

@KO___OL



The AudiTT

ICA Theatre, Friday 1 April, 7pm

I stood at the back of the room, laughing, making jokes, and I was, I don't know, fucking amazed. I was so fucking proud of us. I don't know why. I just was. We looked like kids that had done well in life.

The AudiTT is a two-channel film and sculpture examining memory and lore; oral, aural and behavioural, tradition, millennial folklore and material culture. The work explores the topics of recurring dreams and core memories.

Q&A

Where did the idea come from for your new work?

Where did the idea come from? I guess a few different places. Music is a big part of my life, my day to day, so I tend to draw a lot of inspiration from that. I think that So Solid Crew are really important as a group, a black British group. Just even as a cultural phenomenon. It was like the best glitch ever. They succeeded in spite of everything being against them and doing it all while being fly as fuck. A metaphor. I think it's just very interesting, looking at it from a few different perspectives and trying to place that in context now. That was what I was thinking about.

My little cousin is ten and he lives here in Lagos, and he is obsessed with drill music. So initially, it started off as mainly being about So Solid Crew and all the things that they stood for and the symbols that they used, and all that kind of stuff. Then I just tried to bring it a bit closer to home by channeling that through the lens of my little cousin, and how these are the kids that...he doesn't even know who So Solid Crew are, but they pioneered a sound in the early 2000s that has kind of led to what is happening now. So just connecting the dots. I like connecting the dots between things, basically.

Is it easy for you to describe the work and how you experience it? Does your work have a narrative focus?

I think it's looking at how things are passed down, whether that's through family or different mediums that could be like TV, CD, vinyl, leaflets, magazines, all of that stuff. It doesn't exist in a linear way. You can pick up a magazine

from, I don't know, the early '90s and find something in there that can be activated now, really. The minute you come into contact with it. I think that's what I'm exploring in this. It's hard. There's a lot of different things that go into it, like I said, connect the dots between the different things that interest me in it and how it's relevant to me and maybe try and get someone to look at someone or something differently.

You mentioned before that music is a major part of your life and work. Could you talk a little bit more about your practice?

Yeah. I guess I worked in, well, I still work in the music industry as a creative director, manager, and I run a label. I'm just always around incredible artists and friends. All the artists I work with tend to work with multiple mediums as well. Helping them come up with concepts, research, references, whether that's for the music, whether that's for the visuals or live shows. A lot of the things that I just do in my free time, whether that's just mining for images, records, blogs, or picking up old books, magazines, movies, just reference stuff. That gave me the opportunity to distill all stuff that I had been collecting in music videos, album covers and styling. All that sort of stuff. I always made things for myself, but never showed it really. Yeah, never really showed it until pretty recently. This is all pretty cool in that sense, but also like, fuck.

What about your other pieces of work that you've made recently and shown? Can you talk a little bit about whether there's any connection? Do you have a subject that all your works interlink and relate to? Or are you just trying out different things with each opportunity that you have?

I think they've mainly revolved around, so far, around 2003 as a year. Especially, even with this piece as well. That's just been a year. That was a pivotal point in my life – I was consuming things consciously, indiscriminately and voraciously. So I really wanted to explore that year. We wanted to explore that year in my life because I also keep diaries and stuff. I actually still have a lot of stuff from that time that is really funny to read and look through now as well. I think it was also a very pivotal year for black music both British and US music, and TV as well. There were a lot of things happening that I think the legacy of them is really important.

So yeah, again, all the things I've shown are music based as well. I showed this piece at Swab Art Fair that was kind of...well, I mean it's loosely music related, but it was looking, again, at 2003. It was meant to be a teenager's backpack, so I had like a school report in there, using my own school reports, excerpts from my diary, a Nokia 7600 and an FHM magazine Beyoncé cover from November 2003. Then I'd made these mugs that had a particular pose that Dizzy Rothko (sic), 50 Cent on his *Get Rich or Die Tryin'* album, and also Jonny Wilkinson would do before he would kick. It's a big rap trope. That was the year that *Boy in da Corner* and *Get Rich or Die Tryin'* came out, and England won the Rugby World Cup. I think the three things side by side tell a story. I liked playing around with what connected them and it was 'tea/e': 'dirtee', 'kicking tee', 'drinking tea', 'fif-tea'. 'I'm not a mook'...'I'm not a mug'... Just silly little like word play. Maybe I'm the only one that finds it funny, but yeah, it makes me chuckle.

Yeah. Well, it sounds personal but also super relevant to a lot of people. Can you talk a little bit about your process of approaching this work?

I guess there's the initial idea that I was just like, 'Okay, this would be cool'. Then going off and doing the research to see if it's actually possible to do how I want. I started finding all the available interviews, videos, magazines. I was buying old supplements of different newspapers, and different magazine covers. Even in that, I found this really rare magazine that they were on the cover of super early on. That opened up this whole other wormhole of stuff. So it's just very much a kind of gathering. Gathering all that stuff together and just seeing what jumps out to me. And this is how I zeroed in on the Audi TT.

So yeah, research. Then I spent a load of time trying to find the exact right pieces. It's a lot of research and finding the materials, because it's really important to me that the relics and pieces of the shrine sculpture are exact.

It was then coming to Lagos where it took a different turn, which I didn't expect, which was then, okay, now I can make a link back to my family and back to me. Making that loop. Which was super rewarding, because then it helped me carry on that process of, okay, how does my 11-year-old cousin aka DJ Frosty know all these drill songs. Whether it's London or Manchester, Birmingham, wherever. He's doing the accents, he knows them all. He's jokes, he's a star! He's just on TikTok. Yeah, he's on TikTok, basically. That's where he's finding all this stuff. He was the missing piece in everything that actually makes it relevant to what's going on today. How his generation shares things with each other and finds out about stuff.

@KO__OL's work concerns itself with what he calls 'the sci-fi of everyday life'. Pulling inspiration from the unexpected profundity of casual conversations with taxi drivers, accidental field recordings or deeply transformative ancestral archives, @KO__OL necessarily deploys an aggregation of media – video, sound-mixing, promo-photography, messaging, song, fashion, blogging and sculpture on his journey to illuminate immanent unknowns.

Having ensured the imagery and audience for Moses Boyd's release *Dark Matter* in 2020, and *LA Timpa* and *Dawana* on his own label *O__o?*, @KO__OL expands his own material language, scoping an urbanomic field of activity. One that functions within the iconographic currency of desired branded objects and the perished, evacuated capital of pop-art materialism.

The cosmological whole, its acoustic, gif anime, j-peg, snapchat, meme texture – our febrile media channels – offers no hierarchical distinction in an age of digital multiplicity. @KO__OL renders the canonical porous, even obsolete, a characteristic insistence of our time. One single urgent taxonomy: the socialised, agravic coalescence of speech, sound and vision, with its diametric, Rorschach ghosting, impossible hi-hat geometries and unsettling architectural sub-sonics.

@KO__OL digs deeper into subjects that we may initially meet with fear, such as the root of religion and African spirituality, and testifies that with a little bit of exploration, adjusted subrealities and sur-fictions can ultimately be found and occupied.

Through intense examination of the effects of recurring dreams, psychedelics, pop culture and fantasy, @KO__OL embodies the unquantifiable aspects of everyday life and cultural phenomena in his work, rendering his own personal love-hate relationship with intransigent consumerism, fleeting temporal digital imaging, religious ideology loss and the aestheticisation of ancestry.

@KO__OL belongs to a generation of artists whose labour is concerned with existence in all its forms – how it plays out in reality through memory, music, and the myriad of things we collect and archive to remind ourselves of our short time here on earth.