

Diaspora  
Pavilion |  
Venice to  
Wolver-  
hampton  
10 February -  
29 April 2018

# Diaspora Pavilion | Venice to Wolverhampton

10 February - 29 April



## Ground floor

Diaspora Pavilion | Venice to Wolverhampton is a re-staging of a selection of works previously shown in the exhibition Diaspora Pavilion that took place in Venice during the 57th Venice Biennale last year. The works shown here are by seven of the 19 artists who were part of the Venice show, all of who were selected due to the variety of ways that their practices engage with diaspora as a concept.

The Diaspora Pavilion grew out of a desire to provide a space for artists to pose counter-narratives that interrogate the notion of diaspora and a topical interest in the impact of increased global mobility, displacement and migration on culture. The idea of diaspora here functions as a tool with which to explore how artistic practice has been influenced by cross-cultural exchange.

On the ground floor Larry Achiampong is screening a short film entitled Sunday's Best in the Contemporary Gallery. The film addresses the impact that colonial histories have had on religious practice within the African diaspora.

In the West Gallery Susan Pui San Lok has installed a new configuration of an on-going work entitled Golden. Composed of shimmering gold curtains accompanied by audio pieces, plus a video work not previously exhibited in Venice. This installation explores notions of nostalgia and aspiration.

Beginning in the Morris Gallery and continuing on the first floor, Abbas Zahedi presents a re-formulation of the site-specific installation he developed for the original Pavilion with the new addition of a video work. In his practice Zahedi explores survival techniques for what he has termed the neo-diasporic predicament, one of which is the exercise of bottling drinks, which the artist himself performs. Zahedi has produced a

Saffrock Shandy for Diaspora Pavilion, which will be sold in the café upstairs.

On this first floor of the Gallery five paintings by Kimathi Donkor have been inserted into the displays in the Victorian and Georgian galleries. These interventions address and disrupt different historical moments, invoking figures and myths across time periods, to generate new perspectives in painting.

In the Focus Gallery Paul Maheke presents *The River Asked for a Kiss (To Pateh Sabally)*, a series of four hanging curtains with printed text, and *In the Watery Core of those Stories*, which includes two fish tanks placed on the floor. Both works explicitly reference the Venetian canal, echoing Maheke's interest in water as a subject through which to explore issues around migration and displacement.

For the Diaspora Pavilion Michael Forbes has produced a new series of sculptures and paintings exhibited here for the first time. These works, as did the series shown in Venice, bring together historical artefacts and contemporary objects as a means of commenting on processes of valuation and collecting in connection to urgent issues of the moment.

In an adjoining gallery Erika Tan has re-designed the large-scale work made for the Venice Pavilion, *The 'Forgotten' Weaver (RETURNS)*, onto which she projects two video pieces, and has also introduced a third projection element, *The Weavers Lament*. Together the four elements of the installation consider the relevance in the postcolonial reframing of modernism.



Ground floor

1. Larry Achiampong



Title, date, media  
Courtesy of the Artist/other



2. susan pui san lok

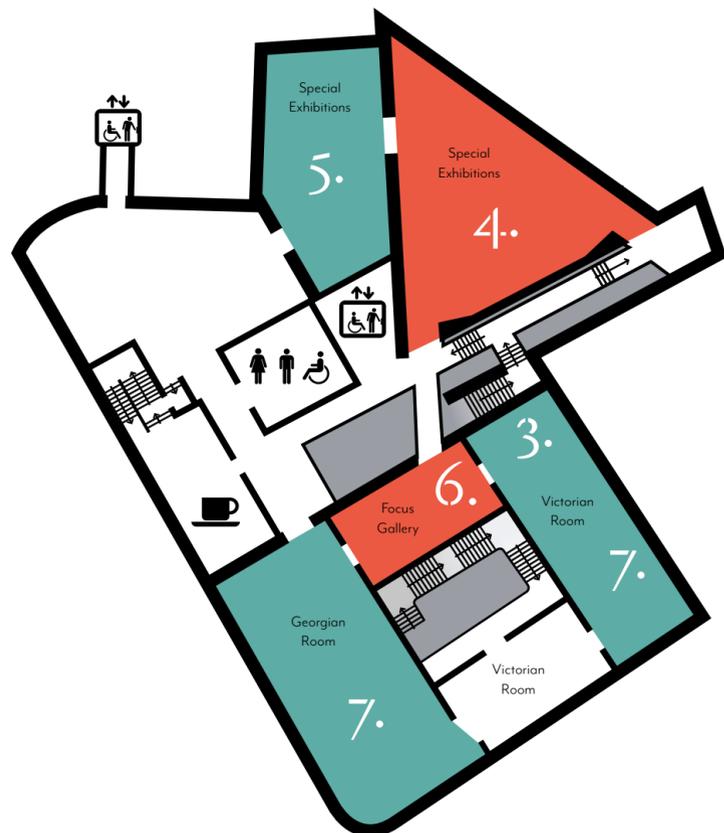
Title, date, media  
Courtesy of the Artist/other

3. Abbas Zahedi



Title, date, media  
Courtesy of the Artist/other

# First floor

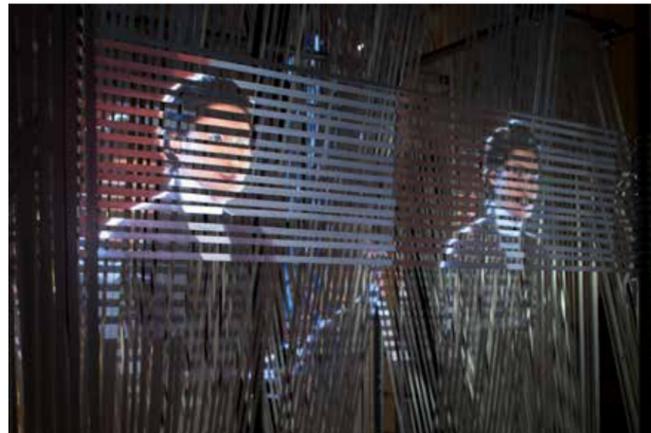


## 4. Michael Forbes



Title, date, media  
Courtesy of the Artist/other

## 5. Erika Tan



Title, date, media  
Courtesy of the Artist/other

## 7. Kimathi Donkor



Title, date, media  
Courtesy of the Artist/other

## 6. Paul Maheke



Title, date, media  
Courtesy of the Artist/other

# Artist biographies

Larry Achiampong's solo and collaborative projects employ imagery, aural and visual archives, live performance and sound to explore ideas of cross-cultural and post-digital identity – in particular, dichotomies found within a world dominated by social media and digital frameworks. With the enduring expansion and sharing of information via the Internet, the idea of a one-size-fits-all version of history, as previously dictated, continues to be eradicated. At the heart of this phenomenon lies Achiampong's increased interest in what new truths or versions become available, the multiple possibilities that are created and maintained in the digital realm and the consequences related to 'IRL' or 'In Real Life'. Achiampong crate-digs the vaults of history, splicing audible and visual qualities of the personal and interpersonal archive-as-material – offering multiple dispositions that reveal the socio-political contradictions in contemporary society.

susan pui san lok is an artist, writer and researcher based in London. Her work ranges across moving image, installation, sound, performance and text, evolving out of interests in notions of nostalgia and aspiration, place and migration, translation and diaspora. Solo projects include: RoCH Fans & Legends at CFCCA, Manchester (2016) and QUAD, Derby (2015) and Golden (2005-ongoing), an Arts Council England and AHRC-funded project, including exhibitions, residencies, a publication, live events, and commissions for Beaconsfield, London, Chinese Arts Centre, Manchester, and Guangdong Museum of Art (2015-2016). Recent group exhibitions include the 1st Asia Biennial & 5th Guangzhou Triennial (2015-2016). In 2017, she was in residency at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, as part of the research programme, Deviant Practice.

Abbas Zahedi is a multi-disciplinary artist based in London. His practice ranges across sound, moving image, installation, performance and participatory events, which entwine expressive and socially engaged modes of being. Zahedi's current practice is influenced by his concept of neo-diaspora - as the predicament of being a second generation migrant, in a hyper-connected world. For the artist, this reality is no longer marked by the traditional understanding of diaspora, as a movement from the margins to the metropole; but instead, it is a paradox of survival, within a complex and transitional state of belonging to multiple imaginal spaces. He is particularly invested in the intersections of personal and collective history, and the use of language to navigate various processes of transformation.

Michael Forbes is an artist and curator. He was involved with the early stage development work for the New Art Exchange, Nottingham (1999 -2010) and is a board member of PRIMARY (trading as Nottingham Studios), (Chair from 2006- 2011) and now the Chair again from January 2017. Forbes has curated many exhibitions including work at the Bonnington Gallery, Primary and Yard Gallery in Nottingham. In 2010 Forbes co-curated a Pop-Up presentation in the Nottingham Exchange Building and has delivered eight major exhibitions at the Art Exchange and New Art Exchange over a number of years. In 2011, with Arts Council England support, Forbes undertook a twelve-month residency and development project at the International Studio and Curatorial Program in New York (leading to exhibitions and other professional development opportunities in the city and elsewhere).

Erika Tan's practice is primarily research-led and manifests in multiple formats, with a leaning towards moving image, referencing distributed media in the form of cinema, gallery-based works, internet and digital practices. Evolving from an interest in anthropology and the moving image, her work is often informed by specific cultural, geographical or physical contexts. Her research interests focus on the postcolonial and transnational, working with archival artefacts, exhibition histories, received narratives, contested heritage, subjugated voices and the transnational movement of ideas, people and objects. Recent projects (Come Cannibalise Us, Why Don't You) explore the discursive connections between the technology of cinematic green screen space to that of the museum and its technologies of dislocation (with particular focus on the colonial Museum in 'Malaya' and the repatriation of objects (with no shadow)).

Paul Maheke's current research imagines the body as an archive using its waters as pathways to information and knowledge. This investigation occupy a metaphorical space wherein which the body resonates and echoes with the broader socio-political and historical context that have birthed it. With particular attention to dance, it proposes to rearticulate the representations of queer Blackness that emerge from Western imaginations by addressing History through non-human subjectivity. Maheke was born in France, and lives and works in London. He was awarded the South London Gallery Graduate Residency 2015-16 and his exhibition 'I Lost Track of the Swarm' was exhibited in the first floor galleries in late spring 2016. Recent projects include: 'Ten Days Six Nights', cur. Catherine Wood and Andrea Lissoni, Tate Modern, London, UK (2017); 'Acqua Alta', Sultana Gallery, Paris, FR (2017, solo show); 'What Flows Through and Across', Assembly Point, London (2017, solo show). Upcoming shows include a solo show at Chisenhale Gallery, London (April, 2018), the Baltic Triennial, the Rennes Biennale and Manifesta.

Kimathi Donkor re-imagines mythic and legendary encounters across Africa and its global Diasporas, principally in painting, but also through drawing, video, assemblage, collage, digital media, performance and installation. Narrative paintings address historic figures like Harriet Tubman and Toussaint L'Ouverture, as well as themes such as urban unrest or the pursuit of leisure, beauty and knowledge. His solo exhibitions include Some Clarity of Vision at Gallery MOMO (Johannesburg, 2015), Queens of the Undead with Iniva at Rivington Place (London, 2012) and Fall/Uprising at the Bettie Morton Gallery, (London, 2005). Group exhibitions include Untitled: Art on the Conditions of Our Time at the New Art Exchange (Nottingham, 2017) and the 29th São Paulo Biennial (Brazil, 2010).

Wolverhampton Art Gallery  
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[www.wolverhampton.org.uk](http://www.wolverhampton.org.uk)



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