du 21 janvier - 1 avril 2023

Pamila Matharu

Where Were You in '92?

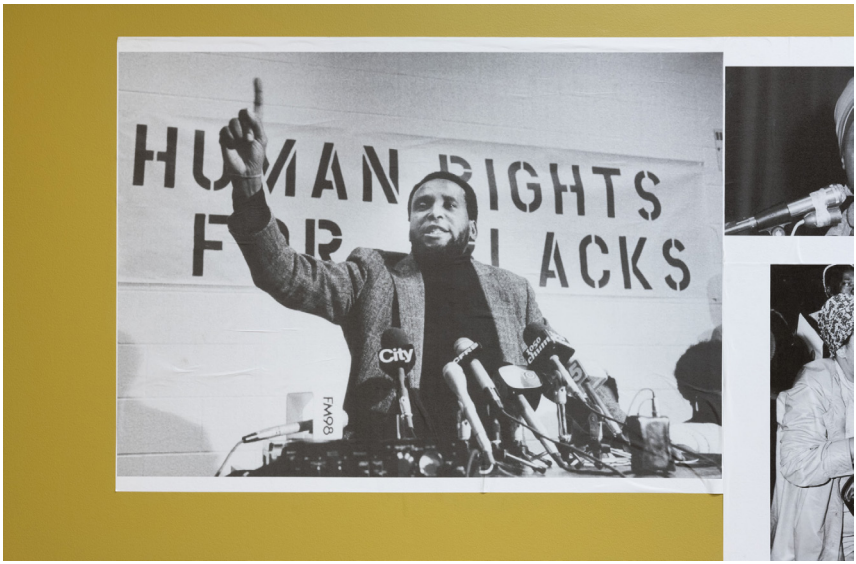
OPTICA, centre d'art contemporain

Where Were You in '92?

Expérimentant avec le son, l'image, les textes trouvés et les actes de contre-archivage d'expériences personnelles et politiques, *Where Were You in '92?* met en relief les archives incarnées que constitue l'héritage révolutionnaire de *Fresh Arts*, un programme dirigé par des artistes noir.e.s qui est issu de la fureur d'une jeunesse enflammée. **Pamila Matharu**, une mentorée de *Fresh Arts*, revient non seulement à ce moment clé, mais aussi à son mentor, **Winsom Winsom**, dont l'histoire activiste de plus de dix ans à Kingston, en Ontario, est méconnue. Ce projet de recherche s'appuie sur la prémisse que les archives se manifestent dans des corps vivants, des histoires répétées, des conversations inachevées, que déclenchent des événements du passé et qui persistent dans le présent et, surtout, dans des pratiques de guérison issues de liens intergénérationnels. Intéressée par les formes de généalogies féministes qui citent le passé et utilisant l'archive comme forum de reconnaissance, de résilience et d'amour radical, Matharu fait un retour sur l'insurrection menée par les jeunes à Toronto, en 1992, qui a donné lieu à *Fresh Arts*. *Where Were You in '92?* trace de nouveaux liens dans l'histoire et la géographie, attirant les personnes qui héritent de son legs et soutenant les autres qui en ont mobilisé les forces centrifuges.

Cette exposition a été initialement présentée au Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, Ontario (30 juillet – 4 décembre 2022).

Auteure : Emelie Chhangur
Traductrice : Colette Tougas



A-1

Pamila Matharu est une « settler » [non autochtone], de parents originaires du Pendjab en Inde (ville de Jalandhar et village de Bhanolangha dans le district de Kapurthala), née à Birmingham, au Royaume-Uni, et arrivée au Canada en 1976. Elle vit à Tkarón:to (Toronto) – territoire du Traité no 13 – sur les terres des Mississaugas de la Première Nation de Credit, des Anichinabés, des Haudenosaunee et des Wendats. Elle détient un baccalauréat en arts visuels et un baccalauréat en éducation (beaux-arts) de l'Université York. Abordant l'art contemporain du point de vue de la pédagogie critique et utilisant un prisme féministe interdisciplinaire et intersectionnel, Pamila explore dans son travail une vaste gamme de formes, dont l'installation, la pratique sociale et l'art médiatique expérimental. Sa première exposition, en 2019, intitulée *One of These Things Is Not Like the Other*, présentée à A Space Gallery (Toronto), a reçu l'OAAG Award for Best Exhibition ainsi que le Homebrew Award du Toronto Images Festival, tous deux en 2019. Son projet *INDEX (SOME OF ALL PARTS)* a remporté l'Edward Burtynsky Photobook Award du festival CONTACT en 2020. En mai 2023, une monographie sera lancée au Peel Art Museum and Archives (PAMA), à Brampton, en Ontario.

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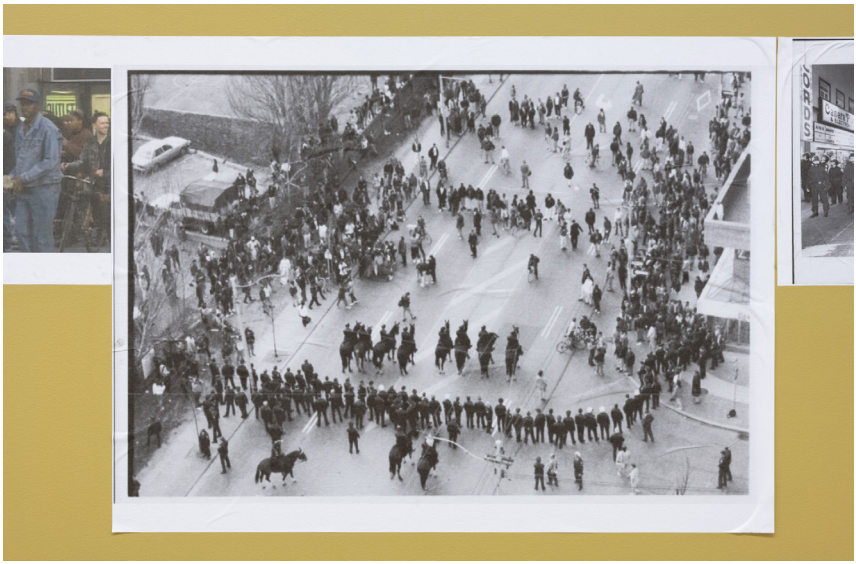
Née à Toronto, l'artiste et auteure primée **Emelie Chhangur** est directrice et conservatrice de l'Agnes Etherington Art Centre. Auparavant, elle a été conservatrice en chef à l'Art Gallery of York University (AGYU), à Toronto, où elle s'est fait connaître pour sa pratique socialement engagée, ses commandes de collaboration à long terme et sa pratique institutionnelle de « in-reach ». Elle est lauréate du premier OAAG BIPOC Changemaker Award (2019) ainsi que du prix d'excellence pour le commissariat en art contemporain de la Fondation Hnatyshyn (2020).



A-10

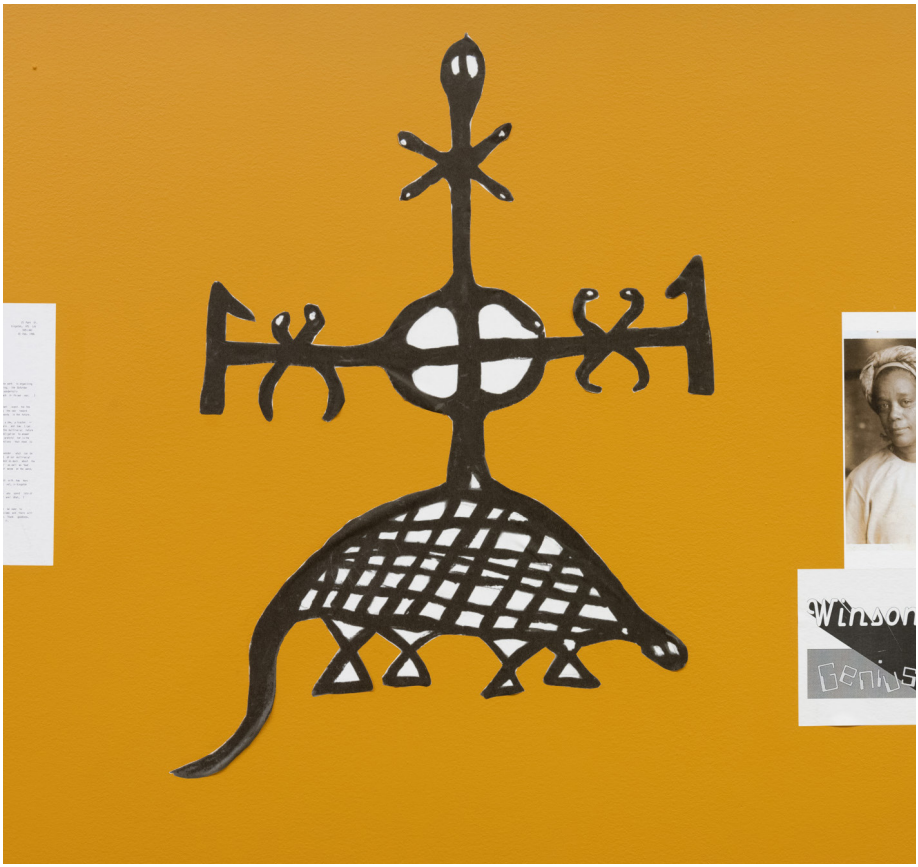
A-12-13

Née à Kingston, en Jamaïque, **Winsom Winsom**, artiste Ashanti Maroon en multimédia, a immigré au Canada dans les années 1970 et a vécu dans la région de Kingston, en Ontario, de 1974 à 1989. Cofondatrice du Black Women's Collective de Kingston, elle a œuvré de concert avec le bureau du maire sur les questions de racisme et a invité de nombreux militant.e.s noir.e.s à Kingston, notamment Angela Davis, Odetta, Dr Mavis Burke et Lincoln Alexander. Conjointement à sa carrière d'artiste et d'activiste, elle a également une longue histoire comme éducatrice en art. Elle a contribué à l'émergence de plusieurs artistes canadien.ne.s à l'exemple de Pamila Matharu et d'bi.young anitafrika.

B

care for existence
rest for resistance

prendre soin de l'existence
repos pour la résistance



From January 21st - April 1st, 2023

Pamila Matharu

Where Were You in '92?

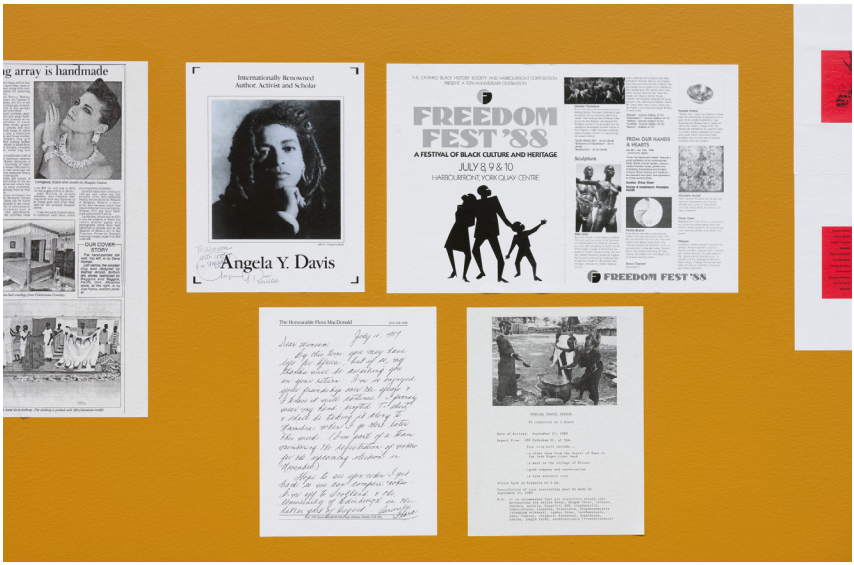
OPTICA, centre d'art contemporain

Where Were You in '92?

Through experimentation with sound, image, found texts and acts of counter-archiving of personal and political experiences, *Where Were You in '92?* brings forth the embodied archives of the ground-breaking legacy of *Fresh Arts*, a Black artist-led program that was born out of the fury of impassioned youth. **Pamila Matharu**, one of the mentees of *Fresh Arts*, returns not only to this pivotal moment but also to her mentor, **Winsom Winsom**, who's more than decade-long activist history in Kingston ON is under-recognized. This research project begins with the basic premise that archives are manifested in living bodies, in repeated stories, in unfinished conversations, sparked by events of the past that persist into the present, and, importantly, in the healing practices of intergenerational connectivity. Interested in forms of feminist genealogies that cite what came before and using the archive as a forum for recognition, resilience and radical love, Matharu looks back to Toronto's 1992 youth-led uprising on Yonge Street that gave rise to *Fresh Arts*. *Where Were You in '92?* traces new lines of connection across history and geography, drawing in those who inherit its legacy and holding up those who mobilized its centrifugal forces.

This exhibition was originally presented at the Agnes Etherington Art Center, Kingston, Ontario (July 30 – December 4, 2022).

Author: Emelie Chhangur



C

Pamila Matharu is a settler of Panjabi, Indian descent (Jalandhar City and the Village of Bhanolangha in the district of Kapurthala), born in Birmingham, England, and arrived in Canada in 1976. Based in Tkarón:to (Toronto) – Treaty 13 territory – on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat. She holds a BA in Visual Arts, and a Fine Arts B.Ed. from York University. Approaching contemporary art from the position of critical pedagogy and using an interdisciplinary and intersectional feminist lens, Pamila's work culminates in a broad range of forms including installation art, social practice, and experimental media art. Her 2019 solo exhibition debut *One of These Things Is Not Like the Other*, presented at A Space Gallery (Toronto), won the 2019 OAAG Award for Best Exhibition and the 2019 Toronto Images Festival Homebrew Award. Her project *INDEX (SOME OF ALL PARTS)* received the 2020 CONTACT Festival's Edward Burtynsky Photobook Award. Her forthcoming monograph will launch at Brampton, Ontario's PAMA (Peel Art Museum and Archives) in May 2023.

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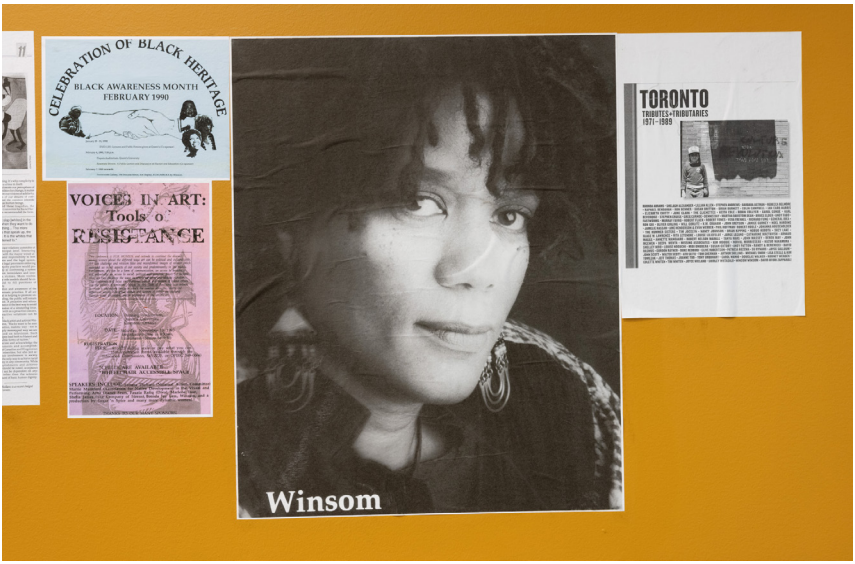
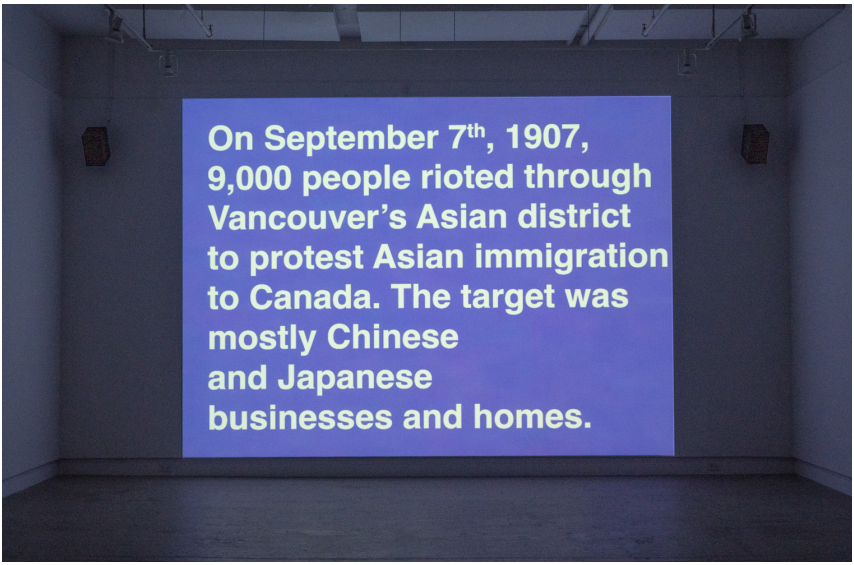
Toronto-born artist and award-winning writer and curator, **Emelie Chhangur** is the Director/ Curator of the Agnes Etherington Art Centre. Prior to this, she was the Senior Curator at the AGYU, Toronto, where she was known for her socially engaged curatorial practice, long-term collaborative commissions, and institutional practice of "in-reach." She is the recipient of the inaugural OAAG BIPOC Changemaker Award (2019) and the Hnatyshyn Foundation Award for Curatorial Excellence (2020).

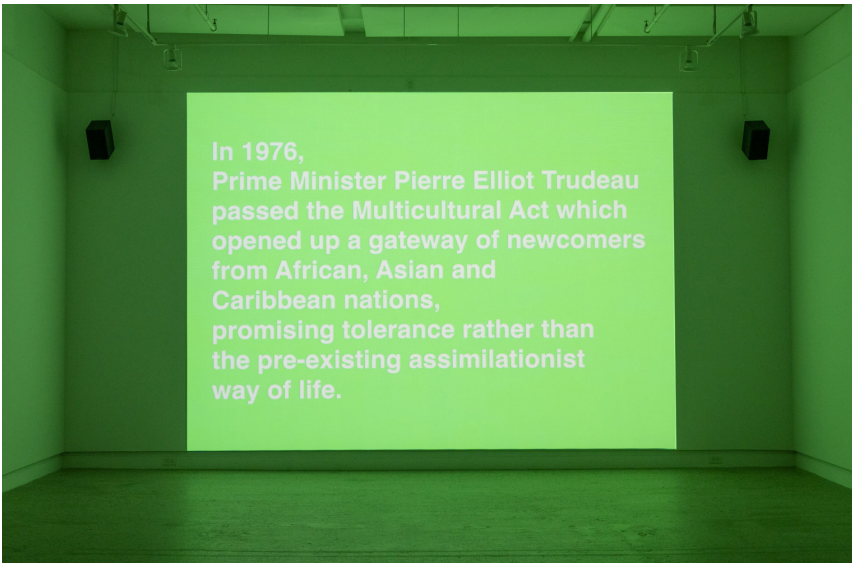
C



Born in Kingston, Jamaica, the Ashanti Maroon multimedia artist, **Winsom Winsom**, immigrated to Canada in the 1970s and lived in the Kingston, Ontario, area from 1974 to 1989. As the co-founder of Kingston's Black Women's Collective, she worked with the Mayor's office on issues of racism and attracted many Black activists to Kingston, including Angela Davis, Odetta, Dr Mavis Burke and Lincoln Alexander. Entwined with her career as an artist and activist, Winsom has a longstanding history as an art educator. She influenced the emergence of several Canadian artists, such as Pamila Matharu and d'bi.young anitafrika.

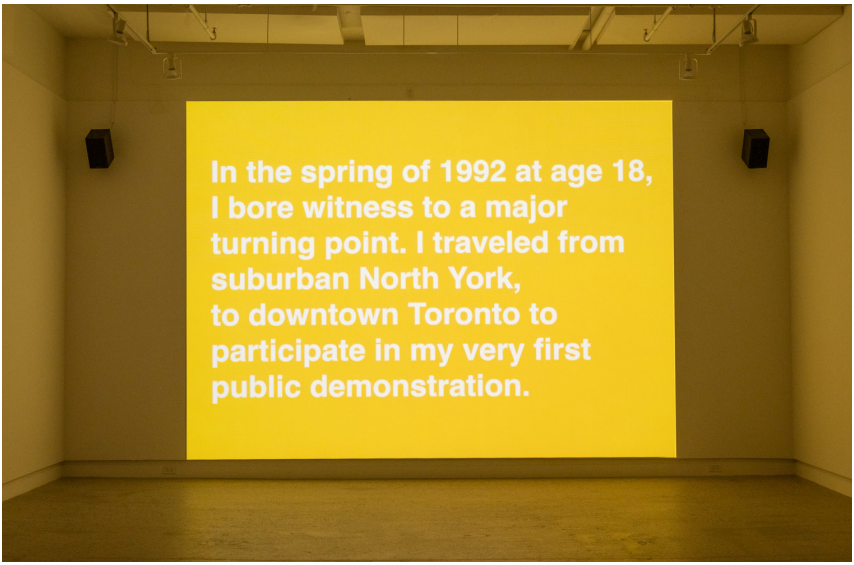
D

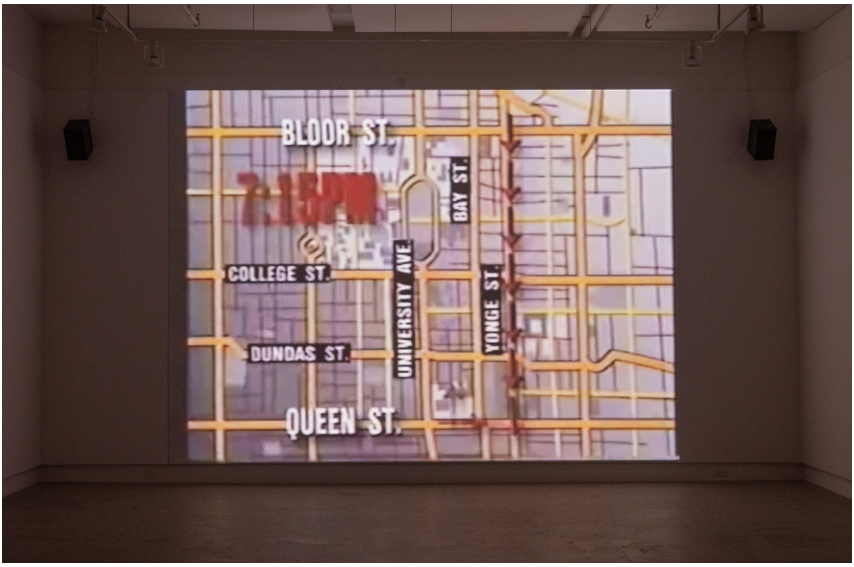

On September 7th, 1907,
9,000 people rioted through
Vancouver's Asian district
to protest Asian immigration
to Canada. The target was
mostly Chinese
and Japanese
businesses and homes.

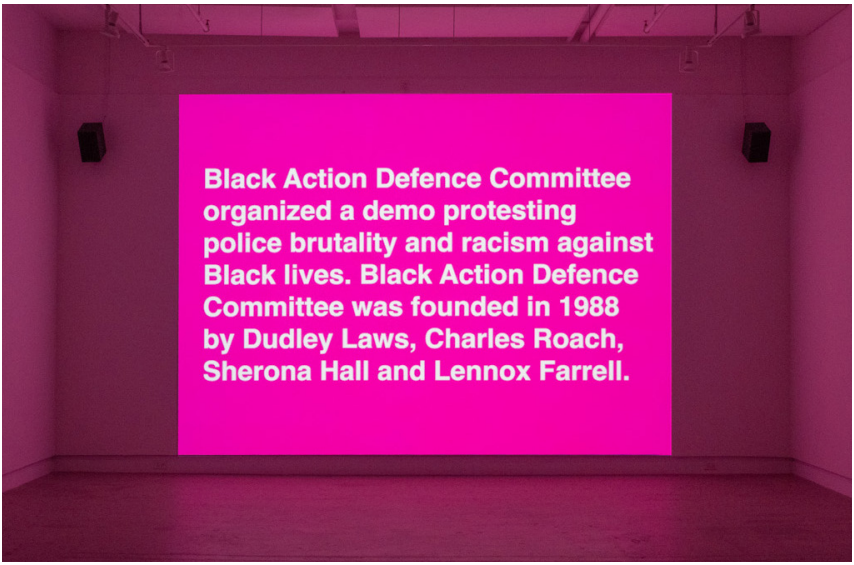

In 1976,
Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau
passed the Multicultural Act which
opened up a gateway of newcomers
from African, Asian and
Caribbean nations,
promising tolerance rather than
the pre-existing assimilationist
way of life.

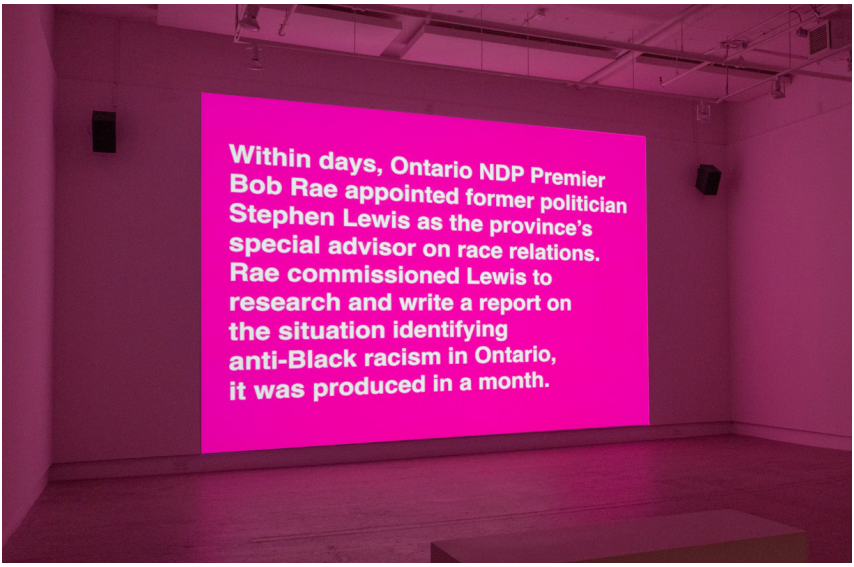
My family arrived in
May 8th, 1976,
from Birmingham, UK.

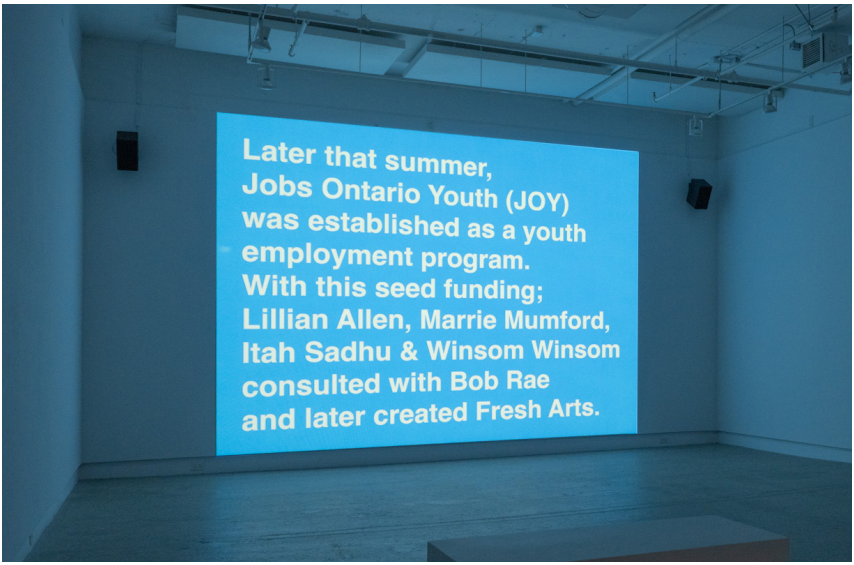
I had a hard time
assimilating in
my first Canadian
classroom.


In the spring of 1992 at age 18,
I bore witness to a major
turning point. I traveled from
suburban North York,
to downtown Toronto to
participate in my very first
public demonstration.


BLOOR ST.
BAY ST.
COLLEGE ST.
UNIVERSITY AVE.
YONGE ST.
DUNDAS ST.
QUEEN ST.


Black Action Defence Committee organized a demo protesting police brutality and racism against Black lives. Black Action Defence Committee was founded in 1988 by Dudley Laws, Charles Roach, Sherona Hall and Lennox Farrell.


Within days, Ontario NDP Premier Bob Rae appointed former politician Stephen Lewis as the province's special advisor on race relations. Rae commissioned Lewis to research and write a report on the situation identifying anti-Black racism in Ontario, it was produced in a month.


Later that summer,
Jobs Ontario Youth (JOY)
was established as a youth
employment program.
With this seed funding;
Lillian Allen, Marrie Mumford,
Itah Sadhu & Winsom Winsom
consulted with Bob Rae
and later created Fresh Arts.

Fresh Arts

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\ Selective bibliography

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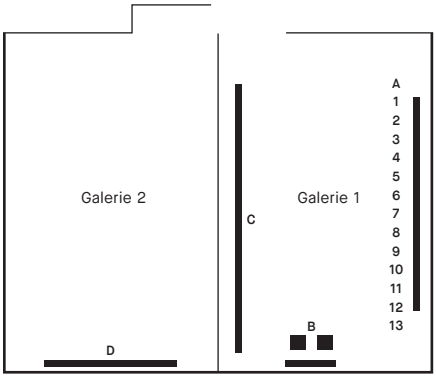

A
ek din I un jour
Fac-similés de photographies de presse à partir d'archives de journaux en ligne : The Toronto Star, CBC, COMPLEX Magazine
Dimension variable.

\ *ek din I one day*
Wallpapered facsimiles of archival press photographs sourced from online newspaper archives; The Toronto Star, CBC, COMPLEX Magazine
Variable dimensions.

A - 1 à 13

1
Lennox Farrell, parmi les premiers leaders du Black Action Defence Committee.

\Lennox Farrell, one of the early leaders of the Black Action Defence Committee.

DAVID COOPER, The Toronto Star File Photo

2
Sherona Hall (film still, Our Dance of Revolution, 2019)

\Sherona Hall (photogramme, Our Dance of Revolution, 2019)

3
La veuve d'Albert Johnson, Lemona, de même que des membres de sa famille et des proches à la sortie du palais de justice après l'acquittement des deux policiers accusés d'homicide involontaire dans la mort par balle d'un immigrant jamaïcain de 35 ans.

\Albert Johnson's widow, Lemona, as well as relatives and friends rushed from the courtroom after the jury acquitted two police officers charged with manslaughter in the 35-year-old Jamaican immigrant's shooting death.

JIM RUSSELL, The Toronto Star File Photo

4
Dudley Laws, leader de la communauté noire, durant une conférence de presse dans la résidence d'Albert Johnson, tué par la police en août 1979.

\Black community leader Dudley Laws talks at a press conference in the home of Albert Johnson, killed by police in August 1979.

DAVID COOPER. The Toronto Star File Photo

5
Ralliement devant les quartiers généraux de la police en novembre 1980 pour protester contre l'acquittement des policiers.

\A rally outside police headquarters in November 1980 protesting the police officers' acquittals.

KEITH BEATY, The Toronto Star File Photo

6
Le 1er septembre 1979, plus de 2000 manifestant.e.s, provenant surtout des communautés noires, descendent dans les rues de Toronto pendant six heures, exigeant transparence et imputabilité.

\On Sept. 1, 1979, more than 2,000 protesters, mostly from Black communities, took to the streets of Toronto for six hours demanding transparency and accountability.

DUTTON, The Toronto Star File Photo

7
Le 26 août 1979, l'immigrant jamaïcain Albert Johnson est tué par balle par deux policiers après que ceux-ci soient entrés dans sa résidence pour enquêter sur une plainte de bruit. Johnson souffrait d'une maladie mentale et était connu des policiers. Sa fille de 7 ans, Colsie, a été citée dans les journaux, disant que les policiers étaient entrés dans la maison et avaient dit à Johnson de s'agenouiller avant de tirer sur lui. La mort de Johnson a suscité un tollé général au sein de la communauté noire ainsi que des manifestations dans la rue, comme le montre cette photo d'une pancarte laissée devant les quartiers généraux de la division 13.

\On Aug. 26, 1979, Jamaican immigrant Albert Johnson was shot and killed after two police officers entered his home to investigate a disturbance. Johnson suffered from mental illness and was known to police at the time. His 7-year-old daughter, Colsie, was quoted in press reports as saying police entered the home, told Johnson to kneel and then shot him. Johnson's death caused a massive public outcry by the Black community and demonstrations in the street as seen in this photo of a protest sign left outside 13 Division headquarters.

FRED ROSS, The Toronto Star File Photo

8
Une photo des archives de la CBC montrant des manifestant.e.s, le 4 mai 1992, qui avancent sur la rue Yonge. Après la fin de la manifestation paisible, un groupe remonte la rue Yonge et détruit des vitrines de magasins. Des douzaines de personnes sont blessées et 32 sont arrêtées. (CBC News)

\A snapshot from the CBC archives of protesters on May 4, 1992 as they marched down Yonge Street. After the peaceful protest concluded, a group began marching back up Yonge Street destroying storefronts. Dozens of people were injured and 32 were arrested. (CBC News)

9
Des policiers municipaux à cheval et d'autres à pieds confrontent une foule au centre-ville, le 4 mai 1992, pour empêcher le vandalisme et le pillage.

\Mounted Metro police officers and others on foot confront a crowd downtown on May 4, 1992, to quell vandalism and looting.

JOHN MAHLER, The Toronto Star

10
Des policiers municipaux, en formation, soutenus par d'autres à cheval, bloquent la rue Yonge au-delà de Dundas, le 7 mai 1992, pour empêcher une émeute.

\A line of Metro police officers supported by others on horseback blocks Yonge St. above Dundas St. on May 7, 1992, to prevent trouble.

KEN FAUGHT, The Toronto Star

11
Un policier à cheval confronte des jeunes gens pendant les manifestations de 1992, après le décès de Raymond Lawrence, 22 ans, aux mains de la police régionale de Peel.

A mounted police officer confronts young people during the 1992 protests following the death of Raymond Lawrence, 22, at the hands of Peel Regional Police.

PETER POWER, The Toronto Star Archives

12
Des policiers à cheval, équipés de matraques, entourent une personne sur la rue Bay près de la rue Mary durant l'émeute du 4 mai.

\Police officers on horseback with billy clubs surround a person on Bay St. near Mary St. during the May 4 riot.

PETER POWER, The Toronto Star Archives

13
Une scène de débris et de destruction après que des émeutiers se soient déplacés sur la rue Yonge près de Dundas, le 4 mai 1992. Certains ont blâmé des hooligans qui auraient profité d'une manifestation légitime pour créer du carnage.

\Debris and destruction after a rioting mob moved along Yonge St. near Dundas St. on May 4, 1992. Some blamed the carnage on hooligans who took advantage of a legitimate protest.

MIKE SLAUGHTER, The Toronto Star

B
Jee Aayan Nu I Vous êtes bienvenu.e ici, 2023
Chaises adirondack de Loll Designs, moquette, guirlandes de fleurs séchées et papier de couleur.
Dimension variable.

Jee Aayan Nu I You're Welcome Here, 2023
Loll Designs' modern adirondack chairs, carpet, dried flower garlands and coloured paper.
Variable dimensions.

C
Cher Winsom (un portrait), 2022
Fac-similés de textes d'archives à partir du dossier d'artiste de Winsom Winsom à la Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario, Toronto.
Dimension variable.

Dear Winsom (a portrait), 2022,
Wallpapered facsimiles of archival texts sourced from Winsom Winsom's artist file in the Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives at Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.
Variable dimensions.

D
Where were you in '92?
Vidéo, documents d'archives provenant de diverses sources

\Video, Archival documentation from various sources
11 min

Remerciements
\ Acknowledgements

Pamila Matharu et l'équipe d'OPTICA tiennent à remercier Emelie Chhangur, directrice et conservatrice, Nasrin Himada, conservatrice associée, sensibilisation académique et engagement communautaire, Charlotte Gagnier, coordonnatrice des programmes publics, et Leah Cox, coordonnatrice des expositions au Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston. L'artiste souhaite également exprimer sa gratitude envers Winsom Winsom, son mentor.

Pamila Matharu and the team of OPTICA wish to thank Emelie Chhangur, Director and Curator, Nasrin Himada, Associate Curator, Academic Outreach and Community Engagement, Charlotte Gagnier, Public Programs Coordinator, and Leah Cox, Exhibition Coordinator at Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston. Continued gratitude to the artist's mentor Winsom Winsom.

Crédits
\ Credits

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Ontario Arts Council

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Conseil des arts de Montréal