

# Institute of Contemporary Arts

PRESS RELEASE

\* Embargoed until 9am Tuesday 1 June \*

## THE ICA REOPENS WITH 'WAR INNA BABYLON: THE COMMUNITY'S STRUGGLE FOR TRUTHS AND RIGHTS'

*Landmark exhibition examines the history of Black communities' resistance to institutional racism and UK policing.*

Open to the public from 6 July 2021 – 26 September 2021



The Institute of Contemporary Arts reopens on July 6th with *War Inna Babylon: The Community's Struggle for Truths and Rights*, an exhibition curated by London-based racial advocacy and community organisation, Tottenham Rights, Kamara Scott and Rianna Jade Parker.

Ten years on from the UK-wide riots sparked by the police killing of Mark Duggan, this exhibition shines a light on the vast range of collective actions, resistance and grassroots activism undertaken by Black communities across the UK in response to over seven decades of societal and institutional racism.

Using the 'symbolic location' of Tottenham, a neighbourhood that has received much attention in recent years due to its history of racial conflicts and heavy-handed policing; this exhibition combines archival material, documentary photography, film and state-of-the-art 3D technology to 'act as a window to the past and as a mirror for our present-day social climate'.

*War Inna Babylon* chronicles the impact of various forms of state violence and institutional racism targeted at Britain's Black communities since the mass arrival-upon-invitation of West Indian migrants in the late 1940s.

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The exhibition includes original tributes from victims' families, case studies of the controversial 'sus' (suspected person) laws and the Gangs' Matrix, and highlights legal developments that have resulted from Black justice campaigns.

*War Inna Babylon* will also present a new investigation into the killing of Mark Duggan by Forensic Architecture.

## **Stafford Scott, co-Founder of Tottenham Rights, said:**

'We are pleased to have been given this opportunity to exhibit, and reflect on, the lived experiences and challenges faced by members of Britain's Black communities, whose voices are seldom heard outside of their own neighbourhoods.

'While *War Inna Babylon* was originally scheduled to open in May 2020 – the delay due to Covid-19 – has inadvertently made this the most timely exhibition it could possibly be.

'In light of events over the past year, that have shown how little value is placed on Black lives – the Covid-19 Public Health England Review, BLM demonstrations, the Sewell washout, the increased use of police violence, and stop and search procedures against members of the Black community – we view this as the perfect time to focus on grassroots activism in Black frontline communities across the UK; which have been at the forefront of resisting state oppression and creating unfounded change for racial justice since the 1970s.'

## **Stefan Kalmár, Director of the ICA, said:**

'*War Inna Babylon* is a long overdue celebration of Black communities and their historic struggles against racism. I am grateful to Stafford Scott of Tottenham Rights, Kamara Scott and Rianna Jade Parker, for the trust they extended to all of us at the ICA in working with us on this exhibition.

'Racism and anti-Blackness in Britain are real and no institution is free from it. Cameron Rowland's exhibition with us last year traced elements of our own building back to Britain's central role in slavery; Tottenham Rights' *War Inna Babylon* connects this legacy to the present moment and shows how contemporary institutions and policies, such as policing, continue to be structured by this legacy.

'As an institution ourselves we are not immune to this. Over the past ten months, we've asked The Monitoring Group, Britain's leading anti-racism advocacy group – a group that Tottenham Rights grew out of – to review our own policies, behaviour and culture. With their support, we are working to become a truly proactive anti-racist organisation in everything we do.

'I'd like to also thank the ICA's long-term partner Forensic Architecture for contributing the new investigation into the killing of Mark Duggan.'

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**Eyal Weizman, Director of Forensic Architecture, said:**

‘The case of Mark Duggan’s death is not only another senseless killing of a Black Londoner by the Metropolitan Police. More than that, it is compelling evidence of the deep, structural problems that exist in the way police brutality is accounted for in the UK.

‘Soon, we will publish a new book on this killing, in partnership with the ICA. Our findings, which have been shared with the police watchdog and the Mayor of London, show that the official conclusions about Duggan’s death don’t add up. Based on our evidence, the case must be formally revisited.’

The exhibition, the first of its kind to accurately assess the conditions of Black lives across Britain, will be accompanied by an extensive public programme presented both in Tottenham and at the ICA that will include film screenings, community educational groups, talks, cultural events, performances, and a digital presentation focusing on the interrelation between artificial intelligence (AI) and racism.

— ENDS —

**For further information, images and to request interviews please contact:**

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For images, wherever possible, please use the image(s) selected from the exhibition [here](#).

NOTES TO EDITORS

## ICA Programme

This exhibition is part of an ICA programme dedicated to racial justice, social justice and liveable futures for all, with programme highlights including the return of the ICA’s Artists Film Club; a week-long convening dedicated to the experimental writing of M. NourbeSe Philip; and Dykegeist, a choreographic work by Eve Stainton and Mica Levi. [See more on the ICA’s programme here.](#)

## Institute of Contemporary Arts

The Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) is an independent organisation that supports the most pressing debates in contemporary culture. From their home on The Mall, the geographic heart of the UK establishment, the ICA is presenting a programme that speaks to the challenges of the 21st century: ground-breaking

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exhibitions, performances, independent film and keynote lectures by many of the world's leading artists and thinkers.

Founded in 1946 by a collective of artists, poets and their supporters, the ICA played a pivotal role in the development of pop art and charted the course of punk, performance art and independent cinema. It has previously staged the first institutional exhibitions by artists including Jean-Michel Basquiat, Damien Hirst, Cindy Sherman and Cosey Fanni Tutti; historic performances and legendary concerts by artists such as Laurie Anderson, David Bowie, Einstürzende Neubauten and Yoko Ono; and critical discussions featuring the likes of Kathy Acker, Homi K. Bhabha, Stuart Hall and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The ICA is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and supported by the DCMS Culture Recovery Fund.

[www.ica.art](http://www.ica.art)

## Tottenham Rights

With over three decades of experience supporting Black communities across the UK, Tottenham Rights is a racial justice organisation that provides advocacy services to those who are vulnerable to over-policing, and have suffered other forms of institutional racism; through victim and family-led campaigns, police monitoring, and race equality consultancy. Tottenham Rights is an offset of the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign and co-founded by The Monitoring Group, following the police killing of Mark Duggan in 2011.

## Rianna Jade Parker

Rianna Jade Parker is a critic, curator and researcher based in South London. She was a founding member of interdisciplinary art collective Thick/er Black Lines – whose work was exhibited in the landmark exhibition *Get Up, Stand Up Now: Generations of Black Creative Pioneers*. She is a Contributing Editor of *frieze* and her book *A Brief History of Black British Art* is forthcoming from Tate Publishing.

## Forensic Architecture

Over the past decade, Forensic Architecture has mobilized an array of innovative technological, aesthetic, and legal strategies to undertake close to seventy investigations of state and corporate crimes worldwide. Conducted in collaboration with community groups, social movements, and civil society partners, these investigations have often made decisive contributions to cases in national and international courts, people's tribunals, and truth commissions. Exhibited in museums and galleries around the world, they have also been crucial in reimagining the relationship between art, culture, and politics today.

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## VISITOR INFORMATION

Opening times: *War Inna Babylon: The Community's Struggle for Truths and Rights* can be visited during regular ICA opening hours Tuesday–Sunday 12–9pm.

Location: Institute of Contemporary Arts, The Mall, London, SW1Y 5AH

For information about tickets and membership, please contact:  
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