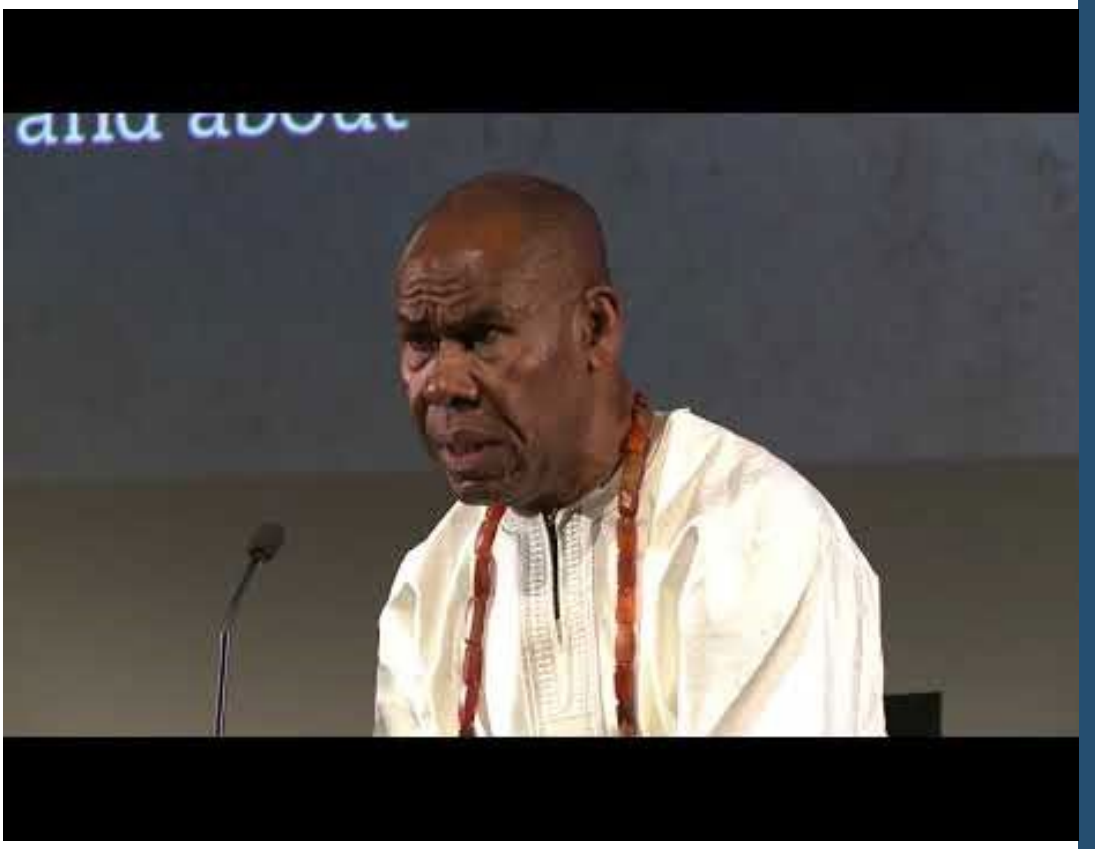
'BLOOD AH GOH RUN
GOOD HAIR
COXSONE'S MUSIC CITY
MIRACLE AT SANTA ANNA
THE GREAT DEBATERS
health battle: FIBROIDS
la Rue Cases-Nègres
HOW EUROPE UNDERDEVELOPED AFRICA
Walter Rodney
JUMPING THE BROOM
DOWNTOWN
Chico & Rita
LUMUMBA
BLACK HISTORY WALKS
AFRICAN HISTORY IN THE CITY OF LONDON
Walks, Talks and Films
on the African history of London
all year long
BLACK BOY LANE

Above: Professor Gus John, Dr Bruce Paddington and John La Rose discuss a film on the Grenada Revolution. African Odysseys premiered Forward Ever in 2014 to 450 people at the BFI. *Such educational, anti-racist films are now at risk if the BFI's proposed redundancy goes ahead. Sign the petition to keep AO going HERE*

Black History Walks Newsletter 26.9.24
Black history is longer than a month...
Walks, talks and films on African history all year long
23 Years of Education Through Film
Check out our website www.blackhistorywalks.co.uk

Above: After two decades of telling his story and complaining about the lack of book/movie/tv show on the incredible life of Flight Lieutenant John Henry Smythe, BHW has commissioned a short film about his life. Sponsored by the Black Curriculum and voiced by Eddy Smythe {son of John Henry) the action-packed video is designed for schools alongside the Pearson GCSE Migration history book which uses content from our Notting Hill walk. The book is presently read by over 10,000 pupils across the country. Please share widely to challenge the widespread ignorance of the Black contribution to World War 2.

In 2019, Eddy Smythe was interviewed at the BFI Southbank as part of a special presentation 'Heroic Black pilots of World War 1 and 2'. You can see Eddy speaking from 1hr 17m *HERE* the entire event would not have happened, far less been recorded but for the African Odysseys initiative which is now at risk after 17 years. *To save African Odysseys sign the petition HERE*



Gary Younge and Professor Gus John on Black British Civil Rights

Professor Gus John is interviewed by Gary Younge after an African Odysseys screening of a film about Black British Civil Rights (50 Years of Struggle) at the BFI Southbank on 14th March 2015. Click above image to watch over 400 people enjoy the Q&A. This type of anti-racist, educational event will disappear within three months if the BFI cuts funding for African Odysseys. *To save AO please sign the petition* ***HERE***

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Above: Click to view recording of Black Women in Broadcast Journalism event in 2023 at the BFI. This fantastic, rare review of Black journalists since the 1970s would not have happened but for African Odysseys. It was produced via the expertise of Mia Morris OBE and Juliet Alexander. It features Charlie Brinkhurst Cuff, Gillian Joseph, Barbara Blake Hannah, Moira Stuart, Ronke Phillips, Angela Ferreira, Maxine Watson and tells some incredible stories. There were many other such AO events that were not recorded due to lack of funds. This type of Black film history is now under threat. To preserve AO please sign the petition *HERE*

The British Film Institute (BFI) plans to terminate the African Odysseys (AO) programme, a vital initiative celebrating Black cinema for the past 17 years.It is the only such programme in Europe.

Launched in 2007 by Black community activists, AO aimed to provide a dedicated platform for films representing the African diaspora and to cultivate an audience that had previously been underserved by the BFI. Co-founded by Tony Warner of Black History Walks and David Somerset of the BFI, the programme has successfully attracted tens of thousands of new attendees and enhanced the BFI's reputation within the Black community.

The programme hosts monthly screenings and themed seasons featuring influential filmmakers such as Ousmane Sembene, Horace Ove, Menelik Shabbaz and Raoul Peck, as well as educational talks and workshops on diverse topics ranging from Black cowboys to African spirituality. AO also provided subsidized training for emerging filmmakers, making it a unique grassroots effort in Europe with a notable track record of community engagement and packed events.

However, in June 2024, the Steering Committee was informed that the Education/Film Programmer, Adult Community position, crucial to the programme's continuity, would be made redundant. This decision came unexpectedly, especially after recent discussions where BFI management had committed to supporting AO's upcoming 20th anniversary in 2026 and expanding its presence on the BFI iPlayer.

The decision to cut the role was made without consultation with the Steering Committee, despite previous protests regarding the programme's treatment and calls for improvement in the BFI's representation of Black filmmakers. Concerns about systemic racism within the BFI, which has been criticized for a lack of diversity in its management structure, further underscore the issue. In March 2023 the Guardian reported on the BFI taking limited action to address systemic racism, article ***HERE***. The committee highlighted that eliminating the role would effectively end AO, as no one would be left to manage its operations, thereby jeopardizing 17 years of community relationship-building, anti-racist practice and curatorial expertise.

The BFI claimed that the redundancy aimed to save costs and promote diversity, yet the committee argued that such a move contradicts their commitment to these goals. They pointed out that the expertise and community goodwill built over the years would be irreparably lost. Furthermore, despite past racial controversies, the BFI did not conduct a Race Equality Impact

Assessment (REIA) for this decision, dismissing the committee's requests for one in reference to the ***Public Sector Equality Duty***

As of mid-September 2024, the committee learned the redundancy would proceed, with the position ending within three months, raising concerns about the future of African Odysseys events at the BFI.

Notably, upcoming rare films about figures like Claude McKay and James Baldwin could be among the last to screen if African Odysseys is discontinued.

The committee is calling on the BFI to reverse this decision, arguing it would not only erase a significant archive of Black history but also damage community relations with a taxpayer-funded institution. They stress that the loss of African Odysseys would be a catastrophic blow to the representation of Black films, filmmakers and audiences in mainstream venues, undermining the important cultural contributions made over nearly two decades. To preserve the legacy of 17 years of grassroots. global majority film programming please sign the petition ***HERE***

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Above: Our previous Netflix suggestion, Rebel Ridge, was the number one film for two weeks . This month's suggestion is Kalushi, a true story of armed resistance by young South Africans that led to Mandela's release. Screened in 2017 as part of African Odysseys and supported by the South African embassy. It got rave reviews but due to racism in film distribution many people don't know it exists. ***The unique African Odysseys programme gives such films space, publicity and audience. To keep this Black film resource for the next generation sign the petition HERE***

Claude McKay from Harlem to Marseille - Black History Walks

Saturday 28th September 2pm at BFI Southbank. Rare film on Claude McKay plus intro and panel discussion hosted by actor-director Burt Caesar. A discussion of this rebellious Jamaican, a poet and novelist, from the Harlem Renaissance to Winston Churchill. Director Matthieu Verdeil, France 2021. 80mins. This type of film will not be seen if African Odysseys is cancelled.

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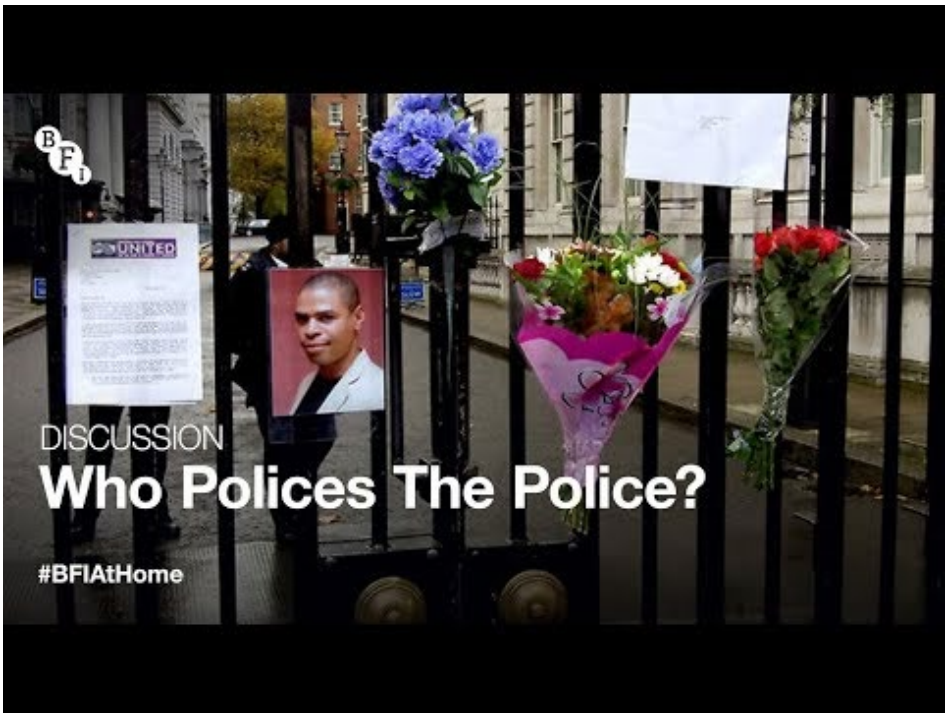

BFI At Home | African Odysseys presents WHO POLICES THE POLICE? with Ken Fero & Marcia Rigg

Click image to watch. Sean Rigg died in a caged area in Brixton Police Station in August 2008 and the Independent Police Complaint Commission (IPCC) were called in to investigate. Using powerful testimonies, poetry and a political analysis of police violence, this 2012 documentary exposed the tactics of the IPCC and, through the family of Sean Rigg, challenge its claim that it is independent.

African Odysseys curated a series of films on deaths in custody and platformed voices like Ken Fero and Marcia Rigg. Such topics are often sidelined by mainstream media and few cinemas have hosted seasons, workshops and talks on these issues. To maintain this level of access and exposure please sign our petition to keep African Odysseys going ***HERE***

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Carnival in the Time of the Sound System - African Odysseys Discussion

Click image to watch. Author Lloyd Bradley (Bass Culture, Sounds Like London) leads a discussion around the theme of Carnival, its history and the diverse cultures that created it, in particular the rise of the Sound System. The guests are Nicole-Rachelle Moore, Dennis Bovell, Young Warrior, Rudy Ranx, June Reid and Lynda Rosenior-Patten.

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Fighting the slave master: Past and Present.

Black History Walks presents Fighting the slave master: Past and Present. - Saturday, 5 October 2024. Click 'read more' below

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Theatreland Black History Walk - Sunday October 6th 10am

Multiple and stunning revelations of the Black performers and productions that have graced the stages of London's West End theatres Explore the hidden history of African presence in the West End's theatre district. With a recent explosion of Black productions since the events of 2020, we investigate and expose how far back the African/Caribbean presence...

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Look out for these events in the future

- East Croydon Black History Walk
- Medical Apartheid
- The Black Image
- Plagiarism, Walks and Black history
- The Amazing True Story of Cy Grant
- African women Resistance Leaders Course
- Notting hill, Harlem in Mayfair, Southbank walks

More details *HERE*

Black History Walks | P.O Box 913 Harrow | London, HA1 9EH GB

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