



## ARTISTS LOOK BACK TO THE FUTURE IN NOTTINGHAM EXHIBITION

### REIMAG(IN)ING THE VICTORIANS

#### A NEW FREE EXHIBITION AT LAKESIDE ARTS

Saturday 23 September 2023 – Sunday 7 January 2024

Launch event: Friday 22 September, 7-9pm

Djanogly Gallery, Lakeside Arts, University of Nottingham

Admission Free

*Reimag(in)ing the Victorians* explores how leading contemporary artists have invoked the Victorians in their work. **Colonial histories, forgotten women's lives and the art of taxidermy feature in this exciting new exhibition** that includes Yinka Shonibare, Sally Mann, Mark Dion, Ingrid Pollard, Polly Morgan and Tessa Farmer. Their sculptures, paintings, and photographs are displayed alongside images and artefacts created by well-known 19<sup>th</sup>-century practitioners, such as John James Audubon and Julia Margaret Cameron, inviting viewers to rediscover the Victorians through a contemporary lens that reimage(in)es them in the present.

Since the Black Lives Matter movement, debates around whose historical past we represent have acquired greater urgency and public attention. The 19<sup>th</sup> century has emerged as a particularly contentious period due to its role in forging national identities in this country and beyond. British-Nigerian artist, Yinka Shonibare, is represented in the exhibition by three of his mannequin sculptures, each dressed in gaily coloured Victorian costumes tailored in the artist's trademark African Ankara fabrics. In his photographic series *Diary of a Victorian Dandy*, the artist casts himself as a fashionable man-about-town in a staged morality tale that mimics popular period dramas and spotlights our nostalgia for an imagined past. Ingrid Pollard applies hand-tinted colour to colonial postcard images of Jamaica as a means of restoring individuality and dignity to their subjects, whilst Sunil Gupta's photographic 'queering' of famous Pre-Raphaelite paintings spotlights the legacy of British rule on the Indian Penal Code and its criminalisation of gay sex.

A second group of works in the exhibition examines visual re-presentations of the role of women in Victorian histories of science and discovery. Mark Dion and J. Morgan Puett's *Ladies' Field Club of York* calls attention to the thousands of anonymous women who contributed vast amounts of knowledge to the natural sciences in the 19<sup>th</sup>



century and beyond. Dorothy Cross's film, *Come into the Garden Maude*, similarly highlights the significance of female-led science in a biographical retelling of the life of the late-Victorian Irish marine biologist Maude Delap. These contemporary homages to Victorian women naturalists are displayed alongside the natural history collections and documents of 19<sup>th</sup>-century female naturalists like Margaret Gatty and Florence Nightingale.

In another display titled *The Animal Body Remade*, the contemporary works featured resonate with the Victorian passion for handicrafts, now enacted in an age of mass digital reproduction and the new epoch of social media. The sculptures of Kate MccGwire, Polly Morgan, and Alastair and Fleur Mackie echo the precision and tactility of Victorian taxidermy through their media and processes of making. Tessa Farmer's minute Skeleton Fairies destroy taxidermized animals in their quest for ecological domination. And Mark Fairington's enormous oil paintings of museum specimens force viewers into an encounter with creatures sacrificed in our quest for knowledge and dominion over the natural world.

Under the theme *Females Beneath the Lens*, the final section of the exhibition displays contemporary and Victorian photographs that 'capture' women and girls through techniques including the wet plate collodion photographic process. By splicing recent revivals of Victorian photographic technology by Nicolas Laborie and Sally Mann with historical precedents by Julia Margaret Cameron and Lady Clementina Hawarden, the display underlines the central role that photography has played in defining female identities since the mid-1800s.

*Reimag(in)ing the Victorians* has been curated by Dr. Isobel Elstob (Assistant Professor in Art History at the University of Nottingham) with Neil Walker, Head of Visual Arts Programming, Djanogly Gallery.

-- ENDS --

For more information, hi-res images, and to arrange interviews, please contact Lakeside Arts' Marketing and Communications Manager Phoebe Raine at [phoebe.raine@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:phoebe.raine@nottingham.ac.uk)



## LISTING INFORMATION

**Exhibition Dates:** Saturday 23 September 2023 – Sunday 7 January 2024

**Opening Hours:** Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-4pm | Sunday 12noon-4pm (Closed Mondays)

**Address:** Djanogly Gallery, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD

**Admission:** Free

**Events:** For talks and events tickets please book online or call the Box Office on 0115 846 7777

## NOTES TO EDITORS

**Lakeside Arts** is the University of Nottingham's public arts centre presenting a programme of visual arts and museum exhibitions, theatre, dance, children and families' productions, workshops as well as a learning programme for everyone. Its venues include the Djanogly Gallery; the University Museum which has a permanent collection of archaeology covering a period of some 250,000 years; the Djanogly Recital Hall which stages concerts by internationally renowned soloists and chamber ensembles; and the Djanogly Theatre presenting UK and international touring work as well as producing and co-producing new theatre and dance.

[www.lakesidearts.org.uk](http://www.lakesidearts.org.uk)

Lakeside Arts Facebook, Twitter and Instagram: @LakesideArts

## RELATED EVENTS

### **LAUNCH EVENT | Friday 22 September, 7-9pm**

Join us to celebrate the launch of the exhibition – admission is free, no prior booking required. Each guest will receive a free drink and a chance to get a first look at the exhibition.

### **LECTURE: The PRESENT PAST IN CONTEMPORARY ART | Friday 22 September, 6-7pm (followed by launch event)**

Dr. Isobel Elstob (Assistant Professor in Art History, University of Nottingham) curator of 'Reimag(in)ing the Victorians', gives an introduction to the exhibition.

### **GALLERY TALK: THE RETURN OF THE FAIRIES | Wednesday 27 September, 2-3pm**

Dr. Isobel Elstob in conversation with artist Tessa Farmer about her extraordinary art works assembled from taxidermy and natural history specimens.

### **GALLERY TOURS**

**Wednesday 18 October & Thursday 9 November, 1-2pm** | led by Isobel Elstob

**Wednesday 22 November** | led by Art History Society Students.

**Thursday 7 December** | New Perspectives led by post-graduate Students.

0115 846 7777 | [lakesidearts.org.uk](http://lakesidearts.org.uk)  
Lakeside Arts, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD



Part of



**University of  
Nottingham**

UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

**Thursday 14 December** | led by Neil Walker, Head of Visual Arts Programming, Djanogly Gallery

This exhibition has been made possible as a result of the Government Indemnity Scheme. The Djanogly Gallery would like to thank HM Government for providing Government Indemnity and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Arts Council England for arranging the indemnity.



0115 846 7777 | [lakesidearts.org.uk](http://lakesidearts.org.uk)  
Lakeside Arts, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD

The University is a body corporate incorporated by Royal Charter with Registered Number RC000664



IMAGES



1. *Butterfly kid(Boy)II* 2015 by  
Yinka Shonibare. Courtesy of  
the British Council Collection ©  
Yinka Shonibare CBE. All Rights  
Reserved, DACS 2023



2. *Too Many Blackamoors* 2015 by  
Heather Agyepong. Courtesy of  
the Hyman Collection © the artist.



3. *Swarming Fever* 2021 by Tessa Farmer © the artist



4. *Ladies' Field Club of York: Mrs. E.N. Todter, Lepidoptery* 1998 by Mark Dion and J. Morgan Puett. Collection Tate, London. © Mark Dion and J. Morgan Puett, photography by Claire Sancroft. Image courtesy the artists.



5. *Gyrus*, 2019 by Kate MccGwire © the artist