

Arcadia Missa ï

Onyeka Igwe
The Miracle on George Green

6 June - 31 July 2024

Private view: 6 June 2024, 6 - 8pm

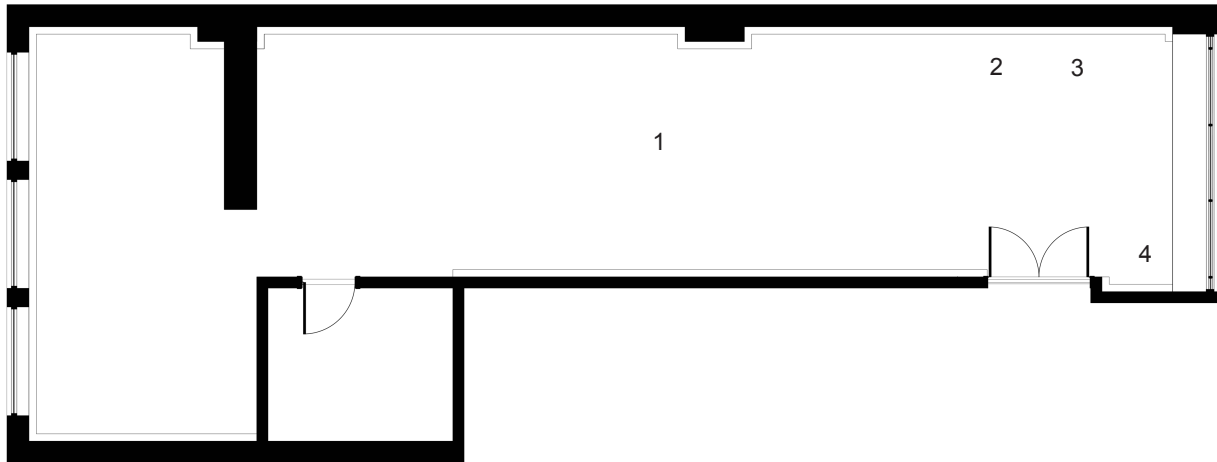
Specialising in moving image and installation, Onyeka Igwe weaves together text, images, and archival materials to create non-fiction films with complex narratives. Her work often draws into question: How do we live together? But rather than providing a single definitive answer, her aim is to explore the intricate complexities of mutuality in a world that emphasises individualism. Central to Igwe's artistic practice is an examination of sensorial, spatial, and counter-hegemonic forms of knowledge. She delves into the realms of the body, archives, and both oral and written narratives as vehicles for inquiry, enabling the revelation of neglected histories and marginalised stories. This solo presentation marks Igwe's first exhibition at Arcadia Missa, and the UK debut of her film *The Miracle on George Green* (2022), which anchors the exhibition.

The Miracle on George Green explores the UK's tradition of the common - spaces collectively owned and utilised for community engagement, gathering, playing and debating. The film revolves around the George Green treehouse in East London, symbolising a collective memory of resistance and community. During the early 1990s, the 250 year old sweet chestnut tree faced destruction, sparking a global letter-writing campaign to save it. The campaign drew masses nation-wide to join local Wantstead groups in their fight to preserve the tree and the area's landscape. From this story, Igwe expands the film to include her own recollections of protests and archival materials from various social collective sites such as: the 17th century Diggers, radical summer camps in Upstate New York in the 1930s and 40s, Greenham Common's anti-war protest in the 1980s, squatting communities in the 1990s and the outdoor raves of the 2000s.

Using image and sound, Igwe presents these intertwined histories as a map of how we understand the past, present and potential futures. The film sits at the centre of the gallery on a cladded wall, alongside materials collected by Igwe in her research for the film, transporting viewers to the commons that foster a culture of resistance, joy and contemplation. The installation celebrates the resilience of communities, highlighting the significance of shared spaces through sharing letters and memories of the Green. Igwe's work reflects on the ongoing vitality of collective resistance, inviting audiences to consider the relevance of these actions today.

Onyeka Igwe (b. 1986, London, UK) Igwe's recent exhibitions include the Nigerian Pavilion, Venice Biennale, IT (2024), *history is a living weapon in yr hand*, Bonington Gallery, Nottingham, UK (2024), Lagos Biennial, Tafawa Balewa Square, Lagos, NG (2024), *A Repertoire of Protest (No Dance, No Palaver)*, MoMA PS1, New York, US (2023); *The Miracle on George Green*, Highline, New York, US (2022); a so-called archive, LUX, London, UK (2021); *The real story is what's in that room*, Mercer Union, Toronto, CA (2021); *There Were Two Brothers*, Jerwood Arts, London, UK (2019); *Corrections* (with Aliya Pabani), Trinity Square Video, Toronto, CA (2018) and more.

Arcadia Missa ii



1- 4 (left to right):

Onyeka Igwe
The Miracle on George Green, 2022
HD video with sound
12 minutes, 9 seconds
(#1/5)

Onyeka Igwe
Letter 1, 2024
Ink on paper
53 x 41.5cm, framed
20 7/8 x 16 3/8 inches, framed
(AP3)

Onyeka Igwe
Letter 2, 2024
Ink on paper
37.5 x 51.5cm, framed
14 3/4 x 20 1/4 inches, framed
(AP3)

Onyeka Igwe
Letter 3, 2024
Ink on paper
37.5 x 73.5cm, framed
14 3/4 x 29 inches, framed
(AP3)