



Title

Black (re)turn

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About the author(s)

was a recipient of the Stuart Hall Foundation Scholarship, in support of her PhD (via MPhil) at the Institute for Black Atlantic Research (IBAR) at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) and the development of her work from her Black diasporic perspective in the North of England, from 2017 to 2020. de Montserrat works through performance, drawing, painting, film, installation, sculpture, print and text. Concerned with challenging structures of care in institutions and with the intersection of gender, race, class, and colonialism, often in the context of life in rural communities, she makes works of art that explore the vulnerability of bodies, the importance of recording and preserving history, and the tactile and sensory qualities of language. de Montserrat is a tutor at the Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford, and an associate lecturer at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts, London. She proudly serves on the Board of Trustees at Crescent Arts, Scarborough, OUTPOST, Norwich, and Alchemy Film & Arts, Hawick. de Montserrat is represented by Bosse & Baum, London.

Cover image:

Black (re)turn

by Jade de Montserrat • June 2023. In collaboration with Drawing Room, London • Artist commission

These photographs document a performance drawing installation at Cow Syke Farm, Bransdale, in 2023. Using charcoal, the work emphasises material blackness, porosities and permeabilities in proximity to Blackness and these networked connections between racism, environmental destruction and abolitionist thinking.



Those from exempt worlds and beyond words here on the threshold each of our selves' conduits, always staring back, with burning intensity.

Searching tributaries, in tribute.



Land and property and body holders:

William Joe Longstaff, Peggy May Timmons neé John, Patrick James Timmons, Geoffrey John Longstaff, Elizabeth May Longstaff neè Lord, Jacob Aston West.

I love you.

I honour you through my plural selves.



Your names choke my tongue around my heart and your bodies,
laid to rest, live on against your will and true to my spirit.

Adèle John Longstaff your spirit may soar, but I wish not to learn,
to observe only, as your spirit's spiracles trail a gloam that ignites
at a distance, happily, without fear or hurt or anguish.

I believe in you and see you well.



Guttural, from the belly breath
 filled breath and full from sleep
 I am actioning
 I take action
 aided by this Iron Age process.
 This mound.

This pregnant mound, this site ready for birthing black.



It is very hard to let go without shedding tears, screwing up our
 faces and choked by the crumpling around the gullet, chest and
 breastplate.



Imagine that as glazed ceramics came to be used, so too charcoal, making burning wood in a controlled way a necessity for glass, clay pots and any metalwork.

Imagine Tutankhamun's meteoric iron dagger strapped up in gold, out of this world, they say. And the bright lights and scorched fingers, the escapade and determination, the knowledge and connection to realms beyond what was visible. And the Gods knew of the need today, of the thirst and of creation, of the earth fucking-over and strangled inhalation, the need for a return to new knowledge. To smelt the iron they must have had charcoal, the element that draws together this

dedication
consecration
devotion.

For hazel and sycamore and birch and oak and rowan and willow.



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