

Home is not a Place

Exhibition: Graves Gallery, Sheffield Museums from 11 August – 24 December 2022

Stills Gallery, Edinburgh 9 March – 10 June 2023

Book: By Johny Pitts and Roger Robinson published by Harper Collins late September 2022



© Johny Pitts, *Dean House, Penryn*, 2021



© Johny Pitts, *Student, Gillingham*, 2021

What is Black Britain?

In 2021, photographer and writer, Johny Pitts, and poet Roger Robinson circumnavigated the British Coast in search of an answer. The resulting project, *Home is not a Place*, presented as an exhibition supported by Photoworks, and book published by Harper Collins, reflects on Black British culture, people and geographies, exploring the notion of home.

'My photographic practice involves trying to celebrate Black spaces, capture them while they're still here and give them a home. If not in a literal sense in a figurative sense, for me home is somewhere that you take with you.' – Johny Pitts



© Johnny Pitts, *RFC Fish & Chips*, Blackpool, 2021



© Johnny Pitts, *Three Young Men*, Notting Hill Carnival, London, 2010

Travelling in a red mini cooper along the Thames and then from Margate to Land's End, Bristol to Blackpool, Glasgow to John O'Groats and Scarborough to Southend on Sea, Pitts and Robinson's circumnavigation encompassed the coastal, urban, rural and suburban, via the places in-between, following the coast clockwise. They set out to document and respond to the many manifestations of Black British culture, and to present an alternative to the official and media narratives.

A self-taught photographer, working in the tradition of British documentary photography, Pitts was supported by the inaugural Ampersand/Photoworks Fellowship working closely with the Photoworks team for twelve months to allow him to develop this new series. The Fellowship aims to provide a transformative opportunity and support for a mid-career artist to complete a new body of work, with a touring exhibition. Pitts has built upon his 'Afropean Archive' of over 100,000 images documenting the Black experience in Europe. His images which form *Home is not a Place* reflect upon the complexity and resilience of Black Britishness at this particular point of time.



© Johny Pitts, *Former premises of the Horse & Lion Pub, Sheffield*, 2016

Home is not a Place will take the form of a touring exhibition, starting in Pitts' hometown of Sheffield and also a new book, published by Harper Collins in September 2022 which will combine photographs with poems by the T.S. Eliot Prize awardee Roger Robinson.



© Johny Pitts, *Man through rain dappled window, Carnaby Street, London (after Sade)*, 2010



© Johny Pitts, *The Activist, Cop 26, Glasgow*, 2021

Johny Pitts is the curator of the ENAR (European Network Against Racism) award-winning online journal Afropean.com and the author of Afropean: Notes From Black Europe (Penguin Random House) which won the 2020 Jhalak Prize], the 2020 Bread & Roses Award for Radical Publishing, and is the recipient of the 2021 Leipzig Book Award for European Understanding. He currently presents Open Book for BBC Radio 4 and a forthcoming Afropean podcast funded by a grant from the National Geographic Society. Pitts has contributed words and images for The Guardian, The New Statesman, The New York Times, and Condé Nast Traveller. His first solo exhibition Afropean: Travels in Black Europe was exhibited at Foam, Amsterdam in 2020.

For further information on the Ampersand / Photoworks Fellowship and exhibitions please contact eleanormacnair@hotmail.com

For further information on the book published by Harper Collins please contact Helen.Upton@HarperCollins.co.uk

Notes for editors

Ampersand/Photoworks Fellowship

Launched in 2021, the Ampersand/Photoworks Fellowship is a new biennial research and development opportunity for mid-career artists using photography. The fellowship offers a substantial bursary with access to a production budget, a mentorship programme, a series of events, and a national touring exhibition. The Ampersand/Photoworks Fellowship is supported by The Ampersand Foundation and Photoworks.

Photoworks

Photoworks champions photography for everyone. We are an international platform, global in reach, and have provided opportunities for artists and audiences since 1995. We do not have a physical venue, but our online channels are always open. Our programme brings new experiences to audiences and opens up new ways to encounter photography.

Photoworks is a registered charity and the only organisation with a national remit for photography in England. Our work is supported by public funding through Arts Council England's National Portfolio. Photoworks is led by Shoair Mavlian, Director.

Sheffield Museums

Sheffield Museums Trust is the independent charity that operates six of the city's leading museums and heritage sites: Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet, Graves Gallery, Kelham Island Museum, Millennium Gallery, Shepherd Wheel and Weston Park Museum. Established in 2021, the charity cares for the city's collections of art, archaeology, social and industrial history, and natural science, alongside the Guild of St George's John Ruskin collection and provides a home for the Ken Hawley Collection Trust's Hawley Tool Collection. We work with our communities to tell the remarkable story of Sheffield and its people, and celebrate its reputation for excellence in craft, making and innovation. Together with local, regional and national partners, we showcase home-grown creative talent and bring outstanding cultural experiences to the city.

The Graves Gallery is the Art Deco home of the city's dazzling visual art collection. Explore displays spanning work by Paul Cézanne, Fay Godwin, Gwen John, Isaac Julien, Haroon Mirza, Grayson Perry, Keith Piper, Bridget Riley and JMW Turner, alongside a vibrant programme of regularly changing exhibitions.

sheffieldmuseums.org.uk

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