

# Institute of Contemporary Arts

PRESS RELEASE

## The Politics of Pleasure

20 July – 7 September 2019



Stock image courtesy of TONL, a creative company transforming stock photography by showcasing the diverse, positive and contemporary lives and identities of Black and brown people

The Politics of Pleasure is a series of Black feminist programmes exploring pleasure as a politics of refusal. The project centres Black gender non-conforming, non-binary, trans and femme audiences and will engage the research and practices of a pioneering group of pleasure artists, authors, activists, speculative writers, dance innovators, visual artists, a vegan soul food chef, and other participants. This series of programmes is curated by The Politics of Pleasure Collective: Nydia A. Swaby and Rita Gayle with ICA Assistant Curator Ifeanyi Awachie. The programme builds on ideas foregrounded at Fugitive Feminism at the ICA in July 2018.

### 20 July, 1–7pm: The Politics of Pleasure: Family Reunion

An all-day event for Black women to explore pleasure as generative of creativity and community, and as fundamentally linked to their humanity.

#### PROGRAMME

##### 20 July, 1pm: Breathe. Speculate. Come.

Ama Josephine Budge leads a workshop harnessing breath, free writing, mark-making and pleasure vocalisations to rest, resist, reimagine and rebuild.

##### 20 July, 4pm: Reclaiming Pleasure Through Dance

Womanist fitness instructor Kelechi ‘Kelechnekoff’ Okafor leads a dance workshop and discussion exploring twerking as empowerment.

##### 20 July, 5:30pm: The sisterwoman vegan Reading Group

A curated library of influential Black literature with small plates presented by soul food chef sisterwoman vegan.

### 31 August – 7 September: Pleasure Genealogies

Pleasure Genealogies seeks to forge further connections between Black feminist practices, theories and art that investigate pleasure. Pleasure Genealogies looks to the Black feminist theorists who initially inspired The Politics of Pleasure collective, including Gail Lewis, Joan Morgan and Audre Lorde, and to the inheritors of their legacies, including artist Davinia-Ann Robinson, author Bernardine Evaristo and DJ scholar Lynnée Denise. Pleasure Genealogies is a response to the work of pleasure activist adrienne maree brown, who teaches Black women to trace lineages of personal pleasure by asking, 'Who taught you to feel good?'

Pleasure Genealogies extends the energy, atmosphere and exploration of previous programmes. The Politics of Pleasure Workshop (22 July 2018) investigated pleasure as fundamentally linked to Black women's humanity and generative of creativity and community. The Politics of Pleasure Family Reunion (20 July 2019) offered further explorations of pleasure through food, writing and movement.

#### PROGRAMME

##### 31 August, 1pm: PRESENCE

A restorative studio session, led by artist Davinia-Ann Robinson, inviting women of colour to unlock a sense of agency through use of clay.

##### 3–8 September, daily 12–9pm: *PLASTICISED SENSATION*

An installation by Davinia-Ann Robinson exploring power structures and pleasure, in accordance to women of colour and their relationship with pleasure.

##### 7 September, 1pm: In Conversation with Davinia-Ann Robinson

Artist Davinia-Ann Robinson discusses her installation, *PLASTICISED SENSATION*, which explores her work around pleasure and power structures based on the erotic for women of colour.

##### 7 September, 3:30pm: How to Write Pleasure

Bernardine Evaristo, discusses her newest novel, *Girl, Woman, Other*, and shares how to write about pleasure for women of colour.

##### 7 September, 3:30pm

Performance-Lecture by DJ Lynnée Denise

#### NOTES TO EDITORS

[ica.art/learning/the-politics-of-pleasure](https://ica.art/learning/the-politics-of-pleasure)

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Each event is ticketed as £7 Full / £5 Concessions / £5 Green, £4 Blue, and Free for Red Members

Multibuy tickets are available.

This programme is open only to POC and Black people who are queer, gender non-conforming, non-binary, trans and/or femme.

Founded in 1946 by a collective of artists, poets and their supporters, the **Institute of Contemporary Arts** is an independent organisation and registered charity which supports the most pressing debates in contemporary culture. The ICA stages groundbreaking exhibitions, performances and keynote lectures by many of the world's leading thinkers. Previously home to the Independent Group, the ICA played a pivotal role in the development of Pop art and charted the course of punk, performance art and independent cinema. The ICA staged the first institutional exhibitions by Francis Bacon, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Tacita Dean, Damien Hirst, Mike Kelley, Mary Kelly, Barbara Kruger, Gerhard Richter, Dieter Roth, Cindy Sherman, Nancy Spero, and Cosey Fanni Tutti and early exhibitions by Bernadette Corporation, Robert Mapplethorpe, Steve McQueen and Tino Sehgal; many now historic performances including those by Laurie Anderson, Einstürzende Neubauten and Yoko Ono; legendary concerts by The Clash, Throbbing Gristle, The Smiths, David Bowie and The Beastie Boys; and critical discussions by the likes of Kathy Acker, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Stuart Hall and Homi K. Bhabha. The ICA Cinema and its dedicated artist's film programme continue to showcase independent film and support pioneering filmmakers including Chantal Akerman, Kenneth Anger, Matthew Barney, Derek Jarman, Ken Loach and Laura Poitras. From its home on The Mall – the geographic heart of the UK establishment – the ICA is an organisation in which different modes of cultural production thrive on the mutual engagement with one another, and a programme that speaks to the challenges of the 21st century. [www.ica.art](http://www.ica.art)

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