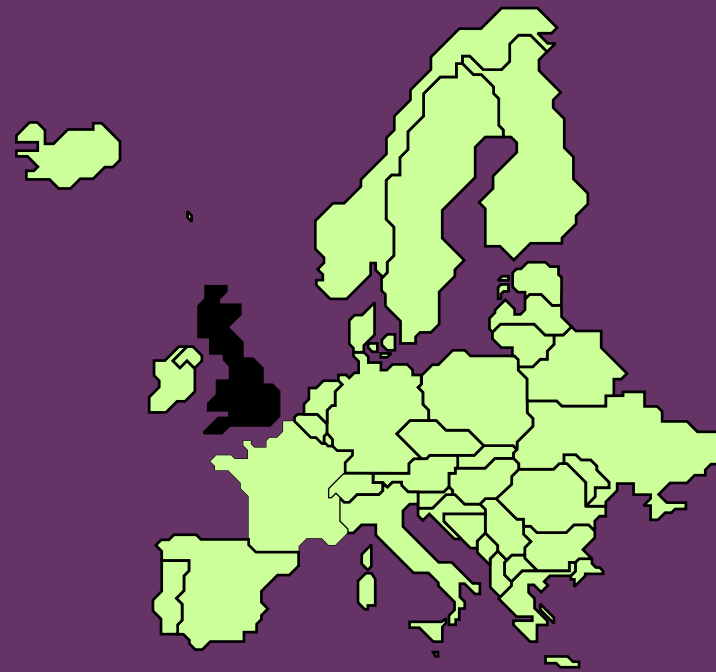


Listen [here](#) for voice note:
Click [here](#) for audio transcript



**LEEDS,
UNITED KINGDOM**

Tuesday 14 March 2023 So Mayer Event

After a week in Paris and some time to take notes, watch more films and just digest all of these thoughts and ideas, I'm now back in Leeds, UK. Today, the super impressive [So Mayer](#) came to Leeds for an event: [Inclusive Cinema: A Queer Feminist Workshop](#) as part of an initiative by Leeds University, New Voices in Cinephilia. I had to voice note my thoughts to myself as my brain was busting after the session.

Friday 17 March 2023 Meeting with Sifiso Khanyile

After watching [MK, Mandela's Secret Army](#) in FESPACO, I caught up with the film's director Osvalde Lewat to ask her about the inclusion of archive footage in the film. She advised me to speak to South African archive researcher, filmmaker and artist, Sifiso Khanyile. This connection turned out to be so insightful and informative, and we had a brilliant 2 hour zoom conversation. Sifiso said that the archive footage from the

MK film was relatively easy to source, and easily accessed. ANC did a good job on documenting themselves, keeping archives and as a result their collected footage is widely accessible. Our conversation mostly focused on consent, rights of archives and access to archives.

Further Info:

- [GSA Radio: Black-Magic Series | Podcast 02 w/Sifiso Khanyile](#)
- [Black Optics! Screen Representations of Black life in South Africa](#)
- [Politics of archives and struggles for emancipation: Reflecting on experiences from Middle East and Southern Africa](#)

One of our topics of conversation was on release forms and consent forms, reflecting on the footage of my family in the VILLON archive.

If there is no paperwork of consent, can the ownership be contested?

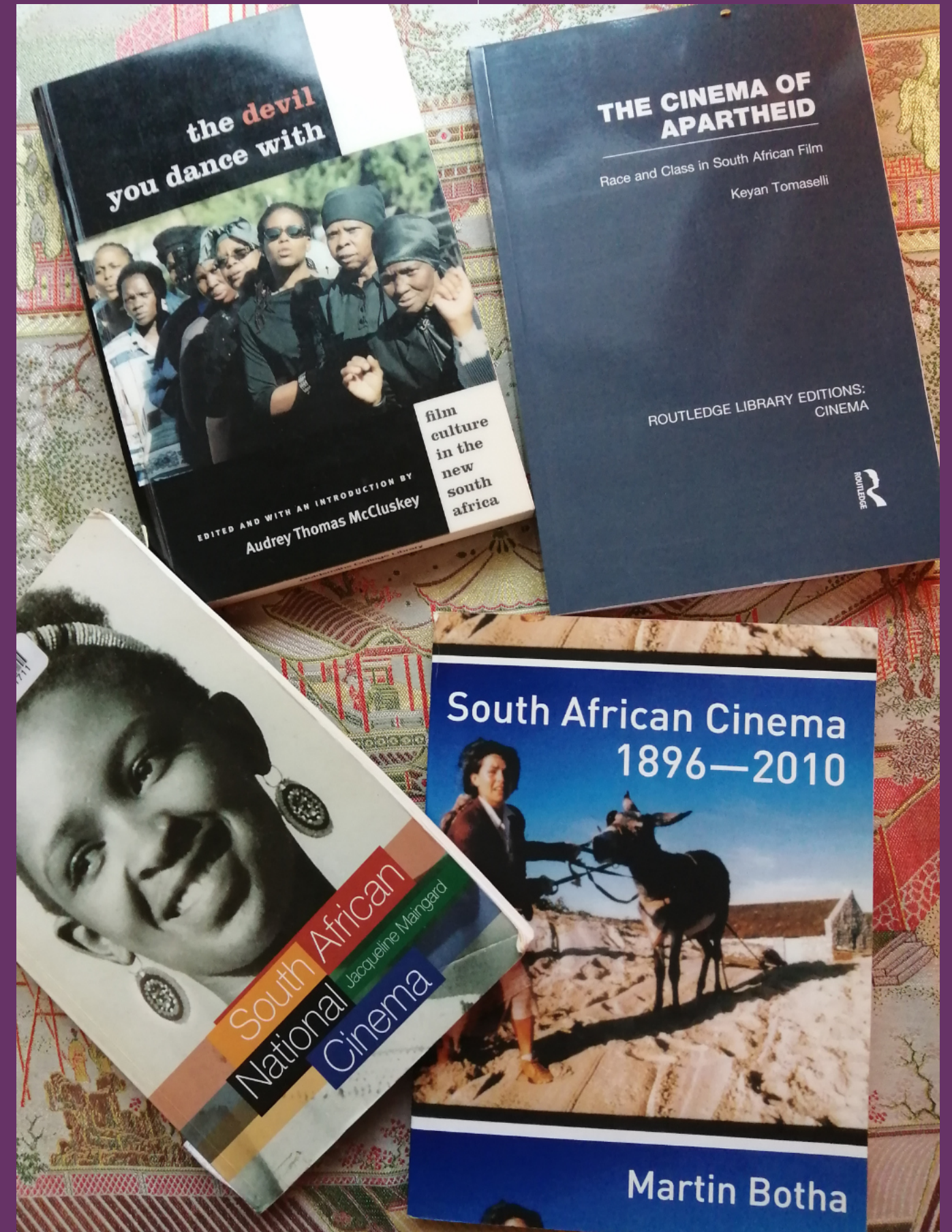
In the colonial/apartheid era, how much do we want to bet that consent of Black subjects wasn't a priority? Also, ownership of content also means control of representation. If we don't own our own images then we don't control how we are portrayed. Our own representation becomes subjective. Someone could take my family's footage and use it to say whatever they like, is that right? Is that artistic licence? The Black people that were cast in apartheid propaganda and subsidised films, did they really know what they were consenting to?

Archives are not willing to give up rights, and in some cases even when the 50 years have passed, the owners are still making sales off the content. [Disney](#) has consistently extended its rights over its content. How does this play out in the restitution debate? We discussed that theoretically the archives might join in this conversation in conferences, but ultimately few are willing to give up rights or increase access. We

talked about Getty Images, and how sometimes when you approach them to use footage, they might not know who the footage belongs to, but they have hold of it. Then you have to pay an access fee (at a similar rate to the licence fee) and sign a waiver to say that you don't know who the footage belongs to.

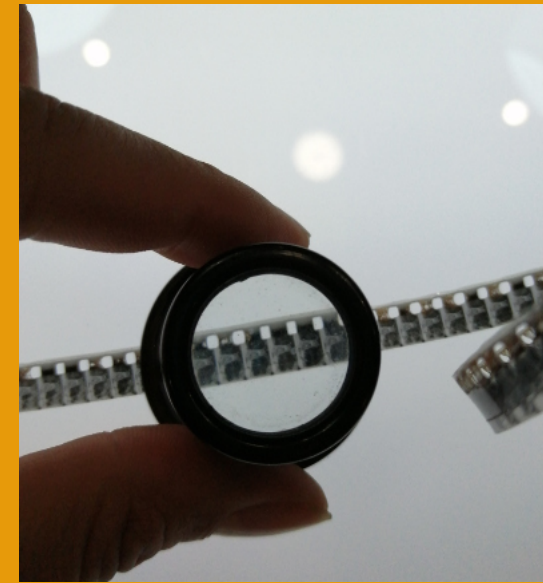
Surely if we do not know who it belongs to it should just go back to the National Archives?

We also talked about the romanticization of the same African content, the same Getty Images, the same African auteurs because of an intellectual laziness. Without recognising we are only touching the surface. We are reusing images of success and we are scared of using the gaps, and doing the work to find the hidden archives. It reminds me of what So said in their presentation, there is speculative archive to be used, creatively. We can repurpose the archive and use the archive to change the narrative.



Wednesday 22 March 2023 Handling Film archive course

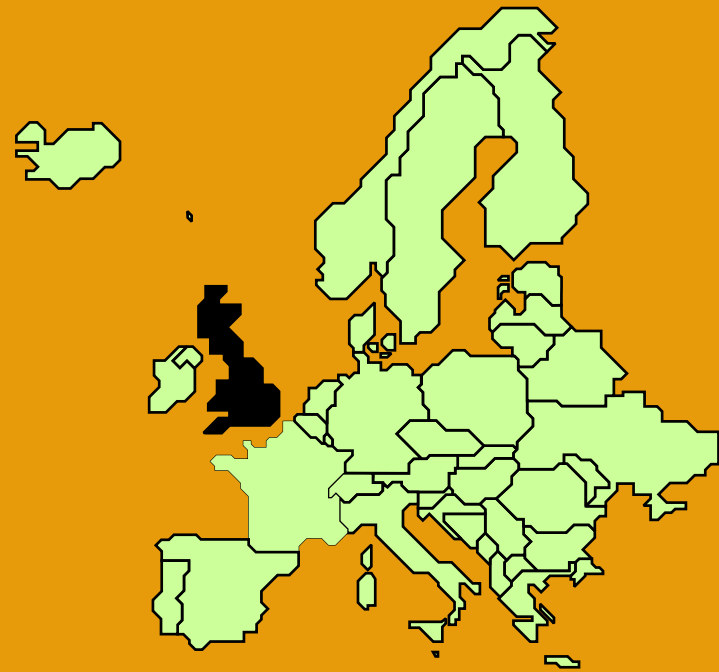
I booked onto a day course on 'Identifying and handling archive film' by Film London. The course itself was a great entry level breakdown on film formats, how to identify different types of format, the history of film and how to handle the materials. The group I was with varied between archives who didn't know what to do with their film content, and those who wanted a refresher. I think myself and one other person there were the only independent learners.



It was interesting to speak to the London archives and I had a fabulous day. I ended having a lot of conversations about ethics, and when I shared my research interests, the archives I spoke to were really curious and felt that the topics were pertinent – which was validating. We talked a lot about who should look after the archive, with regards to both who has the actual resources to do the job, and who has the cultural connection and awareness to be the best custodian.

Can responsibility of an archive that has come about through chance or default, and without purpose, result in a lack of care or misunderstanding of the archive?

There is something in identity politics and work responsibility that I want to interrogate. I think ultimately there are different types of connection: emotional, historical, political, professional, cultural etc.



LONDON,
UNITED KINGDOM

How connected should you be to the archive you are a custodian for?

**Thursday 23 March 2023
June Givanni Archive**

I used some time to volunteer at the [June Givanni Pan African Cinema Archive](#) to help with the up and coming major exhibition - [PerAnkh](#). I knew June already as she kindly joined a panel I ran in [Cinema Rediscovered 2022](#) on '[Preservation of Access: Deconstructing Ownership of and Access to Global South Archive Film](#)'. I spent two days locating and logging materials for the exhibition, and quite selfishly soaking up all of June's incredible stories and rooting around the archive.

It was helpful to be in a literal educational resource of a room in order to immerse myself in past efforts to elevate African film. There was so much content on programmers, filmmakers, festivals and critics who have innovatively brought African cinema to new



audiences. It was an inspiring place, and helpful to know that this effort has long existed, and isn't going anywhere. It reminds me of a conversation I had with [Inney Prakash](#) (a brilliant speaker in the FIAF conference in Paris) about celebrating past curators and their programmes, as those who programme 'niche' work are integral to the work being seen, and should be recognised. This archive was a celebration of people who care about African film.

How can we better celebrate past film curators and programmers in the archive?

In addition, it was a different type of archive from that which I had spent time in before, coming from audio visual archives from the continent. The majority of content here being documents, letters, publications, posters and film tapes; Archive content surrounding the film exhibition sector, rather than just the film content themselves. I could easily see myself working in an archive, film, learning and number systems – what's not to love!?

**Thursday 30 March 2023
We Are Parable**

It's the last weekend of my research window, although I can easily see this is just the continuation of a journey, thankfully with no end in sight. I went to London to celebrate the 10th birthday of [We Are Parable](#) with UK sector colleagues, friends and also some special guests, new FESPACO friends Hawa Essuman and Neigeme Glasgow-Maeda.



Aside from speeches and cake, we also had screenings and a presentation by Hawa's Manyatta Screenings. One of the most pertinent points that came out of the conversation was a question from the audience – “How can the diaspora support the continent?” The immediate response was – “Send money!”

It is a thought that has crossed my mind more than once, and in conversation with my dad in South Africa we discussed how it can feel hard approaching problems on the continent from a diaspora lens. You automatically feel like an outsider, and at worst, part of the problem. I believe the reason why I am interested in African cinema in the first place is to feel better connected to my heritage, but also to give myself knowledge and therefore permission to have a stake in its future. I'm learning that no one can give me permission to be South African, nor tell me that I am not South African enough. I'm gradually understanding that it is up to me to

decide how I feel and who I am, and ultimately to overthink this is a distraction away from progressive work I could be doing.

I've been so inspired by the people I have met, and the conversations I have had, and I absolutely cannot wait to continue this thread in the future, which is still unknown, but that's okay, the journey is perfect.

