

Amgueddfa Cymru's response to the Black Lives Matter Movement

1. Contributions to the Development of Government's Policies

Amgueddfa Cymru has had to face some difficult and important truths about ourselves in response to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, and to reflect on our role in combatting racism. As a result we are developing a better understanding of the role that we should play in achieving race equality in Wales.

Together with our community partners and young people, we have been diversifying our collections, increasing representation and contributing to conversations that highlight decolonization, inequality and racism.

Working with communities across Wales, we are taking action to contribute to achieving this goal and have joined Zero Racism Wales and others to publicly commit to standing up against racism in all its forms.

The Slave Trade and the British Empire: An Audit of Commemoration in Wales

The Director General was a member of the Welsh Government Task and Finish Group that prepared the Audit, and the Report of which it is part. The Report was published by the Government in November 2020

Draft Welsh Government Race Equality Action Plan

The Museum contributed to the content of the Culture chapter of the Draft Race Equality Action Plan.

2. Establishing a Black Lives Matter Consultation Group

A Black Lives Matter Consultation Group has been established by Amgueddfa Cymru. Partners involved include BLM Wales, Race Council Cymru, Race Alliance Wales, Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Team (EYST), and the Sub-Saharan Advisory Panel (SSAP). Work to date has focused on reviewing the Charter for Decolonising Collections, the Plan for Collecting Black Lives Matter and developing learning programmes for schools, as well as beginning recruitment of new roles (see below) to help us to achieve these programmes. Constructive feedback has been received on the importance of Participatory Action Research and repatriation.

3. Establishing the Amgueddfa Cymru Producers

We recognize our workforce is not diverse enough. With support in part from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation we are in the process of advertising four community roles to support more inclusive learning and public programmes (events and exhibitions) and project manage our work on decolonising the collections.

To diversify youth involvement in our work we established the Amgueddfa Cymru Producers in 2020. The Producers are independent young people between the ages of 18-25 from diverse backgrounds who act as agents of change in the Museum. The Producers are paid for their work which has included reframing policies, mentoring Directors, co-producing exhibitions and launching their own Instagram account, *Bloedd*. This work is supported by a network of partners, and part of a wider provision for the young people involved. Partners involved include Llamau, Barnardo's, Promo Cymru and Children in Wales.

New partners such as the Sub-Saharan Advisory Panel Young Leaders Network, and Jukebox Collective have advised us on reframing interpretations and programmes in response to Black Lives Matter. The first edition of [Cynfas | National Museum Wales](#), part of the *Celf ar y Cyd* initiative (in partnership with Arts Council Wales) focused on celebrating Black culture and artworks in the Museum collection. It was edited by Umulkhayr Mohamed, an Amgueddfa Cymru Producer.

Events delivered include:

- **Lates PITCH BLACK** festival curated by Amgueddfa Cymru Producer Um Mohamed and in partnership with Artes Mundi was delivered throughout May, celebrating blackness and interrogating the impact that the British Empire and culture has had on Black people and their history. The events included collection tours, workshops and performances with successful open call artists. An example of work produced by artists, Gabin Kongolo, can be seen in the link, <https://vimeo.com/showcase/pitchblack-gabin-kongolo> (Password: YfagdduGabin321).
- **In Conversation: David Olusoga** was an event hosted by community partners, the Sub-Saharan Advisory Panel Young Leaders Network, was delivered on the 9 November 2020. Discussions included how this period in British and Welsh history has been considered, what kind of collective memory has developed, and the impact of such memories on framing our national identity and constructing a distorted and incomplete national story. Post event evaluation comments included:

“emotional, inspiring and hopeful for change”

“my ah-ha moment came with the realisation that there has been a historic lack of access to Black educators in Wales and the difference it makes in terms of perspective is evident.”

4. Up and coming Events for 2021 include:

- **Remembrance 2021**, an event developed by the Museum in collaboration with community partners and historians of Black History, who will explore stories of minoritized communities in Wales and their lived experience. Talks and workshops will focus on often forgotten stories of Black soldiers and those who suffered massive casualties in WW1.

Initiatives to support school based learning include:

- In response to the *Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group: final report* chaired by Professor Charlotte Williams and commissioned by Welsh Government, we have been re-framing our learning resources for schools. Approximately 180,000 school pupils and students participated in Amgueddfa Cymru's programme for schools annually, pre-pandemic.
- With such a wide reach we have an important role to play in supporting Wales to become an anti-racist nation. Our current learning offer is varied and broad, yet themes of diversity and race are rarely explicitly addressed.
- We will integrate elements of Black history into relevant thematic resources and develop new resources / workshops to focus on celebrating positive contributions by Black and non-black communities of colour to culture and life in Wales. One recent example is a new learning resource for Key Stage 3 and 4 commissioned and created by poet Marvin Thompson as part of the first edition of *Cynfas*. The resource uses a lithograph by artist Chris Ofili, *For the Unknown Runner*, as a hook to explore aspects of identity and representation.
<https://museum.wales/cynfas/article/2265/Learning-Resources-For-the-Unknown-Runner/>
- The Lead Creative Schools led by Arts Council Wales has recently launched a new strand to their programme - *Cynefin: Black, Asian and minority ethnic Wales*, an opportunity to empower a network of schools to devise and deliver innovative and creative projects that explore these key themes. Amgueddfa Cymru will provide the Arts Council with a list of opportunities that schools and the artists can undertake with collections and exhibitions.

Reframing Picton

As part of this commitment, working with the Sub-Saharan Advisory Panel Youth Leadership Network, we invited artists to help us reframe the colonial narrative around the portrait of Lieutenant-General Thomas Picton by Martin Archer Shee, currently on display at National Museum Cardiff.

We received a very strong response as a result of the call out with over 50 submissions made. The selection process was led by the members of the Sub Sahara Advisory Panel and a shortlist of 7 agreed. Following a series of interviews and detailed follow up discussions, two proposals have been selected both of which are led by female artists with Trinidadian heritage, one of whom lives and works on the island. Details are shortly to be released publicly and we anticipate that the works will be installed at National Museum Cardiff during 2022. Responding to the Black Lives Matter emergency has been an important part of our collecting activity. Staff attended Black Lives Matter rallies and marches in 2020 and collected placards and banners. Some of these will be incorporated into the Re-framing Picton exhibition.

5. Black Lives Matter and Black History collecting activities and projects (2020-21)

Catalogued and available on Collections Online (all tagged with 'Black Lives Matter' keyword to aid searching):

- Placards and digital images donated by Glitter Cymru (social and support group for the LGBT+ ethnic minority community in south Wales) of the BLM rally held in Cardiff, 6 June 2020

https://museum.wales/collections/online/?field0=string&value0=Black&field1=with_images&value1=1&field2=string&value2=Lives&field3=string&value3=Matter&field4=string&value4=glitter

- Digital images of various BLM rallies held in Cardiff between 30 May – 6 June 2020

https://museum.wales/collections/online/?field0=string&value0=Black&field1=with_images&value1=1&field2=string&value2=Lives&field3=string&value3=Matter&field4=string&value4=Anthony&field5=string&value5=Jones

- Digital images of the BLM rally held in Bangor, 6 June 2020

https://museum.wales/collections/online/?field0=string&value0=Black&field1=with_images&value1=1&field2=string&value2=Lives&field3=string&value3=Matter&field4=string&value4=Bangor&field5=string&value5=Jim&field6=string&value6=Ellis

- Digital images of the BLM rally held in Wrexham, 7 June 2020

https://museum.wales/collections/online/?field0=string&value0=Black&field1=with_images&value1=1&field2=string&value2=Lives&field3=string&value3=Matter&field4=string&value4=Wrexham

- Placards and digital images of the BLM rally held outside the Senedd, 27 June 2020

https://museum.wales/collections/online/?field0=string&value0=Black&field1=with_images&value1=1&field2=string&value2=Lives&field3=string&value3=Matter&field4=string&value4=Senedd&field5=string&value5=Shukri

Awaiting cataloguing and digitizing:

- Clay sculpture made at HMP Parc prison, Bridgend, during Black History Month 2020 in response to the disproportionate number of Black and ethnic minority men in the prison system.
- Digital images of the interior and exterior of the Paddle Steamer Café, Butetown.
- Oral history interview with BLM activist, Nelly Adam.
- Digital images of the Jamaican elders of Port Talbot and their families.

6. Presentations, media contributions and events delivered by Museum staff:

- The Museum's Curator of Black History delivered presentations at the following online events:
 - Zero-Tolerance to Racism campaign (Race Council Cymru)
 - George Floyd: One Year On (Race Council Cymru)
 - Webinar organised by the south-east branch of the Archives & Records Association: 'Collecting a Nation: 2020 a year to remember'.
- The Curator of Black History was interviewed on *Inside Museums* – a BBC4 documentary about St Fagans – about collecting the BLM movement.
- The Principal Curator of Contemporary & Community History organised an online screening of *Just ah likkle piece of Jamaica inna Port Talbot* – a film that celebrates the untold personal stories of Jamaican elders who made Port Talbot their home in the 1950s-60s:

<https://museum.wales/whatson/digital/11322/Windrush-Day-Online-Film-Screening-Just-ah-likkle-piece-of-Jamaica-inna-Port-Talbot/>