

Streams of Memories

Friday 28–Sunday 30 January 2022

A free online screening programme
Curated by **Culture Art Society (CAS)**
In collaboration with **The Showroom**

At the culmination of their research residency
with **The Showroom** at **Metroland Studio, 2021**



Barbara McCullough, *Water Ritual #1: An urban rite of purification*, 1979
Film still, courtesy of **Barbara McCullough** and **Third World Newsreel**

This programme presents five experimental short films by **S. Pearl Sharp**, **Barbara McCullough**, **Kym Ragusa**, **Omah Diegu**, and **Martina Attille**; exploring the ways in which these filmmakers weave and unravel stories, fears and hopes across the African continent and diaspora, between generations and over time.

Each film touches upon the sociality and sensuality of gathering; heightened by being shown together as part of this programme in company and dialogue with one another.

Schedule - 65 minutes

Introductions:

Lily Hall, Curator, **The Showroom** and **Awa Konaté**, Curator & Founder, **CAS**

1. **S. Pearl Sharp**, *Back Inside Herself*, 1984, 4 minutes
2. **Barbara McCullough**, *Water Ritual #1: An urban rite of purification*, 1979, 6 minutes
3. **Kym Ragusa**, *Demarcations*, 1992, 5 minutes
4. **Omah Diegu**, *African Women, U.S.A.*, 1980, 20 minutes
5. **Martina Attille**, *Dreaming Rivers*, 1988, 30 minutes

S. Pearl Sharp's film *Back Inside Herself*, 1984 is a visual poem on self-invention; and shows a Black woman finding her own sense of self while rejecting white hegemonic societal expectations of who she should be and how she should behave.

Barbara McCullough extends the poetics of cinema in *Water Ritual #1: An urban rite of purification*, 1979, to enact the spiritual and psychological journey of a Black woman as she (re)connects with the African continent and the Caribbean on a cosmological level.

A different sense of wandering and wondering is conveyed in **Kym Ragusa's** *Demarcations*, 1992, through mediations on how the trauma of rape leaves its inflictions on the body yet does not determine self-identity.

African Women, U.S.A., 1980, by **Omah Diegu** further explores misogynoir and transnational complexities by addressing family, labour and gender power relations.

Dreaming Rivers, 1988, by **Martina Attille** reflects and recalls the ghosts of love, loss and kinship.

Together these short films pull, release and upsurge the histories, experiences and lives of Black women. Rather than merely presenting how they are viewed, particularly by the white gaze, these films - or memories - intervene in dominant Western cinematic aesthetics and redirect vision towards how Black women themselves view the structures, relations and intimacies of their lives. These five filmmakers look at the camera not for recognition, but to confront and impose their looking onto and against the camera.

It is this ambivalence to visibility and wildness to capture that led **CAS** to accompany the screening programme with the essay *Why Black Cinema?*, 1987, by the late poet and social activist **Toni Cade Bambara**. This text and the film programme will be discussed in an accompanying reading group which is being held at The Showroom on Saturday 29 January 2022. The reading group extends CAS's on-going work towards exploring and hosting discussion framed by the intersectional relations between contemporary art practice and literary theory.

**Please note that the films *Demarcations*, 1992, and *African Woman, U.S.A.*, 1980, contain references to rape, and so viewer discretion is advised.

About **The Showroom**

The Showroom is a contemporary art space focused on collaborative approaches to cultural production within its locality and beyond. They commission and produce art and discourse; providing a programme that challenges what art can be and do for a wide range of audiences, including art professionals and the local community. The programme focuses on process-driven approaches to production be that art work, exhibitions, events, discussions, publications, knowledge and relationships.

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About **Culture Art Society (CAS)**

CAS is an interdisciplinary curatorial platform founded in 2013 that foregrounds archival research to facilitate institutional as well as public awareness and engagement with past and present artistic productions from the African continent and diaspora.

Core to CAS's work is creating access to these knowledge productions and artistic curricula, including hosting trans-geographic dialogues that centre critical pedagogies and decolonial paradigms to bring into focus the historiography, theory and practices of Black cultural workers for exhibition projects and public programming.

CAS have been in residence at **Metroland Studio** in Kilburn Square between January–December 2021.

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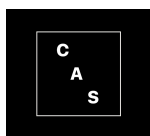
About **Metroland Studio**

Metroland Studio is a new site for research, experimentation and production for art and artists. The studios are run by **Metroland Cultures**, a charity that was formed to produce and present the **Brent Biennial** programme, and to support culture, creativity and youth development in Brent into the future.

With thanks to each of the filmmakers and to distributors **Cinenova**, **Third World Newsreel**, **UCLA Film Archive** and **LUX**.

Streams of Memories is supported using public funding by the **National Lottery through Arts Council England**.

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