

Janiva Ellis & Donald Rodney

5 February – 30 March 2022

On display are historic works loaned from the Arts Council and UK Government collections by British artist Donald Rodney (1961 - 1998) alongside new pieces by American painter Janiva Ellis (b. 1987).

A shared mood permeates the gallery, the show is animated by a reflexive awareness of sentiments thrust upon them, the works anticipate the viewer, they look back. More importantly, they look at each other.

The paintings Janiva Ellis produced in successive years from 2019 to 2022 form a procession, a small timeline of art history snippets amalgamated with American pop cultural reference. In *Heritage High* (2020), a cheerleader leaps over an abstracted Rodin sculpture.

The dialogue formed between Ellis and Rodney's work is spoken (and whispered) in a shifting valence, some parallels can be drawn simply, *115 Charles St.* (2021) named after the artist's mother's childhood flat, presented in conversation with Donald Rodney's *In the House of My Father* (1997). Other parallels, elusive as the efficacy of Black representation, are spoken atemporally, as though the last 20 years have yielded little change in the flattened approach to Black practice.

The reception of Donald Rodney, who used his own X-rays to represent the disease of apartheid and police brutality, rather than the blood disorder that was slowly corroding his body, has been burdened by the tragedy of his early death. Compounded by a sense of tragedy already projected onto Blackness, we invite you to visit the work through the unique ability and sensitivity both artists possess.

With thanks to Hamishi Farah, Arts Council Collection (Southbank Centre, London) and the UK Government Art Collection (London).

Arcadia Missa ÷

List of works

From left to right

Janiva Ellis
Untitled (grey anvil), 2019
Oil and pencil on canvas
58.5 × 81.3 × 5.1 cm (23 × 32 × 2 inches)

Donald Rodney
Untitled, 1994
Paper, mixed media, magazines
40 × 32.50 × 3.70 cm (15.7 × 12.8 × 1.5 inches)
UK Government Art Collection (London)

Janiva Ellis
Untitled (pink anvil), 2019
Oil and pencil on canvas
40.7 × 50.8 × 2.5 cm (16 × 20 × 1 inches)

Janiva Ellis
Untitled (bubble), 2019
Oil and pencil on canvas
40.7 × 50.8 × 2.5 cm (16 × 20 × 1 inches)

Janiva Ellis
Incoming, 2022
Oil and pencil on canvas
111.8 × 139.7 × 5.1 cm (44 × 55 × 2 inches)

Donald Rodney
Self-Portrait 'Black Men Public Enemy', 1990
Lightboxes with Duratran prints
190.5 × 121.9 cm (75 × 48 inches)
Arts Council England (Southbank Centre, London)

Janiva Ellis
115 Charles st., 2021
Oil on canvas
76.2 × 91.4 × 2.5 cm (30 × 36 × 1 inches)

Donald Rodney
In the House of My Father, 1997
Photographic print on aluminium. Photograph taken by Andra Nelki
153 × 122 cm (60 1/4 × 48 1/16 inches)
Arts Council England (Southbank Centre, London)

Janiva Ellis
Untitled (rat), 2019
Oil and pencil on canvas
35.6 × 45.7 × 2.5 cm (14 × 18 × 1 inches)

Office

Janiva Ellis
Heritage High, 2020
Oil and pencil on canvas
121.9 × 91.4 × 2.5 cm (48 × 36 × 1 inches)