

reminding us that ships launched in the name of western democracy and 'civilisation' were essentially vehicles for unfair trade. Here the mannequins are an uncanny presence, silently watching their own 'holiday movie'.

## Second Floor Galleries

*Hinterland* (2013) literally invokes 'a land behind' with a reworked photograph of a statue of Queen Victoria in Georgetown, Guyana. Emblematic of his upbringing, between Britain and Guyana, Locke hints at the country's tumultuous relationship with its past. Removed in 1970 and dumped in the undergrowth of Georgetown's Botanical Gardens, the statue was subjected to a kind of dethroning, symptomatic of Guyana's then burgeoning socialist republic, only to be reinstated in 1990 in front of the city's Supreme Court of Judicature.

As the only South American country in which English is the official language, Guyana is a member of the Commonwealth, headed by the current British monarch. Her profile is recognisable within *Untitled (Orange Queen)* (2009) that, part of the series *House of Windsor* (2002-08), is a portrait encased within kitsch accessories. Adorned with plastic jewellery, toys and greenery, it is a response to globalisation and a proliferation of cheap goods transported by sea in the 1990s. Locke observes:

*I like how it looks. It is aspirational - in that I try to take the cheapest thing I can find and work it to make it look precious. The irony here is that the material I am using - such as the golden plastic toy weapons and jewellery - are trying to look expensive.*

Shelved at the far end of the room are the works titled *Souvenirs* (2018-19). Essentially busts representing members of the British Royal Family (Queen Victoria, Princess Alexandra and Edward VII), the base material of the work is Parian – a porcelain imitating marble manufactured by Copeland in Stoke-on-Trent. Locke has adorned the figures with handmade and found materials, including clay skulls and metal masks, cowrie-shells (the currency historically used in the slave

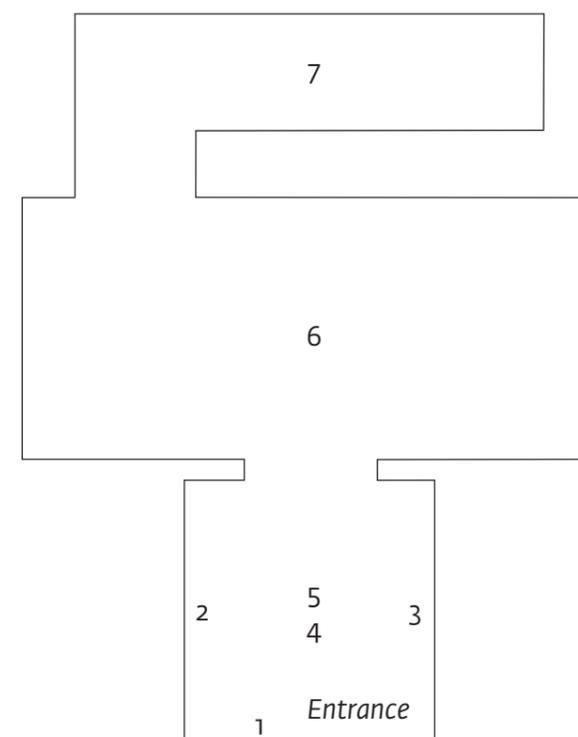
trade) and military medals, such as the 1st Birmingham Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

Various antique gold loan documents can be seen in the next gallery, such as *Chinese Imperial Gold Loan 13* (2017). The work presents histories of trade and colonial power, drawing out the exploitative nature of these economies. Another layering of imagery and text can be seen here, with the African continent divided, and consequently commodified, with borders replaced by the lines of a jigsaw puzzle. The surrounding wallpaper enlarges the small print for all to see. The inclusion of the *Greek Government Refugee Loan 1924 2* (2019) draws parallels between the crisis then and now.

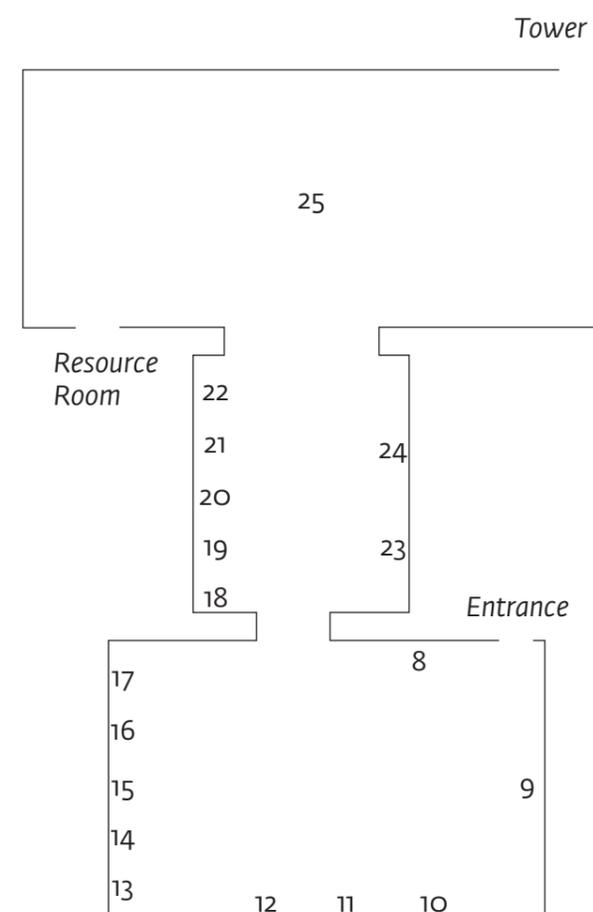
The historic architecture of Guyana is referenced through a series of prints, overworked by the artist with acrylic paint, with focus on the stilted house. Much of Guyana is below sea level and, despite the protection of a sea wall, flooding is common. Since his childhood, Locke has seen the wooden houses fall into a state of disrepair and slowly replaced by brightly coloured 'concrete baroque' architecture. Another set of fantastical drawings, of the houses on boats, reference a way of life that is slowly dying.

The finale of the exhibition presents an installation of boats either built or customised by the artist titled *Armada* (2019), comprised of new ships and five featured in the installation *On the Tethys Sea*, part of the Diaspora Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2017. Crew and passengers are noticeably absent from these models, but other details abound. Close looking reveals UN medals and references to the current refugee crisis. As well as ships on ships – including a small souvenir of the HMT Empire Windrush and a model of the Mayflower, on board a wooden raft. Here we see the accumulation of a vast history of migration, which Locke sees endlessly returning into the politics of the present day.

## First Floor Galleries



## Second Floor Galleries



## List of Works

1. *Island Queen* (2003), charcoal and pastel on paper. Courtesy private collection, London.
2. *HMS Belfast* (2012), acrylic paint and ink on c-type photograph. Courtesy IWM (Imperial War Museums).
3. *Huan Tian Xi Di* (2016), acrylic paint and ink on c-type photograph.
4. *Armada boat 6* (2019), mixed media sculpture.
5. *Armada boat 16* (2019), mixed media sculpture.
6. *The Nameless* (2010), cord and plastic beads.
7. *The Tourists* (2015), mixed media and film.
8. *Untitled (Orange Queen)* (2009), mixed media sculpture. Courtesy private collection, London.
9. *Hinterland* (2013), acrylic paint on c-type photograph.
10. *Sixth Street, Alberttown* (2018), acrylic paint and ink on c-type photograph.
11. *Vreed-en-Hoop* (2018), acrylic paint and ink on c-type photograph.
12. *Station Street, Georgetown* (2018), acrylic paint and ink on c-type photograph.
13. *Souvenir 1 (Queen Victoria)* (2018), mixed media on C19th Copeland Parian bust.
14. *Souvenir 4 (Princess Alexandra)* (2019), mixed media on C19th Copeland Parian bust.
15. *Souvenir 2 (Edward VII in Masonic Regalia)* (2019), mixed media on C19th Copeland Parian bust.
16. *Souvenir 5 (Albert Edward, Prince of Wales)* (2019), mixed media on C19th Copeland Parian bust.
17. *Souvenir 6 (Princess Alexandra)* (2019), mixed media on C19th Copeland Parian bust.
18. *Chinese Imperial Gold Loan 12* (2017), acrylic on original antique share certificate.
19. *Chinese Imperial Gold Loan 13* (2017), acrylic on original antique share certificate.
20. *Chinese Imperial Gold Loan 14* (2019), acrylic on original antique share certificate.
21. *Greek Government Refugee Loan 1924 2* (2019), acrylic on original antique share certificate.
22. *Chinese Imperial Gold Loan 11* (2017), acrylic on original antique share certificate.
23. *Guyana House Boat 5* (2018), watercolour on paper.
24. *Guyana House Boat 2* (2018), watercolour on paper.
25. *Armada* (2019), mixed media sculptures.

**Lin Ke**  
*Fly*  
**8 March — 2 June**

### **Tower Room, Second Floor**

Please note the Tower Room is only accessible via a number of steps

Ikon presents *Fly* (2016), a recent performance video by Lin Ke. It features a young Chinese artist facing a laptop camera, his meditative position foiled by the irritating movement of his mouse cursor as if it were a flying insect. Working within the boundaries of his computer desktop, in a room of his own, the artist is at the same time networked into a globalised virtual world that is clearly not conducive to relaxation.

Lin Ke was born in the eastern coastal province of Zhejiang, China (1984). After studying at the new media department, China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, he graduated in 2008. Now living and working in Beijing, Lin Ke uses his laptop as a studio and experimental testing ground, constantly testing its possibilities and limitations. He uses software not as a technical means to achieve a complex effect or aesthetic, rather as a catalyst for art making. The results are refreshingly low-tech and beguiling, blurring the boundaries between the virtual and the real with an artistic language that is dryly humorous.

In these days of the proliferation of 'the selfie' Lin Ke's webcam videos encourage reflection on the nature of the representation of our online selves. For many of us, social media, the internet and our digital devices are indispensable means through which we engage with external realities and this understanding informs his work overall. We easily identify with him when he explains that his computer "is like my personal assistant helping me discover different kinds of possibilities, while also being a sort of guide, since its limits become my own."

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# **I K O N**

## **Exhibition Guide**

***Hew Locke: Here's the Thing***  
**8 March — 2 June**

This is the most comprehensive exhibition to date of work by British artist Hew Locke. Involving a wide range of media – painting, drawing, photography, sculpture and installation – Locke explores the languages of colonial and post-colonial power, and the symbols through which different cultures assume and assert identity. Fusing historical source material with a keen interest in current affairs, often through the juxtaposition or modification of existing artefacts, Locke focuses attention especially on the UK, the monarchy and his childhood home Guyana, which gained its independence in the 1960s.

### **First Floor Galleries**

In the first gallery, Locke introduces a recurring theme of the exhibition – the ship. Carriers of countless possible meanings, they evoke centuries of warfare, trade and strategies of cultural imperialism, returning within the present day and holding personal significance for the artist:

*Guyana means 'land of many waters' – you are constantly aware of boats. I went to Guyana as a five-year-old kid on a boat. I came back here on a boat. So many things, good and bad, travel by sea.*

*HMS Belfast* (2012) is a photographic print embellished with acrylic paint and ink, showing the iconic ship surrounded by aircraft from the 1950s and present day. Conserved as a piece of cultural heritage, Locke reimagines its rusted hulk as "being battered through time". The light cruiser floats beneath a coat of arms which includes the seahorse insignia of the ship's namesake city.

Opposite is a photographic print of *Huan*

*Tian Xi Di* (2016), a traditional Chinese cargo ship that visited Britain in 2012. The ship was scheduled to join the diamond jubilee pageant, missing the regatta because of a delay at the Suez Canal. The Shard, seen in the background of the image, references the vessel's trip along the Thames.

*Island Queen* (2003) is a charcoal and pastel drawing of Queen Elizabeth II, the British monarch of Locke's lifetime. It was made five days before the Iraq War, in direct response to the impending conflict around weapons of mass destruction.

Between the prints sit model ships, including the USS Constitution, a heavy frigate used in the War of Independence and to oppose the slave trade, which Locke has decorated with Benin masks, a recurring motif, from an ancient West African kingdom annexed by the British Empire in the late 19th century.

On entering the second gallery we are encompassed by *The Nameless* (2010), made of cord and plastic beads, a processional walk of unlikely characters. Part animal, part human, the figures march to the tambourine, clapping hands, clarinet, drum and trumpet. Winged creatures associated with heraldic imagery are visible, including cherubim and seraphim, often used in funeral adornment. Death is central to the scrolling graphic, notably through the skeletal figures and Kalashnikovs assault rifles, a cliché of global conflict. For Locke the work discloses cultural iconography, re-presented here "as a collection of wall drawings referencing tapestries which have been half ripped down".

*The Tourists* (2015) recasts Locke's artistic intervention on board HMS Belfast, permanently moored on the Thames as part of the Imperial War Museum. A year before it was decommissioned in 1962, HMS Belfast visited the Caribbean, stopping at Trinidad on its final voyage. Locke conjures up an alternative history for museum mannequins, preparing costumes and props to Calypso music as part of the Trinidad Carnival. The gesture hints at an 'exotic' alternative to the regimented daily life of sailors, whilst