



Part of



**University of  
Nottingham**  
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

PRESS RELEASE

## **Blk this & Blk that ... a state of urgency Michael Forbes Solo Exhibition**

**Djanogly Gallery, Lakeside Arts, University of Nottingham  
Saturday 10 September – Sunday 6 November 2022  
Admission Free**

We are delighted to present the first solo exhibition of London/Nottingham-based artist Michael Forbes at the Djanogly Gallery, Lakeside Arts, in autumn 2022.

Forbes works with sculpture, installation, photography and digital media to explore themes of contemporary racial politics, migration, history, religion, and the dichotomy of blackness/whiteness. He has exhibited nationally and internationally including the Diaspora Pavilion at the 57<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale. His new works, exhibited together for the first time across three galleries, were conceived during Covid lockdown for Forbes' MA in Sculpture at the Royal College of Art.

*Masquerade ... evolution of the black body*, revisits totemic sculptures which Forbes has swathed and bound cocoon-like in shiny black PVC. The bulging skins conceal an assemblage of symbolic objects which, he suggests, have been consumed and processed in the evolution of the 'black body'. In *Untitled (white man's burden)*, white mannequins ride rodeo-style atop bulky PVC-wrapped parcels illustrating the precariousness of the white supremacist position. The largest sculptural installation features cast figures suspended from ropes. The presence of life jackets on the inverted torsos points to more recent political and humanitarian events. These sculptures are presented alongside a video in which the same figures are tossed and submerged in an ocean of gold alluding to the economic disparities contributing to mass migration.

Forbes began his artistic practice in photography and this exhibition features two bodies of work, the first documenting vibrant Caribbean Street carnivals. The images celebrate music, dance, fashion, and sexuality as they assert and honour unapologetically the underrepresented. The second series links Forbes' lens-based practice to his sculptures incorporating mannequins. Whilst investigating the symbolism of luxury handbags and goods sold in counterfeit form by African migrants, Forbes was drawn to question the displays of designer fashions across Europe's capital cities. Beyond the ostentatious display of haute couture, the artist questions what narratives around privilege are being 'sold'.

The most obviously polemical works in the exhibition are text-based. Several reproduce slogans taken from the banners of demonstrators at the 2020 BLM protests whilst others replicate signs warning of the presence of surveillance cameras or the hazard of electrified and razor fences.

-- ENDS --

0115 846 7777 | [lakesidearts.org.uk](http://lakesidearts.org.uk)  
Lakeside Arts, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD

## Notes to Editors:

### 1. Michael Forbes

<https://www.michaelforbes.org.uk/> Instagram, Twitter, Facebook @forbesprojects

Michael Forbes has exhibited nationally and internationally including: *Reformation* at Yinka Shonibare's Guest Project (2018); Diaspora Pavilion, Palazzo Santa Marina, 57<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale (2017) and *CPT: Time, History and Memory*, Gallatin Galleries, New York (2012). He is the 2020 Yorkshire Sculpture Park/Royal College of Art Visiting Artist.

Selected exhibitions/projects: Forthcoming solo exhibition, Saatchi Gallery (2023); forthcoming solo exhibition, Yorkshire Sculpture Park (2022/23); *The World as a Work in Progress*, Attenborough Arts Centre, Leicester (2021); *Cut & Mix: Visual Representations of Black British Masculine Identities*, The New Art Exchange, Nottingham (2021); *Space Lapse: RCA Sculpture 2020*, Royal Sculpture Society, London (2021); *Tomorrow: London*, White Cube Gallery, London (2020); *London Grads Now*, Saatchi Gallery (2020); *Reformation: Guest Projects*. Group show with Nadim Kashif Chaudry/Barbara Walker (2018); *Diaspora Pavilion, Venice to Wolverhampton*, Wolverhampton Art Gallery (2018); *Venice – Diaspora Platform: International Curators Forum*, Palazzo Santa Marina, Venice (2017).

Alongside his artistic practice, Forbes has curated many exhibitions and supports artists' professional development. Forbes played a leading role in developing the New Art Exchange, Nottingham, and its early programme and is a co-founder of Primary, an artist studio complex in Nottingham, where he has his studio and is now Chair of the Board of Trustees. Forbes has a BA (Hons) in Photography from Nottingham Trent University (1998) and an MA in Sculpture from the Royal College of Art (2020).

### 2. Lakeside Arts

Lakeside Arts is the University of Nottingham's public arts centre presenting a programme of visual arts and museum exhibitions, theatre, dance, children and families' productions, workshops as well as a learning programme for everyone. Its venues include the Djanogly Recital Hall which stages concerts by internationally renowned soloists and chamber ensembles; the Djanogly Gallery; the University Museum which has a permanent collection of archaeology covering a period of some 250,000 years; and the Djanogly Theatre presenting UK and international touring work as well as producing and co-producing new theatre and dance. [lakesidearts.org.uk](http://lakesidearts.org.uk)

For more information, high resolution images and to arrange interviews, please contact Lakeside Arts' Marketing and Communications Manager Mária Konyeliciska at [maria.konyeliciska@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:maria.konyeliciska@nottingham.ac.uk)

Lakeside Arts Website: [lakesidearts.org.uk](http://lakesidearts.org.uk)

Lakeside Arts Facebook, Twitter and Instagram: @LakesideArts

## Images:

1. From the series *Shop...selling the ontology of whiteness* (2016-20) copyright Michael Forbes 2022
2. *Untitled (white man's burden)* (2021) copyright Michael Forbes 2022
3. From the series *Black Paintings (fear of black consciousness)* (2022) copyright Michael Forbes 2022
4. From the series *Carnival ... beyond the glitz of the parade* (2009-2019) copyright Michael Forbes 2022

0115 846 7777 | [lakesidearts.org.uk](http://lakesidearts.org.uk)  
Lakeside Arts, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD

1.



2.



3.



4.

