



Keith Piper - (You are now entering)
Mau Mau Country, 1983. Acrylic on hessian & canvas. On loan from Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London

© Photo Keith Piper 2015

Activism and Campaigning

Clenched Fists: Movements of resistance to and activism against racism, political violence and inequality

The Clenched Fists theme embodies the movements of resistance against racism, political violence and inequality. It encompasses the joined-up activism of the community as well as strength and the fight for justice. Artists and musicians used their talents to challenge racism and discrimination, summoning their creative energies to illuminate the stories around them and highlight inequality. These principles were displayed through continuous work by local activists organising, protests and events as well as opening bookstores and becoming publishers.

Materials you will need include: source materials, paper, pens, computer and access to the Internet.

Resources: paper squares, base paper, paint & brushes, pastel crayons, oil pastels, sketch books, mirrors, glue. art work, *(You are now entering)* Mau Mau Country, Keith Piper. Visit nocolourbar.org to access a download.

Activism and Campaigning

Clenched Fists: movements of resistance to and activism against racism, political violence and inequality

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Keith Piper (b. 1960), a multi-media artist and academic of African-Caribbean heritage, was a founder member of the ground-breaking 1980s BLK Art Group, a collective of Black British art students from the West Midlands. His painting (You are now entering) Mau Mau Country, 1983 was featured in No Colour Bar. The 'Mau Mau' referred to in the title is the militant anti-colonial movement among the Kikuyu people of Kenya originating in the 1950s.

Kenya (East Africa) was settled by Europeans at the start of the twentieth century. The settlers introduced several restrictions on land ownership and displaced large numbers of the Kikuyu tribe who had worked the land as migratory farmers for centuries. During the early 1950s, resentment grew against European settlement and the lack of local political representation. This was first shown in attacks carried out in the latter half of 1952 by the banned secret society, Mau Mau, who fought against the Kikuyu who were loyal to the government. The Mau Mau Uprising, that took place in British Kenya between 1952 and 1960, is referenced in Keith Piper's artwork as he uses strong imagery to represent ideas of a protest campaign, activism, freedom and independence.

ACTIVITY ONE

- What action would you suggest to prevent the attacks?
- Who would you go to, to get help and support?
- How else might you express your feelings about the treatment received?

ACTIVITY TWO

Draw on a sketch book and use other references to explore a range of symbols and marks, some of which have cultural significance.

- How can you tell a distinct story about protest using symbols, words and graphics?

RESEARCH

Pupils to confidently investigate the potential of creating new material. Independently select and effectively use relevant processes to create a finished work. By looking at the artworks in the exhibition, pupils should test how artists used a range of creative technical ideas to communicate their story. They should select two works of art and describe the techniques used.

REFLECTION

By designing and developing ideas through Art-Making, pupils can consider what decisions the artists made when using materials, graphics and symbols.

EVALUATING AND DEVELOPING WORK

Pupils will evaluate their work as it progresses and talk about finished product, its intentions and whether these were met.

Further discussions methods and approaches to creating Art will help to increase their knowledge of technical processes. This is developed within a specific cultural context, understanding that when peoples are scattered, significant elements of their culture may be lost to them. A discussion should take place at the end of each session to provide pupils with the tools and confidence to investigate the themes on their own.

For useful links please visit: www.nocolourbar.org

No Colour Bar: Black British Art in Action 1960 -1990 is a collaborative project between The Friends of the Huntley Archives at the LMA, the City of London: London Metropolitan Archives, and the Guildhall Art Gallery, supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund.

