

BLACK Chronicles

An Autograph touring exhibition presented in partnership with the Visual Identities in Art and Design Research Centre (VIAD), University of Johannesburg







13 April to 31 May 2018

FADA Gallery University of Johannesburg

Curated by Renée Mussai. Presented by VIAD in partnership with Autograph, London



"Memory has many different tropes, and the most important trope of memory is forgetting ...

This project wants to bring back into memory and representation, history: the forgotten, the ignored, the disavowed, the marginalised experiences."

— Stuart Hall

Excerpt from The Missing Chapter: Cultural Identity and the Photographic Archive, keynote lecture presented on 21 May 2008 at Autograph, Rivington Place, London

Black Chronicles

From 13 April – 31 May 2018 VIAD hosted the fourth iteration of Autograph's internationally touring, critically acclaimed Black Chronicles programme. Curated by Renée Mussai (Senior Curator and Head of Curatorial & Collection, Autograph, London), the exhibition was presented at the University of Johannesburg's FADA Gallery and marked the first time that a wider selection of works from this archival body of work – and newly added imagery – were exhibited on the African continent. Over its six-week run, Black Chronicles IV became the most visited exhibition in the history of the FADA Gallery, and was celebrated across a range of news, magazine, radio, television and online media platforms. The show was accompanied by Curatorial Care, Humanising Practices: Past Presences as Present Encounters, an interdisciplinary programme organised as a collaboration between VIAD and Autograph, hosted by UJ Arts & Culture, convened by Leora Farber (Director, VIAD) and Renée Mussai.

Black Chronicles IV presented to audiences in Johannesburg an extraordinary collection of photographic studio portraits, the majority of which were produced from original nineteenth-century glass plates as large-scale modern silver gelatin prints. Buried in the Hulton Archive's London Stereoscopic Company (LSC) collection for more than 125 years, these images were unearthed by Autograph in 2014 as part of their ongoing curatorial archive research programme, The Missing Chapter: Black Chronicles (2013- present). Selected LSC portraits, excerpted from a larger body of work, were shown alongside a display of rare albumen cartes-de-visite and cabinet cards from Autograph's own archive collection of photography. The exhibition foregrounded historically marginalised narratives of both ordinary and prominent black figures, including performers, dignitaries, politicians, servicemen and women, missionaries and students, offering viewers a unique opportunity to encounter a diverse range of 'black presences' in a curated gallery installation -African, Caribbean and South Asian - through the prism of nineteenthcentury studio photography in Victorian Britain.

(Front cover) Albert Jonas and John Xiniwe, The African Choir. London, 1891. © Hulton Archive/Getty Images. Courtesy of Hulton Archive, and Autograph ABP, London.

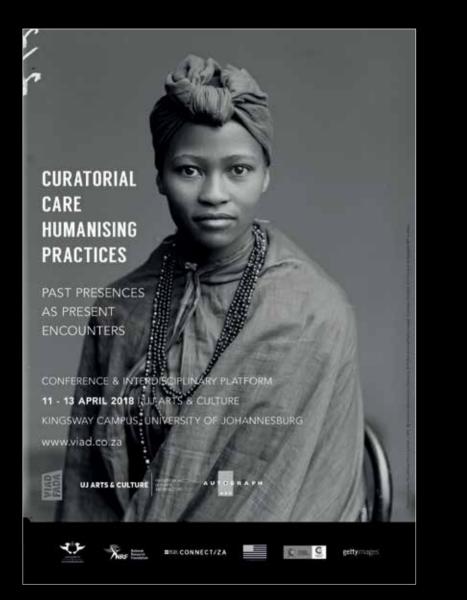
(Inside front cover) Yinka Shonibare, Effnik, 1996. Commissioned by Autograph ABP. Courtesy Autograph ABP.

(Left) Albert Jonas and John Xiniwe, The African Choir. London, 1891. © Hulton Archive/Getty Images. Courtesy of Hulton Archive, and Autograph ABP, London.

Black Chronicles IV featured period personalities with compelling individual and collective biographies, including Sarah Forbes Bonetta, a West African enslaved orphan of royal heritage who became a protégée of Queen Victoria; refugee Prince Alemayou of Ethiopia; international boxing champion Peter Jackson a.k.a. "The Black Prince" from the island of St. Croix; Dadabhai Naoroji, scholar and the first Indian member of parliament in Britain; and Kalulu, the young African companion of controversial British explorer HM Stanley. Furthermore, Black Chronicles IV also included portraits of notable black South Africans photographed in London at the turn of the century as part of The African Choir: key members of the 'African Intelligentsia', a number of these figures later became leading social activists and reformers, including the political activist, academic and founder of the Bantu Women's League, Charlotte Maxeke, her sister Katie Makanya (both born Manye) and Paul and Eleanor Xiniwe, social entrepreneurs associated with the South African Native Congress which in 1912 became the African National Congress.

Their portraits – together with fellow choir members – featured prominently in the evocative sound and image installation The African Choir 1891 Re-Imagined, a collaboration with composers Philip Miller and Thuthuka Sibisi, installed in the lower ground floor gallery.

Complemented by a presentation of over 200 portraits from W.E.B. n. Du Bois' The Paris Albums 1900 – also seen for the first time in South



Africa – these exquisitely rendered photographs presented alternative perspectives to dominant modes of portrayal prevalent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, evidencing cultural diversity, agency and advocacy.

Black Chronicles IV contributed toward an ongoing process of redressing the persistent absences of black narratives within the historical record, enabling different ways of 'seeing' individuals often rendered invisible or missing within Victorian Britain, colonial Southern Africa, and the American South.

The exhibition's nineteenth century imagery was presented in dialogue with a large-scale reproduction of Effnik (1997) – a contemporary self-portrait by Yinka Shonibare CBE (b. 1962), commissioned by Autograph ABP, arguably the blueprint of the artist's celebrated Diary of a Victorian Dandy project (1998).

Coinciding with the launch of the exhibition, VIAD and Autograph collaboratively hosted a 3-day international conference, titled Curatorial Care, Humanising Practices – Past Presences as Present Encounters. Using the exhibition as a departure point, the interdisplinary conference built upon a critical rethinking of curatorial practices, as a discipline traditionally bound to a colonial logic of collection, 'safe-keeping' and display. The multimodal programme of the conference challenged the authorial custodianship associated with this tradition, and its historic (but lingering) application in the ethnographic/raciogenic arrangement of marginalised bodies. Proposed instead was an ethical recourse to curatorial care in which traditional understandings of curating as a 'caring for objects' are reconstituted in relation to (re)-acknowledged subjectivities.

Several of the conference paper were collected in Issue 6: Volume 33 of Critical Arts entitled Ecologies of Care: Speculative Photographies, Curatorial Re-Positionings (Taylor and Francis, 2020), guest edited by Leora Farber and Renée Mussai.

Curators' Note

"The aim of the Black Chronicles progammes is to open up critical inquiry into the archive to locate new bodies of knowledge and to support Autograph's ongoing mission to continuously expand and enrich photography's cultural histories. Based on current research, the portraits unearthed as part of Black Chronicles constitute the most comprehensive body of photographs depicting the black subject in Victorian Britain, hitherto unseen. The visual presence in Britain of these figures not only bears direct witness to entangled colonial and imperial histories, but also offers a fascinating array of personal narratives that defy pre-conceived notions of cultural diversity in the nineteenth century. Their studio portrayal invites multifaceted dialogue regarding complex politics of difference, subjectivity and agency in relation to visual representation and the performance of identities: some are presented in ways that convey a sense of pride, dignity and respectability, while others are, arguably, still locked in contested modes of ethnographic representation. At the heart of the exhibition is the desire to re-constitute the archive through what I call 'remedial curatorial work': resurrecting figures from archival vaults of oblivion and re-introducing them as part of carefully annotated visual narratives into contemporary consciousness."

Company © Hulton Archive/Getty Images courtesy of Hulton Archive, and Autograph, London.

(Left)

Conference poster

for Curatorial Care.

Past Presences as

Present Encounters (11 – 13 April 2018) –

featuring portrait of

Frances Gooba, The

African Choir, 1891, by

London Stereoscopic

Humanising Practices

- Renée Mussai, Senior Curator, Autograph, London.

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Black Chronicles was produced in close association with the Hulton Archive, a division of Getty Images, without their generous support this project would not have been possible.

Printed from glass plate negatives by Mike Spry between 2014 and 2017, photographs by London Stereoscopic Company © Hulton Archive/Getty Images are shown courtesy of Autograph ABP, London, supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund.

All vintage photographs, texts and other archive material reproduced courtesy of Autograph ABP. Digitally reproduced photographs of Sarah Forbes Bonetta and others are shown courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London and private collections as stated.

Autograph ABP is supported using public funding by Arts Council England. The Missing Chapter/Black Chronicles was supported by Heritage Lottery Fund (UK) between 2013 and 2016.

Black Chronicles IV was supported by British Council Connect ZA, The US Mission to South Africa, the National Research Foundation, and the University of Johannesburg.

The African Choir 1891 Re-Imagined sound-installation has been made possible through generous financial support from the South African Department of Arts and Culture (DAC).

Born on the island of Saint Croix, then the capital of the Danish West Indies, Peter Jackson (1860–1901) – also known as 'The Black Prince', 'Peter the Great' and 'Coloured Champion of the World' – was a heavyweight bare-knuckle boxer with a successful international career and stage actor.

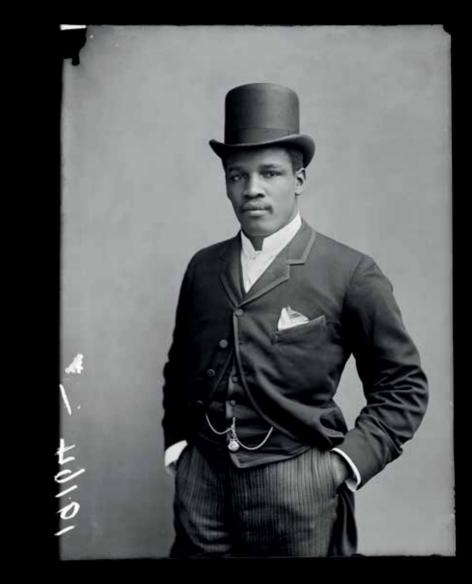
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(Right) Peter Jackson. London, 1889. By London Stereoscopic Company. © Hulton ArchiveGetty Images. Courtesy of Hulton Archive and Autograph ABP, London.

(Following page – top left) Black Chronicles IV, installation view, FADA Gallery, University of Johannesburg, 2018, photo by Anthea Pockroy. or

(Following page – bottom left) The African Choir 1891 Re-Imagined, installation view, FADA Gallery, University of Johannesburg, 2018, photo by Anthea Pockroy.

(Following three spreads) *Black Chronicles IV*, installation view, FADA Gallery, University of Johannesburg, 2018, photo by Anthea Pockroy.



"There is nothing like a photograph for reminding you about difference. There it is. It stares you ineradicably in the face."

— Stuart Hall

Excerpt from The Missing Chapter: Cultural Identity and the Photographic Archive, keynote lecture presented on 21 May 2008 at Autograph, Rivington Place, London Black Chronicles IV





"Caring and daring, remedial curatorial care work moves us towards recognition and reform – vigorously, rebelliously and im/patiently. It calls for curatorial pleasure, archival pleasure, visual pleasure. It is tentacular and divergent. Decolonial and intrinsically feminist, it is rooted in blackness. It reverberates, assaults and soothes, simultaneously, with knowledge, beauty and transgression. It alleviates. It is amendatory, restitutive. It probes and provokes. It manifests and is manifesting: it makes visible, citable, legible. It embraces theory and praxis. It sutures. It is political and personal. It is fuelled by a sense of curatorial urgency, curatorial agency, and curatorial response-ability... "

— Renée Mussai

Excerpt from opening lecture / conference paper (2018) "'Whose Eyes' - Towards a Remedial Other/Wise: Reflections on Black Chronicles and Curatorial Care"

BLACK CHRONICLES IV

13 APRIL - 31 MAY 2018

Curated by Renée Mussai

VIAD is proud to host the fourth iteration of Autograph ABP's internationally buring Black Chronides programme, marking the first time that a wider selection of works from the series – and newly added imagery – are exhibited on the African continent

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An intrage prologitiphs and other entries material courtesy of Autograph ABP. Supported by the National Lottery through the Hentage Lottery Fund. Text obtaines by Prolessor Silvert Hall, 2008.

Autograph ABP is a London-based arts charity that works internationally in photography and film, nois, representation, cultural identity and human rights, www.sutograph-abo.co.uk

Autograph ABP is supported using public funding by Arts Council England. The Missing Chapter/Black Orionicies was supported by Heritage Lottery Fund (UK) between 2013 - 2016.

and cover monograph will be published by Autograph ABP in partnership with ward University's Hutchins Center, Speinan College Museum of Fine Art, and D. University of Inhanness on Communication and a statution of the Art.







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"Here, the strategic administration of curatorial care not only enhances the archive's resurgent architectures, but also engenders pleasure ... such pleasure, for me, reaches its remedial climax when figures are not merely drafted into re-existence, but when those unfolding processes of diachronic un/doing and re/doing mean that those 'presences' previously compromised or betrayed by the archive may now re-exist differently."

— Renée Mussai

Excerpt from opening lecture / conference paper (2018) "'Whose Eyes' – Towards a Remedial Other/Wise: Reflections on Black Chronicles and Curatorial Care"



ig. Those bits of history that simply drop out, which people do not regard as interesting or important. ie mainstream story...

Do you know what disavowal is? It is when one :

the most ortant trope in memory is forgetting.





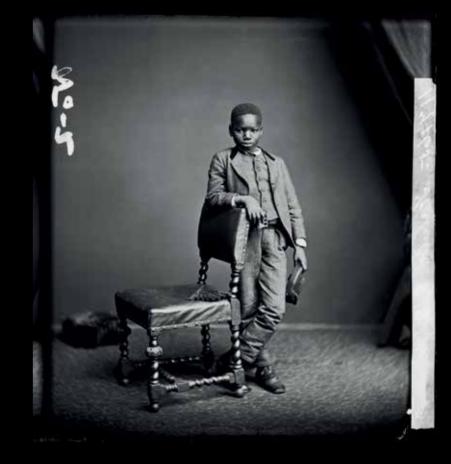
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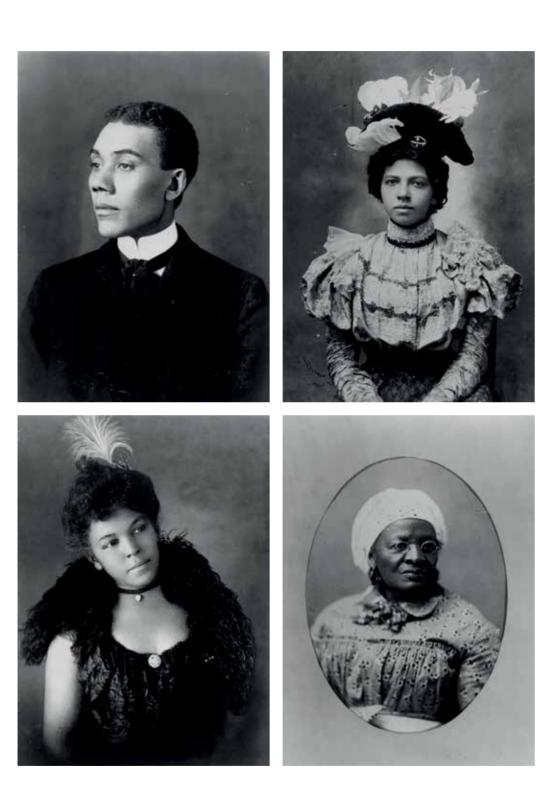
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The Paris Albums 1900 W.E.B Du Bois

For the 1900 Paris Exposition, pioneering scholar and civil rights activist W.E.B. Du Bois and lawyer and educator Thomas J. Calloway strategically employed 363 photographs in their landmark sociological visual display project The American Negro Exhibit, held within the Palace of Social Economy at the 1900 World's Fair in France.

Included as an additional and discrete component in the installation of Black Chronicles IV at the FADA Gallery, W.E.B. Du Bois' The Paris Albums 1900 presented over 200 portraits depicting educated, black middle-class men, women and children, which challenged the scientific 'evidence' and popular racist caricatures that ridiculed and sought to diminish African-American social and economic success.

In retrospect, this remarkable body of work can be read as the origins of a photographic construction of a new post-slavery African-American visual identity, providing insight into the conditions and selfaffirming expressions of black culture in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century, only thirty-five years after the abolition of slavery.

Ranging in genre from mugshot aesthetic to bourgeois theatrical portrait, Du Bois' intention – as curator and chronicler – was to produce a comprehensive, alternative view of the black subject, in his own words 'an honest straightforward exhibit of a small nation of people, picturing their life and development without apology or gloss, and above all made by themselves.'

Note

(Left) Untitled, From The Paris Albums 1900: W.E.B. DuBois. Courtesy of the Prints & Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

(Following spread) The Paris Albums 1900,

photo by Anthea Pockroy.

installation view, FADA Gallery, University

of Johannesburg, 2018,

Most sitters were presented unidentified, and the photographers unnamed; a typical caption would read 'African American man, head-andshoulders portrait, left profile'. It has since been established that Thomas Askew, a prominent Africa-American photographer in Atlanta, made many of the photographs for Du Bois' Georgia Negro Studies.

Acknowledgements

All photographs reproduced courtesy of the Prints & Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Produced by and originally shown at Autograph, Rivington Place, London, 17 September – 22 November 2010, curated by Renée Mussai and Mark Sealy.





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legro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world.

"It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tale of a world that looks on in amused contempt or pity."

— W.E.B. Du Bois

From The Souls of Black Folk (1903)



The African Choir 1891 Re-Imagined Songs composed and arranged by Philip Miller & Thuthuka Sibisi

Curated by Renée Mussai as part of Black Chronicles' international travelling programme and reflecting the exhibition's characteristic deep matt black walls, this immersive audio-visual multimedia installation presents five songs re-created by composers Philip Miller and Thuthuka Sibisi from an original nineteenth century concert programme performed by The African Choir in London in 1891, along with large-scale photographic portraits of all individual choir members rediscovered after 125 years at the Hulton Archive in 2014.

The African Choir: Drawn from various mission stations and church choirs in the Eastern Cape, including graduates from Lovedale College, the original sixteen-member ensemble included seven men and seven women, plus two children. They toured Britain and the USA between 1891-93, with the stated aim to raise funds to build a technical college at home.

Their concert repertoire was divided into two halves: one comprised Christian hymns sung in English together with popular operatic arias; the other consisted of African songs, including compositions by John Bokwe and the Rev. Tiyo Soga. In line with the division in repertoire, the choir appeared for the first half of their performance in 'traditional' African costume, before changing into contemporary Victorian dress for the second half. They performed to great acclaim to large audiences in concert halls and appeared before Queen Victoria shortly after their arrival in England in the summer of 1891.

The Sound: The choir's performances on tour were never recorded, however written documentation has survived. Working with fifteen professional singers in a series of improvised and collaborative workshops in Cape Town in 2015, Miller and Sibisi reimagined the original repertoire from a contemporary perspective, basing their contemporary recreations on surviving concert programme notes.

The Photographs: The visual component features twenty large-scale photographic portraits of the choir's members, produced as modern silver gelatin prints from original nineteenth-century glass plates, as well as a wallpaper reproduction from one of the few surviving vintage cabinet carte-de-visite of the choir. [Photographed in July 1891 by the London Stereoscopic Company, these glass plate negatives were unearthed by Autograph at the Hulton Archive, a division of Getty Images, and first exhibited to critical acclaim in 2014 as part of Black Chronicles II at Rivington Place, London. Based on research to date, they represent the most comprehensive body of portraits depicting African sitters in Victorian London.]

Concluding a South African exhibition tour, with prior showings at the Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, and the Apartheid Museum, Johannesburg, The African Choir 1891 Re-imagined installation was presented in the lower ground floor of the FADA Gallery as part of Black Chronicles IV.

In 2016 an accompanying 30 minutes' audio CD was produced in a limited edition of as a collaboration between the composers and Autograph.

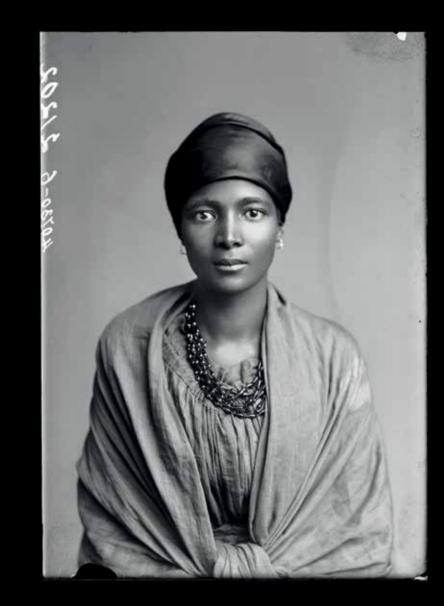
(Left) Charlotte Maxeke (née Manye), *The African Choir*. London, 1891. By London Stereoscopic Company. © Hulton Archive/Getty Images. Courtesy of Hulton Archive, and Autograph ABP, London.

(Following spead)) Eleanor Xiniwe, The African Choir. London, 1891. By London Stereoscopic Company. © Hulton Archive/Getty Images. Courtesy of Hulton Archive, and Autograph ABP, London.

(Following page – left) Wellington Majiza, The African Choir. London, 1891. By London Stereoscopic Company. © Hulton Archive/Getty Images. Courtesy of Hulton Archive, and Autograph ABP, London.

(Last spread) The African Choir 1891 Re-Imagined, installation view, FADA Gallery, University of Johannesburg, 2018, photo by Anthea Pockroy.





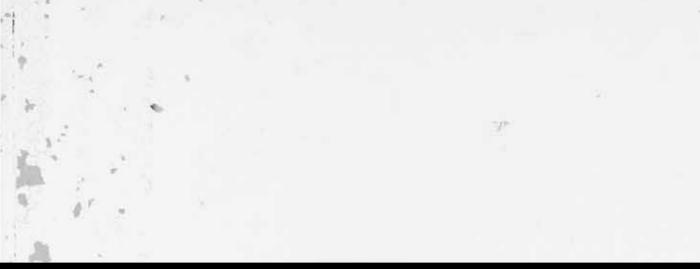


"It matters whose eyes are inside the archive. It matters whose eyes are in front of – and behind – the camera: it matters who looks, who watches and who sees. It matters who cares. It matters, too, whose eyes govern, control and preserve the archive, and whose vision, generosity and curiosity enable us to see differently, write differently, curate differently... "

— Renée Mussai

Excerpt from opening lecture / conference paper (2018) "'Whose Eyes' – Towards a Remedial Other/Wise: Reflections on Black Chronicles and Curatorial Care"















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