990)), **Ellen Gallagher & Edgar**

Cleijne's 16mm alien life forms projected onto a gallery wall; **David Huffman's** outer space populated by flying saucers and robots, **Marepe's** galaxy of shiny, brightly-coloured aliens created from Christmas baubles; **Hew Locke's** 3-D collage-painting which projects fears of a metropolis under attack in classic sci-fi form; **Henna Nadeem's** digital collages of transformed rural landscapes; **Kori Newkirk's** shimmering alien landscape created from a trail of cultural miscellany; **Yinka Shonibare's** *Dysfunctional Family (1999)*, a delightfully non-nuclear grouping from a brave new world; **Mario Ybarra Jr.'s** partnering of Zapata and Chewbacca within a fantastical giant mural and a new piece especially conceived for the exhibition from **Eric Wesley**.

Mingling fact and fiction, science and art, **Alien Nation** will also show a collection of original sci-fi film posters from the 1950's to present day, courtesy of The Reel Poster Gallery, as well as extracts from contemporary and archive science fiction films as part of this unique exhibition that reveals our innermost fears and fantasies about the outsider.

This exhibition will be accompanied by a significant publication with contributions from the curators and **David Alan Mellor**.

Alien Nation also includes a wide programme of tangent events, which include:

- A specially curated series of sci-fi film screenings at the **ICA**
- Talks on paradox and paranoia in the US political landscape
- A solo show of works by Laylah Ali at **inIVA's** gallery at 6-8 Standard Place, Rivington Street, London EC2. Wednesday-Saturday 17 January - 24 February 2006
- A tour of the exhibition in 2007 which includes Manchester Art Gallery and the Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, Norwich

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Notes to Editors:

Artist biographies will be provided on request

About the ICA

The **Institute of Contemporary Arts** in London is one of the worlds most innovative and historically influential contemporary art institutions. Originally conceived in 1947 by poet, anarchist, art critic and historian, **Herbert Read**, alongside a group of artists and patrons including **Richard Hamilton**, Sir **Eduardo Paolozzi**, **Roland Penrose** and **Peter Watson**, as a "laboratory" or "playground" for

contemporary arts, the ICA has continued to work across the widest possible range of artistic and intellectual fields and has consistently pushed for a wider, often unorthodox, understanding of art and culture.

About inIVA

inIVA (Institute of International Visual Arts): inIVA 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. ([ww.iniva.org](http://www.iniva.org))

Rivington Place: In 2007 Rivington Place, inIVA and Autograph ABP's new contemporary visual arts space will open in the heart of East London. Supported by the Arts Council England Lottery Capital 2 Programme, this will be the UK's first permanent home for culturally diverse visual arts and photography. Barclays Bank plc is the Rivington Place founding corporate partner, contributing £1million towards the development. This innovative partnership reflects Barclays history of supporting positive social change and making a real and lasting difference to the diverse communities in which it operates. (www.rivingtonplace.org)

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