



## Balwin's Nigger R E L O A D E D

Workshops/Performances/Film Screenings/Art Installations

22 August 2014

3:00 – 11:00pm

Iniva, Rivington Place

Shoreditch, London EC2A 3BA

Iniva (Institute of International  
Visual Arts), Rivington Place,  
London EC2A 3BA, UK

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*"One of the West Indians... started up a conversation with me and wanted to know where I was from, and I told him I was from Harlem. That answer didn't satisfy him... - "Yes," he said "But man, but where were you born?"- And I began to get it - "Well," I said, "My mother was born in Maryland, my father was born in New Orleans, I was born in New York." He said, - "But before that where were you born?" - And I had to say, "I don't know." James Baldwin "Baldwin's Nigger" (1969)*

In the 1969 film **Baldwin's Nigger** (West Indian Student Centre London, directed by Horace Ové), author James Baldwin and comedian Dick Gregory discuss the black experience in the United States relating it to the Afro-Caribbean experience in Britain.

On Friday 22 August 2014 Iniva is host to a one day showcase titled, **Baldwin's Nigger R E L O A D E D**, a project initiated by artist **Barby Asante**



in collaboration with Iniva's Education Curator Teresa Cisneros and the emerging London based collective of thinkers and artists 'sorryyoufeeluncomfortable'.

Artist and curator Asante's practice focuses on enabling dialogues across cultures. Together with Iniva she provides a space to invite young thinkers to reinterpret, re-perform and reflect, on the subjects of race and identity raised in Baldwin's film.

The project sees the **collective and curators' cross-generational and individual practices coming together** to engage and re-contextualize the film through multidisciplinary artistic approaches.

Baldwin's provocations in the film highlight the danger in separating identities from their specific histories; universalising experiences leads to erasure and the inability to communicate across difference. The artists aim to reconnect identities and histories to their own experiences, as well as, to challenge attitudes of aloofness surrounding conversations on race.

Through **artworks, interventions, performances, DJ sets, workshops and film screenings**, the group sets-up contemporary conversations that 'map out' themes such as identity, race and legacy, allowing a re-animation of histories, through collaborative artistic practices, reimagining the possibilities of tomorrow. Expect a lively day of fresh engaging, critical thinking as the 'sorryyoufeeluncomfortable' collective takeover **Iniva's home at Rivington Place** for the day.

**For further information and images please contact:**

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**Notes to Editor**

**James Arthur Baldwin** (August 2, 1924 – December 1, 1987) was an American novelist, essayist, playwright, poet, and social critic. Baldwin's essays, as collected in *Notes of a Native Son* (1955), explore palpable yet unspoken intricacies of racial, sexual, and class distinctions in Western societies, most notably in mid-20th-century America, and their inevitable if unnameable tensions.[1] Some Baldwin essays are book-length, for instance *The Fire Next Time* (1963), *No Name in the Street* (1972), and *The Devil Finds Work* (1976).

Baldwin's novels and plays fictionalize fundamental personal questions and dilemmas amid complex social and psychological pressures thwarting the equitable integration of not only blacks, but also of gay and bisexual men, while depicting some internalized obstacles to such individuals' quests for acceptance. Such dynamics are prominent in Baldwin's second novel, written well before gay equality was widely espoused in America: *Giovanni's Room* (1956).[2] Baldwin's first novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, is said to be his best-known work. (Wikipedia)

**About the project**

In 1969, photographer and filmmaker **Horace Ové** released **Baldwin's Nigger**. This short film documented American intellectual James Baldwin in conversation with Comedian and Activist Dick Gregory in front of an audience of Londoners in Brixton, mostly of Afro-Caribbean heritage.

The film was shot in a 'plain verite' style - because of the audience make-up and Baldwin's own background the conversation is open and there is very little self-censorship. Baldwin presents a provocative account, drawing on his personal experiences, and the resulting dialogue is extremely candid and open about the situation for Black people in Britain and the United States at that time. The conversation that is played out in the film and the questions and concerns addressed are still relevant in today's society.



Continuing her research into creating works that stimulate dialogue around questions of the cross cultural and multicultural in contemporary Britain, artist **Barby Asante** takes this film as a starting point to explore the legacy of Black intellectual thought on young people today.

**Baldwin's Nigger Reloaded**, the project engaged with **15 emerging thinkers** to research, develop and create a 21st Century re-enactment and response to the film addressing concerns that affect young people across cultural and socio-economic lines. The project inspired the creation of the young collective, **'sorryyoufeeluncomfortable'**.

**Barby Asante** studied Fine Art at the University of East London, where she began making work in film, photography and installation, placing herself in the frame as a means of confronting the audience with the perceived problem of her image. Making the idea of dialogue and participation a defining part of her practice, Asante shifts freely between roles as artist, curator, educator, facilitator and other roles exploring and emphasising the importance of the dialogic and social aspects of creative and artistic practice.

**Exhibition listings Information**

Date: 22 August 2014  
 Time: 3pm – 11pm  
 Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts)  
 Rivington Place  
 London EC2A 3BA

Admission: free

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Tubes: Old Street/Liverpool Street/Shoreditch High St  
 Rivington Place is fully accessible, for parking & wheelchair facilities call +44 (0)20 7749 1240

**About Iniva**

Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts) works at the intersection of society and politics. It engages with new ideas and emerging debates in the contemporary visual arts, reflecting in particular the diversity of contemporary society. We work with artists, curators, creative producers, writers and the public to explore the vitality of visual culture. ([www.iniva.org](http://www.iniva.org)) Iniva is supported by Arts Council England.

**About Rivington Place**

Opened in 2007, Rivington Place is home to Iniva and Autograph ABP. Designed by architect David Adjaye OBE, this award winning building is dedicated to the display, debate and reflection of global diversity issues in the contemporary visual arts. Rivington Place is home not just to two exhibition spaces but also Iniva's Learning Space and unique research library, the Stuart Hall Library.

