

# E L S A J A M E S

Born in London, England 1968. Lives in Essex, works in London and Essex

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## Education | Learning

2020-21 - Syllabus VI, Alt Learning Programme with Wysing Art Centre, Eastside Projects, Iniva, Spike Island and Studio Voltaire

2013-15 - Postgraduate Certificate, Participatory and Community Arts, Goldsmiths, University of London

2006-10 - BA First Class (Hons) Fine Art, Chelsea College of Arts, University of the Arts London

## Solo Exhibitions

2022 - *Othered in a region that has been historically Othered*, Focal Point Gallery, Essex (Forthcoming)

2019 - *Black Girl Essex*, Firstsite, Essex

2018 - *Forgotten Black Essex*, Chalkwell Hall, Metal Culture, Essex

## Group Exhibitions

2021-22 - Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2021, South London Gallery, London

2021 - Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2021, Firstsite gallery, Essex

2020 - *Policy No.1 Disrupt The Existing Narratives*, Policy Making: The Agency of Visible Women, Beecroft Art Gallery, Essex

2019 - *Black Girl Essex: Here We Come, Look We Here*, Super Black, Firstsite, Essex

2019 - *Circle of Blackness*, Time Portals, Furtherfield Gallery, London

2018 - *The Agency of Visible Women*, Beecroft Art Gallery, Essex

2012 - *Already Here*, Curated by Osei Bonsu, Central Saint Martins, London

2011 - *Pause*, Artside festival, Southend on Sea, Essex

2011 - *The Pier Project*, AVA Gallery, University of East London, London

2010 - *Goat Curry & Rap*, Lecture Theatre, Chelsea College of Arts, London

2010 - *Inscriptions*, Chelsea College of Arts, London

2010 - *Rituals | Shifted*, The Triangle Gallery, Chelsea College of Arts, London

## Screenings

2021 - *Black Girl Essex: Here We Come, Look We Here*, Firstsite, Online

2020 - *Forgotten Black Essex*, part of the Essex Girls exhibition, Beecroft Art Gallery, Essex

2020 - *Forgotten Black Essex: Princess Dinubolu*, One Southend BHM Event, Online

2020 - *Black Girl Essex: Here We Come, Look We Here*, IWD event, Beecroft Art Gallery, Essex

2019 - *Love in Social Practice*, Going Places Festival, Cubitt and All Change, London

2018 - *Forgotten Black Essex*, Big Screen Southend, Focal Point Gallery, Essex

2018 - *Goat Curry & Rap*, The Agency of Visible Women, Beecroft Art Gallery, Essex

2011 - *Inscriptions*, Last Friday Shorts, The Old Waterworks, Essex

## Public Collections

2021 - Government Art Collection, London, UK

## **Awards**

2022 - *Othered in a region that has been historically Othered*, New body of work, Project Grant, Arts Council England

2021 - Finalist, Freelands Award

2021 - Bloomberg New Contemporaries, London

2021 - *THIS IS ESSEX*, Ten-month period of research and development, Project Grant, Arts Council England

2020 - *Covid-19 Survival*, Emergency Response Award, Arts Council England

2019 - *Black Girl Essex*, Firstsite residency and new work, Project Grant, Arts Council England

2017 - *Forgotten Black Essex*, Research and new work, Grants for the Arts, Arts Council England

2013 - *The Chatterbox Project*, Workshops and sound installation, Grants for the Arts, Arts Council England

## **Commissions**

2021-22 - *A Place With A Heart: A Place To Grow*, Public Artwork, The White House (Create London) (Forthcoming)

2021-22 - *WE STAND WITH YOU*, Black Lives Matter Special Limited-Edition Print, Firstsite, Essex (Forthcoming)

2021 - *A Place With A Heart: A Place To Grow*, Procession, The White House (Create London)

2020 - New Town Culture Programme, Exploring local histories and creating with foster families, The White House (Create London)

2020 - *In Other Words* book publication, Contributing artist, Metal and the Live Art Development Agency

2020 - *WE STAND WITH YOU*, Black Lives Matter poster download commission, Firstsite, Essex

2020 - *Generation Rebellion R&D*, Co-lead Artist with Sue Mayo, Intergenerational workshops and Zine, Magic Me, London

2019 - *Circle of Blackness*, Commission exploring a past and future black woman narrative, Furtherfield, London

2019 - *Love in Social Practice*, Artist film commission, Cubitt, London

2018 - *Decorum*, Co-lead Artist, Intergenerational workshops and film, Magic Me & Metal Culture, Essex

2016 - *The Garden of Remember*, Lead Artist & Development, Digital App, Southend Borough Council, Essex

2015 - *Changing Face of the Rise*, Producer & Lead Artist, Community Engagement, Thurrock Council, Essex

2015 - *Asylum Seekers & Refugees in Southend*, Community Researcher commission, Written Report, CAST, Essex

2014 - *Covered*, Producer & Lead Artist, Workshops and Public Exhibition, Essex County Council, Essex

## **Residencies**

2021 - *ELSA JAMES AT ESSEX*, Ten-day research residency, Art Exchange, University of Essex

2020 - *Remote Residency*, Selected artist for month-long residency focusing on new research, Metal Southend, Essex

2019 - *Black Girl Essex*: Four-month residency exploring the black British voice in Essex, Firstsite, Essex

2016-17 E+E: Five-month Time and Space residency with Everton Wright, Metal Culture, Essex

2013 - Switch Ideas Lab: Five-day residency, Arts Council England Digital Escalator programme, Writers' Centre, Norwich

## **Curatorial**

2021 - *Walking in the Wake: Michael McMillian and Dubmorphology*, Estuary 2021 Opening Weekend, Online

2021 - *During the Hour of Darkness: James Jordon Johnson and Shamica Ruddock*, Estuary 2021 Opening Weekend, Online

2021 - *A Short History of Nearly Everything: Antonio Roberts*, Estuary 2021 Opening Weekend, Online

2021 - *Whip It Good: Jeannette Ehlers, Fiona Compton & Aleema Gray*, Panel discussion, Estuary 2021 Opening Weekend, Online

2019 - *Super Black*, Arts Council Collection National Partners Programme exhibition, Firstsite, Essex

## **Appointments | Workshops**

2021 - *Activities with Elsa James*, Holiday Fun Summer programme, Firstsite, Essex

2021 - Devised activity, *Discover Essex with Elsa James*, Holiday Fun Half-term programme, Firstsite, Essex

2021 - Artist Mentor, George Morl for the Agency of Visible Womxn and The Old Waterworks residency, Online  
2020 - Contributing Artist, Self-portrait drawing for Focal Point Gallery's 30<sup>th</sup> year 'commemorative tea-towel', Essex  
2020 - Artist Selector, New moving image works for Big Screen Southend programme, Focal Point Gallery, Essex  
2020 - Lead Artist, Protest Placard Making workshop for International Women's Day March, Beecroft Art Gallery, Essex  
2019 - Panel Artist Judge, New Voices Auditions, BBC Essex, Essex  
2019 - Lead Artist, *Change the Conversation*, Young women's 4-day Art and Activism Project, Autograph ABP, London  
2019 - Panel Selector, Social Art Network + Kickstarter PBC, Coaching Programme, London  
2019 - Lead Artist, Social Art Assembly, Lab sharing and discussion, Tate Exchange, London  
2019 - Lead Artist, Mark making workshop for Muslim women's group, Essex  
2019 - Lead Artist, Printmaking workshop for Muslim women's group, Essex  
2018 - Lead Artist, Social Art Summit, Participatory lab discussion and debate, Site Gallery, Sheffield  
2018 - Nominated Artist, *No Shortlists* experimental Joshua Sofaer workshop, Social Works? Axisweb, London  
2018 - Participating Artist, *For The Love of Labour, Get-Together*, Social Works? Axisweb, Nottingham  
2018 - Lead Artist, Relief Printmaking Workshop Activity for Redbridge Council at Fairlop Annual Fair, Essex  
2018 - Co-lead Artist, Alexandra Leykauf *Caprona* workshop for Start Children's programme, Focal Point Gallery, Essex  
2018 - Lead Artist, *The Digital Selfie Portrait: ProCreate* workshop for Suffolk Libraries staff, Suffolk  
2017 - Associate Artist, *HenPower* weekly workshops for young people with mild learning disabilities, London  
2017 - Co-lead Artist, Hilary Lloyd *Theatre* workshop for Start Children's programme, Focal Point Gallery, Essex  
2017 - Lead Artist, 50 Notable Black Britons: Black History Month drawing workshop for Basildon residents, Essex  
2017 - Lead Artist, Open Arts: A six-week wellbeing arts programme for Muslim women's group, Essex  
2016 - Artist Facilitator, *HenPower* Southend, working with dementia participants, Essex  
2016 - Lead Artist, *The Digital Selfie Portrait: ProCreate* on iPads for retired participants, Essex  
2015 - Artist Facilitator, NetPark Education Programme, working with primary pupils, Metal Southend. Essex  
2011 - 12 Project Development Manager, The Old Waterworks (formally TAP) Artist-run space, Essex

### **Public Talks | Interviews**

2021 - *BEING OTHERED IN A REGION THAT HAS BEEN HISTORICALLY OTHERED*, CAMP, Online  
2021 - *Intersections in the Art of Elsa James*, book launch and talk, Estuary Festival, Online  
2021 - Working Class British Art Network, Discussion with Sean Edwards and Aidan Moesby, British Art Network, Online  
2021 - In Conversation with Sepake Angiama (Artistic Dir, Iniva) and Jon Blackwood (Writer | Curator), Firstsite, Online  
2021 - Artist talk with Q&A, part of the British Libraires Unfinished Business: The Fight for Women's Rights, Suffolk Libraires, Online  
2020 - Artist talk, POC in the Industry, Blackground Black History Month event, University of the Arts London, Online  
2020 - In Conversation with actor/writer Anne Odeke, Queens Theatre Hornchurch, YouTube Video  
2020 - Live Radio Broadcast on the Ian Wyatt BBC Introducing show: 12/10/20, BBC Essex, Essex  
2020 - Panellist with Marc Garrett, Cassie Thornton and Tomislav Medak, RadicalxChange Conference, New York, Online  
2020 - In Conversation with artists R.M Sanchez-Camus and Sian Williams, Axisweb, Online  
2020 - Artist discussion with Q&A, Quarantine Dialogues curated by Jon Blackwood and Maja Zeco, Online  
2020 - Live Radio Broadcast on the Sonia Watson breakfast show: 08/06/20, BBC Essex, Essex  
2020 - Artist Talk with Q&A, PEER Ambassadors programme, PEER Gallery, London  
2019 - Live Radio Broadcast on the Ben Fryer and Sonia Watson breakfast show: 22/11/19, BBC Essex, Essex  
2019 - Artist Talk with Q&A, Norwich University of the Arts, Norfolk  
2019 - Live Radio Broadcast on the Dave Monk Drive time show: 17/10/19, BBC Essex, Essex  
2019 - TV News Presentation Feature on BBC Look East: 16/10/19, BBC, Essex

2019 - Live Radio Broadcast, The Essex Girl stereotype panel debate with Emma Bullimore: 30/07/19, BBC Essex, Essex

2019 - TV News Feature on BBC London: 24/07/19, BBC, London

2019 - TV News Feature on BBC Look East: 22/07/19, BBC, Essex

2019 - Live Radio Broadcast on the Kath Melandri Saturday Breakfast: 29/06/19, BBC Essex, Essex

2019 - Live Radio Broadcast on the Tony Fisher Show: 27/06/19, BBC Essex, Essex

2019 - Live Radio Broadcast, Windrush Diversity Panel on the Jodie Halford Show: 19/06/19, BBC Essex, Essex

2019 - No Frills Working Dinner Party, part show part discussion with Scottee & Friends, The Albany, London

2019 - The Guilty Feminist Live Tour panel chat with Deborah Frances-White, Cliffs Pavilion, Essex

2019 - Artist Talk with Q&A, Gray's School of Art, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen

2019 - Artist Talk with Q&A, School of Art and Digital Industries, University of East London, London

2018 - *Forgotten Black Essex*, Presentation with Q&A for BHM18, The Sixth Form College, Essex

2018 - *Who am I? Identity and Belonging*, panel discussion with Q&A, Focal Point Gallery, Essex

2018 - *The Archive & Historical Geographies of The Black Presence*, Talk, panel discussion with Q&A, Autograph, London

2018 - Radio interview for Peter Holmes Sunday Breakfast: 18/02/18, BBC Essex, Essex

2018 - Babble Arts Chat, Internet Radio interview on *Forgotten Black Essex*, Essex

2017 - Stories of Resistance and Solidarity, International Women's Day panel discussion, Metal Culture, Essex

2016 - Three-Minute Wonder, Future Parks, Metal Culture, Essex

2014 - *Essex Girls Guide to Life with Syd Moore*, Show guest, Independent Radio, Essex

2013 - Three-Minute Wonder, Future Parks, Metal Culture, Essex

2012 - Video interview, Chelsea Alumni, Chelsea College of Arts YouTube Channel, London

### **Publications | Features | Press**

2021 - *Intersections in the Art of Elsa James*, by Dr Jon Blackwood, published by Firstsite and Metal, ISBN: 978-0-948252-47-1

2021 - Reclaiming Essex: Michael Landy RA and Elsa James, Feature article, Art Quarterly in print

2020 - *Essex Girls: For Profane and Opinionated Women Everywhere* book by Sarah Perry cited on page 8

2020 - *Art by the Water* feature by Rick Jordan, Condé Nast Traveller magazine in print and online

2020 - *How a Black slave brought to Harlow left behind a legacy remembered for centuries* by Elliot Hawkins, Essex Live Online

2020 - *The Black princess who took on a white Southend community and caused national uproar* by Elliot Hawkins, Essex Live Online

2020 - *Black Girl Essex* editorial featured by Nicky Adams, Essex Life magazine in print and online

2020 - *Scarlet Lipstick and Theology*, quoted in Sarah Perry's essay, Guardian Review in print and online

2020 - *Place 2020*, contributing writer, Centre for Place Writing at Manchester Metropolitan University online

2020 - *The Great Women Artists Podcast*, Chloe Austin talk with Katy Hessel, Episode 29 online

2020 - *The Black British Artists Challenging Super White Britain* by Chloe Austin, Black Ballad online

2019 - *Coming Out as a Black Essex Girl* contributing feature article, Trawler X EGLF newspaper publication

2019 - *The black princess who 'took on a white world* by Laurence Cawley, BBC News online

2019 - *I want to challenge people's perceptions* by Darryl Webber, Essex Chronicle newspaper

2019 - *Exhibition on Black identity and experience in Essex*, by Darryl Webber, Essex Chronicle newspaper

2019 - *Elsa James shows just what an Essex Girl looks like*, by Neil D'arcy, Colchester Gazette newspaper

2019 - *The black artist taking on the 'Essex Girl' stereotype*, by Dawn Gerber, BBC News online

2019 - *Firstsite presents three film works by Elsa James*, Art Daily online

2019 - *Black identity exhibition*, Essex Enquirer newspaper

2019 - *Reflection of different cultures at Firstsite shows*, by Neil D'arcy, Colchester Gazette newspaper

2019 - *Southend artist Elsa takes exhibition to Firstsite gallery*, by Kelly Ann Buckley, The Echo (Southend) newspaper

2019 - *Exhibition explores black identity in Essex*, Essex Chronicle newspaper

2019 - *Exhibition to celebrate park's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary*, Enfield Independent newspaper

2019 - *The Invention of Essex*, Cited in article by Tim Burrows, Long read Guardian newspaper

2019 - *New Ways of Seeing, Making & Telling*, Commissioned contribution, a-n The Artist Information Company online

2018 - *Essex black history film closes*, by Kelly Ann Buckley, The Echo (Southend) newspaper

2018 - *Forgotten Black Essex*, cited on page 27 -28 by Tim Burrows, Radical Essex book publication by Focal Point Gallery

2018 - *Artist responds to forgotten black Essex*, by Kelly Ann Buckley, The Echo (Southend) newspaper

## **Boards**

2021 to date - Trustee, The Old Waterworks, Essex

2017 to date - Advisory board, Arts La'Olam, Suffolk

2017 - 2019 - Trustee, Scottee and Friends, Essex

2015 - 2017 - Vice Chair, Essex Cultural Diversity Project, Essex