

THE SCHOOL MUSEUM



“I came to theory because I was hurting—the pain within me was so intense that I could not go on living. I came to theory desperate, wanting to comprehend—to grasp what was happening around and within me. Most importantly, I wanted to make the hurt go away. I saw in theory then, a location for healing.”

bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, 1994

Library Obscura is a speculative library. It is collected by five black and mixed-heritage Cornwall-based multidisciplinary artists and mothers* from the African and Caribbean diaspora, assembling under the name *AfroSea*. Catherine Lucktaylor, Angeline Morrison, Libita Sibungu, Maria Christoforidi, Caroline Deeds. The *AfroSea* collective came together to dream about unknown ancestries and destinations uncharted. We walk, we laugh we complain, we claim space and announce presence, we heal with new and old stories.

We were supported by the Exeter University Art and Culture project *Reimaginings* and invited to create a communal project. This publication is our response to this invitation and the first step to a larger evolving map of books written by and about People of Colour.

Inspired by archives such as the *Free Black Feminist Library* and *The Feminist Institute*, we imagine this project growing into an inclusive physical library and other multifaceted pockets of resistance that invite reflective communal engagement with ‘minor’ literature — reading circles, discussions, lectures, ceremonies.

We have compiled a curated list of books, songs, films and texts from our research. Focused on the transformative voices of black feminist thinkers, predominately women, including cisgender, transgender and non-binary people whose life experience aligns with blackness, from various branches of academia, the arts and literature.

The lists were a challenge, a patience, paying attention to the voices that feed you when no one feels, looks, sounds, thinks like you. These books carry our dreams, and they are for everyone and anyone, for those days you wish the power lay differently, those days that you wonder...

- *What does the rest of the world think?*

Women gathered in union are powerful. Books gathered, circulated, read, discussed, quoted, digested are powerful. We are uniting resources to strengthen the spaces for unlearning the Western canonical understanding of history, culture, and identity. We seek to model experimental frameworks for research and public engagement grounded in friendship and critical intimacy.

This publication is an anthology of our meetings and discussions, the flowing of laughter and tears, an acknowledgement that books and other cultural productions are connected to voices, physical bodies and their quotidian consistent labour. It is an archive of hope reorienting how we relate to knowledge and its origin.

This syllabus of study weaves a variety of current issues that resist the centralization of authority in male dominated academia and proposing different rhythms of critical thought — that includes vulnerability, and a politics of care.

This is a curriculum of a future school for change, a tool and site of decolonial value production. That not only works towards expanding the canon but also reshaping the idea that we must operate according to a canon.

The name *Library Obscura* - recalls the natural phenomenon of ‘camera obscura’ where a very small hole casts an inverted image of the outside world into a darkened room. You can follow this metaphor to all its dimensions... The titles of the texts are not alphabetic or linear. They are in an anarchic emotional disorder. Sometimes the titles together sound like a poem, sometimes the titles alone are powerful enough to start a revolution.

The *AfroSea* Collective, July 2025