

## *At Home with Vanley Burke*

22 July – 27 September 2015



Vanley Burke, Photograph,  
© the artist, Courtesy The Arts Council Collection, the artist and Ikon

Ikon is pleased to present *At Home with Vanley Burke*, a unique exhibition from Birmingham-based artist Vanley Burke. The project sees the entire contents of Burke's flat in Nechells, north-east Birmingham, transported to Ikon's main exhibition space.

Referred to as the "Godfather of Black British photography", Burke (b. Jamaica, 1951) is also a dedicated archivist and collector of objects relating to black culture in Britain. His flat's distinctive interior is an embodiment of his compulsive acquisitiveness. Displaying a vast collection of printed material - posters, flyers, publications - clothes, records, ornaments and countless other items, it provides an invaluable insight into Britain's African Caribbean communities. The countless objects that fill Burke's space, serve as a portrait of religious and political beliefs, artistic activities, fashions, leisure pursuits, food, health issues and many other aspects of everyday life. This exhibition reveals Burke too as a subject of his own enquiry.

Burke's collection stands as one of the most significant bodies of material in the city of Birmingham's Archives, and exists in part within the Library of Birmingham; the majority, however, remain in his flat near the city centre. From 22 July to 27 September these items are on public exhibition at Ikon, revealing a shared human experience and community identity that has long been hidden from view.

Burke's extraordinary career as an artist has carried him from capturing the streets of Handsworth, Birmingham during the disturbances of the 1980s to recording black life at the end of apartheid in South Africa. Arriving in Britain in 1965, Burke has documented the experience of black people in the UK for over 45 years, producing what is regarded to be the greatest photographic record of African Caribbean people in post-war Britain.

Commenting on the project, Vanley Burke explained: "This flat is many things, it's an archive, it's a gallery, it's my home, it's where I collect a part of our history. History is part of a lived experience... it's those objects which might look so insignificant, so kitsch, but to a lot of people it contains so much information about how their parents lived."

A catalogue accompanies the exhibition – illustrated by the artist – alongside texts by Peter James, Curator of Photographs at Library of Birmingham, and artist Marlene Smith. *At Home with Vanley Burke* is supported by funds raised through *Art Happens*, the Art Fund's crowd-funding platform, and the Mill Dam Trust.

For more information, high-res images and to request interviews please contact Emma Gilhooly or Milly Carter Hepplewhite at Pelham Communications on 020 8969 3959 or email [emma@pelhamcommunications.com](mailto:emma@pelhamcommunications.com) or [milly@pelhamcommunications.com](mailto:milly@pelhamcommunications.com)

## Note to Editors:

1. Ikon is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art venue situated in central Birmingham. Established in 1964 by a group of artists, Ikon is an educational charity and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. The gallery programme features artists from around the world and a variety of media is represented, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation. Ikon's off-site programme develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom. Education is at the heart of Ikon's activities, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. Through a variety of talks, tours, workshops and seminars, Ikon's Learning Team aims to build dynamic relationships with audiences, enabling visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art.
2. Ikon is open Tuesday–Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am-5pm. Admission is free.
3. Ikon is supported using public funding by Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council.

# IKON

Ikon Gallery, 1 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2HS  
0121 248 0708 / [www.ikon-gallery.org](http://www.ikon-gallery.org)  
Open Tuesday-Sunday, 11am-5pm / free entry

4. For the latest news and events follow @ikongallery on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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Vanley Burke, Apartment (2014), Courtesy the artist and Ikon



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