

Re-imagining Cole symposium

October 20, 2018

Bodleian Libraries Weston Library, Broad Street, Oxford

Outline programme

The symposium will be delivered in two sessions. The morning session will commence with scene setting: an introduction to Cole to illustrate how his life intersected the complex intertwining of education, politics and race in the early twentieth-century exploring and examining the difficulties and barriers he encountered as a student at the illustrious University; the history of caricatures; Africans in caricatures; an exploration of Cole's images, and why these are thought to be the only images that exist.

The afternoon session will focus on re-imagining a new image of Cole.

9.30 – 10.00	Registration
10.00 – 10.05	Welcome
10.05 - 10.10	Introduction to the morning session
10.10 – 10.40	Introducing Christian Frederick Cole – Pamela Roberts FRSA Founder and Director of Black Oxford Untold Stories
10.40 – 11.20	Dr Temi Odumosu, Africans in English Caricature, 1769-1819: Black Jokes, White Humour
11.30 – 12.00	TEA/COFFEE
12.00 – 12.20	Dr Robin Darwall Smith, University College, University of Oxford: Cole at University College
12.20 – 12.40	Colin Harris, Superintendent, Bodleian Libraries: The Shrimpton Collection
12.40 – 13.00	Concluding remarks for the morning session
13.00 – 14.30	LUNCH
14.30 – 15.30	Introduction to the afternoon session: Re-Imagining Cole: Roundtable discussion with Robert Taylor, photographer: Portraits of Achievement series Dr Temi Odumosu Pamela Roberts Dr Robin Darwall Smith
15.30 – 15.45	Moving Forward Kenneth Tharp, Director of the Africa Centre
15.45 – 16.00	Evaluation and close

The **Re-Imagining Cole** symposium will examine the background, context and depictions of previously unseen caricatures of Christian Frederick Cole, Oxford University's first Black African Scholar 1873, and the first Black African to practise Law in the English High Court 1884. The symposium will explore why Cole and his historic achievements were only portrayed in the form of parodies, given Cole contemporaries were afforded the respect and visibility of their accomplishments commemorated through portraits or statues. The symposium will also examine the broader issues of race and representation in portrait art and caricatures. Finally, the symposium will pose the following questions:

Should Cole's image be re-imagined, if so, why?

What should a re-imagined image tell an audience, who decides?

With a panel of art historians, artists and academics including:

Dr Temi Odumosu, Malmo University, Africans in English Caricature, 1769-1819: Black Jokes, White Humour.

Dr Temi Odumosu is an art historian, educator, and cultural strategist focussed on diversifying and transforming communications practices. Drawing on her doctoral research, at the University of Cambridge, Oumosu explored how British artists employed African characters and ultimately created influential stereotypes in caricatures and satirical prints from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Her international research and curatorial interventions have been concerned with identity politics, Black aesthetics, and the psychosocial consequences of distorted representations.

Dr Robin Darwall-Smith, University College, University of Oxford: A History of University College, Oxford.

Dr Robin Darwall-Smith, Archivist at University College. Darwall-Smith is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. He has also published extensively on aspects of the history of Oxford and its colleges. Dr Darwall-Smith will set the scene to provide a contextual background to University College's history during the period Cole attended the college.

Robert Taylor, Photographer: Portraits of Achievement Series

Robert Taylor has published and exhibited widely over the last 30 years, with work in the V&A, the National Portrait Gallery and several other permanent collections. Following service in the RAF and then being called to the Bar, his friendship with the photographer Rotimi Fani Kayode was a major influence in his decision to become a photographer himself.

Robert's current practice divides between collections of portraits commissioned by academic and scientific institutions including the Royal Society, and Oxford University colleges celebrating landmark anniversaries such as the first admission of women into hitherto all male institutions. He has also undertaken many self-initiated projects, some exploring the relationship between image and text in forming an image's interpretation, others centred around identity, including an ongoing series initiated by an ICA commission – of portraits of Black British practitioners across the arts.

Colin Harris, Bodleian Libraries: The Shrimpton Collection

Colin Harris was the former superintendent of the Bodleian's Special Collections Reading Rooms in the Weston Library within the Bodleian Libraries. He is a leading authority on the work of the Shrimpton caricatures and catalogue, where the Cole caricatures are held. Harris will provide a contextual background to Shrimpton, the catalogues and commentary on Cole's caricatures.

Kenneth Tharp CBE, Director of the Africa Centre

Kenneth Tharp is a key figure in the UK arts and culture scene with over 35 years professional experience in the sector. He began his career as a dancer; as one of the leading dance artists of his generation, he performed for 13 years with the internationally-acclaimed London Contemporary Dance Theatre and then with other leading companies during a 25-year career as a performer, choreographer, teacher and director. Tharp was appointed as the new director of the Africa Centre in April. The centre is the cultural space dedicated to the African diaspora in the UK.

Pamela Roberts FRSA, Founder and Director of Black Oxford Untold Stories

Pamela Roberts is an award-winning creative producer, historian, author, playwright and founder and director of Artistry. Artistry came into existence to produce Breaking the Illusions: International Black Media Festival to provide a showcase for emerging and established filmmakers. Roberts has received numerous awards for her work, including being recognised for outstanding contribution to media by H.R.H the Queen of England in 2004.

Artistry specialises in delivering Black heritage projects that challenge the traditional narratives of Black heritage and history to illustrate a new or different perspective. One of Artistry's initiative is Black Oxford: Untold Stories which celebrates the contributions and legacies of the University of Oxford's Black scholars from the turn of the 20th century to the present day.

Roberts's efforts to raise the profile of pioneering Black scholars, both through her work at Black Oxford and her book, *Black Oxford: The Untold Stories of Oxford University's Black Scholars*, resulted last year in the achievement and unveiling of a plaque at University College, University of Oxford, to honour Christian Frederick Cole.



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