

EXHIBITION GUIDE

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EXODUS CROOKS EPIPHANY (TEMPORAIRE)

9 FEBRUARY – 21 APRIL 2024

Ikon hosts Exodus Crooks' exhibition *Epiphany (Temporaire)*, commissioned by Ort Gallery and International Curators Forum (ICF), and curated by Orphée Kashala. Originally presented at Block 336, London, in Summer 2023, the exhibition includes sculpture, film, text and sculptural installation. For *Epiphany (Temporaire)*, Exodus has invested in a process of carving out (sometimes literally) dialogues from the layers of history, heritage and culture around them. Through an interrogation of domestic and familiar surfaces, Exodus is investigating the embodiment and repository of memories, histories and traditions, inherited, stored and transferred through time and shared space. A succession of profound experiences converges within the exhibition to form an allegory of personal stories of love, loss and shame.

Exodus Crooks is a British-Jamaican multidisciplinary artist, educator and writer whose practice centres the relationship with self. Observing the results of fractious domesticity, despair and passion, their art tends to appear as questions of self-actualisation and the role that religion and spirituality play in that journey to enlightenment. Based between the Midlands

IKON/60

Wednesday–Sunday, 11am–5pm
Free entry, donations welcome

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and North Jamaica, their art exists alongside their educational role. With themes of care, tenderness and reimagination at the core of their practice, Exodus uses gardening, text, filmmaking and installation to further explore indigenous thought.

Orphée Kashala is a UK-based Pan-African and Diasporic art curator and cultural producer. Kashala was selected in 2021 for the Emergence(y) project in Birmingham, an Ort Gallery and ICF residency provision for emerging curators to develop their practices. His curatorial practice is a recourse to art and artists as mediums to lead the collective interrogation, interpretation and reckoning with human complexity. Kashala leans into contradiction and complication to untangle an intrinsically resistant, liberated and decolonised counter-visibility.

EXHIBITION ARTWORKS

1. *The confession: part 1* (2022)

Photograph and text on Birch wood

The confession: part 1 is the first in a 2-part work that presents a conversation between Exodus and their God. This work centres the act of confessing and is an invitation to explore honesty with yourself and/or your deity, or yourself as a deity. The artist uses the layout of Carolee Schneemann's *Interior Scroll* (1975) to reference the experience of conversing with a man. The photographic text piece suggests the importance of mistakes in a space that wishes you attain unattainable perfection.

Exodus believes confessing to be a rite of passage in order to reach a state of higher knowledge and invites the audience to sit, be present and, if willing, exchange confessions for enlightenment.

A large-text transcript of this work is available – please ask an Information Assistant.

2. *The offerings that remain (2012–2023)*

Sketchbook pages, journals, notes and magazines

Archival material in two vitrines refers to Exodus' journey with self-identification, regarding both their spiritual and physical liberation. As the artist has continued to transition, both physically and spiritually, they have felt called to draw upon their earliest memories of embodied self-awareness. Becoming aware of, and celebrating, their appearance began with the Black hair and beauty magazines the artist would read as a child with their maternal aunt. Their inward and outward reflections on self are present in the material, creating a voyeuristic event where viewers are able to read and witness the artist explore who, where and how they are.

3. *Doing duties for Miss Dell (2023)*

Washing line, turf, underwear and bedsheet with text

In late 2022, Exodus woke up with a memory of them in the back garden of their maternal grandmother's home, also their childhood home. The artist remembers that they were doing their duty of hanging out the wet laundry on the clothesline. A mesh vest (marina), boxer shorts and a bedsheet with the words "and I'll never leave you, as long as God spare my life" painted onto the fabric hang on the line. This speaks to the relationship with the artist's matriarchal lineage, where chores and domestic duties were prioritised over or equated with the duty to love. This work has offered a reflection on the artist's relationship with maternal affection in Caribbean culture. As their grandmother ages, they are forced to reckon with her temporary presence on earth, especially when their grandmother follows their goodbyes with the phrase "as long as God spare my life".

The struggle to remember each detail of their dream became an act of trying to access the space between consciousness and unconsciousness; piecing together, tracing and holding on to what is temporary and therefore sacred. “The word remember (re-member) evokes the coming together of severed parts, fragments becoming whole” (Bell Hooks, 1995).

4. *Leti’guh* (2022-2023)

2-channel film, 9 minutes with open captions

Filmed in Jamaica, *Leti’guh* comments on the process of gathering, having, holding and letting go of ideas. The 9-minute film explores this act of letting go in two ways: as the launching and sharing of a new or old idea, allowing it to leave your mind, your heart and your sketchbook; and having to mourn for, bury and/or release an idea back into realms from where it came.

Both explorations of letting go require vulnerability. *Leti’guh* features Philip Ambokele Henry, an artist and Bishop’s son. As Ambokele slowly taught Exodus how to make a slingshot, they discussed their relationship with religion, spirituality and the life cycle of ideas.

5. *Y: the symbol of man* (2023)

Mixed media

Crafted under the guidance of Exodus’ mentor and friend, Philip Ambokele Henry, the fully functioning slingshot sits amongst a plethora of naturally formed Y-shape tree branches, also known as a crutch. Made using rubber, leather and a branch from a tree in Port Antonio, Jamaica, the slingshot is personified in the film *Leti’guh* (2022-2023) by Ambokele as he describes the slingshot as a symbol for man. As western discourses on gender continue to be complex and somewhat limited, the collection of slingshots are expressions of the many definitions of man, self and humanity that hold meaning for the artist.

6. *A message from my ancestors* (2022–2023)

Wooden wardrobe with carved text and rug underneath

A message from my ancestors uses the significance of the wardrobe, seen in biblical and magical contexts, to represent a portal to other worlds. In visiting their ancestral plane, the artist received a poem, originally titled *For your twelve-year-old self*. This installation consists of a small rug and a mahogany wardrobe, sourced from their childhood home, and the poem carved into the wardrobe using a rotary tool. The artist's relationship to working with natural materials stems from their training in calabash carving and their recent research into indigenous thought.

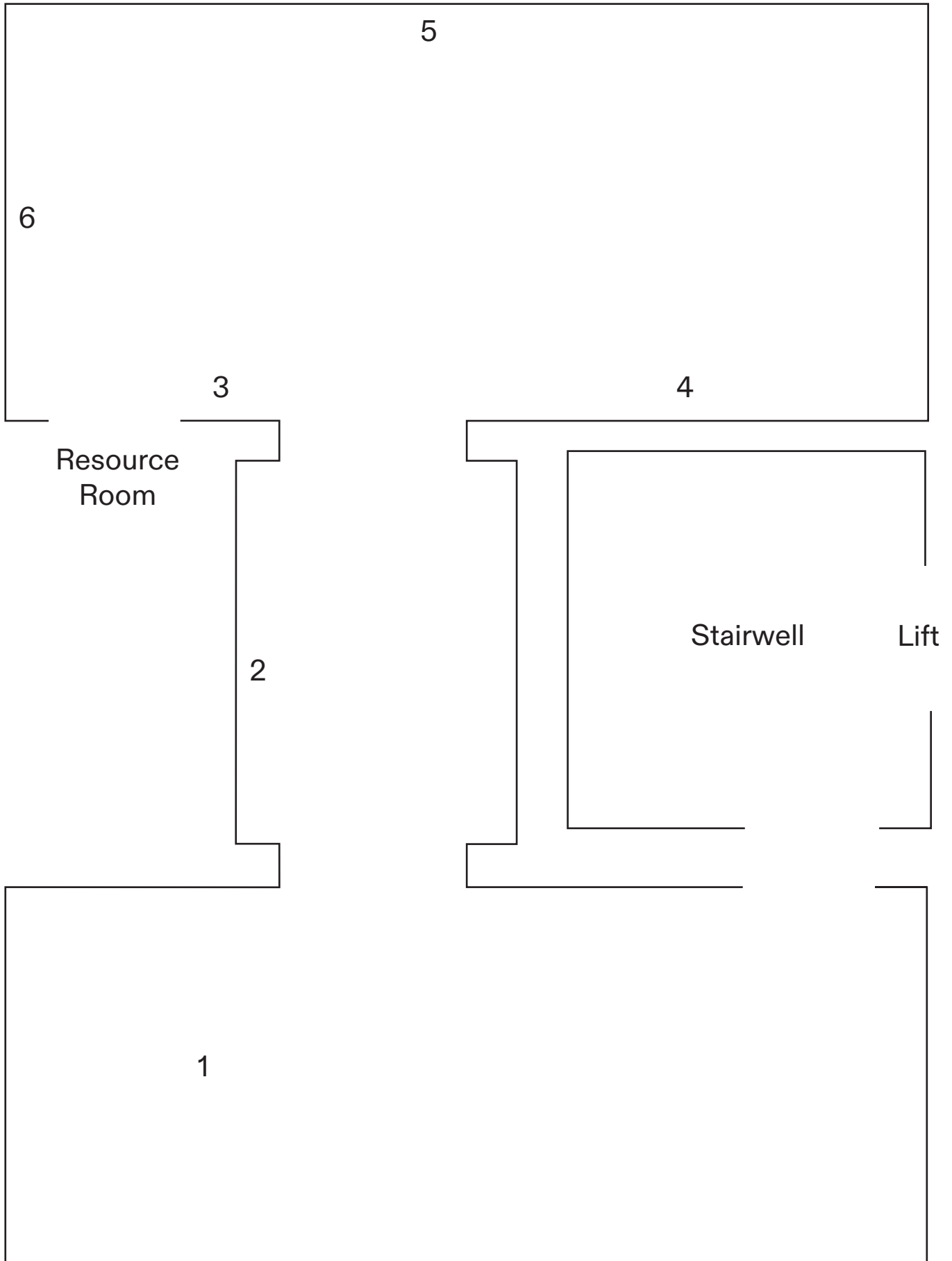
Ikon Resource Room

Visitors are invited to use this space to rest and reflect on the exhibition in a relaxed setting.

LIST OF WORKS

1. *The confession: part 1* (2022)
Photograph and text on Birch Wood
2. *The offerings that remain* (2012–2023)
Sketchbook pages, journals, notes and magazines
3. *Doing duties for Miss Dell* (2023)
Washing line, turf, clothes and bedsheet with text
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2-channel film, 9 minutes with open captions
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Mixed media
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Wooden wardrobe with carved text and rug underneath

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Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace,
Birmingham, B1 2HS
0121 248 0708 / ikon-gallery.org

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