

ACCESS THE ARCHIVE



Contributors
THANK YOU FOR MAKING
THIS ZINE POSSIBLE:

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HOW - WHY .

WHERE .

DO WE KEEP
ARCHIVES
SAFE &
ACCESSIBLE?



Institutional stewardship

VS



Grassroots,

stewarded

by volunteers

CHALLENGES OF ACCESSING THE ARCHIVES

PRESERVATION VS. ACCESS TENSION

Physical archives are fragile, so institutions often restrict access to protect them.

RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS

Archival work is expensive—digitization, cataloging, storage, and staffing all require funding.

FRAGMENTATION ACROSS INSTITUTIONS

SCREEN MEDIA

RIGHTS AND LICENSING COMPLEXITY

Multiple rights holders: directors, writers, studios, music composers.

TECHNOLOGICAL OBSOLESCENCE

equipment and skills needed to access them are lost.

STORAGE AND BANDWIDTH CONSTRAINTS

Hosting them requires significant infrastructure.

METADATA AND DISCOVERABILITY ISSUES

Video content is harder to index than text. Without detailed metadata—scene descriptions, keywords—it's difficult to search inside a video.

**BLACK + SOUTH
ASIAN ARCHIVES**

**CHRONIC
UNDERFUNDING**

COPYRIGHT AND LEGAL BARRIERS

METADATA AND SEARCH LIMITATIONS

Poor or inconsistent metadata makes materials hard to find.

ACCESS INEQUALITIES

A huge proportion of archives are effectively locked behind higher education, institutional affiliation, fees, or physical presence in specific locations.

DIGITIZATION GAPS

PAYWALLS AND RESTRICTED ACCESS

RAPIDLY CHANGING DIGITAL FORMATS
how to archive something that is constantly changing or platform-dependent., like social media or interactive art.

CURATION BIAS AND GAPS

Historically, archives prioritized mainstream or “important” productions, often neglecting minority voices.

UNDERREPRESENTATION AT THE POINT OF CREATION

Many Black Caribbean and Asian communities in the UK were historically excluded from mainstream media production.

BLACK + SOUTH ASIAN ARCHIVES

INSTITUTIONAL BIAS IN COLLECTING AND CATALOGUING

even when material exists,
it can be hard to find or
misrepresented.

TRUST AND ACCESS BARRIERS

Some community archives are
cautious about access due to:

- Past exploitation or
misrepresentation
- Extractive academic research
- Lack of credit or benefit to
communities

METADATA AND NAMING PROBLEMS

Older catalogues may use outdated
racial labels.

INFORMAL AND “HIDDEN” ARCHIVES

A significant amount of
material exists outside
formal institutions, like
personal VHS collections
and activist groups.

No catalogues, no
digitisation, and access
depends on trust and
relationships.

RIGHTS AND OWNERSHIP COMPLEXITIES FOR DIASPORIC MEDIA, OWNERSHIP IS OFTEN UNCLEAR:

Co-productions across
countries and defunct
production companies
leads to dead ends in
permissions.

TRANSNATIONAL FRAGMENTATION

Black Caribbean and Asian
archives are often split
across countries.

WHAT IF WE MOVED TOWARDS...

MEASURE
"SUCCESS" BY HOW
ARCHIVES ARE
USED - NOT JUST
BY PRESERVATION

MASS
PARTICIPATORY
DIGITISATION

POOL RESOURCES
+ SHARED
INFRASTRUCTURE

REDESIGN
ARCHIVES AS
PLATFORMS,
NOT VAULTS


→ BUILD
DISTRIBUTED
DIGITISATION
SKILLS

COMMUNITY-LED
CATALOGUING

INTENTIONAL,
CORRECTIVE
ARCHIVING

FLEXIBLE,
PURPOSE-BASED
ACCESS

LIVE, CONTINUOUS
PRESERVATION



CAN I
FIND IT?


DOES IT
STILL EXIST
IN A USABLE
FORMAT?

CAN I
LEGALLY
VIEW IT?



WHOSE
VERSION OF
HISTORY AM
I ACCESSING?





ACCESS
=
TRUST

CENTRALISED →

EXPERT-LED →

CLOSED →

STATIC ARCHIVE
→

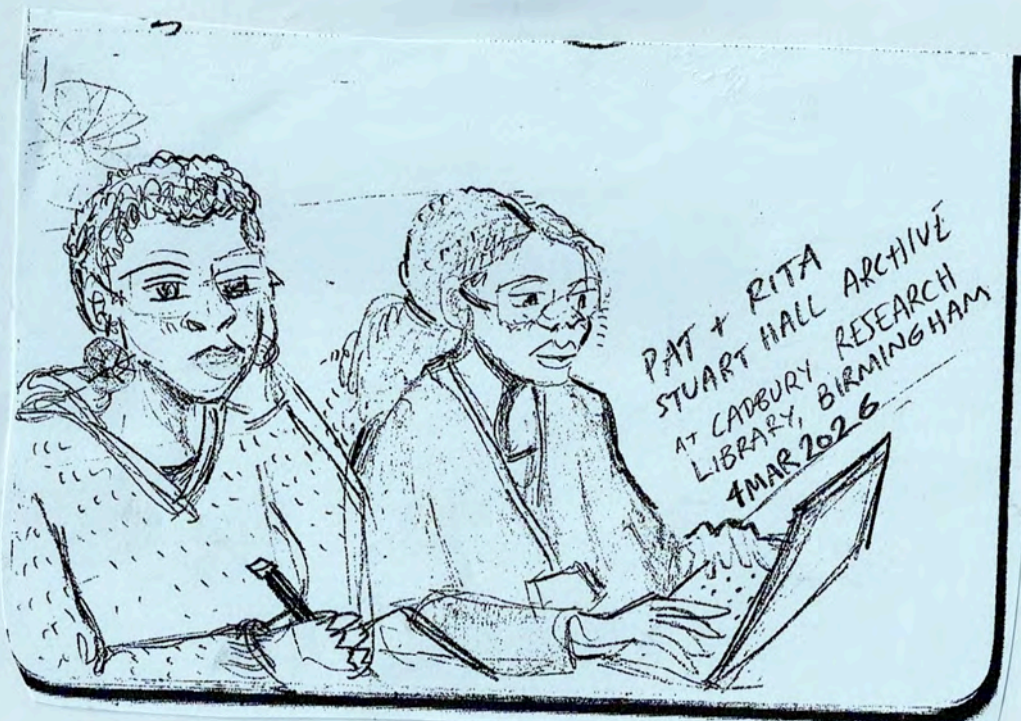
DISTRIBUTED

SKILL SHARED

TIERED ACCESS

LIVING SYSTEM

HERE ARE SOME
WAYS THAT WE CAN
ACCESS THE ARCHIVE





MACE

4

The Media Archive for Central England is the specialist public film archive serving England's East and West Midlands.

They aim to preserve the fragile screen heritage of England's Midlands,

creating a regional moving image collection that is accessible to everyone,

where preservation needs and copyright restrictions allow.

Archive access

You can view titles that are held as part of the region's moving image collection by:

- Using the search facility on this website. More than 10% of the catalogue entries on the site include a viewable video.
- Contacting us if you're struggling to find what you're looking for and we can discuss alternative ways of viewing material.
- Going to our [licensing page](#) if you are a film researcher and would like to know more about the collection or would like screeners.

THE STUART HALL ARCHIVE

Consisting of
89 boxes, containing representative
material

unpublished reports,

teaching material;

essays,

scripts and speeches;

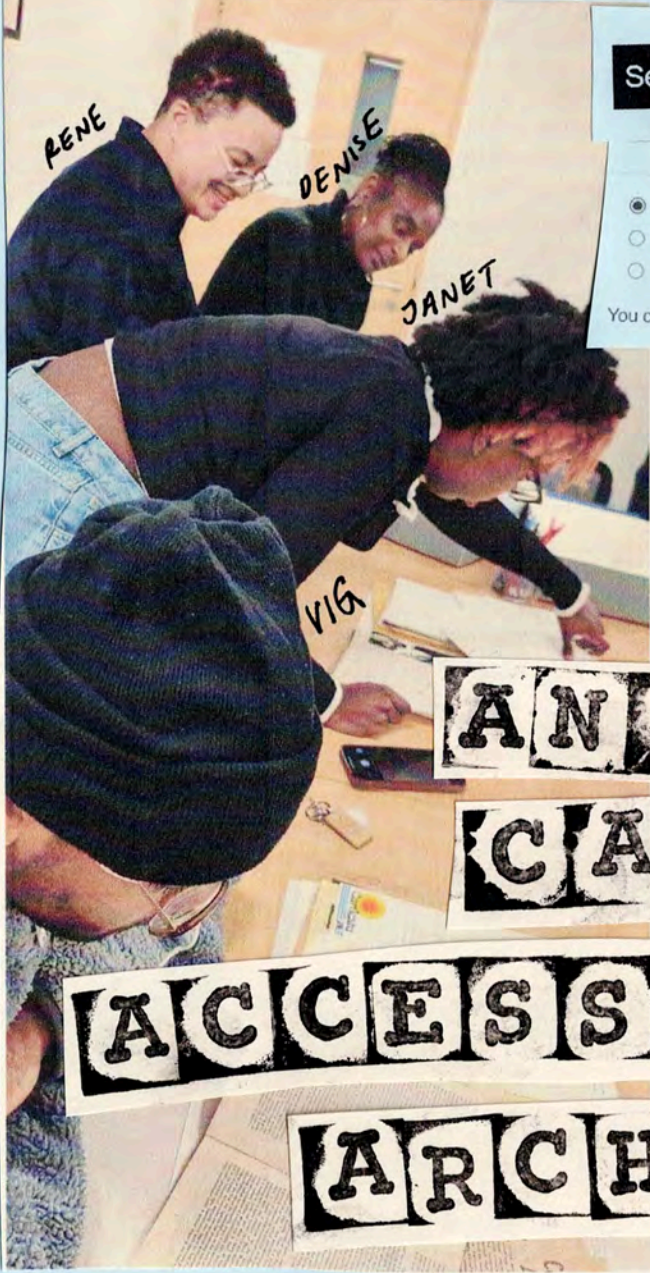
audio recordings and video cassettes;
covering a period from c.1950 to c.2010—

A very large amount of the material (50
boxes) remains unsorted,



As a public intellectual Hall made major
interventions in the cultural and
political life of Britain,

The Stuart Hall Archive is held at the Cadbury Research Library.



RENE

DENISE

JANET

VIG

Search the catalogue

- Match all words
- Match any of the words
- Words appear together as a phrase

You can tweak your search further using Search

Did you know?

g

ANYONE

CAN

ACCESS THE

ARCHIVE

Four Corners Archive project

has worked with 51 volunteers to research, digitise, archive and make oral history recordings for the creation of this digital archive.

The physical archives are currently housed at the Bishopsgate Institute.



How to use the archive



Search by organisation, collection, theme, keyword and medium

Four Corners Archive is made possible through the generous support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art.

THE Amberside Collection

ACTIONS

Search within this collection:

Email catalogue entry

The AmberSide Collection is a vast body of documentary photography and film dedicated to preserving the working-class experience.





Birmingham
City Council



Sign In / Register



Council



Search this site for information, advice and more...

Search

[Home](#) / [Things to do](#) / [Libraries](#) / [Archives and collections](#) / [Archives and collections](#)

Archives and collections

Archives and collections



Related information

In this section

- 1 Overview
- 2 Access to our collections
- 3 How to use the Wolfson Centre for archival research
- 4 Getting involved
- 5 Donations and deposits of records
- 6 Reading room procedures

Access to our collections

Local Studies material is available to researchers in the Heritage Research Area.

Some material is on open access for researchers to help themselves.

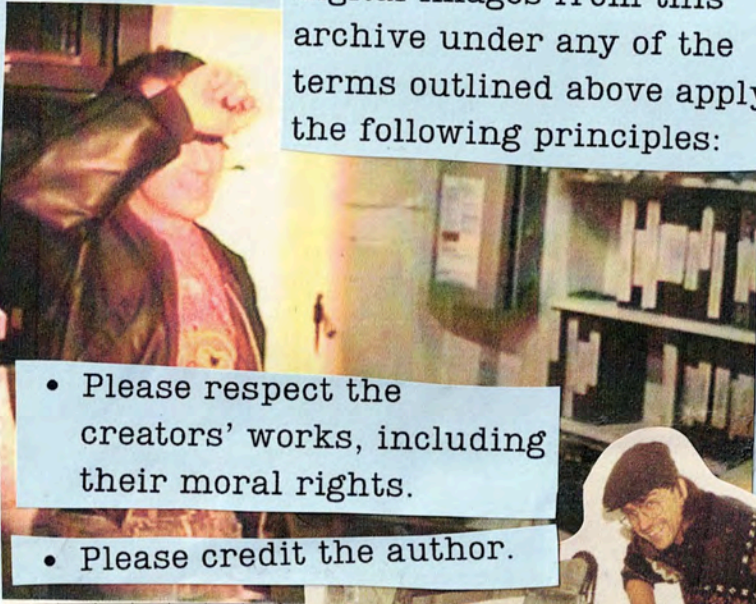
Our archives catalogues are available online in the archives and heritage catalogue.

Usage terms

We ask that anyone reusing digital images from this archive under any of the terms outlined above apply the following principles:

- Please respect the creators' works, including their moral rights.
- Please credit the author.

• Please ensure that you consider traditional cultural expressions and all ethical concerns in using the material,



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VA

Visiting Arts

1977-2022

IN

Iniva Institutional Archive

1984 - Present

Permission to re-use this material in any way should be sought from the individual contributor or their representative.

PHYSICAL MEDIA



OLD THINGS
TAKING
UP SPACE!!!

BOXES OF OLD VIDEOS
IN YOUR ATTIC?

YOUR NAN'S TV BECOMING AN ORNAMENT?

PHOTO ALBUMS FULL OF DISTANT FACES + PLACES?

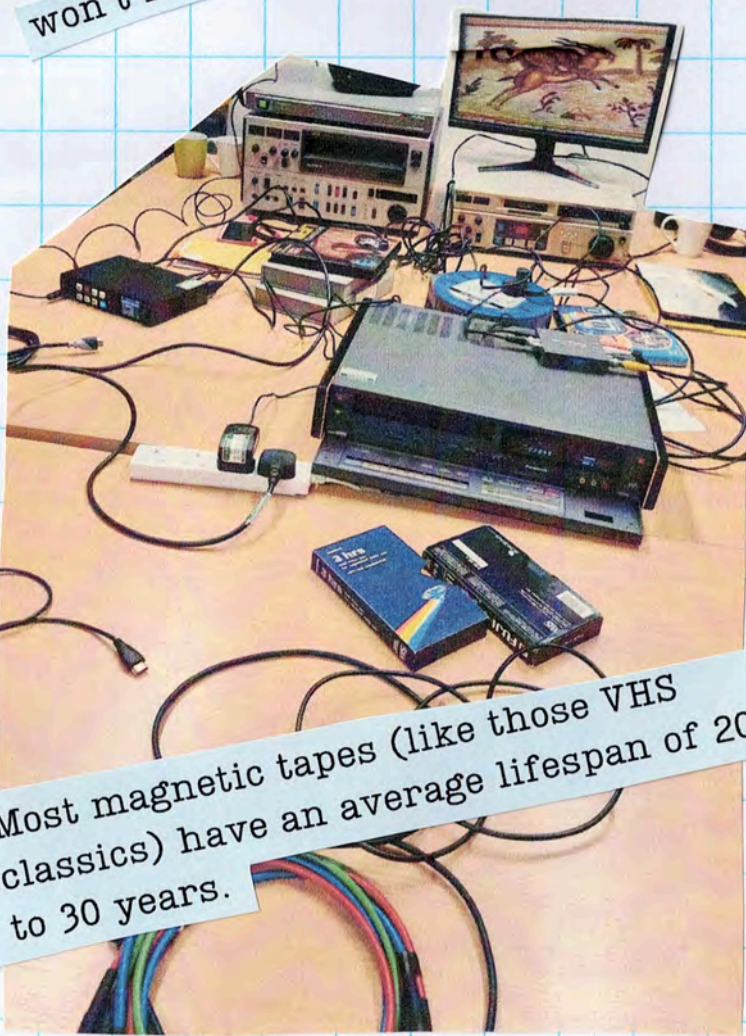
STACKS OF CASSETTE TAPES GATHERING
DUST?

A BUNCH OF OLD STUFF YOU DON'T
KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH??

YOUR TRASH IS AN ARCHIVIST'S TREASURE!

DEGRADENCE →

Did you know your
favourite home tapes
won't last forever?



Most magnetic tapes (like those VHS classics) have an average lifespan of 20 to 30 years.

*** Solution ***

digitise your personal

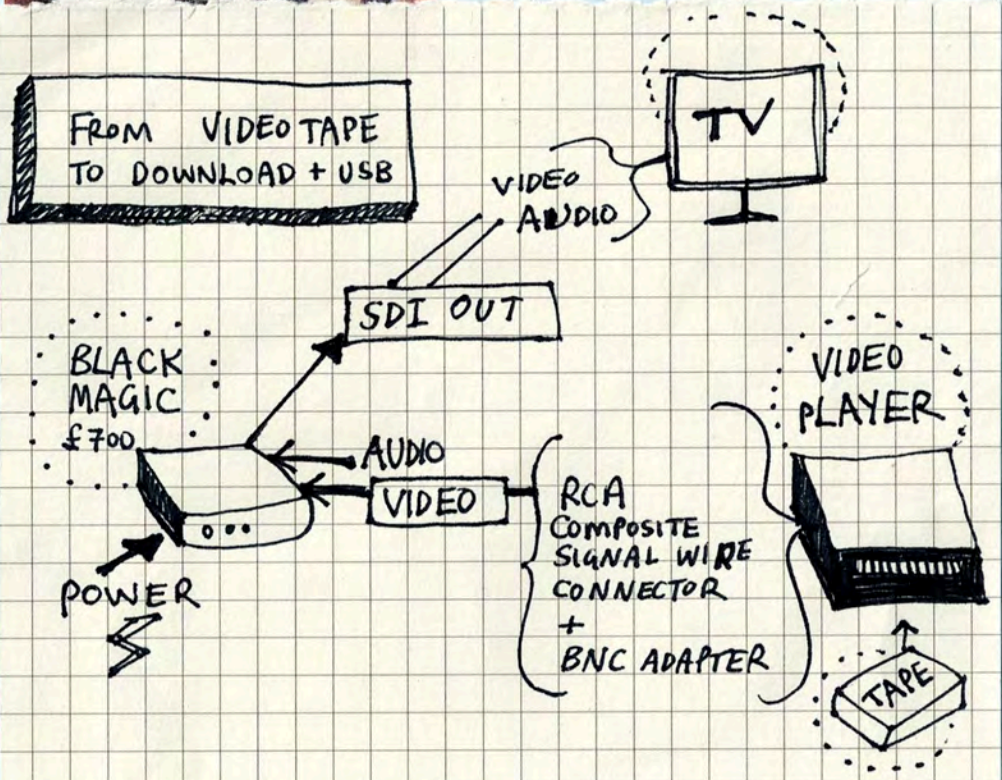
tape collection



THERE ARE DIY WAYS

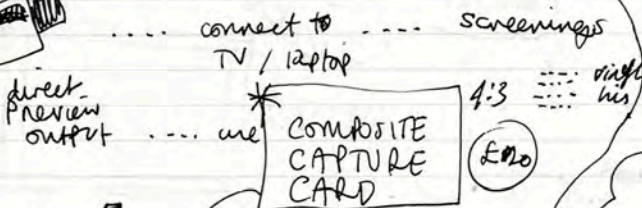
TO DO IT AT HOME.

save those memories before they fade!



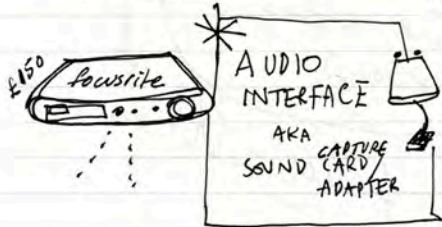
ANTONIO
ROBERTS
@BMWP

olympus



video
R/W audio
RCA cable is also audio

for live video streaming



OBS project.com drive

SOURCES

MARCH museum installation / screening
digbeth first fri
7m - 15m National Lottery Fund

Composite multiple live video forces
or video recorders / animation

add text & movement

Boomerang EA

written
set up
films

DOWNLOAD
VLC

it can play most
video formats



- .MKV
- .AV
- .MOV
- .MTS
- .MP4
- etc

DOWNLOAD
HANDBRAKE

open source
video transcoder



for when we'll share files

ffmpeg

can read
all these
video formats

can convert video
files from one
format to another.

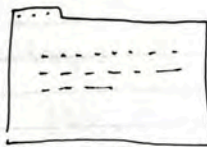


open withn handbrake
+ press play ▶

OR

PRESET: choose suitable place
to send what to where

dimensions: □ cropping OFF



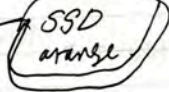
COMMAND LINES
can show how
this works

MP4 is a
consumer file
format

pro level
video editing
will be bigger



solid state drive



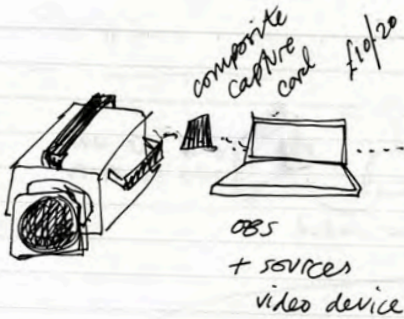
low

don't record in
MP3

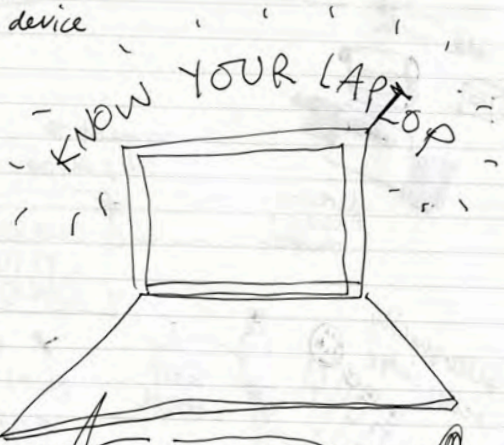
record big PRO RES
or H.264 (or whatever)
or ten compress.

record in RAW
it means more data
hasn't been edited

chromulants



* might need to download the right drivers

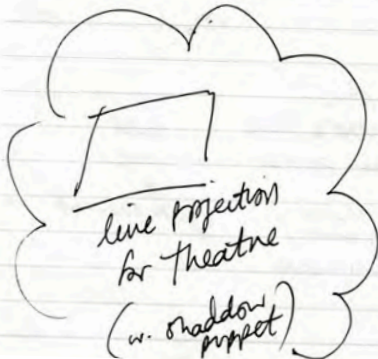


"linear editing"

where do you go to find settings options?

play with it

it's like choosing your palette



ANALOGUE has noise & variability

CRT MONITOR



Honoring the medium with the hardware

It's not the story itself but how you received it

4:3 Square screen



digital → analogue Conversion

LINEA
⊕ BLC

RCA

VIDEO CONVERTER
VGA to VIDEO

HDMI
VGA

FLO
VGA CONVERTOR
VIDEO



COMPOSITE ADAPTER

yellow port is VIDEO

cables don't match color.

check what ports are needed

THIS is essentially the MONITOR

HDMI 2 AV
HDMI 2 VGA



Watch out for decompensation

Window + P then expand

CODEX RESOLUTION



RETURN

SEEK

GO

33 33
se wo wew

Ф И Е Е Ф Л Д Л
А н н а н а
у о

сам
Ф О Ф О Ф О Ф О Ф О
Ф О Ф О Ф О Ф О

2 zenko
Ф О Ф О Ф О Ф О



HELP?
WHY SHOULD
I NEED ANY
HELP?

PUT ME
IN THE PICTURE?
WHAT ABOUT?

WHAT
DID YOU
FORGET?

IT'S FUNNY,
I OUGHT TO BE
MISERABLE OR MAD
OR SOMETHING, BUT
I'M NOT. JUST KIND
OF DAZED AND
SHOCKED.



* we'll take time to discuss your real needs, providing you with the best possible service at a price you can afford



RESEARCH

PRINT

EDIT SUITES

VIDEO



It's crazy to me to see so many services under one roof!

A video access resource

Birmingham Trade Union Resource Centre
7 Frederick Street, Birmingham B1 3HE.
Tel: 021-233 4061

The Trade Union Resource Centre was set up by Birmingham Trades Council and was funded for its first four years by the Economic Development Committee of the West Midlands County Council.



GOSH!

A UNIQUE SERVICE

* Gear libraries *

* Purpose-driven work *

* Multi-use spaces *

EQUIPMENT
We have a range of low band U-matic and VHS production equipment including a Sony DXC 3000P camera and 6800 portable deck, a National Panasonic F10 camera with portable VHS recorder, a Sachtler Hot Pod tripod, 800 watt and 2000 watt lights, a portable light kit with battery belt, tie pin and directional mikes, portable reel to reel and cassette recorders. These are all available for hire, with reduced rates for trade unions, community groups and other non-commercial users.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION
We can make videos at all levels from broadcast quality to VHS. In addition to commissions carried out for trade unions and community organisations we have made several campaign videos which are distributed in conjunction with TURC Publications



SCREENING FACILITIES
Our 30 seat cinema has a 27 inch video monitor and overhead projector and is ideal for trade union branch meetings, campaign meetings etc.



Alot of what is happening now was happening in the 80s. And people organised in lots of different ways to meet the challenges of the time.

My peers had not even begun to imagine what was possible in this city before seeing them in the archives.



Archive

Assemble

Reassemble

RE: Assemble

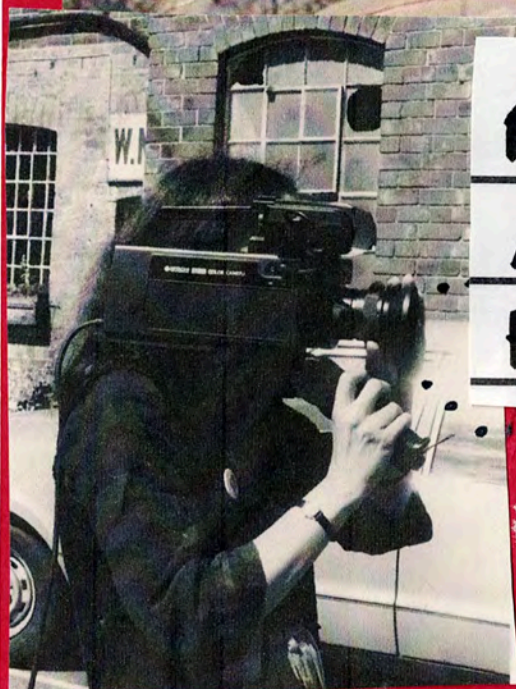
Reassemble

Assemble

Archive



XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
* Connection
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



**ARCHIVISTS
ARE
FUTURISTS**

Welcome to

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
* Connection :
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



Birmingham



WHAT IS THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM
ACT ?



The PTA is a legal cover for
mass surveillance and intimidation.



THE AREA CARETAKER



THIS MAN IS RICKY SMITH



He is what is known
as an area care taker
He is 1 of 16 area
care takers in



Birmingham.
skills!

- maintenance man
- Advice worker
- Plumber
- Community worker
- Joiner
- Friend



DOES OUR COUNCIL CARE ABOUT US?

General Elections 2024: WhatsApp Voice Note

what a time Leon had said at this party / lifetimes ago / In the kitchen Kamil reads / Pedagogy of the Oppressed / Aaaaand thats when I was like / Mhmm / Oh crap voting / Oh crap who i am gonna vote for / Oh crap / Who are the candidates / Here have a drink / It'll freshen ya up / Looks like labour's gonna win / Hate to admit / i'm not pumped / I'm so sparkhill / look at me / I'm so sparkhill / This guy / his face / at myy Roti Junction?? / Looks like labour's def gonna win / Everyone chanted at the party / We grew up in a time when / Labour was also seedy cesspit / Lesser of the 2 evils tho / I want better for us / I want the bar to not be in hell / Look at me talking / like I know politics / I'm winging it / right now I want better / for us / We grew up / in a time when / Labour won and I didn't jump / or hoot for joy / I'm winging it / right now / I say subhanaAllah / Good / Just Lord / for this fine day / Look at me talking / like I know politics / We grew up in a time when / The bar weren't in hell / I want better / for us spark hill / alum rock/ small heath London Leicester Leeds / We chanted watchu gonna read / Repeat / Pedagogy of the Oppressed / Aaaaand that's / when I was like / Mhmm / Oh crap voting / Oh crap / who i am gonna vote / for / Oh crap / Oh what a time we grew up in / What a time Leon / what an upside-down party

PERSPECTIVES

#1: Police Officer

Muhammad Idrish, must stay
Rings, in my right ear
Maybe I'm - on the wrong side
A path, adjacent to truth
My uniform, an estuary
Cajonling, cacophonies
Steering, sound towards
a river, of liberation
Deportation, no way
Muhammad Idrish, must stay

@ vigs poetry

PERSPECTIVES

#2: Megaphone Man

Muhammad I think, must stay

Strains our throat

our Adam's apple of freedom

Holding murmurs of Muhammad's throat

I wonder if they are listening

Thatcher and the pigs

I see one walking

four steps ahead

Sweating under the weight

of a bridge too big

for a human heart...

I wonder

when he is stripped

of every blue

If he sees colour

The same as us?

@nigspetry



MAP




THE ARCHIVE

make it easy to discover,
explore and

build upon

what came before.

500 ft
100 m

 Pedestrianised roads
 Roads
 Waterways


Birmingham
Snow Hill


Birmingham
Cathedral

Museum &
Art Gallery

Town
Hall

National
Indoor Arena

Library of
Birmingham

2

6

7

the more I do this

listening to light
and

the more I'm convinced

Pulses of a plant or
Seismic



sounds
from
the earth or
electricity



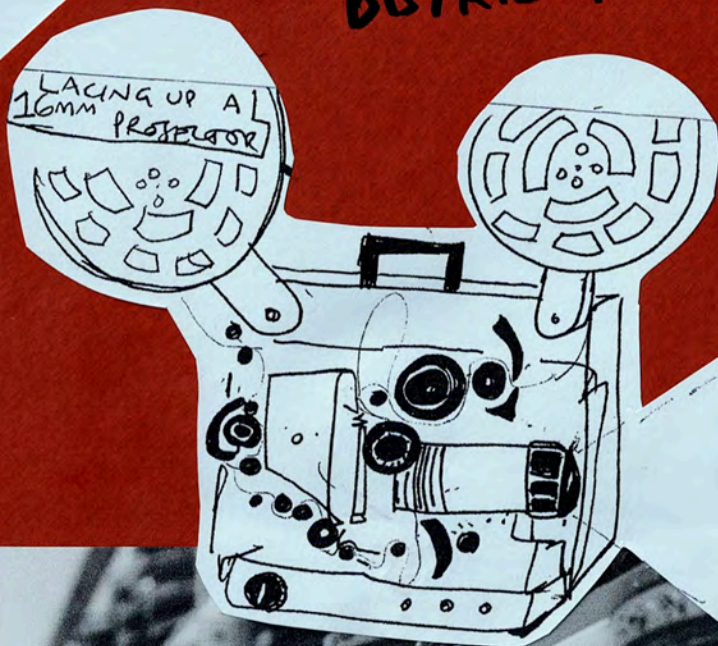
there are ghosts

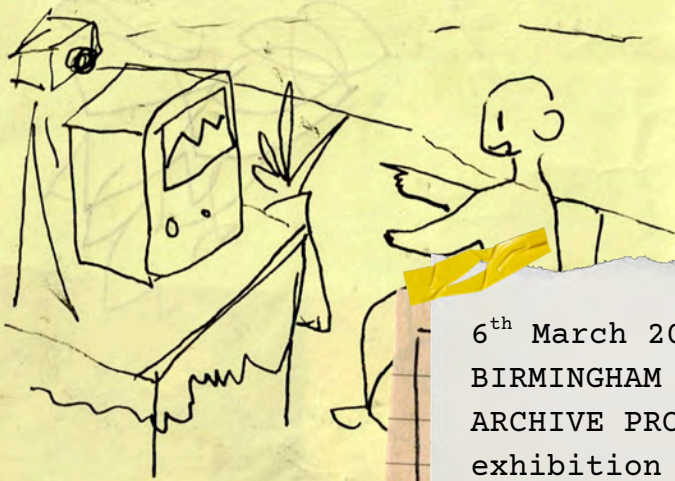
in the machines



SCREENINGS

SHARING +
DISTRIBUTION





6th March 2026
BIRMINGHAM MEDIA
ARCHIVE PROJECT
exhibition at
Digbeth First Friday

Visitors were invited
to view our responses
to the archives so far.

I drew this doodle of
how I wanted the space
set up for Lorenzo.

Watching archival
footage of 80s Birmingham
on old tech on a
cosy corner sofa was fun!

I saw how the way we
view the media archives
can generate inter-
generational, cross cultural
reimaginings of this city.

**vi
vid
proj
ects**



How can independent distribution networks

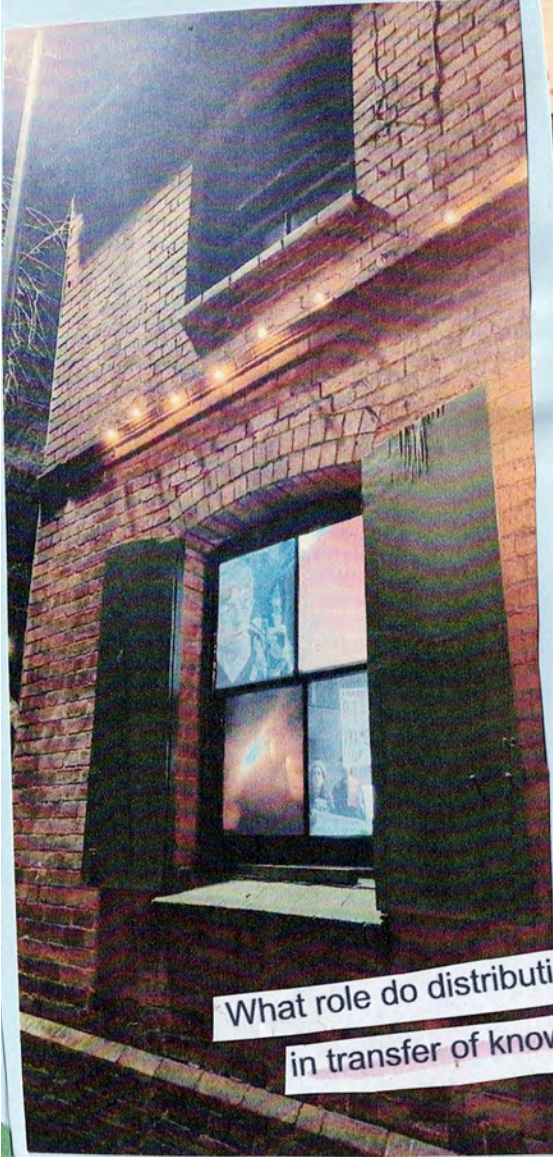
improve engagement with community

audiences?



Inconvenient Political Activist

JAYNE MURRAY'S
Installation



What role do distribution networks play
in transfer of knowledge on a local and national
level?



Radical Exhibition Collective

'We can make do with outdated tech': the Birmingham collective reviving DVDs



This year, a new group called *Radical Exhibition Collective* started a pop-up Community DVD Library here in Birmingham to imbue us with some community spirit. Popping up every two-ish months in Balsall Heath with *Birmingham Resistance Library*, the project aims to increase access to independent, archival and experimental cinema; advocate for film in the cultural space; and platform subaltern expression.

Radical Exhibition Collective's stall can be found in a creative hub called The Old Print Works, kitted with an assortment of DVDs, supplementary mini-zines, and a portable DVD player you can borrow. Indie film lovers, locals, and cultural workers can browse *Radical Exhibition Collective's* slowly-growing collection of documentaries, comedies, and love stories. Once you've made your pick, you've got until the next pop-up to return or renew it.

Excerpt from Skin Deep Magazine, published 30.10.25 by Jaz Morrison

<https://skindeepmag.com/articles/birmingham-dvd-library-radical-exhibition-collective>

WEPRESENT

by WeTransfer

“Apostles of Cinema,” created by production house ajabu ajabu, introduces us to the distributors, translators and cinema-owners working to make sure movies of all kinds are available to the masses, and building a system where the beauty of cinema is provided, preserved and enjoyed by the people.



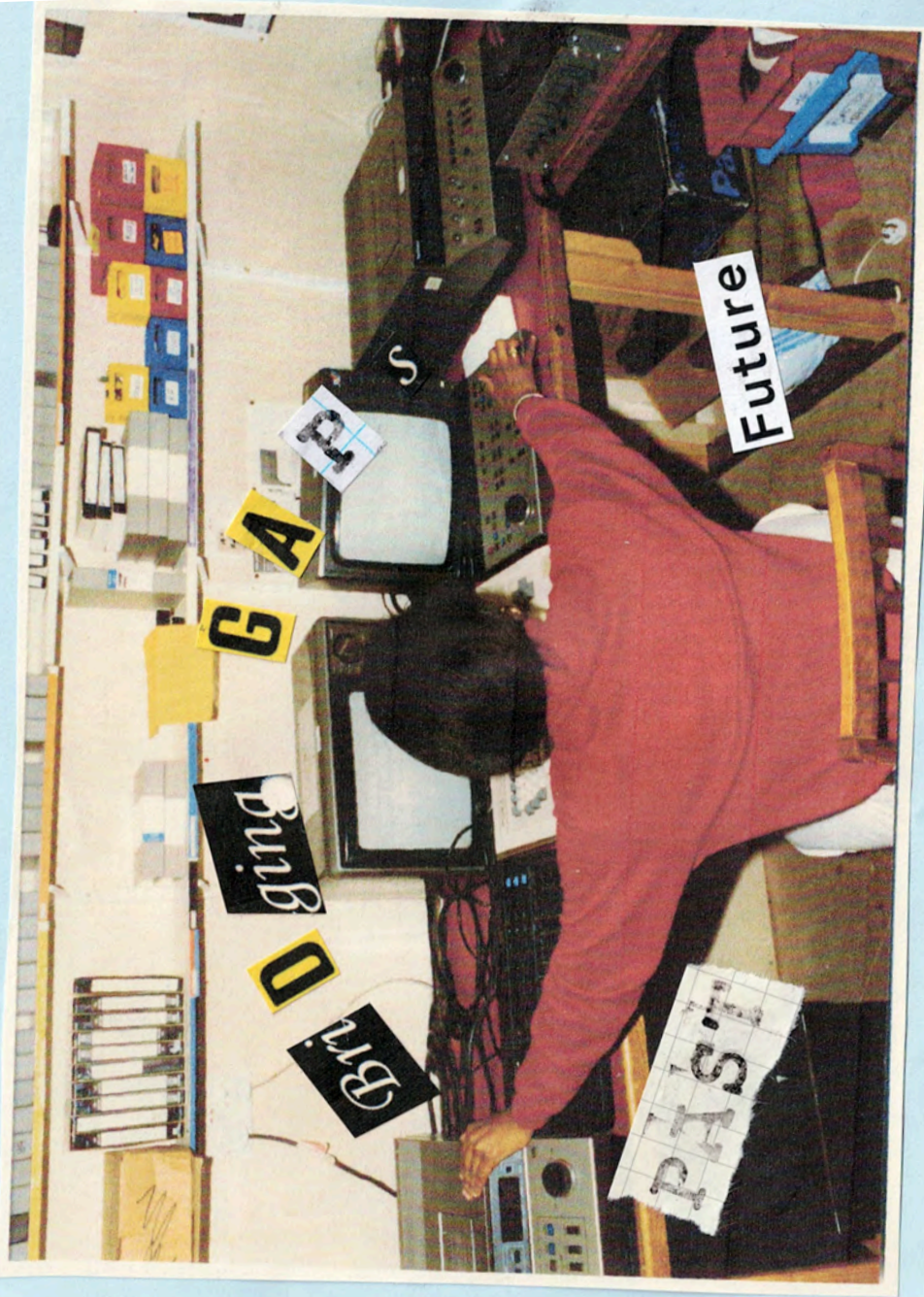
We spoke with the film's co-directors Martin Mhando and Ron Mulvihill over the role that Dar es Salaam's local cinematic slipstream might play in addressing a lack of access to Black African visual heritage outside of privileged institutions in the West. Bringing this film into these spaces was only possible because they had managed to hold onto its rights. How far the film travels within these spaces, and what further connections might be allowed between audiences on the margins and works that are so close to their perspective, experience, and histories, is a question of time and a question of continuing access.

For us, and thankfully, for them as well, to work with Frank, Black, Rehema and others was to envision a world where cinematic heritage is preserved not by agencies, institutions, or corporations, but by people.

Excerpt from WePresent

(Published on Oct 24, 2023, Words by Jesse Gerard Mpango)

<https://wepresent.wetransfer.com/stories/apostles-of-cinema-film>



Future

PAST

ging

G

A

P

Br10

0

The Birmingham Media Archive Project is delivered by Vivid Projects, funded with the support of the BFI Screen Heritage Fund, awarding National Lottery funding.

With contributions from
Keara Stevens
Erinn Dhesi
Jayne Murray
Marley Starskey Butler
Nafeesa Hamid
Vignesh Venkataramaiah

This zine as edited
by Charlotte Bailey
April 2026

**vi
vid
proj
ects**





Birmingham
**Media
Archive
Project**

