

PRESS RELEASE: For immediate release

Mo'Lasses IV

Philomena Francis

4 April – 6 June 2009

Opening Preview: 3 April 2009

Chelsea College of Art & Design graduate Philomena Francis exhibits her latest installation Mo'Lasses IV as part of her Mo'Lasses series at The City Gallery, Leicester from 4 April – 6 June 2009.

Taking inspiration and influence from a variety of colonial and popular reference points, Philomena Francis creates astonishing installations based around treacle wall drawings to illustrate the ways in which the black female body is understood in the twenty-first century.

Brown sugar has connotations of black female sexuality in popular culture and historically sugar, from which treacle is derived, played a vital economic role in the slave trade. The paints that Francis uses refer to the Georgian middle classes who drove the sugar industry.

Through these reference points, Francis suggests the complexity and contradictions of black female identity in contemporary society. She is also interested in pushing beyond the traditions of drawing and painting by moving into a much more immediate, sensory realm. The treacle fills the space with its wonderful, tainted aroma and is powerfully evocative.

The various media Francis uses are a key element of her work. The rough canvas used in the wall hangings of Francis' 'Brown Sugar Series' were reminiscent of the sacks used to transport sugar processed in small mills during Philomena's father's childhood in Jamaica.

The use of black treacle is also reminiscent of the liquid produced in the sugar refining process. Such cultural references continue to intrigue Francis and black treacle has emerged as the main medium through which she creates site-specific installations such as the Mo'Lasses series on show at The City Gallery.

Previous exhibitions include Rivington Place, London (Institute of International Visual Arts commission) and Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, Portugal.

Philomena Francis was born in 1969 in London to parents of Caribbean origin. She studied Fine Art Theory and Practice at Chelsea College of Art & Design and graduated in 2006 with a first class honours degree.

- Ends -

Notes to editors:

1. For more details on Philomena Francis including biography, artist statement and previous exhibitions visit www.philomenafrancis.com
2. Also showing at The City Gallery is The Hitcher, Chris Coekin from 4 April – 6 June 2009.
3. The opening preview for The Hitcher, Chris Coekin and Molasses IV, Philomena Francis takes place on 3 April 2009 from 6.00pm – 8.00pm (Invitation only). For an invitation please contact James Hickford on the details below.

Visitor information:

Mo'Lasses IV
Philomena Francis
4 April – 6 June 2009
The City Gallery, Leicester

Opening times:

Tuesday – Friday: 11.00am – 6.00pm
Saturday: 10.00am – 5.00pm
Closed: Sundays, Mondays and Bank Holidays

Free admission

Images:

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