

# APALAZZOGALLERY

screening:

## OH ADELAIDE

by **Sonia Boyce and Ain Bailey**

APALAZZOGALLERY is delighted to present a special screening of *Oh Adelaide* (2010), a single-channel video, by UK artist Sonia Boyce and sound artist Ain Bailey.

*Oh Adelaide* incorporates found film footage, such as the jazz composition *Creole Love Call* (1927) by Duke Ellington, taken from the internet of the late jazz singer and entertainer, Adelaide Hall (1901-1993). The artist, with the help of the soundtrack realized by Ain Bailey, manipulates and re-imagines the pictures in order to address important questions related to the representation and perception of the female black body.

*Oh Adelaide* starts with the opening of the curtains onto the scene, where the presence of the singer, Adelaide, is in part covered by an incandescent mass that deprives the spectator of the view of her body. Furthermore, her performance, that consists mainly in a wordless vocal of the famous jazz standard *Creole Love Call*, is concealed by the disturbing sounds. Adelaide appears as an ethereal figure on the stage and this sense of estrangement and dispossession is underscored by Bailey's immersive and haunting soundtrack. The artist often describes this work as "a cross-generational dialogue that vacillates between activating the archive and a melancholic futurism".

Adelaide Hall was born in Brooklyn, New York, and subsequently made her home in London. Encouraged by Duke Ellington, she became one of the first jazz scat vocalists (a wordless technique where the voice mimics a musical instrument) to commit that style to vinyl.

The video is part of the *Devotional Collection*, a project that Sonia has been doing since the 1999; it has started as a performance and then has been continued as an ongoing collection. Sonia has been collecting, from different sources and with the support of other people, names of black British female singers. In this way, she creates a sort of archive that enhances collective memory of black English music; each person can find in it a name of a song or singer that means something to him/ her and share his/ her emotions with other people. Since music is a mass and universal experience and "a name, or a title of a song, or the record itself becomes a meeting point for shared and particular experience".

Sonia Boyce came to prominence in the early 1980s as a key artist in the burgeoning Black-British art scene of that time with figurative paintings that spoke about race and gender. Since the 1990s, her practice has broadened to incorporate text, print, sound, photography, video and improvised collaborations. Recent exhibitions include: *Afro Modern*, Tate Liverpool and tour (2010); *The Impossible Community*, Moscow Museum of Modern Art (2011); *Play! Recapturing the Radical Imagination*, Göteborg International Biennial of Contemporary Art 7 (2013); *Sonia Boyce Scat – Sound and Collaboration*, Iniva-Rivington Place, London (2013); and, *Speaking in Tongues*, Centre for Contemporary Art, Glasgow (2014); Curator, Okwui Enwezor invited Sonia Boyce as one of the artists for the 56<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, where she presented *Exquisite Cacophony* (2015).

Upcoming solo show 2016: *Sonia Boyce: Dada Nice Improv!* curated by Sophie Orlando, La Villa Arson, Nice (February, 2016); with a monograph edited by Sophie Orlando and commissioned by La Villa Arson.

Opening Friday 20 November 6 pm  
20 November – 5 December