

Pseudo Activism and its Blemish on the Black Lives Matter Movement.

When beginning this module my initial thoughts were drawn to a location that was based near to my childhood home in Bristol. Bristol's long and rich history spans over thousands of years one of its most significant and controversial being its large role in the slave trade. During the first large scale protest in June for Black Lives Matter and its subsequent removal of the Colston Statue, I wanted this protest and landscape that the statue resided in to be the main focal point of my project.

The toppling of the Colston Statue was one of the most significant and controversial moments of the Black Lives Matter Movement in the U.K. Colston's heavy involvement within the slave trade that allowed him to exploit and traffic human bodies garnered him a hefty fortune. While some of this money went

towards supporting institutions such as music and education, his charitable actions that only sought to benefit the white oppressor are minute when compared to humanitarian atrocities he so



actively played a role in. His inevitable and untimely toppling came as no surprise yet this action was heavily publicised within the media on both political spectrums. When attending the initial BLM march in Bristol that saw the toppling of the controversial Colston, I wanted to snapshot moments of the march on my phone to ensure I captured significant and resonating moments of the protest. I wanted to use my phone in a similar style found in point and shoot cameras as phones are almost a digitalised version of the classic film point and shoot.

Producing this image on the left, the mix between the BLM movement and the ongoing epidemic felt like the two largest issues that were affecting the western world. Taking inspiration from protest photographers such as Lyndsey Weatherspoon as seen in the first image, I wanted to also shoot in black and white so accentuate not only the scale of the first march but to also allow for a sense of timelessness in my images. Influenced as well by the favoured use of black and white in various protesting photography, I felt that the black and white aesthetic of my images fit the mood and scenes captured.

When attending the second march only 2 weeks later, much fewer numbers had attended as the first, only then to decrease further upon the third march that I had attended. These ever decreasing turn outs brought great dread and sadness not only to myself but the organisers of the protests and other attendees. The Black Lives Matter movement had almost become a 'moment' as coined by Labour leader Kier Starmer and the contempt of the white narrator had once again become most comfortable. In order to get the sense of dread and disappointment so many felt in the prior marches, I wanted to revisit the location of the images captured 6 months after on the same weekend the BLM gatherings would take place.



The eerie silence of these so called 'activists' only two days after the brutal murder of Mohamud Mohammed Hassan in Cardiff through the excessive use of force and gross misconduct by the Cardiff Bay police force. The sense of vigour for change has virtually diminished. Once again it seems a movement for change and hope has slowly been removed from societies forefront of discussion and faded into the back , much like Greta Thunberg's Climate change marches. My main goal for this project was to highlight the pseudo activism so many of our peers play apart in, playing a role for change rather than being the role change, it seems it has become popular to be perceived as 'woke' but the question arises, is a pseudo activists strive for the perception of 'wokeness' actually beneficial to the

movement or is it rather a self serving, self preserving facade that ensures they evade confrontation of their own ideology ?

In conclusion, I feel that my images have communicated the unease and discomfort caused by pseudo activism as well as allowing an open discussion as to whether these people may be beneficial to a cause. I feel that my images have communicated my point well through the use of juxtaposition and framing to ensure my ideas are competent and concise.

