

T O M O R R O W

10/08



a moment in a future time

TOMORROW

Tomorrow, is a meditation on Blackness as a creative, generative force from which everything is born; an exploration of what Blackness is and what it might become. It's a publication about writing, memory, and identity that draws on the extensive archive of 198 Contemporary Arts and Learning that questions notions of memory and Blackness, both as lived experience and abstract concept.

Working with a group of young women from Norwood School, *Tomorrow* has been created within the context of the collection and constitution of the archive of 198 Contemporary Arts and Learning. With the intention of exposing young people to archives and the different ways an archive can be used for research and creative work, this publication draws inspiration from the work of artists BARKA, Reggie Pedro, Joy Yamusangie, Thandie Loewenson, Rabz Lansiquot, Tabita Rezaire, and Sana Badri; and exhibitions such as *Diasporic Self: Black Togetherness as Lingua Franca*, *Futura Free* and *People Signs and Resistance* all curated by long time 198 associate Barby Asante with collaborators Amal Alhaag, Teresa Cisneros, Chandra Frank and Mutiny Arts. Using these works and projects as a jumping off point to inspire this collection of writing, *Tomorrow* looks at the way in which artists draw on the concept of 'memory' to create meaningful works that both capture and engage with speculative ideas about the past, present and the future.

Tomorrow was brought together in a series of workshops convened by Barby Asante in collaboration with artist and writer Ronnie McGrath, with the support of Project Coordinator Paula Pinho Martens Nacif and Jessica Nicholas from Norwood School. Alongside the writing presented in this publication are the exercises we created, our collective poems, some of the visual inspiration we used in workshops and our workshop playlist. We hope that you are inspired by our process and use this publication not just as something to read but also as a resource to inspire your own use of archives and practices of remembering to speculate and imagine your own tomorrows.

Sankofa!

Barby Asante and Ronnie McGrath
May 2021

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OUTCOMES

A MOMENT IN TIME THAT MATTERED TO SOMEONE

A Moment in Time That Mattered to Someone was when my mother found out that her grandmother had passed away. She was heartbroken and couldn't stop crying.

That day she got the phone call, the phone call that changed everything, that broke her. On that day, she had lost an important piece of herself. She had lost the woman who helped raise her, took care of her when she was sick, and played an important role in the woman she has grown to be today.

She knew that very soon, it would be time to take her leave and venture to the place she called home, to say goodbye to the one she called "mama" forever.

It was hard to come to terms with this heartbreaking event. She cried day and night, but none compared to the day she watched the one she loved lowered into the ground, into a 6 foot hole, a dark abyss where she will lay for eternity. Emotions overflowing, guilt and sorrow, anger and hatred.

"Why did she leave me? Why?"
"I didn't even get to say a proper goodbye"

But all she can do now is imagine that mama is in a better place, a place where she can be happy, be reunited with her lost love, her husband.

ARIANA G

LINKED BACK TO A M- OTHERB- OARD

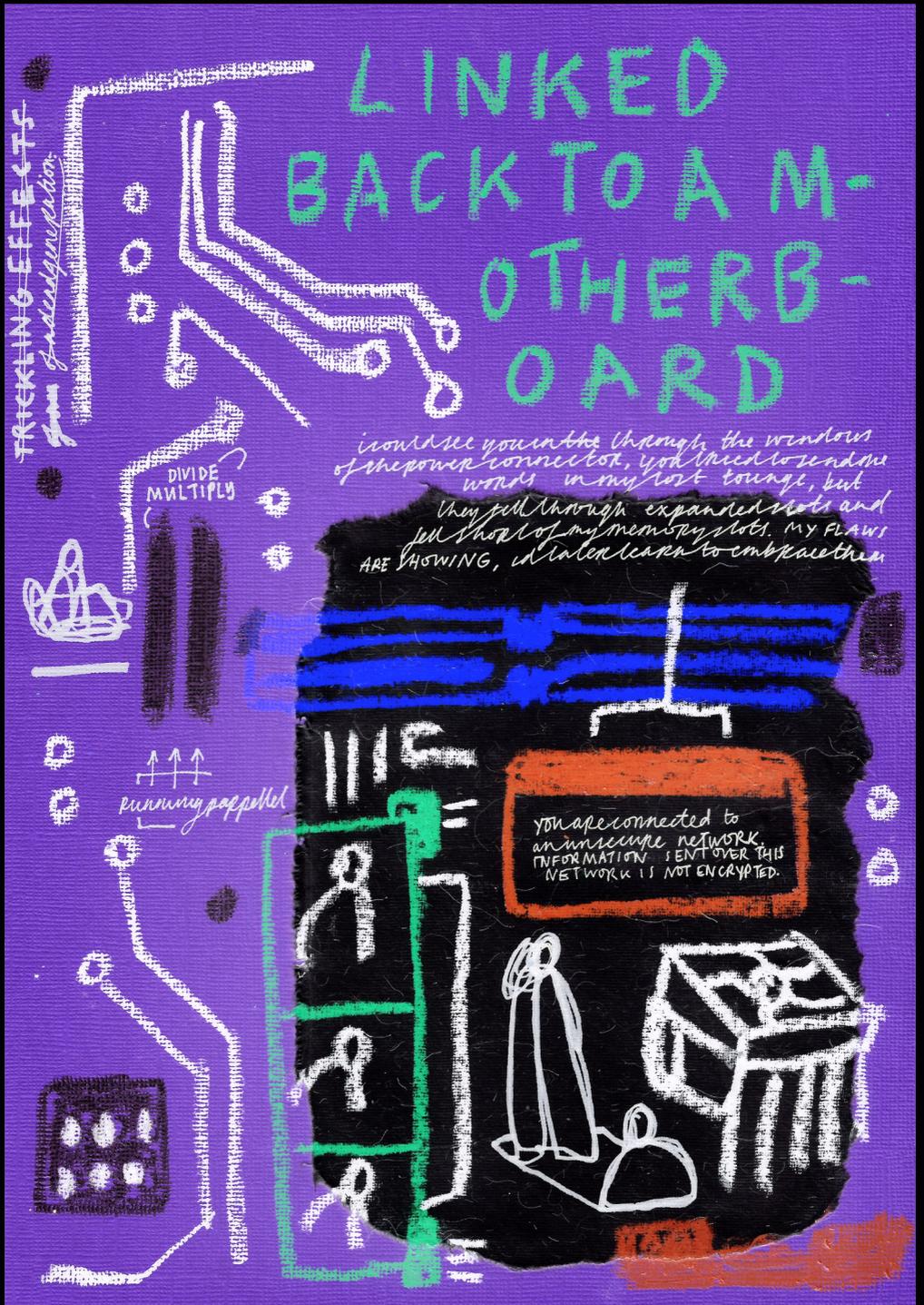
TRACKING EFFECTS
from granduncle

i could see you in the through the windows
of the power connector, you tried to send me
words in my lost lounge, but
they fell through expanded slots and
fell short of my memory slots. MY FLAWS
ARE SHOWING, it takes time to embrace them

DIVIDE
MULTIPLY

↑↑↑
running poppet

you are connected to
an insecure network.
INFORMATION SENT OVER THIS
NETWORK IS NOT ENCRYPTED.



WHAT
WILL
BLACKNESS
BECOME

Mellina Medjebour

Blackness will become the key to our future; the guidance to a better world and a better place. If people accept blackness, blackness will give back happiness and peace.

I am a black abstraction just like the taste of sunlight. I may come across as blinding but believe me I'm just what you're looking for. Just like the emptiness of space, I am full of mysteries.

The different colours showing different identities. The war may end but the fight is still going on. The blurriness and confusion of the journey overtook my thoughts. It wasn't clear as to what it was but one thing I'm sure about is that I am finally at peace.

Finally alone, walking through the empty streets, hopefully she doesn't realise what I had done.

Blackness is the light to space. The emptiness of the absolute fulfillment; the consistency of the inconsistent.

Blackness is the path to the hereafter and the memories of our past. Blackness will become the future beauty, the freedom of enclosure. The confusion of blackness is the clear sight of sunlight.

Blackness is the ruling to the restrictions. The mistake of the understanding, the akan of our children and future generations. Blackness will become the peace to our miseries, the pain to our happiness.

The moment in time that mattered to someone.

Walking through the empty streets, she could feel the freeze soothing through her skin like a bee swifiting through the air.

It was in that moment in time that she had realised that the small things mattered the most.

She didn't care about luxurious items or clothing, what mattered the most was the “your welcome” after the thank you's.

All she cared about was the kindness of a human soul.

The new face of the world. We
destroy our body to regain our
anatomy.

We are like a hermetically sealed
bag that acts like art which tires to
move beyond a communicative act.
But who are we? She asks.
Not symbols nor letters could
describe the beauty of blackness
and yet she asks again what will
blackness become?

Dear Little Havana Girl,

You are gorgeous with your emerald eyes gazing at me from across the water paddling your little toes in the twinkling water beneath your feet. Your skin, absolutely flawless and smooth like a china teacup shining in the light. Through the sweet melody that pours and swirls through the air, you sway with the beat of the ground and the pulse of your heart. You are dripping in melanin like honey. I see your perfectly sketched hair by the hands of God swaying in the wind whilst like a butterfly dancing in space, free. This will be you very soon, I promise. You are a black abstraction, just like me.

I am a black abstraction floating but sinking, swimming but drowning, living but dying. Not physically, but mentally. I am walking on a tightrope, thousands of feet off the ground trying to balance my mind and my heart. But the wind. It's so strong, I don't know if I can keep balanced for much longer. Tick-tock, tick-tock. The sun is now the moon and day is now the night, but now I can see. It's dark but now I can see clearly. This pitch-black has caused me to see more than ever before. This blackness has caused me to understand more than I ever have before. This black abstraction. I am part of this black abstraction.

Blackness. Blackness is a word in today's conflicted world which we can reclaim, snatch, and grasp the meaning of. Blackness. Blackness will no longer be intertwined with racism and prejudice in this blue and green sphere. Be seen as a pejorative term, that has been shackled down by chains, enslaved by those in power. But a complementary term which we will let fly and watch saw through the white clouds of candy floss and love, free from it all. The word 'blackness' will be able to unite those from far and wide clutching each and every soul. We will be holding hands whilst being captivated from head to toe by the word radiating from our skins like the sun on a hot summer's day. Blackness will become the word of tomorrow. Blackness will become our word of tomorrow.

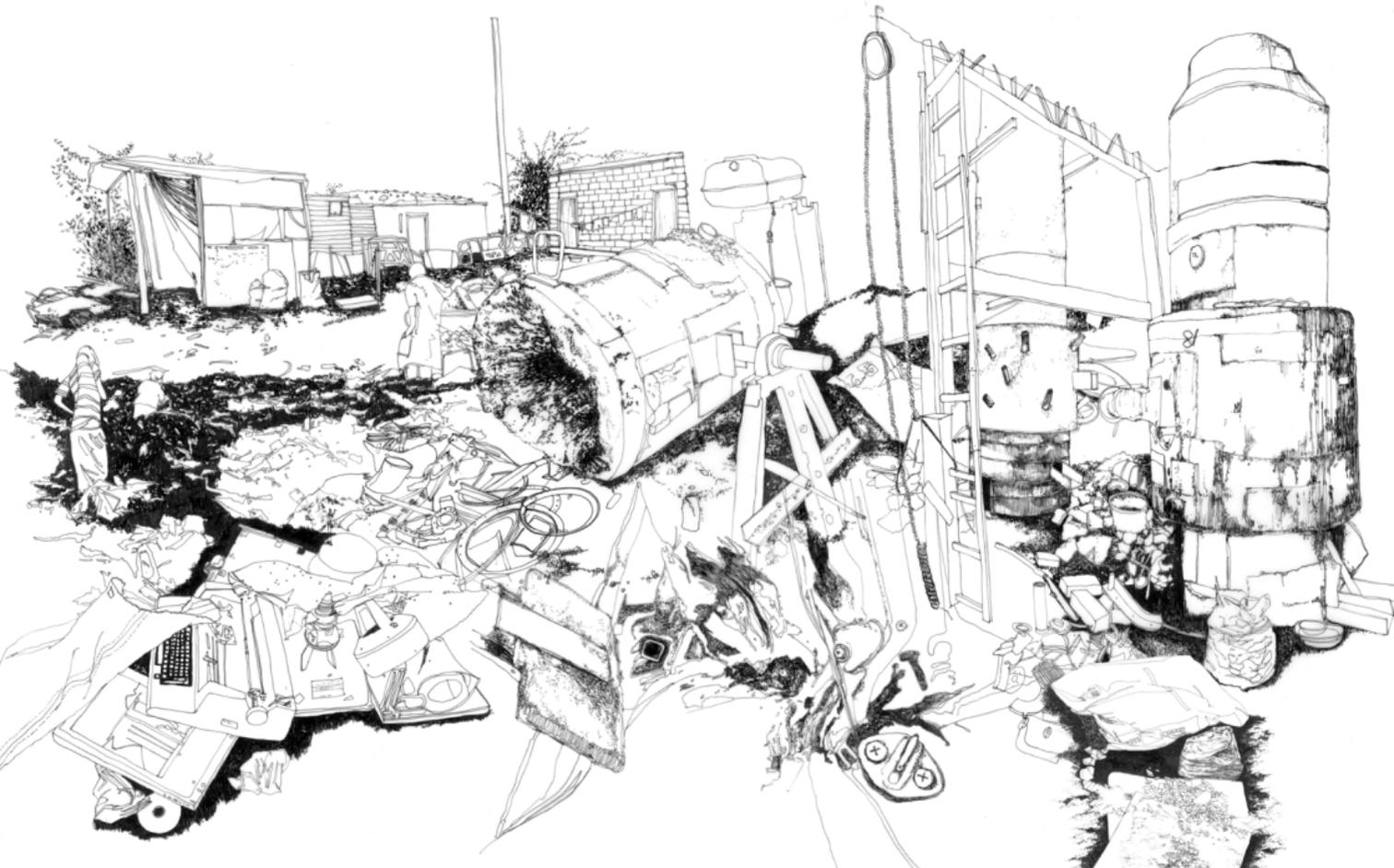
But today, we have got to do more than just survive. We have got to stop living in the past but we need to move with the time. We are the stiff hands of the clock which weep for the existence of man and where we are today society. We NEED to move on. The education system has us drowning in western ideologies of the work clouding our minds suffocating us until they are blue. We need to make a change. We need to embrace our black roots and our heritage with twists and burrows in the soil below, twisting and turning to escape and explode. We must dance for our heritage. We must dance for Africa. We must dance for the motherland because we are not just surviving. We are thriving for a better future. We were primitive in the past, but a problem for those in the future who think we will just shut up like a child being demanded by a parent. No. We can't. We won't. Tomorrow will be different. Just you wake little Havana girl.



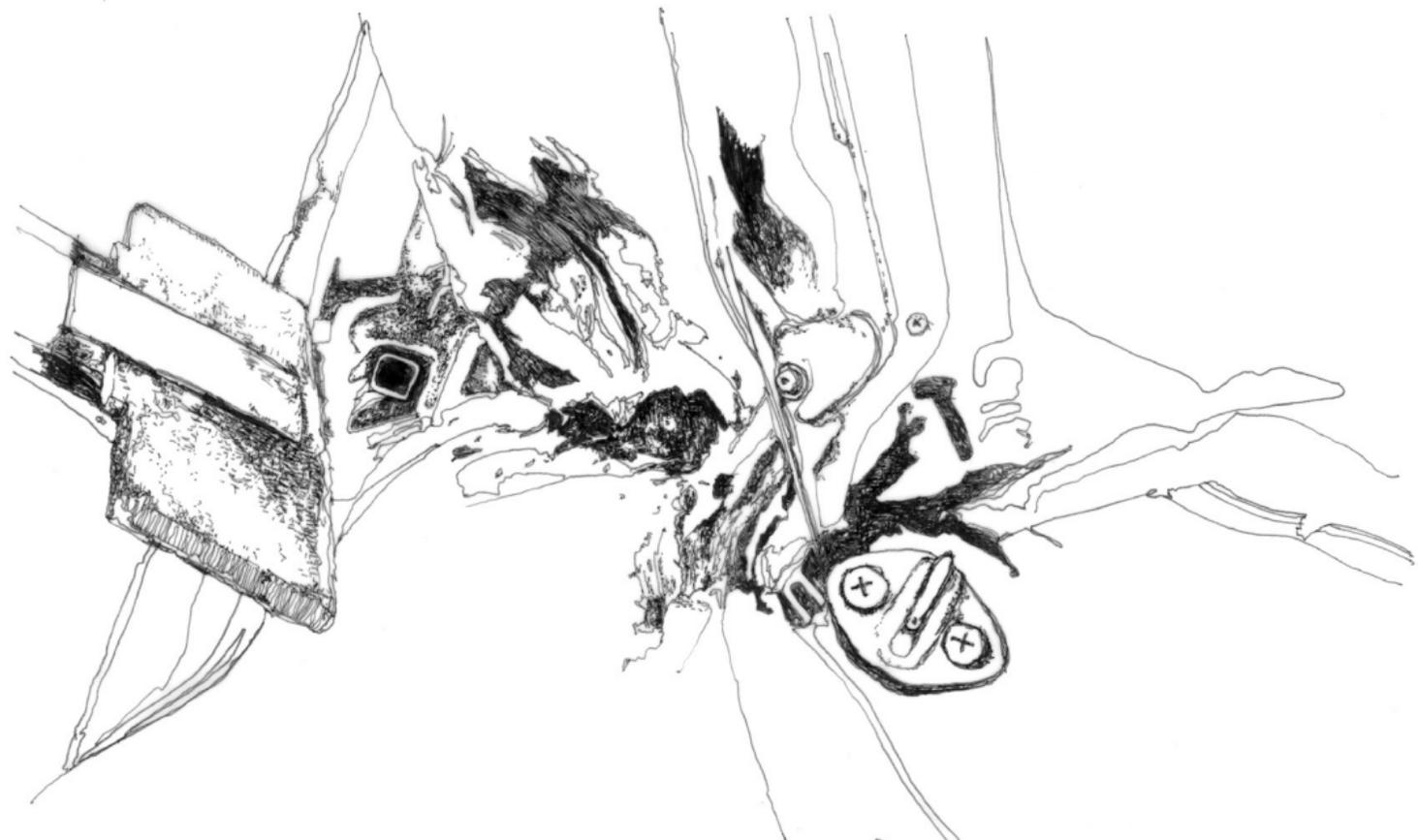
Havana Girl, Sana Badri shot on double-exposed film. Originally published in *Yellow Zine*



Thandie Loewenson (2016) *The Flatlands*



Thandie Loewenson (2016) *Chunga Composite*



Thandie Loewenson (2016) *Field Notes Drawings: Car Breaking in Mtendere, Lusaka*

What is consistency?

Consistency, a feature of our everyday lives. How we act and respond on a day to day basis. What we do. What kind of schedule or timetable we follow daily. Where we go and with who.

What is consistency?

A feature of an illusion, a dream, a hallucination. The dream of a future that will never come true.

What is blackness?

Blackness, how thick and curly a 'black person's' hair is. How more likely they are to commit a crime. How ratchet or ghetto or ugly a 'black person' is.

What is blackness?

Blackness, a person with a dark skin colour? A person who is judged because of how dark that skin colour is? A person who is more likely to be stopped by the police? A mother who is four times more likely to die from childbirth? Blackness is the soul and joy that lies within your heart. The rich culture passed down through generations by our ancestors.

What will blackness become?

Blackness will become a feeling, a feeling of soul, comfort and warmth. It will become a symbol of joy, peace and justice. The shadows of chains, prejudice and racism will fade. Blackness will become cultural appropriation. Blackness will become everyone and everything. Blackness will become our life. Blackness will become our soul. Blackness will no longer be a thing to be judged upon. It will no longer be a target of racism. Blackness will become us.

Tomorrow

Tomorrow, the dream of tomorrow that we will all be equal, that the horror and haunting of our past will finally be over. The dream of tomorrow that blackness will be something to be celebrated by everyone.

What is tomorrow?

Shemoi Whitely

THE INCONSISTENCY OF EVERYTHING

What is consistency?

The moment in time that mattered to someone.

Walking through the empty streets, I could feel
the breeze soothing through my skin.

It was in that moment in time I realised that the small things
mattered the most.

I didn't care about having luxurious things

What mattered to me was the "you're welcomed"

After the thank yous.

The kindness of the human soul.

That day everything changed.

That day she got the phone call that changed her life,

That day she got the phone call that broke her heart.

She has lost an important piece of herself.

That day she could never forget the one she loved
the most.

They were gone forever.

"The light in the bathroom must be wrong!

I look so bad, so tired.

Did I really get so old so quickly?"

My middle became a void,

A mysterious emptiness –

I dug, bare fingers and curious, for what I did not know.

Where did the years go?

Where did these lines come from?

You were born for this.

Like all those before you, that led to you to
this – your – moment.

Like a flower.

You are in the flower of the moment;

Life.

You hear a calling:
It's the genes in our body that supposedly link us.
The DNA in our saliva with the traces of our ancestors...
Is that what you want to believe?
Or the scientific definition of family?
Or the bonded connection of entering the room with the spirits
sky high of your loved ones.
The laughter.
The joy.
The want of a never ending night with family
There were no signs of life.
No comfort of another person.
No warmth.
It was just me and this empty room, facing my fears.
Or do you want to believe it's not yours but sciences choice?
My middle, that which joins continents.
Gives birth to humanity.
Brought me here on slave ships.
When land could no longer be seen.
And I made myself anew.

I AM A BLACK ABSTRACTION

I am deep nutritious soil, inverted
quicksand.

Banana trees and coffee plants
sprout from my skin.

My hair corn husks.

My hands seaweed.

I am a black abstraction just like
the taste of sunlight.

I may come across as blinding but
believe me,

I'm just what you're looking for.

Just like the emptiness of space,

I am full of mysteries

I am a black abstraction floating
but sinking.

Bring dragged around whilst my
mind is at rest with the clouds that
lay above

I am a box riding a camel down
a hill

Driving a flower into my finger,
Grabbing forceps from a hole,
I am growing raindrops in the
darkness

Paula, Mellina, Rasheeda and Barby



And the other Blue Silhouettes Cascading Out the Sky Like A Million Men Marching, Ronnie Mcgrath, mixed media



Isis & Horus in Abstract Form, Ronnie Mcgrath, painting

HAVANA GIRL

Sky copter its evil eye on my third eye being.
The ice man cometh with a new architecture for my bones.
Havanah girl drifting like a rhumba, smelling of rum,
One of Africa's lost children.
Pink sunshine hides the carnage of the night before.
Blue haze rushes through the door,
Sunday's turn into rituals of building,
The skies are alien flowers.
She is obscured from the city.
Ghosts walking down the road can't see her.
Pink sky hazy like the world is ending, but we're ok,
We're happy, we got love and we are on our way to make some
black beans.
Nature's crystallised, fossilised.
Evidence of what we never was.
I'm wearing my favourite yellow shorts,
Skipping rope shorts,
Drinking juice shorts,
And I am wearing my jelly sandals.
The different colours showing different identities.
The war may end, but certainly not for mankind.
The blurriness and confusion of the journey overtook my
thoughts.
It wasn't clear as to what it was
but one think I was sure is that I was at peace.
Finally alone, walking through the busy, yet so empty streets.
Confusion but there is order.
The helicopter shows the danger that was present before.
However the pinks and blues in the sky show safety and
calmness.
Blacks and whites show a lack of identity.
But a one sided point of view with a lack of contrast and
individuality.
Strong black girl taking her steps on a path of change, about
the views on what the average person thinks of a "black girl"

Ronnie, Barby, Paula, Mellina and Rasheeda



WE WANT TO DO MORE THAN SURVIVE

A moment in time that mattered to someone.
What will Blackness become when race is done and skin is more
worthy than food?

Blackness, how thick and curly a 'black person's' hair is
Blackness will become the future beauty, the
freedom of enclosure. The confusion of blackness is the clear
sight of sunlight.

Blackness will become the future beauty, the freedom of
enclosure. The confusion of blackness is the
clear sight of sunlight.

In society you feel trapped, conditioned to follow the rules so
there is order and civilisation. We are taught to dress a certain
way to avoid judgment from others.

Blackness will no longer be intertwined with racism and
prejudice but let to fly through the clouds
free of chains free of it all

First part was an accident. It was hard to come to terms with
this heart breaking event. She cried every day and every night.

But none compared to the way she cried the day she had to
watch the woman she loved be lowered into the 6 foot hole in
the ground, into a dark abyss,. Emotions overflowing, guilt and
sorrow, anger and hatred.

“Why did she leave me? I didn't even get to
say a proper goodbye”

TOMORROW

1

What Do We Mean
by Speculative
Fictions?

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What are we
Reading?

3

Quick writing
to music

4

Writing stories from
exhibitions

TASKS

What Do
We
Mean by
Speculative
Fictions?

Speculative Fiction often reflects on or re-assesses the past or the present, in the future or now, using fantasy, technology, imagining and speculating.

Speculative fiction can be:

Science Fiction
The Everyday Extraordinary
The Dystopic
Imagining Futures
Visionary Fiction
Afro Futurism
Horror
Magical Realism
What If.....



Other Futures: We Must Dare To Invent The Future, Rabz Lansiquot 2018,
Video Still

**What Are
We Reading?**

The Binti Series
Nnedi Okorofor

Children of Blood and Bones
Tomi Adeyemi

Pet
Akwaeke Emezi

Shadowshaper
Daniel Jose Older

Bloodchild
Octavia Butler

How Long to Black
Future Month
N.K. Jemisin

Noughts and Crosses
Malorie Blackman

The Comet
WEB Du Bois

A River Called Time
Courtia Newland

Witches Steeped in Gold
Cinnion Smart

Quick Writing to Music

This is a free writing exercise inspired by our playlist. Just play the tune and let your pen flow until its done.

Or listen to the song. Set a timer for 5 minutes. Then write what the song brought to mind.

Here's Our Playlist

Alime

Jojo Abo (feat. Elo & Vuyo)

Night

Benga and Coki

We Are Stazz

Angel Bat Dawid

Black

Sault

Now (A Forever Momentary Space)

Damon Locks Black Monument

Ensemble

Afro Futurism
Sons of Kemet

Journey to Satchitanada
Alice Coltrane

Water (If Only They Knew)
Kojey Radical ft Mahalia

Energy
Sampa the Great feat
Nadeem Din Gabasi

Insomnia
Faithless

How about
writing
a story using
these titles from
exhibitions that
have happened
at 198.

Ara: A New Face of the Old World
Sunara Begum

The Inconsistency of Everything
Harmander Singh Judge

Future Essence
Danielle Dean

Do You Know Your Middle
Joy Yamusangie

A Moment in Time
That Mattered to Someone
Roma Tearne

Write the opening 3–5 sentences to stories or poems that use or begin with these titles.

Choose one of your ideas to develop into a longer piece of writing.

Keywords

Keywords that came from our sessions that we would like to share with you...

Ubiquitous: existing or being everywhere, especially at the same time; omnipresent: ubiquitous fog; ubiquitous little ants.

Mimesis: basic theoretical principle in the creation of art. The word is Greek and means “imitation” (though in the sense of “re-presentation” rather than of “copying”). Plato and Aristotle spoke of mimesis as the re-presentation of nature.

Grotesque: adjective. odd or unnatural in shape, appearance, or character; fantastically ugly or absurd; bizarre. fantastic in the shaping and combination of forms, as in decorative work combining incongruous human and animal figures with scrolls, foliage, etc.

Abstract: is from a Latin word meaning “pulled away, detached,” and the basic idea is of something detached from physical, or concrete, reality. It is frequently used of ideas, meaning that they don’t have a clear applicability to real life, and of art, meaning that it doesn’t pictorially represent reality.

Surreal: adjective of, relating to, or characteristic of surrealism, an artistic and literary style; surrealistic. having the disorienting, hallucinatory quality of a dream; unreal; fantastic

Serendipity: noun, the occurrence and development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way.

Aesthetic:

adjective, concerned with beauty or the appreciation of beauty.
noun, a set of principles underlying the work of a particular artist or artistic movement.

Polysemic: When a symbol, word, or phrase means many different things, that's called polysemy. ... Polysemous words almost always share the same origin or root.

Utopia: an imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect

Dystopic: The opposite of utopia. An imagined state or society in which there is great suffering or injustice, typically one that is totalitarian or post-apocalyptic.

Apocalypse: the complete final destruction of the world, as described in the biblical book of Revelation. An event involving destruction or damage on a catastrophic scale

CONTRIBUTORS

PAULA is a sugar cane plant. She was born in a swamp and grew up on a farm. She melted into syrup and realised she could be earth, sun, ocean, caterpillar, and became butterfly.

BARBY is a twilight time traveller, moving through the ancient future and across the seas. She carries within her the ability to invite people to imagine their futures, guided by the internal roadmaps of her ancestors.

RONNIE is a wordsmith, forging metal into images of some Black stuff in search of itself. A popular Ronnie quote is “excuse me while I step into the dub plate style.”

MELLINA is the ultimate hero she says of herself “Some may know me , some may not. I like to refer myself as Wonder Women. I rescue people in need and just like any random person, I want equality for all. Sometimes as I fly through the air looking down at earth I think to myself, how are you so small yet so powerful?”

RASHEEDA's arms and legs are as strong as tree bark whilst she holds the world upon her shoulders.

Well that's how it feels. A huge nothing, an emptiness always upon her back, but she doesn't let that stop her.

ROSE is part cyborg part Risograph machine built in the jungles of Borneo. She was assembled by OOMK to print messages from the future to save humanity's past.

ANNESHA is a fearsome warrior, fighting for justice and equality who can turn tears into laughter with just one word.

SHEMOI is the spirit of a lioness in human form. Both Fierce and gentle she holds space for others as she leads them through storms.

DANIELLE's energy is so effervescent, when she walks into a room it becomes filled with so much energy all people want to do is dance.
(Danielle Brooks)

ARIANNA is a mirror reflecting the light of the world as it could be into our hearts. As a telepathic being she transmits inspirational thoughts to people to imagine a better tomorrow.

TOMORROW

Tomorrow was produced by pupils from Norwood School with Barby Asante and Ronnie McGrath, as part of Creating a Legacy; Archiving 32 years of 198 Contemporary Arts and Learning. This project was supported by The National Heritage Lottery Fund.

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PEEPAL TREE



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