



"Ingannare l'archivio": l'estetica del riciclo' di John Akomfrah e del Black Audio Film Collective come pratica di 'contro-memoria' nell'Inghilterra postcoloniale [

2018

text (article)

Analítica

By recognizing in the disembarking form the Empire Windrush of the first actual migratory flow, mainly from the West Indies, a central episode in the history of postcolonial England, the essay intends to highlight various themes that bind the works of John Akomfrah and the Black Audio Film Collective (BAFC) to the social and historical reality of London in the second half of the twentieth century up to today. In the works he realized as a member of the Collective as well as in his more recent films and video installations, Akomfrah recurrently worked with found images and footage, mainly from BBC Archives, to try to answer some "perennial questions" which are central issues in his poetics: What is a migrant? Does a city like London preserve memorial traces of the lives of its immigrants? Considering the archive both as a sort of monument that merely attest to the existence of diasporic lives and as a shrine of materials used to build the official discourse about immigrants, Akomfrah aims to "trick it" in order to force it to tell something about the subjectivity, the desires and the identities of post-migrants. This essay also aims to connect Akomfrah's poetic and film/video production with the studies in the field of Counter-memory and Postcolonial Studies, reflecting on some relevant statements by the artist and analyzing films such as *Handsworth Songs* and *The Nine Muses*, as well as video installations such as *Mnemosyne* and *Vertigo See*, in order to investigate the way in which their major issues reflect or rather contrast the various cultural representations of contemporary London as a cosmopolitan and inclusive metropole

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