

For immediate release

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**Artist Harun Morrison is awarded the Decolonising Natural History commission at the Horniman**

Artist and writer Harun Morrison has been appointed to the joint Decolonising Natural History residency at the Horniman Museum and Gardens, and Delfina Foundation, beginning in May 2021.

The Decolonising Natural History residency is in partnership with the Delfina Foundation as part of their programme *Collecting as Practice* – with the artist co-selected by the partners – and runs from 1 May to 20 December 2021. The joint residency will inform a final commissioned artwork which will be displayed at the Horniman from April 2022.

The brief for the commission asked artists to take a creative look at the Horniman's Natural History collection, considering the legacies of colonial collecting, the modern-day purpose of natural history collections and linking the climate and ecological crisis.

Deploying the rhetorical device prosopopoeia, in which a speaker communicates to an audience by speaking as another person or object, Morrison will construct critical-fabulations through which the collection 'speaks back'. This process will begin by selecting a number of objects in the collection to be cast as protagonists in a comic-philosophical playscript.

Morrison's installation will bring the imagined discussions to life using digital animation based on 3D scans of museum objects alongside a series of audio and text works.

**Ends**

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**Harun Morrison Biography**

In 2006, alongside Helen Walker, Harun co-founded collective practice They Are Here. Recent commissions include *I'll Bring You Flowers* (2019), *Survival Kit 10*, Riga, and *Laughing Matter* (2018) at Studio Voltaire co-commissioned by Block Universe, which saw the gallery converted into a

comedy club. The performance *40 Temps, 8 Days* (2017) at Tate Modern highlighted the use of temp labour at the institution in the context of the wider gig-economy.

Harun is a former artist-in-residence with Arts Catalyst, Furtherfield, IASPIS and Botyrka Konsthall. He has also been a visiting artist at various universities and is associate faculty for the studio program Conditions, in Croydon. In recent years Morrison has co-designed a number of community gardens, including the conversion of a car park in Dagenham, East London on the Beacontree Estate, and Bootle Library in Liverpool, commissioned by Rule of Threes.

In 2021, his work will be shown at the Dakar Biennial, Senegal, and Eastside Projects in Birmingham. His forthcoming novel, *The Escape Artist*, will be published by Book Works in 2022. Since 2019, he has been a trustee of the Black Cultural Archive.

@harunishere

#### Notes to Editors:

- Based in Victoria, London, **Delfina Foundation** is dedicated to facilitating artistic exchange and developing creative practice through residencies for international and UK-based creative practitioners, partnerships and public programming. Since 2014, Delfina Foundation's seasonal programming has been guided by recurring thematic programmes, including Collecting as Practice, The Politics of Food, Performance as Process and science\_technology\_society.
- The **Decolonising Natural History residency** is part of the Horniman's artist commission programme which showcases artists' responses to the Horniman's collection through a variety of media including fine art, performance and research residencies.
- **Coronavirus restrictions and impact** – following the latest government guidance, the Museum and Butterfly House are currently closed. The Horniman Gardens remain open, including the Café kiosks, toilets and Sunday market, and the Horniman is asking the public to adhere to social distancing and the latest safety advice guidance.
- The Museum was closed from 18 March 2020 to 30 July and from 5 November to 3 December, and closed again on 4 January 2021. The Gardens have remained open throughout the pandemic.
- **Every month the Horniman is closed costs around £150,000 in lost income** from ticket sales, memberships, the shop and café. In recent years, the Horniman has increasingly relied on this vital income to help care for the Gardens, animals and Aquarium residents, to run events and to look after the collections. The support of returning visitors, our supporters and their generous donations, are more needed than ever. [horniman.ac.uk/support-us/](https://www.horniman.ac.uk/support-us/)
- **The Horniman Museum and Gardens** opened in 1901 as a gift to the people in perpetuity from tea trader and philanthropist Frederick John Horniman, to 'bring the world to Forest Hill'. Today the Horniman has a collection of 350,000 objects, specimens and artefacts from around the world. Its galleries include natural history, music and an acclaimed aquarium. A new World Gallery of anthropology opened in June 2018 and a new arts space, The Studio, opened in October 2018. Indoor exhibits link to the award-winning display gardens – from medicinal and dye gardens to an interactive sound garden, Butterfly House and an animal walk – set among 16 acres of beautiful, green space offering spectacular views across London. [horniman.ac.uk](https://www.horniman.ac.uk)
- The Horniman Museum and Gardens is core-funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and since 1990 has been governed by an independent charitable trust, registered charity no. 802725. The Horniman Museum and Gardens also receives funding from Arts Council England as one of its National Portfolio Organisations.
- On 29 July 2019 the **Horniman Museum and Gardens declared an ecological and climate emergency**, pledging to place carbon reduction and environmental issues at the heart of its work. The declaration – and the subsequent **Climate and Ecological Manifesto**, published in January 2020 – is a consolidation of existing work and a commitment to renewed ambitions to reduce the Horniman's environmental and pollution footprint, increase biodiversity, and inspire others to do so. Find out more about the Horniman's manifesto commitments and progress so far at [horniman.ac.uk/climate](https://www.horniman.ac.uk/climate).