

Burden of Proof (Windrush) Focus Group Call Out

Are you a resident of the Whitworth's local community with lived experience of 'Windrush'? Would you be happy to share your stories in this focus group? Do you want to look at ways in which your lived experience can help others?

We are putting together a focus group of people aged over fifty with lived experience of Empire Windrush. This focus group will come together to respond to Barbara Walker's series of work called Burden of Proof, to share their personal experiences of Windrush. The group will work with an artist to develop a resource from the stories that will hopefully be of benefit for families responding to the Windrush compensation processes.

We propose that the Burden of Proof Focus Group meets twice together over a two-hour session. With an additional session taking place with the Louder than Words Focus Group to explore both themes, Windrush and Stop & Search, from fresh perspectives. The focus group sessions will be first introduced by gallery staff and then led by a local artist with lived experience of Windrush.

Outline of Sessions:

- Session 1: Introduction to Barbara Walker's exhibition, define the role of the focus group and finalise the artist's commission. One from focus group to sit on artist shortlist/interview panel with Claire Cowell (Age-friendly Producer) & Hannah Vollam (Assistant Curator)
- Session 2: Led by commissioned artist supported by Claire Cowell and Hannah Vollam
- Session 3: Joint session bringing together older and young people.

This is an intergenerational project, drawing inspiration from Barbara Walker's two series of work, 'Burden of Proof' and 'Louder than Words'. It is proposed that we commission two artists, with a socially engaged practise, to explore the impact of both 'Windrush' and 'Stop and Search' across local generations.

Dates TBC:

Wed 24th September 5pm - Deadline for getting in touch to be part of the focus group.

Thursday 26th Sept 4-6pm – Meet artist Barbara Walker to be finalised

October – Session 2 TBC

Early November – Joint Session 3 date tbc

Barbara Walker

The Whitworth is excited about the forthcoming Barbara Walker exhibition this Autumn.

Growing up in Birmingham, Walker's personal experiences with issues of class, race, power and belonging have shaped her practice. She makes work that ranges from small, embossed works on paper, to large-scale wall drawings. Intensely observed and empathetic, her work gives a powerful presence to Black communities and culture in art history.

Centred on concepts of visibility and erasure, the exhibition will bring together paintings, prints and drawings from across Walker's career, including her most recent Turner Prize nominated series Burden of Proof (2022-23).

If you would like to be part of the focus group contact claire.cowell@manchester.ac.uk.