Contextual Studies

10.03.2022

ffotogallery

Towards a strategy for inclusive curatorial practice and engagement

What’s the future for photography?

What’s the future for Wales?



“Museums hold a unique position of being trusted, which is particularly important given the perceived lack of trusted organisations in society such as the government and the media.”

Museums Association / Ipsos Mori

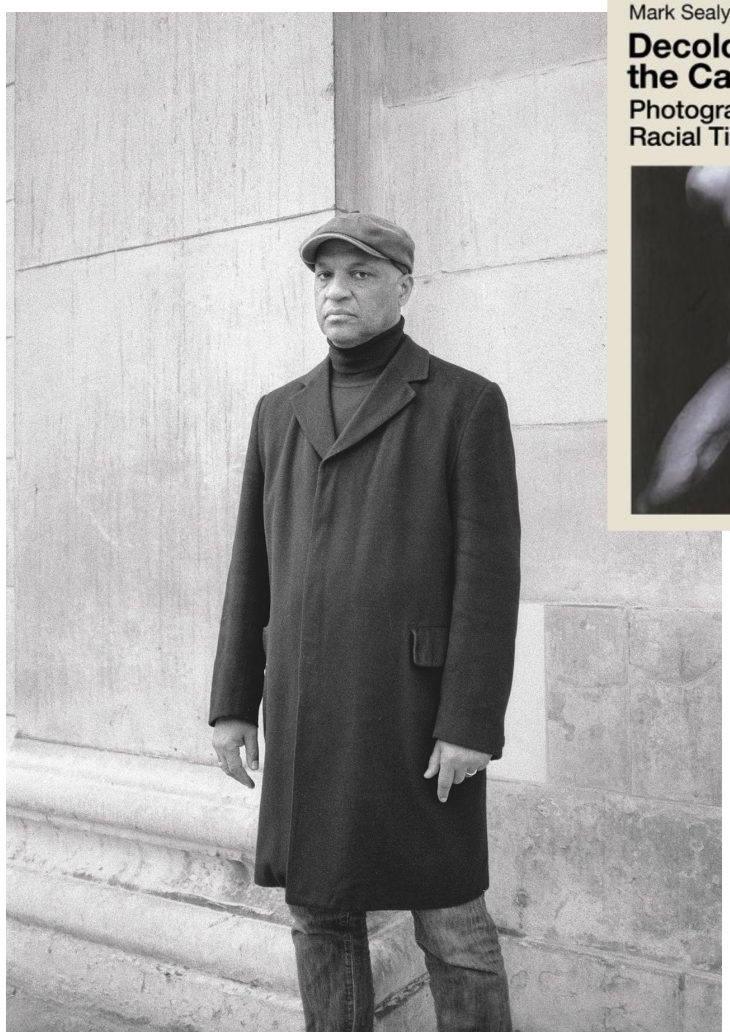
Critical theorist Ariella Azoulay states that, “photography was imperial from the very beginning”

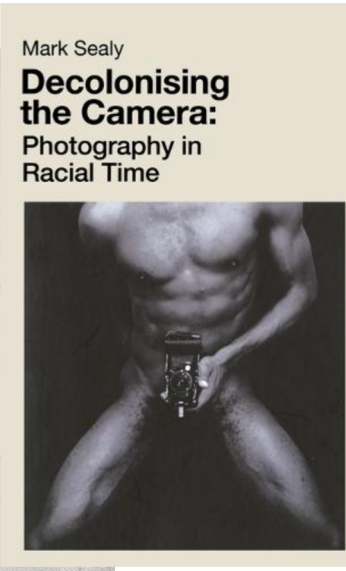
However, unlike most definitions of the ‘beginning’ of photography which coincide with the first technological developments and the earliest fixed images at the beginning of the 19th century, Azoulay instead asks us to consider that photography’s “origins go back to 1492”

(Azoulay, Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism 2019).

Mark Sealy
Decolonising the Camera: Photography in Racial Time

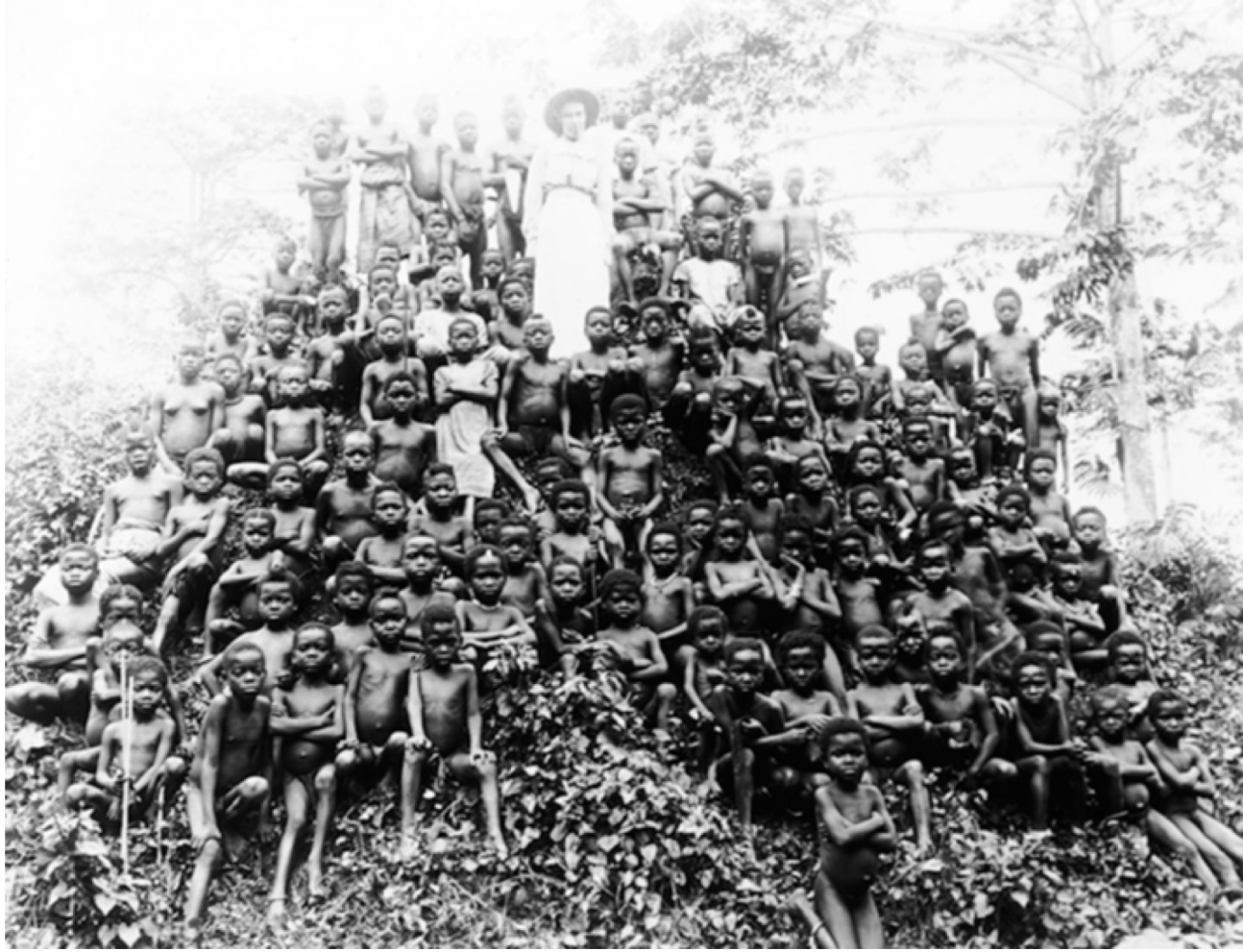
‘If we stop looking at (photographs) as strictly historical records, and instead read the photographs across historical time, this allows different meanings to surface and conclusions to be drawn.’



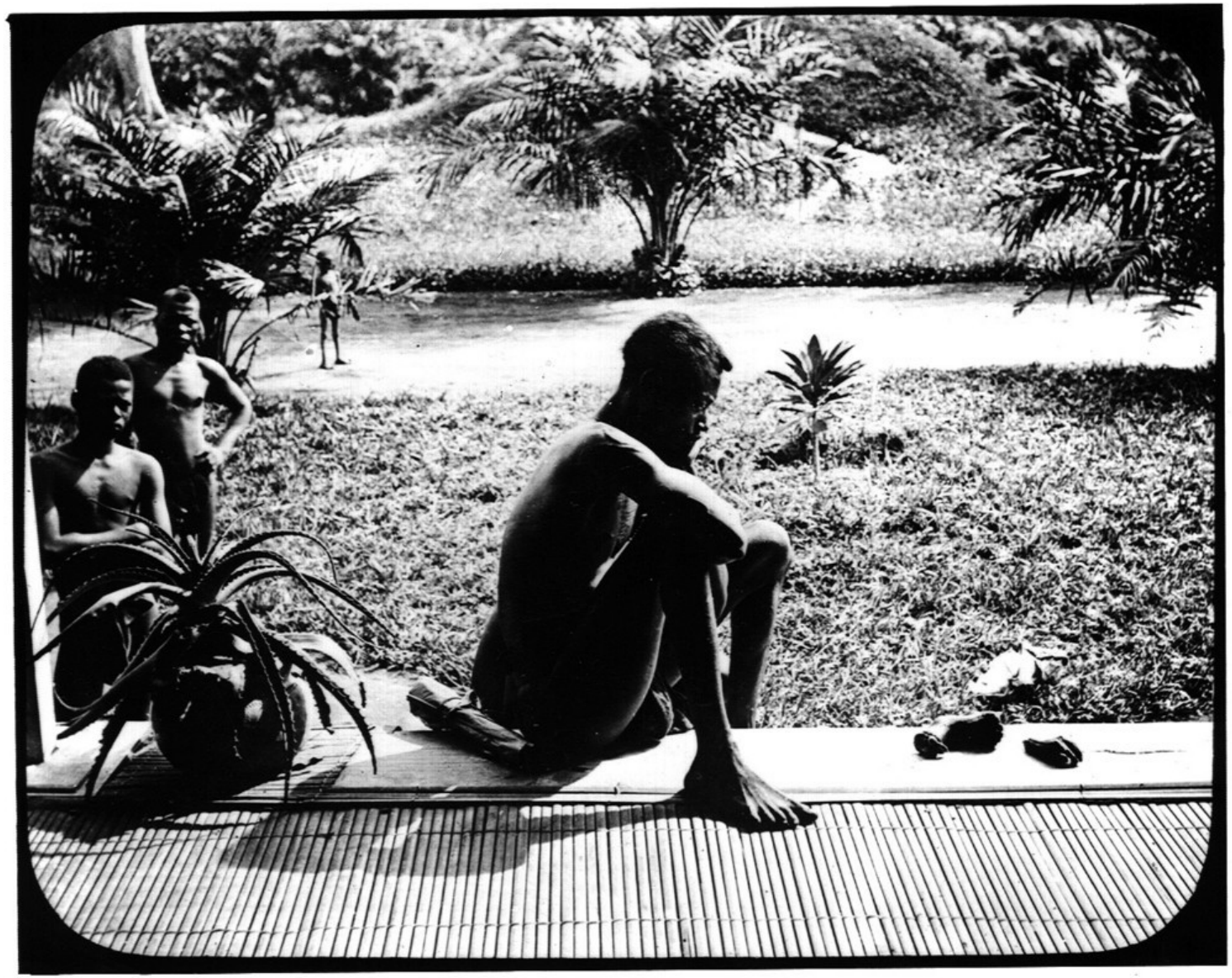


Alice Seely-Harris

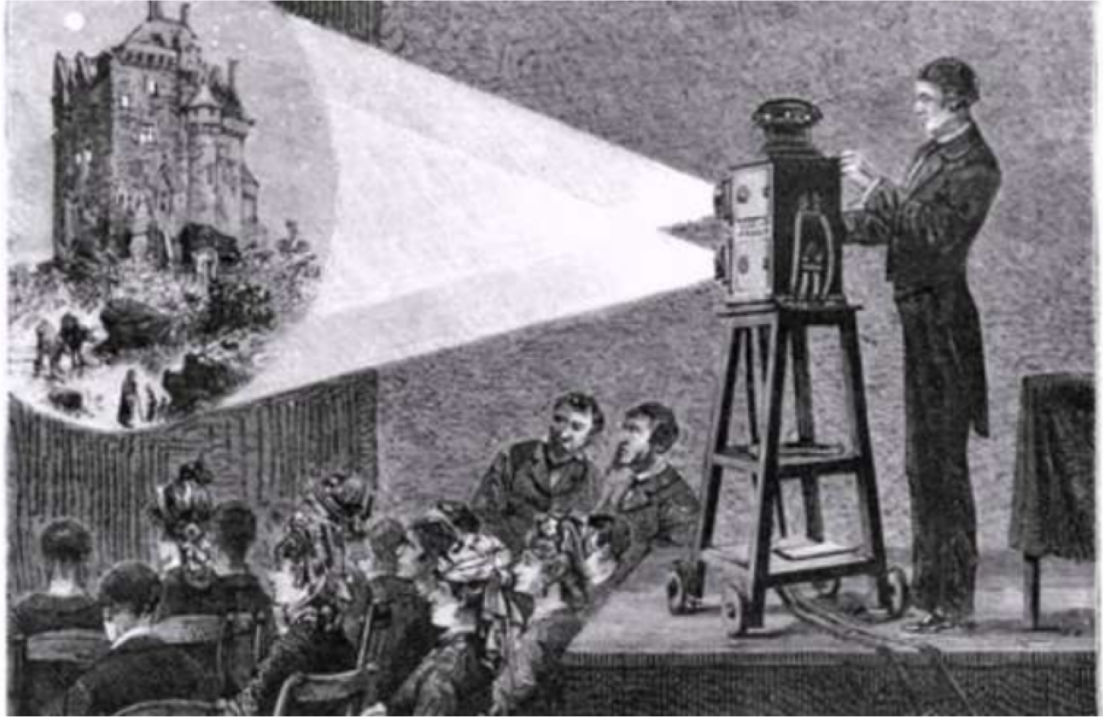
largely considered the earliest example of socially engaged photography



Alice Seely-Harris with Congolese children c1905



“Seely-Harris’s images portray violence but they also carry an embedded message of the African subject as being a cultureless, helpless child who would, with proper guidance and missionary application, become a good hardworking African Christian…”



“...put another way, the objective was to coerce the idle African into becoming a **profitable productive** being through religious enlightenment.”

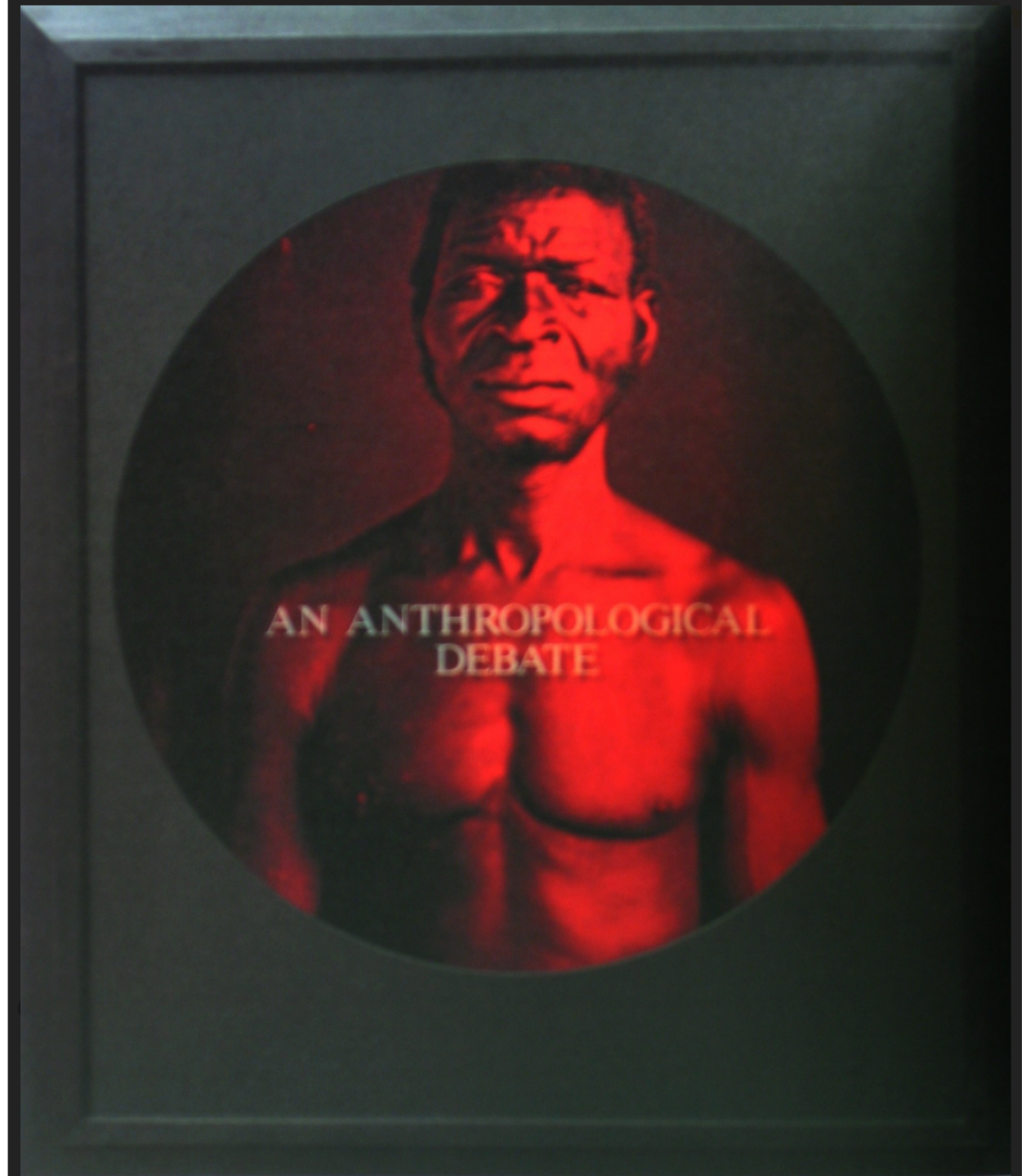
Carrie Mae Weems

From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried

Thirty-three images, a divine number—including four enlarged daguerreotypes of enslaved men and women captured in 1850 by Joseph T. Zealy, produced in the name of eugenics by Harvard University scientist Louis Agassiz, and archived at Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography.

https://www.moma.org/collection/works/45579




AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL
DEBATE

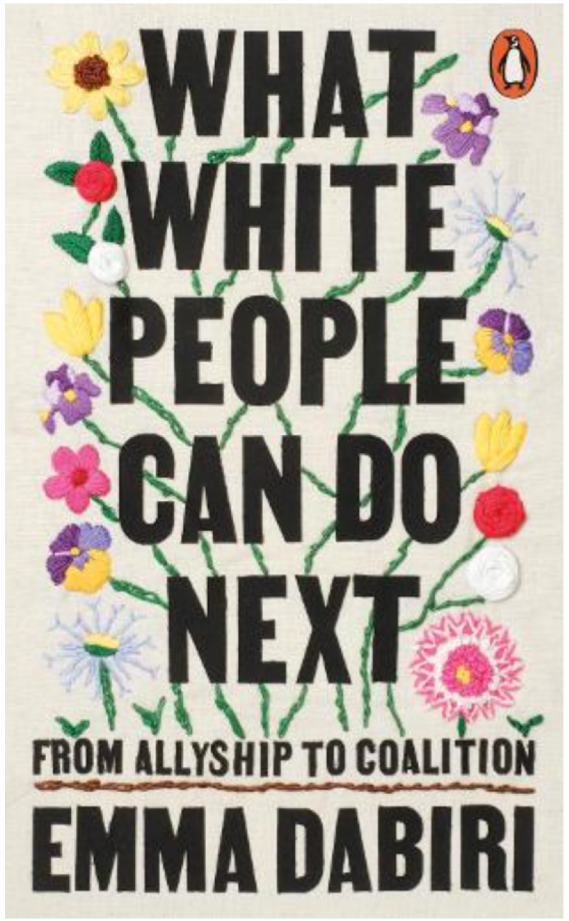
In 1996, Harvard threatened to sue Weems for her use of Zealy's images, as she had originally agreed not to appropriate them without permission, but then changed her mind.

Instead, as Weems later recounted to Willis, she summoned the university, saying, "I think that your suing me would be a really good thing. You should, and we should have this conversation in court."

The question of ownership shows itself again. Who is entitled to images of enslaved humans who were captured by Europeans? Harvard backed down and simply acquired Weems's collection. Capitalism is but a white sheet.

Aperture.org

Emma Dabiri: What White People Can Do Next (2021)



Emma Dabiri: What White People Can Do Next (2021)

Dabiri describes how the concept of ‘race’ was introduced into laws in the state of Virginia, in the early 1700s, in an attempt to quell uprisings by African and English workers over working conditions.

The wealthy landowners successfully used this as a ‘divide and rule’ tactic, to suppress dissent and make an enemy out of the ‘other’.

Dabiri writes that ‘(o)ne of the primary interventions behind its invention was to justify the exploitation of one group of people for the material benefit of another…and to prevent the emergence of coalitions that could pose a threat to the consolidation of capital.’



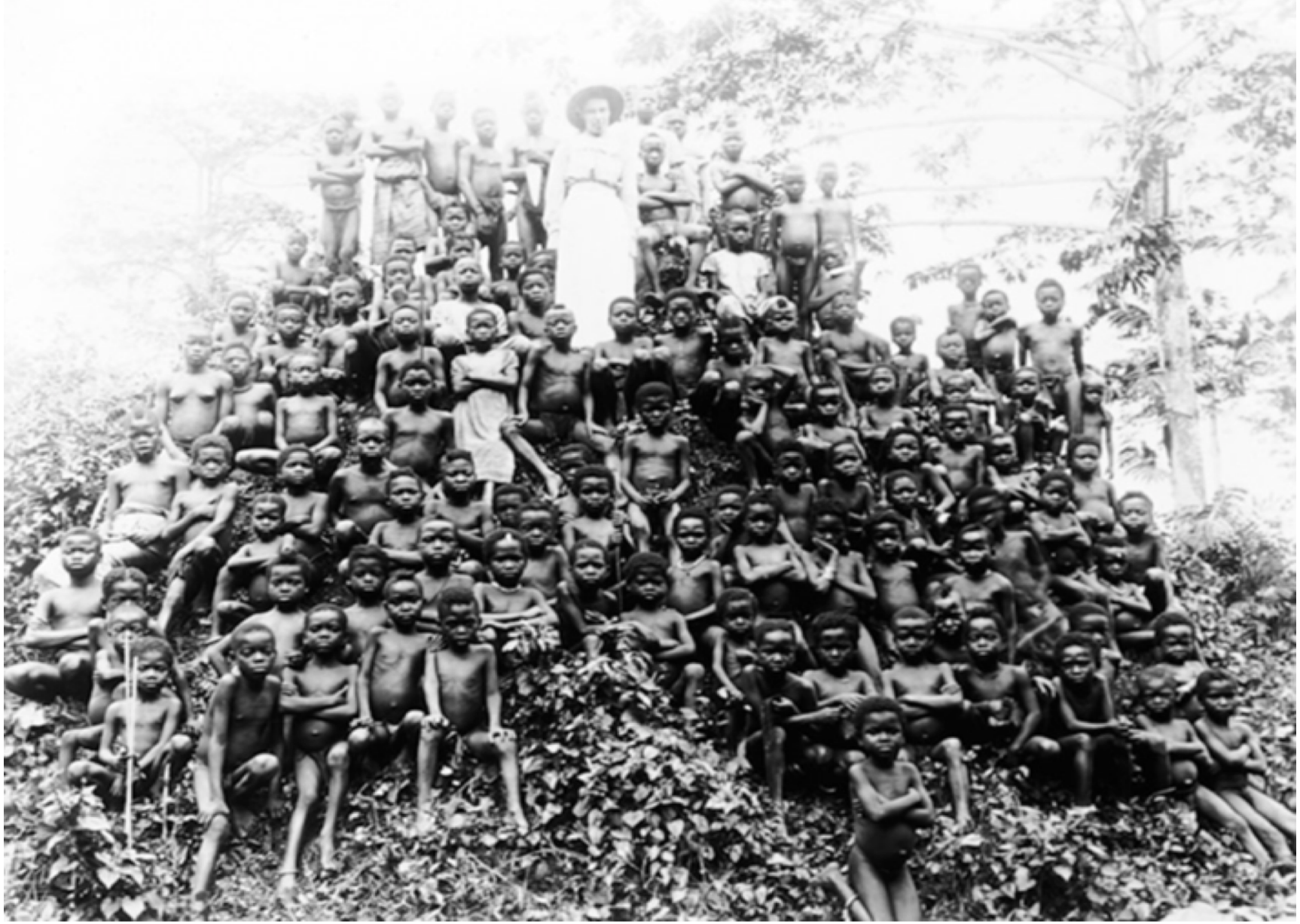




Philip Kennicott

Philip Kennicott is the Pulitzer Prize-winning art and architecture critic of The Washingt
Post. He has been on staff at The Post since 1999, first as classical music critic, then as
culture critic. Follow

By including Winogrand's dispassionate image along with 19th-century slave images, and by emblazoning the words "Some Laughed Long & Hard & Loud," Weems suggests that the original was part of that deeply racist photographic history. That wasn't fair. Winogrand unleashed meaning without making a definitive statement, Papageorge captured the context and neutered the ugly racism some people found in the image, while Weems assumes the racism is intended and uses it without reference to Winogrand's larger, more ambiguous body of work. Washington Post 2014



Alice Seely-Harris with Congolese children c1905

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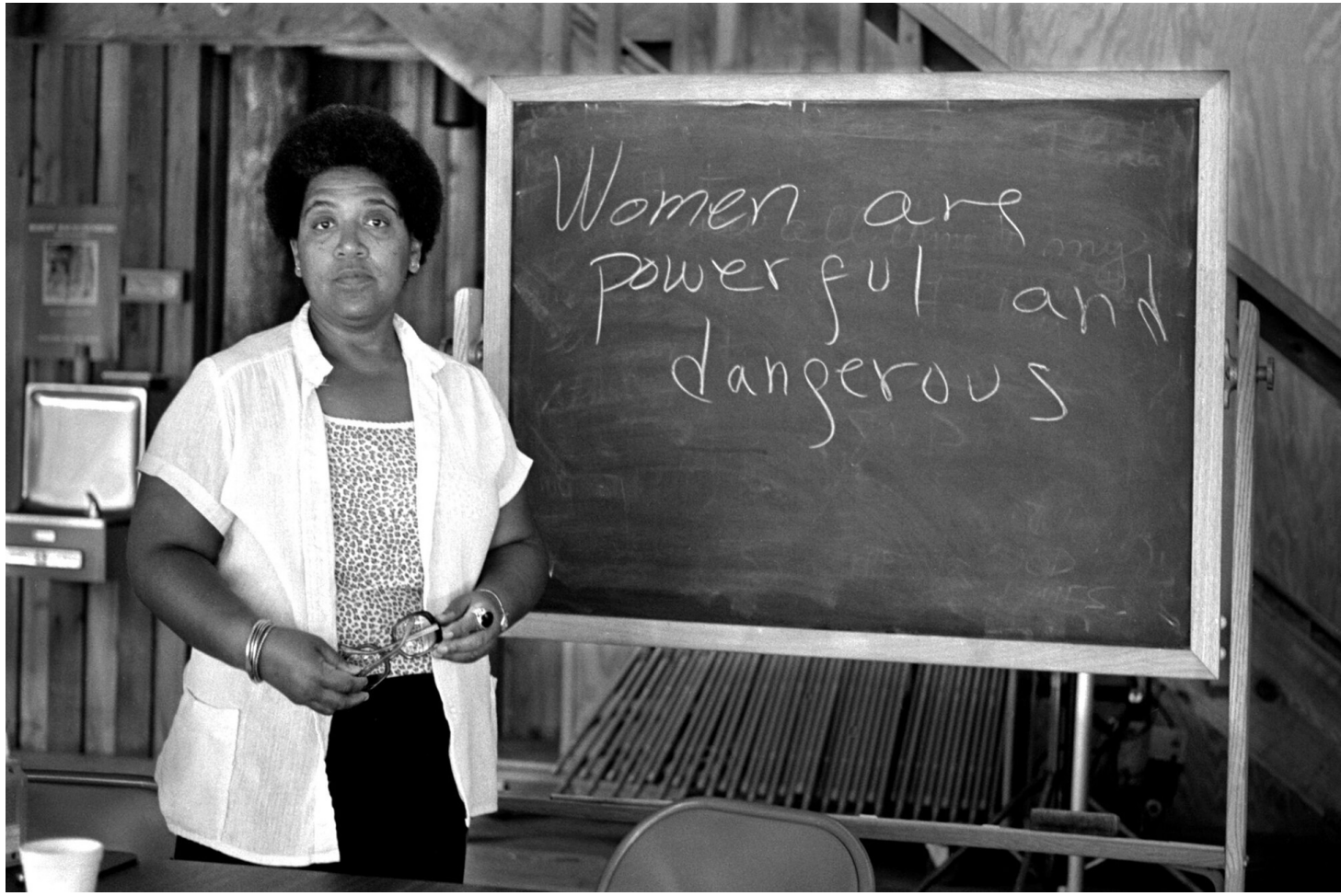


The Help film 2011

(based on book 2009 by Katheryn Stockett)

The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master’s House

Black,
lesbian,
feminist,
mother,
warrior,
poet



Audre Lorde

Angela Davis



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpYdfcvYPEQ

What should a contemporary photography gallery in Wales look like?

- What do you want from a gallery?
- What are the most important things a gallery should consider?
- How do you make a gallery inclusive?