

For Immediate Release: 31 July 2025

**Tapestry of Black Britons, Voyage to the Islands, and Faces & Fabrics Quilts Unveiled for Victory over Japan (VJ) Day 80  
Friday 15 August 2025 | 1pm – 4pm | Max Nasatyr Room,  
Coin Street neighbourhood centre**

Coin Street neighbourhood centre is proud to present three powerful textile exhibitions on Victory over Japan (VJ) Day 80: ***Tapestry of Black Britons***, ***Voyage to the Islands Quilt***, and ***Faces and Fabrics of Coin Street Community Quilt***. These exhibitions celebrate inclusive histories, community creativity, and intergenerational storytelling through the medium of textiles. The public is invited to view the works on **Friday 15 August 2025**, from **1pm to 4pm**.

**Tapestry of Black Britons: Weaving Inclusive Histories**

Created by **Paula Ogun Hector** and woven in collaboration with Bristol-based textile innovators **Dash + Miller**, the ***Tapestry of Black Britons*** is an evolving artwork inspired by the Bayeux Tapestry and African woven traditions. It tells a more inclusive story of British history, with an initial focus on the often-overlooked contributions of Black British, Caribbean, African and Indian service personnel during the Second World War.

At the heart of the exhibition is a striking Second World War panel, marking the 80th anniversary of VE + VJ Day – based on archival imagery from Getty Images Black History & Culture Collection and the Imperial War Museum. Also featured is *Out of Many*, a hand-woven piece by award-winning expert weaver Doreen Gittens, based at London's Oxo Tower Wharf for the past twenty-five years.

A new panel designed by artists **Adwoa Botchey** and **Solomon Adebisi** of **Adeche Atelier** debuts at this event. Drawing from Yoruba mythology, their tapestry depicts a Yoruba creation story, adding a spiritual and cultural dimension to the historical narrative.

***Voyage to the Islands Quilt***, by artist **Jahnavi Inniss**, will also be on public display, re-examining the overlooked roots of scientific discovery. Inspired by the

Hans Sloane Herbarium; a collection of over 1,000 plant and animal specimens gathered from former British 'West Indian' colonies in the late 1600s, this piece highlights the crucial, yet largely unrecognised, role of enslaved Africans and indigenous communities in shaping modern science.

As the tapestry travels across the UK, it will grow through contributions from artists, embroiderers, poets including **Grace Nichols** FRSL and **John Agard** FRSL, schoolchildren, academics, and cultural institutions such as the University of Birmingham Culture Forward, Crafts Study Centre, Manchester Central Library, Hastings Museum, and the Great Tapestry of Scotland Museum.

"This innovative and imaginative project, a modern interpretation of both the Bayeux and Akan commemorative traditions, will provide a valuable educational resource for generations to come," said **The Rt Hon Lord Paul Boateng CVO**, Chancellor of the University of Greenwich, and Co-Chair of the Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission.

*"Tapestry of Black Britons* spotlights inclusive British history, fostering deeper understanding of our shared past and present," said **Paula Ogun Hector**, Founder and Creative Director. "The World War II design honours contributions that historically have been marginalised, while the Yoruba creation story celebrates mythology and storytelling that connect us all. Out of many threads, we are one fabric. This exhibition was made possible thanks to public funding from the National Lottery through Arts Council England."

## **Faces and Fabrics: A Community Quilt of Identity and Belonging**

*Faces and Fabrics of Coin Street Community Quilt* is a joyful and collaborative project between the Coin Street **Over 50s Art Group**, **ESEA Unseen**, and the wider community. Led by **Nishi Begum** and **Libbie Jackson-Bell** from the Coin Street Youth and Community Team and **Sue Man** and **Kim Chin** from ESEA Unseen. Inspired by a group visit to the Barbican's Unravel exhibition in early 2024, the exhibition explored textiles as protest, healing, and resistance. The group asked if they could create a textiles project to celebrate the Coin Street community. The quilt literally stitches together people, place and community.

Over the summer ESEA Unseen, were commissioned to run a series of 5 intergenerational workshops introducing process, techniques and ways of making a portrait. More than 80 people contributed to the quilt, including local children, young people, art group regulars, neighbours, volunteers, and Coin Street staff. The youngest participant was 7 years old, the oldest 80.

Each patch is a personal self-portrait, not just of faces, but of identity, culture, and memory. The final quilt is still being hand-stitched by staff and volunteers and will be a lasting symbol of what community art can achieve. It's not about perfection, it's about participation, pride and the stories we share.

**[ENDS]**

## NOTES TO EDITORS

- **For press enquiries and images please contact:**  
**Keith Winestein**, Communications and Media Manager (Coin Street) [k.winestein@coinstreet.org](mailto:k.winestein@coinstreet.org) 0207 021 1681 (desk and mobile)

### About the Artists and Makers

- **Paula Ogun Hector** is the founder and creative director of Tapestry of Black Britons CIC. Her work spans 20+ years of presenting inclusive histories—on screen (BBC's *Black Britain*), in PR (CRE, BFI Black World Season), and in education. [www.tapestryofblackbritons.com](http://www.tapestryofblackbritons.com)
- **Dash + Miller** is a Bristol-based textile design studio known for innovation and sustainable practice. [dashandmiller.com](http://dashandmiller.com)
- **Doreen Gittens**, founder of Archipelago Textiles, is an expert weaver based at Oxo Tower Wharf for over 25 years. [www.archipelagotextiles.com](http://www.archipelagotextiles.com)
- **Adwoa Botchey and Solomon Adebisi** are the artistic duo behind Adeche Atelier. [www.adeche.com](http://www.adeche.com)
- **Jahnavi Inniss** is an award-winning graphic designer and craft educator whose practice is focused on celebrating untold stories within Black British history. <https://jahnavi-inniss.com/>
- **Over 50s Art Group** have been meeting at the Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre since 2008. The group is made up of local older people with an interest in or curiosity about art and have had several exhibitions in the local area. The group is led by Nishi Begum and Libbie Jackson-Bell from the Youth and Community Team.
- **ESEA Unseen** were Kim Chin and Sue Man, two multidisciplinary artists that connected through the wider East and Southeast Asian communities' networks.

### About Supporting Partners

- **The Forgotten Generations:** A charitable archive established by RAF veterans documenting the contributions of British African and Caribbean service personnel. [www.theforgottengenerations.com](http://www.theforgottengenerations.com)
- **Getty Images:** Selected images for the exhibition have been provided by the Getty Images Black History & Culture Collection.

### About Coin Street Community Builders (CSCB)

- Coin Street Community Builders (CSCB) is a social enterprise based in Waterloo and North Southwark. We operate a high-quality, inclusive

nursery at the Coin Street neighbourhood centre, providing early years education for over ninety children, with more than sixty attending daily.

- CSCB owns, manages, and maintains key public spaces along the South Bank, including the riverside walkway between the National Theatre and Sea Containers, Bernie Spain Gardens, Oxo Tower Wharf, and Gabriel's Wharf. We are also the freehold owner of the Iroko, Mulberry, Palm, and Redwood housing developments, which are leased to primary housing co-operatives managed by residents.
- Our mission is to create an inspirational neighbourhood, one that supports a thriving, diverse, and inclusive community. [www.coinstreet.org](http://www.coinstreet.org)

### **About Youth and Community Programmes at Coin Street**

- The Youth and Community Programmes Team delivers a range of programmes for the local community including sports, tutoring and leadership for young people, gardening sessions, community singing, art and wellbeing programmes for older people. We foster community, creativity, and lifelong learning. <https://coinstreet.org/community>

### **About Arts Council England**

- Arts Council England champions creativity and culture across England. Between 2023–2026, it will invest over £467m of public funds and £250m of National Lottery contributions to ensure access to culture in every community. [artscouncil.org.uk](http://artscouncil.org.uk)