



**Olaudah Equiano Portrait Sculpture by Christy Symington
Joined 'Black Georgians' Exhibition at Black Cultural Archives**
9 Oct 2015 – 9 April 2016 : **Date extended until 4 June 2016**

On 5 November 2015, Black Cultural Archives welcomed Christy Symington's portrait sculpture of Olaudah Equiano which joined the 'Black Georgians: The Shock of the Familiar' exhibition curated by Steve Martin. Christy Symington will run a Workshop on 4 June 2016 to 'Make Your Own Clay Sculpture of Olaudah Equiano'.

Christy Symington made this portrait sculpture of 'Olaudah Equiano – African, slave, author, abolitionist' for 2007 at the time of the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act with the intent to further share his story. The life-size portrait sculpture prompts enquiry into who Equiano was and what he did. His social standing, reflected through his clothing and hairstyle, was unusual for a black man in that period. The shape of Africa forms the back of his shoulders and broken shackles and chains are sculpted on the stem of the sculpture, prompting his opposition to slavery.

This exhibition reveals the everyday lives of Black people during the Georgian period (1714-1830). It offers a rich array of historical evidence and archival materials that present a surprising, sometimes shocking, and inspiring picture of Georgian Britain.

Olaudah Equiano [1745-1797] was instrumental in bringing about the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in Britain of 1807. Attention has been under awarded to him in Western historical representation of the slave trade though he was an outspoken opponent, first through many letters to newspapers and later in his 'best-seller' book of the time, '*The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African*'. Equiano was enslaved at the age of 11 and eventually bought his freedom 20 years later in 1776. Through his book published in 1789, he brought to light the horrendous conditions on slave ships and appalling injustices of the slave trade. It is said to be the best-known written account of the life of a slave.

Christy hopes to encourage empowerment through learning of ancestral achievements and social improvement by bringing to the fore Equiano's life story.

Black Cultural Archives

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Open Tues-Sat 10-6, til 7pm every 2nd Thurs

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Christy Symington MRBS

Christy Symington is a London based sculptor and Member the Royal British Society of Sculptors (Council Member from 2003-2007). She studied traditional figure sculpture and drawing techniques in Paris at the Atelier des Beaux Arts Montparnasse and Glaciere and the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Graduated from the New York Studio School USA with Merit Award for Sculpture. Took her MA in Fine Art at Byam Shaw (now Central St Martins), University of the Arts London. With a PGCE in Education she teaches and mentors in several UK art colleges and schools and exhibits regularly in the UK and overseas. Contact details can be found on her website <http://www.christysymington.com>

Provenance: Previous exhibitions and venues where this sculpture has been shown since 2007:

Stephen Lawrence Centre, Solo Show 'OLAUDAH EQUIANO MAN AND BROTHER', London SE8

Deptford X Fringe Arts Festival 2015 'Deptford Conversations' selected by Janette Parris

St Nicholas Church, Deptford, London SE8

Ana Tzarev Gallery, 57th Street, New York, USA – Freedom to Create Prize

Victoria & Albert Museum, Orient Global Freedom to Create Prize 2009, London SW7

Islington Arts Factory, 'IfyouDON'TLikeThewaYTHEShiPISruN...', London N7

Museum of London Docklands, 'Equiano's Epigrams', West India Quay, London E14

Threadneedle Figurative Prize, The Mall Galleries, London SW1

Royal West of England Academy [RWA], "156 Autumn Exhibition 2008", Bristol, UK

'Politics Pays Back! – Images of political life in the UK, Kowalsky Gallery at DACS, London EC1

The Society of Portrait Sculptors, "Face 2007", Cork St, London W1, UK

Photo left: Tontxi Vazquez