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## **CAN'T BE WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE - EXHIBITION**



**REIMAGINING THE UNTOLD STORIES OF 5 PROMINENT BAME BRITISH WOMEN THROUGH THE LENS OF 50 BAME BRITISH WOMEN CREATIVES.**

**'Can't Be What You Can't See'** Exhibition debuts on 2nd November 2019. This exhibition offers a response to how Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) women of today interpret and react to certain stories in history that have somewhat been forgotten and also shine a light on the lack of inclusion of BAME British women in mainstream history.

**"The internet taught me more about BAME history than I learnt in school, learning about women I can relate to and that also look like me makes me feel relevant"** - Sarah Buller

Amidst the dealings of Brexit, the Windrush scandal and the forgetting of the Grenfell victims, the sense of what it means to be a Londoner and the feeling of "belonging" can be seen as quite a sensitive topic now more than ever. This is especially the case for young women of colour in London. With statistics reflecting the lack of opportunity and invisibility young BAME women face daily, this exhibition is the final showcase of They Came Before Us: A History of Women of Colour in the UK (TCBU) project.

The project has brought together over 50 BAME women creatives over a period of 11 months to develop and create the exhibition, using 5 creative disciplines: Spoken Word, Photography, Set Design, Film and Visual Arts. They have put together an exhibition that will allow the public to see through their eyes some of the hidden histories of 5 BAME British women and the vital role they played in the history of the UK.

The 50 women on the project have been able to explore elements of their identity and also create safe spaces for them to grow and build their networks, which will allow them to move forward confidently and progress in their creative fields as statistics show less than 10% of the creative industry is BAME and less than half of that percentage is BAME female.

**“This project and exhibition will hopefully help empower BAME women in their everyday life and allow them to better understand their identity. Whilst also encouraging the wider community to learn something new” - Dowa Ojarikre**

The exhibition will not only shed light on untold histories but it will also challenge the way people usually interact with museums and galleries, the public will experience an interactive, non formal exhibition enabling them to truly feel and live the experience.

‘Can’t Be What You Can’t See’ exhibition opens at 14 Hanbury Street E1 6QL just off Brick Lane from 2nd November to 5th November and will then be at the N22 Open Event from 7<sup>th</sup> November to 14<sup>th</sup> November at Collage Artspace 4, Library Mall, 191 High Road, Wood Green, London N22 6DZ. Please visit [www.theycamebeforeus.com](http://www.theycamebeforeus.com) for more details.

They Came Before Us: A History of Women of Colour in the UK (TCBU) is a Collage Arts project, developed by Dowa Ojarikre and Sarah Buller. TCBU is a project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund made possible with the money raised by National Lottery players. Collage Arts is a leading Arts Development Agency based in the heart of Wood Green Creative Quarter. For more information please see [www.collage-arts.org](http://www.collage-arts.org)

### **Notes to Editors**

The exhibition ‘You Can’t Be What You Can’t See’ runs from 1st November for Press and Private viewing. 2nd November 2019 – 5th November 2019 for the public. Free Entry.

**Collage Arts** an arts development, training and creative regeneration charity based in the Wood Green Cultural Quarter. For over 35 years, the organisation has operated artists’ studios in Haringey with an estate of 100 studios and making spaces. Collage also creates opportunities for greater participation in the arts and widens access to employment in the creative industries. It does this through a range of learning programmes, enterprise and support services, facilities and resources.

To learn more, please visit [www.theycamebeforeus.com](http://www.theycamebeforeus.com)



Supported by

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