

GRT TALKS & DISCUSSIONS - WEDNESDAY 30TH SEPTEMBER 2020 - ONLINE

GYPSY MAKER 4 ONLINE

WITH

ISAAC BLAKE, CAS HOLMES,
DAN TURNER AND DANIEL BAKER

2020



ROMANI
CULTURAL & ARTS COMPANY

DELEGATE GUIDE

WEDNESDAY 30TH SEPTEMBER 2020 – ONLINE WITH G39



Dear Delegate,

The Romani Cultural & Arts Company is proud to announce an evening of talks and discussions in association with g39. The event takes place to mark the end of the latest Gypsy Maker exhibition tour of new works by the artists Cas Holmes and Dan Turner. These exciting exhibitions of newly commissioned artworks are the latest in the RCAC's groundbreaking Gypsy Maker project—an initiative that supports the development of innovative works by established and emerging Gypsy, Roma and Traveller artists. The Gypsy Maker project expands the work of the RCAC by continuing to engage GRT communities and the wider public in ongoing dialogue about the ways in which art continues to inform the lives of individuals and communities today.

Cas Holmes trained in fine art and currently works with textiles and mixed media. She is the author of several books for Batsford Publications including *Stitch Stories* (2015) and *Textile Landscape: Painting with Cloth* (2018). The transient nature of Holmes' work and process underpins her compulsion to engage with our built environment and natural landscapes—with people and place.

'The opportunity to work with and be mentored by the Gypsy Maker 4 project allows me to pause to reflect on my identity and mixed heritage. With migration, changes in our working lives and increasing opportunities to travel, certainties about who we are and our place in the world are in flux.' Cas Holmes

Dan Turner is an artist and educator. A Romani Gypsy, born in Dartford, Kent, Turner attended St Martins School of Art where he studied Sculpture. His work recently appeared in FUTUROMA at the Venice Biennale in 2019. By using Transactional Objects which have significance across cultures, Turner examines how Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultures meet and interact with the dominant culture.

'Working with the RCAC on its Gypsy Maker project provides a unique opportunity that is rarely available, especially to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups. Its approach of commissioning ground breaking work and projects has helped promote understanding about GRT communities. In the process it has changed people's lives, including mine.' Dan Turner

Isaac Blake is Executive Director of the Romani Cultural & Arts Company in Cardiff, UK, which is supported by a variety of major funders and government departments. RCAC is now celebrating its 10th anniversary. He is a proud Romani Gypsy and has worked as a professional dancer and choreographer. Isaac was Dance Curator to the RomArchive the international digital archive for art of the Roma.

"I am proud once again to provide a platform for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller artists to showcase the best of our community's culture and heritage. The resulting work from Gypsy Maker 4 is illuminating and I know that my community and the wider public will benefit enormously from it." Isaac Blake

Daniel Baker is a Romani Gypsy born in Kent, UK. An artist, curator and theorist, he holds a PhD on the subject of Gypsy aesthetics from the Royal College of Art, London. Baker curated FUTUROMA at the 58th International Art Exhibition at the Venice Biennale in 2019. Publications include *We Roma: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art* (2013), *Ex Libris* (2009) and *FUTUROMA* (2020). Baker's work can be found in collections worldwide.

"The pioneering work of the Romani Cultural and Arts Company in supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller artists is unparalleled. Their Gypsy Maker project is unique in commissioning new bodies of work by GRT artists thus enabling the production of new knowledge from a widely underrepresented group. This visionary initiative continues to make a valuable contribution to international contemporary art and cultural discourse." Dr Daniel Baker

General Information

Please find below a brief reminder of Zoom best practice and protocol to ensure everyone is clear how to contribute and engage fully throughout the session.

- Familiarise yourself with **Speaker view / Gallery view** options, and also with the **Mic** and **Camera** on/off buttons
- Please switch off your microphones and cameras unless you're invited to speak during the Q&A. This cuts down on feedback, confusion and unnecessary background noise for everyone.
- Familiarise yourself with **Chat function, emoticon responses** and **Raising hands**:
- If you'd like to ask a question, make a comment or raise a point in response to anything you hear this evening, please type your question into the **chat box** and we will come to you during the Q&A session after the presentations. Please keep comments short and concise to allow everyone time to speak if they wish to.
- To use the **chat box**: send your question for everyone to read, or if you prefer you can select Isaac or Chris as the recipient, and it will be sent as a private message. This is useful particularly if you'd like us to share your question or comment without attributing it to you (please state in your message that you'd like to remain anonymous).
- You can also use the **Raise hand** button to ask a question, or turn your camera on and raise your hand on screen

Mobile Phones: As a courtesy to speakers and other delegates, please ensure that all personal mobile devices are 'on silent' or are switched off during the events.

Agenda



18.00 Welcome & Official Opening

Isaac Blake - Director of the Romani Cultural & Arts Company
Chris Brown Company Director g39

18.10 Key Note Opening Speech

Phil George, Arts Council of Wales Chair

18.20 Panel I: Gypsy Maker 4

Isaac Blake, Daniel Baker, Cas Holmes, Dan Turner

19.15 Panel II: Q&A

Participants: Isaac Blake, Daniel Baker, Cas Holmes, Dan Turner
Chairperson: Chris Brown

19.45 Key Note Closing Speech

Lord Elis-Thomas MS, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

19.55 Event Summary & Close

Isaac Blake

The Romani Cultural & Arts Company is grateful for the support of the following:

Arts Council of Wales
Art in the Attic, The Robert Maskrey Gallery
Bucks New University
Cardiff Story Museum
Coventry University (Centre for Dance Research)
g39
Gypsy, Roma Traveller Police Association: GRTPA
The Riverfront
Robert Dawson: Gypsy and Traveller Books, Postcards...
RUG Art Gallery Cardiff
RomArchive
Rutgers University (Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies)
Welsh Government

Speaker Biographies

Daniel Baker

Daniel Baker is an artist, curator and researcher. A Romani Gypsy, born in Kent, he holds a PhD on the subject of Gypsy aesthetics from the Royal College of Art, London. Baker curated *FUTUROMA* at the 58th International Art Exhibition at the Venice Biennale in 2019. He acted as exhibitor and adviser to the first and second Roma Pavilions; *Paradise Lost* and *Call the Witness* at the 52nd and 54th Venice Biennales. Baker's art and writing examines the role of art in the enactment of social agency through an eclectic practice that interrogates contemporary art discourse and its social implications via the reconfiguration of elements of the Gypsy aesthetic. His work can be found in collections worldwide. Publications include *We Roma: a Critical Reader in Contemporary Art* (2013), *Ex Libris* (2009) and *FUTUROMA* (2020). Baker currently lives and works in London. www.danielbaker.net

Isaac Blake - Director - Romani Cultural & Arts Company, Cardiff

Isaac Blake is a proud Gay Romany Gypsy and has worked as a professional dancer and choreographer. He is currently Executive Director of the **Romani Cultural & Arts Company** in Cardiff, UK, which is funded by a variety of major funders and government departments. As Executive Director of the RCAC, Isaac has developed arts and performance programmes on Gypsy and Traveller caravan sites with young children and adults, worked in schools and colleges, and promoted arts as a medium for empowerment and advocacy throughout Wales with Gypsy, Roma and Travellers. He has engaged widely with non-Gypsy communities to promote dialogue and to improve social cohesion. His leadership and management of the RCAC has seen the organisation grow from a small voluntary group to a major third sector (NGO) agency that leads the Romani and Traveller field in Wales and is one of the major players in Romani and Traveller advocacy and empowerment in the UK. RCAC has been celebrating community strength since 2009.

Isaac was Dance Curator for the RomArchive, leading a team of academics and researchers. The RomArchive was devised as an international digital archive for art of the Roma complemented by historical documents and scholarly texts. Isaac has been instrumental in supporting LGBTQI rights in UK, Europe and beyond, particularly with respect to the Gypsy, Roma & Traveller communities. Isaac has supported LGBTQI Gypsy, Roma & Travellers to attend events internationally and has personally attended such events in order to be an advocate and representative of his community and to positively promote LGBTQI rights.

Chris Brown, Company Director g39

Chris Brown is Company Director of g39. Born in 1973 in Worcester, he lives and works in Cardiff. Brown is an artist, musician, co-founder and co-director of g39. He is responsible for strategic development of the organisation within Wales, Britain and beyond. From 2008-12 he was Magazine coordinator for a-n The artists information company. He studied postgrad Composition

Speaker Biographies

and Jazz at RWCMD (Cardiff) and is also a member of Go Faster Stripe, an independent collective that promotes high-profile comedians through its programme of live acts and DVD production.

Lord Elis-Thomas ,The Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

Lord Elis-Thomas is The Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism and supports the work of the Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language.

Biography: Lord Elis-Thomas was born in 1946, in Carmarthen. He represents the Dwyfor Meirionnydd constituency in the National Assembly for Wales as an Independent member. He is also a member of the House of Lords. He was elected by his colleagues as 'Llywydd' or Presiding Officer of the National Assembly for Wales from its inception in 1999 to 2011. He has been a member of the Arts Council of Wales and the British Film Institute as well as Chairman of the Welsh Language Board and Chairman of Wales Screen. On 13 December 2018 Lord Elis-Thomas was appointed Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism. Lord Elis-Thomas enjoys trail running and hill walking.

Phil George, Arts Council of Wales Chair

Phil George has been the Arts Council of Wales Chair since April 2016. At his appointment he stepped down from his role Creative Director of the Cardiff-based television production company Green Bay Media which specialises in high-end documentary projects for broadcasters in Wales, the UK networks and internationally. The company has won numerous awards at BAFTA and the Celtic Film and Television Festival which he co-founded in 2001. Previously, Phil was Head of Arts Music and Features at BBC Wales.

A proud son of the Rhondda Valley, Phil was educated there and at Christ Church Oxford. He has an honorary doctorate from the University of South Wales and in 2011 received the Inspire Wales award for his work at National Theatre Wales and Green Bay.

Cas Holmes

Cas Holmes trained in fine art and currently works in textiles and mixed media using the same approaches as a means to interpret her ideas. After graduating from University College of Creative Arts, Cas undertook research into papermaking and textiles in Japan, supported by a Winston Churchill Memorial Fellowship and a Japan Foundation Fellowship. As part of her practice Cas works on community collaborations developing a range of projects based on environmental themes from the natural and the observed world. She is the author of three books for Batsford, including the 'The Found Object in Textile Art' which is used a primary reference source in education. Cas' fourth book for Batsford 'Textile Landscape: Painting with Cloth in Mixed Media'

Speaker Biographies

focuses on the interrelationship between, textiles, painting and landscape. She travels, teaches and exhibits internationally and has received a 'Pride of Britain Award' from the NRI Institute (India/UK 2010) for excellence in her field. Cas recently worked on a collaboration titled 'Garden of Remembrance' with the Garden Museum, Lambeth and Age UK Bromley and Greenwich'. Cas is a visiting tutor at West Dean College where she was also a resident artist. Her work is held in collections including the Museum of Art and Design New York, the Embroiderer's Guild UK and the Garden Museum, London. Supported by Arts Council England her one person show Urban Nature, was exhibited at the Beaney in Canterbury and the 20th Anniversary of the European Patchwork Meeting (2014) and the Lace Museum in the Netherlands (2015)

Dan Turner

Dan Turner is an artist and educator from London, a Romani Gypsy born in Kent. Dan trained at St Martins School of Art where he completed a BA Hons in Fine Art (Sculpture). With increasing numbers of the Romani community now static, Dan's work explores the end of travelling as a way of life. His art is concerned with changes in group identity and social cohesion. It uses traditional iconic objects to explore themes of transaction, scrutinising interactions between Romani and mainstream cultures. He reflects on how these objects affect Traveller cultural experience within mainstream society, and how these experiences feed into collective memory. Recently Dan has worked with the Wellcome Trust Reading Room and Chisenhale Art Place on collaborative projects which examine traditionally perceived ideas Romani of luck and healing. In these projects, Dan worked with small diverse groups to explore the use of good luck objects and their use in modern society. In future work Dan will continue to explore the importance of caravans and wagons. He is interested in how they embody attitudes concerning Traveller life and their continued meaning as the legacy of Romani iconography and symbolism. Dan's work was exhibited in FUTUROMA at the 58th International Art Exhibition at the Venice Biennale in 2019.