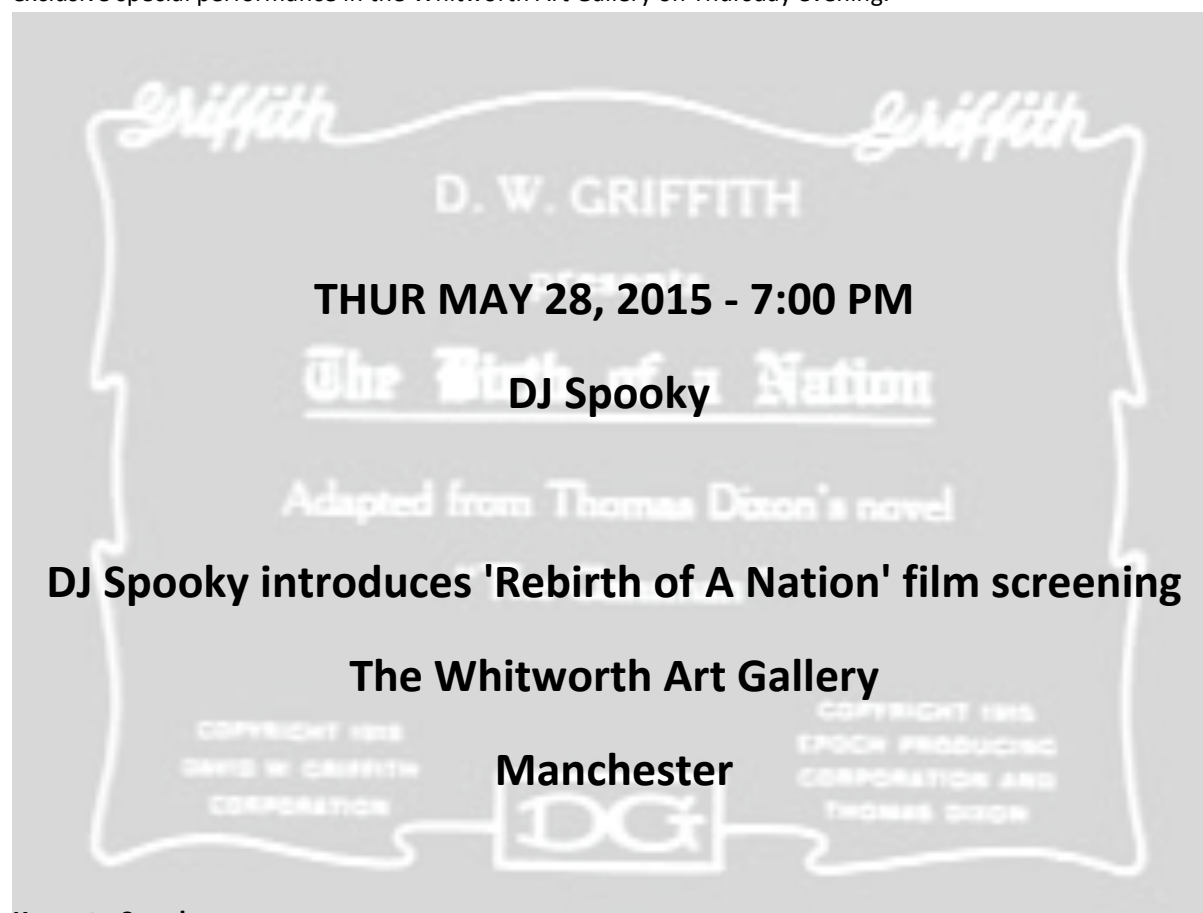


Art, Culture and Ethics in Black and White: 100 Years of *The Birth of a Nation*

The second symposium of the network, Art, Culture and Ethics in Black and White: 100 Years of *The Birth of a Nation* takes place on **May 28-29 at the Whitworth Art Gallery of the University of Manchester**. Entitled 'The Birth of a Nation: Regions, Nations and the Transnational' the focus will be on domestic and international concerns surrounding and extending beyond Griffith's controversial film. International speakers will consider the representation of race and identity, within and outside the American context, as well as the effects and reach of film and culture on a global scale. Each scholar, artist and performer seeks to locate and address the roots of social, economic, ideological and political division in cultural offshoots as diverse as art, installation, literature and film. In addition to the speakers and panels, Paul D. Miller (aka DJ Spooky) will be giving an exclusive special performance in the Whitworth Art Gallery on Thursday evening.



Keynote Speakers

Michael Bibler is Professor of English at Louisiana State University and writes in particular on sexuality, gender and race in the American South.

Lubaina Himid is a contemporary artist and Professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Central Lancashire and one of the first artists involved in the Black Art movement of the 1980s.

Keith Piper is a founder member of the ground-breaking BLK Art Group and Reader in Fine Art at Middlesex University.

Sikay Tang is a New York-based award-winning documentary filmmaker.

Soda_Jerk are a 2-person art collective from Sydney working the interzone of experimental film, documentary and speculative fiction.

Art, Culture and Ethics in Black and White: The Participants

Soda_Jerk A 2-person art collective that works with sampled material to construct rogue histories and counter-mythologies, Soda_Jerk (<http://www.sodajerk.com.au/>) were formed in Sydney in 2002. Taking the form of video installations and live video essays, their archival image practice is situated at the interzone of experimental film, documentary and speculative fiction. They are currently in Europe for a series of projects and residencies including this appearance at the Whitworth. They will return to NYC in July to undertake a 5 month studio residency awarded by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.

Michael Bibler is Professor of English at Louisiana State University. He is author of the book *Cotton's Queer Relations: Same-Sex Intimacy and the Literature of the Southern Plantation, 1936–1968* (University of Virginia Press, 2009), the co-editor of the essay collection *Just Below South: Intercultural Performance in the Caribbean and the U.S. South* (University of Virginia Press, 2007) and of the new edition of Arna Bontemps's 1936 novel *Drums at Dusk* (LSU Press, 2007). He has also written on *As I Lay Dying* by Valerie Bettis for the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and is currently working on a book about the literature, films, and plays of Truman Capote.

Lubaina Himid was born 1954 in Zanzibar, Tanzania and is a contemporary artist and Professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Central Lancashire. One of the first artists involved in the Black Art movement of the 1980s, her activist work focuses on themes of cultural history and reclaiming identities and is shown in galleries in Britain and throughout the world.

Keith Piper was born in 1960, and is a member of the generation of Black British subjects whose parents formed the first mass wave of migration from the Caribbean, Indian Sub-Continent and Africa during the 1950s. He was a founder member of the ground-breaking BLK Art Group, an association of black British art students, and is Reader in Fine Art at London's Middlesex University.

Sikay Tang: A New York-based award-winning documentary filmmaker Sikay introduces *Dreams Are Colder Than Death* (Arthur Jafa, 2013)

In this new essay film, filmmaker and cinematographer Arthur Jafa (*Daughters of the Dust, Crooklyn*) begins with a question: what does it mean to be black in America in the 21st century? He composes the many troubled and troubling answers, offered in the form of evocative images of African-American men and women (intermingled with more abstract visual correlatives to certain remarks), and spoken answers from former Black Panther Kathleen Cleaver, filmmaker Charles Burnett, poet Fred Moten, artist Kara Walker, and others, into a powerful choral work of sustained, burning intensity. Jafa's aesthetic strategy of separating sound and image has a political charge: he wanted his interviewees to speak freely, unencumbered by the burden of "survival modalities," i.e., learned forms of self-presentation for public consumption in general and the white world in particular. As of this writing, we are still in the wake of Eric Garner's death in Staten Island, while the National Guard's intervention in Ferguson, Missouri, and Walter Scott's shooting in Charleston on April 4th makes Jafa's haunted meditation seem increasingly relevant as the minutes tick by.

Symposium

May 29th Whitworth Art Gallery

Art, Culture and Ethics in Black and White: 100 Years of *The Birth of a Nation*

Programme

10.45am Welcome and Introduction

11.00am Panel A

Lydia Plath (Canterbury Christ Church University) Mammy, Mandingo, Django and Solomon: A Century of American Slavery in Cinema from *The Birth of A Nation* to *12 Years a Slave*

James West (University of Manchester) 'The Liberty to Show the Dark Side': *Birth of a Nation*, Johnson Publishing Company and Corporate Responsibility in Post-war America

Carina Spalding (University of Manchester) Stigma and Spectacle: Representations of Black Women's Hair and Beauty on Film

12.15pm Lunch

1.00pm Keynote Speaker: **Michael Bibler** (Louisiana State University) Invisible Empire: Visualizing White Terrorism from *Birth of a Nation* to Ferguson

2.00pm Panel B Keynote Panel: **Alan Rice** introduces **Lubaina Himid** and **Keith Piper**

3.00pm Tea and Coffee

3.20pm **Soda_Jerk** present **Astro Black**, an ongoing multi-channel video cycle informed by cultural theories of Afrofuturism. Taking the cosmic jazz musician Sun Ra as a point of departure and referencing Griffith, this speculative history seeks to draw out the nexus of science fiction and social politics in Black Atlantic culture.

4.00pm Presentation and Screening **Sikay Tang**: New York-based award-winning documentary filmmaker Sikay introduces *Dreams Are Colder Than Death* (Arthur Jafa, 2013)

5.00-15pm Closing remarks and End of Programme.

Thanks to: the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures Research Network Fund and the Division of English, American Studies and Creative Writing at the University of Manchester; the University of Central Lancashire and especially Professor Alan Rice, Co-Director of the Institute for Black Atlantic Research for their kind generosity; Edge Hill University Ormskirk, Lancashire; the University of East Anglia.

Please register for both events at:

<http://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/learn/adults/talksandtours/thursdaylates/>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/930631293643326/>