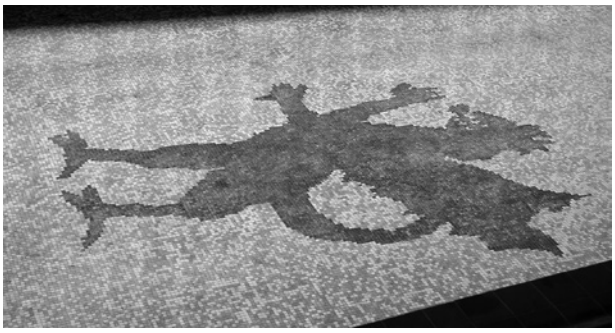
the present pandemic. Appropriately, Absalon described *Cellules* as being 'like a virus in the city'.

It is often said that civilisation is more than just good plumbing (doubtful) or that privacy or feelings of shame are what separates humans from animals. Law speculatively casts and mirrors the inscrutable places in which his subjects are briefly apprehended or locked and erased. Near the gallery exit, *untitled*, 2020, forms a limited, momentary reprieve. A black-and-white photograph of a ceramic white shoulder, resembling a bent torso, is rendered in extreme close-up, with matted wet hair filling the edge of the frame. The photograph fixes a character in Law's matrix of fragmentary figures and semi-observed scenes, a brief glimmer of something tangible.

Chris McCormack is associate editor of *Art Monthly*.



Judy Price, *Phoenix Rising (Griffin Mosaic, Holloway Women's Prison Swimming Pool)*, 2020

Judy Price: The End of the Sentence

Stanley Picker Gallery, Kingston upon Thames
6 February to 4 April

I only recently realised that the massive, historical Holloway Women's Prison, place of Ruth Ellis's execution, was shutdown in 2015 and the prisoners shipped around the UK. Coincidentally, I had unwittingly been near the site of the prison recently, after being referred to Holloway library when my local library didn't have a copy of a book I needed. The library was renamed the Cat and Mouse Library in reference to the infamous 1913 Prisoners, Temporary Discharge for Health Act, known popularly as the 'Cat and Mouse Act', which was a response to the suffragettes' tactic of going on hunger strike after arrest. Under the new law, the authorities would allow the hunger strike to continue until the prisoner was too weak to cause harm and then release the activist on licence, ready to be rearrested at the first sign of trouble. It's interesting how creative, and often good humoured the suffragettes were in promoting their cause, disrupting society with actions that reflect, as the rebels say, 'spicy' – bordering on illegal – actions of today's Extinction Rebellion 'arrestables'. The humour of the protesters contrasts shockingly with the atrocious behaviour of authorities to shut down the suffragette movement – which included force-feeding and other abuses – but with new emergency powers given to governments during the current coronavirus crisis, climate activists of the future, as Edward Snowden has warned, may face similarly draconian measures.

A good example of the humour and creativity of the suffragettes is Pank-a-Squith, a board game similar to Monopoly, playing on the names of Emmeline Pankhurst and her foe, the aristocratic dandy and prime minister, Lord Asquith. A version of the game s recreated by Erika Flowers in Judy Price's research-led exhibition 'The End of the Sentence'. Pank-a-Squith becomes *Holloway Women's Building Game*, a central work in the the show, and concerns the current campaign to integrate a 'Women's Building' on the former prison site, which is currently being developed by Peabody housing association. The campaign is led by the organisation Reclaim Holloway – many individuals have pledged to support the campaign online, including Extinction Rebellion – and aims to deliver services to help 'the majority of women imprisoned because of poverty, injustice, addiction and abuse' and provide a workspace that supports social change, creativity and networking.

Flowers spent three years in Holloway Prison for non-violent offences during the last days of the prison's existence. Her Instagram diary and pocket cartoons offer an illuminating view into life at the prison, and follows female inmates as they are decanted to other prisons around the country. Ironically, after decades of neglect, terrible conditions and a high suicide rate, Holloway Prison had recently become, under a series of reforming governors, a more utopian version of a rehabilitation environment. It even had a swimming pool for the prisoners, featuring a mosaic that spells out 'Phoenix Rising', which features in a series of photographs by Price (who spent a period of time documenting the empty prison after its closure). The redesign of the prison in the late 1990s transformed it, as Caitlin Davies described in her 2018 book *Bad Girls – A History of Rebels and Renegades*, from a place of 'terror to evildoers in a grim castle-like panopticon, to an open-plan design', featuring unlocked cells for some and even a view of sheep. It is sadly ironic that the prison would only finally be closed soon after these positive changes and that the women would be transferred to much less salubrious surroundings, such as HMP Send.

Archival material is key to this informative exhibition. One photograph taken in 1985 shows two women looking out over the grounds of HMP Holloway from a prison balcony, and it is difficult to know whether this is a moment of rare freedom or a prison riot. It is also interesting to see the interactions between 200 prisoners and a dance group over a five-week period in Katrina McPherson's *Symphony*, documented during Dance United's 2002 residency at Holloway. I was inspired by this video to do some more reading, and found a memoir by the dancer Suz Broughton which captures perfectly how it must have felt to be an artist working in Holloway prison: 'On one level, I did not feel any more intimidated than I would have done in front of any other group of strangers. However, initially I was certainly more on edge as I had been trained to carry keys in order that we could save time and get around the prison without relying on an officer to open every door and gate. Teaching with a bulky set of keys in a pouch on your hip can really make you feel like a target – especially when you are told during the training how to respond to any attacks you may encounter if someone lunges for the keys or if you are kidnapped! There is a real dichotomy of energy within Holloway. On the one hand, there is constant noise and tension as everyone watches out for themselves and yet, there is also a lethargy, which is hard to rise above, as women are herded around, forever queuing to be

counted or body checked ... there was a general assumption we would be teaching ballet – their natural reaction was "oh no we're all going to have to wear them funny little skirts with them tights and prance about"." Broughton's notes provide an apposite insight into the history of incarceration and the arts, and, as with this exhibition, provide valuable material for those who might wish to understand the prison environment in order to make it healthier for society as a whole.

'The End Of The Sentence' is scheduled to reopen when the current restrictions are lifted.

Rob La Frenais is an independent curator.

Performance

BMW Tate Live: Our Bodies, Our Archives

On 16 March, in response to the spread of coronavirus, Tate cancelled its annual performance showcase, the Tate Live Programme, which this year was devoted to the question of how the body carries history. It had been due to present installations and performances by Faustin Linyekula, Tanya Lukin Linklater and Okwui Okpokwasili across two weekends in March. The following day, in tune with the general suspension of public life in the UK, Tate announced the closure for the foreseeable future of all its galleries. After the spaces were vacated, a private performance of Linyekula's *My Body, My Archive* was filmed and later posted online.

Linyekula, who was born in 1974 in former Zaïre, now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo, opened the event with a welcome speech delivered in a darkened, echoing tank. Alluding to the way the art world sometimes behaves as though it existed within a bubble, he drew a parallel between the events inside the tanks and those in the wider world, noting that 'suddenly the world out there has caught up with the world of the arts'. As the phrase has it, we were all in this together. As we stood on the threshold of isolation, Linyekula entreated us to honour the small groups of people we would become dependent on for human contact and, in some cases, for survival; to 'remember the little circles we need to make'.

In the online video, a procession led by Linyekula, accompanied by a mournful trumpet, made its way through the empty tanks, whose desolate scenography spread across my computer screen like a pool of ink. Dancers moved through sections of performances created between 2006 and 2019, punctuated by a monologue delivered in French. A looping, recursive text, read out by one performer, alluded to the way the Congo's history, its landscapes and traumas can reveal themselves in people's bodies. In poetic terms, she explained how 'as a result of thinking about the Congo, I have become a Congo rustling with river and forest'. And yet, she said, 'Congo does not exist, it must be invented'. In Linyekula's story, the process through which place becomes body and body becomes place are not spontaneous events; they occur over generations, ceaselessly. Linyekula's performance returned time and again to its central idea of the body as an archive, constituted over time and accessed in the moment. In evoking the archive, it also highlighted how such access matters when thinking and planning for the future.

In the weeks during which the grave reality of the pandemic dawned on us, and social distancing became a matter of course, the usual deluge of emails announcing exhibition openings, art fairs and creative accolades morphed into a flood of closure notices, invitations to online viewings, announcements of digital commissions and unprecedented access to online collections. Organisations small and large, public and private sought to maintain a sense of business as usual while also making efforts to support artists through the coming hardships and to keep their publics engaged. For better or worse, social media and online tools began going through a process of vindication, as we all came to rely on them in ways and to an extent that we hadn't previously imagined. For many people, the coronavirus lockdown has revealed deep uncertainties for the future, but for others it has also provided a companion opportunity: to be in the present in unfamiliar and interesting ways.

Around halfway through *My Body, My Archive*, three performers gather in a ring of light to share thoughts, dance and daub each other with white paint. They spell out colonial and post-colonial names of places – Zaïre, Belgik, Congo, Brazzaville. Later they smear the paint across their exposed skin, blanking out the names and locations. As they dance and sing to the beat of a drum, a voice advises Europe to look to Africa to know its future. Everyone's future is fragility, it says, and the unique knowledge and skill Africa has developed – how to survive precarity – is precisely what the world needs now.

If the motif of the circle, which Linyekula has put at the centre of this performance, is a concise way to conceive of the orbit that brings together performers and audience in a public context, it is also useful for thinking about how we foster private interaction: those 'little circles' are a strategy for survival.

The circle is also a metaphor for the progression of time, especially when it is set in three dimensions to become a spiral. Everything recurs, with difference. We will be here again, on a different level, dependent on the choices we make as individuals and communities. In an interview published online by Tate, Linyekula pointed out that in Lingala, one of the widely spoken languages of the Congo, the same word, '*lobi*', is used to designate 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow'. As Linyekula went on to explain: 'the future and past are connected through those who are present today ... what did you receive, and what do you pass on.' Where are you in the circle of history; in your intimate circles?

At the time of writing, the prime minister, like many people, is ill. He has spent his first night in hospital

Faustin Linyekula, *My Body, My Archive*, 2020, performance and installation