

PRESS RELEASE

Monday 4 January 2010
For immediate release



The Meaning of Style

Black British Style, and the underlying political and social environment

Artists:

Vanley Burke (Photography)
Clement Cooper (Photography)
Michael Forbes (Photography)
Gerard Hanson (Painting / Photography)
Barbara Walker (Painting / Drawing)
Blackfeather (Photography / Collage)

Curated by **New Art Exchange** (David Schischka Thomas)

Dates: Saturday 16 January - Saturday 10 April 2010

Preview: Friday 15 January, 6pm - 9pm

Opening Times: Monday to Friday 10am - 7pm and Saturday 10am - 5pm

Admission: Free

New Art Exchange presents an exhibition exploring the presence of young African Caribbean men in Britain over the last 40 years, and how Black music, fashion and culture have influenced mainstream society.

Young African Caribbean men have often been portrayed as low achievers and perpetrators of crime in British society. But now, with Barack Obama winning the presidency of the biggest superpower in the world, will we see these same young men portrayed in a different light; as a source of huge potential for the future? Will the achievement of black youth in Britain over the last 40 years be recognised and honoured?

The presence of young 'Black' men in the UK started to be felt in the mainstream media in the 1970's. Often portrayed negatively, this was a period of hope for the 'African Caribbean' community, a period of 'Pan African' and 'Back to Africa' ideology. This was also a period of oppression for many young Black men, due in part to the political climate of Thatcherism, Police harassment and institutionalised racism.

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The African Caribbean youth of the late 1970's/early 1980's were the first generation in the UK to confront society and demand change on mass. This 'rebel' generation in the UK were reflected in the visibility of sub-cultures like the 'Natty Dreads / Rastas' and the rise of reggae music with politically aware artists like Bob Marley and, in the UK, Steel Pulse. Young men developed a 'Rebel' style that influenced young people from all backgrounds, around the world.

Style, fashion, ideology and the 'Black' Diaspora may have changed over the years, but young 'Black' men in the UK have made their presence felt ever since. In modern society many of the legacy of this 'rebel' style is seen in the fashion of young people from all backgrounds, ethnicity and geographical locations around the world. Ultimately, this exhibition will ask questions of all of us.

'The Meaning of Style' will bring together artists that have created portraits of young people using different mediums and create a dialogue and polemic which cross reference the work in the exhibition .

Skinder Hundal, Chief Executive - New Art Exchange said:

"New Art Exchange is extremely proud to be hosting this extremely important exhibition, which explores some of our seminal artists documenting 'British Black culture' from past decades, and highlighting how this has helped influence fashion, music and mainstream culture. It was a time of change, awareness and finally empowerment for many migrant communities in the UK, and the exhibition explores this through various artforms."

The exhibition and accompanying events and educational programme will explore young African Caribbean men's style and fashion over the last 40 years, and the underlying political, social environment.

- Ends -

For further PRESS information please contact: Raam Tarat, *Marketing and Communication Manager*

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Notes to Editors:

The Meaning of Style

- The exhibition will be running from Saturday 16 January - Saturday 10 April 2010
- Artists include: Vanley Burke (photography – Birmingham); Clement Cooper (photography – Manchester); Barbara Walker (painting / drawing – Birmingham); Gerard Hanson (painting / photography – Oxford, UK / Kingston, Jamaica); Michael Forbes (photography – Nottingham); Blackfeather (photography / collage - Nottingham)
- Opening Times: Monday to Friday 10am - 7pm and Saturday 10am - 5pm
- Admission to the exhibition is FREE

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- For more information visit the NAE website: www.nae.org.uk

New Art Exchange

- **New Art Exchange was awarded £5million** of funding from Arts Council England, Nottingham City Council, the Greater Nottingham Partnership, East Midlands Development Agency, Radford and Hyson Green New Deal for Communities, and European Regional Development Funding, and took 18 months to build. The organisation was a big winner in Arts Council England's the January 2008 review of national arts funding gaining a 58% increase in its annual funding grant. The award was made in recognition of the organisation's vital role in supporting visual and performing arts.
- **The building designed by architects Hawkins\ Brown** boasts 5 -storey building provides 1360 sqm space dedicated to visual arts with; galleries, workshop/performance/rehearsal space, artists in residence facilities, and a cafe. Distinguished from the red clay buildings of the neighbourhood by its black brick façade and arrangement of frameless windows ranging in size (from 0.16 sqm to 4.84sqm), offers incidental and unexpected views into and out of the building.
- **Mission:** *The New Art Exchange ambition is to become a national centre of excellence promoting contemporary arts development within the cultural and creative industries, to deliver an innovative and exciting programme of activity to promote, support and advocate contemporary multi-cultural arts development in visual and performing arts and new media. To be a cultural centre led by African, African Caribbean and South Asian arts practice. To serve an international community from roots firmly embedded in the local area.*