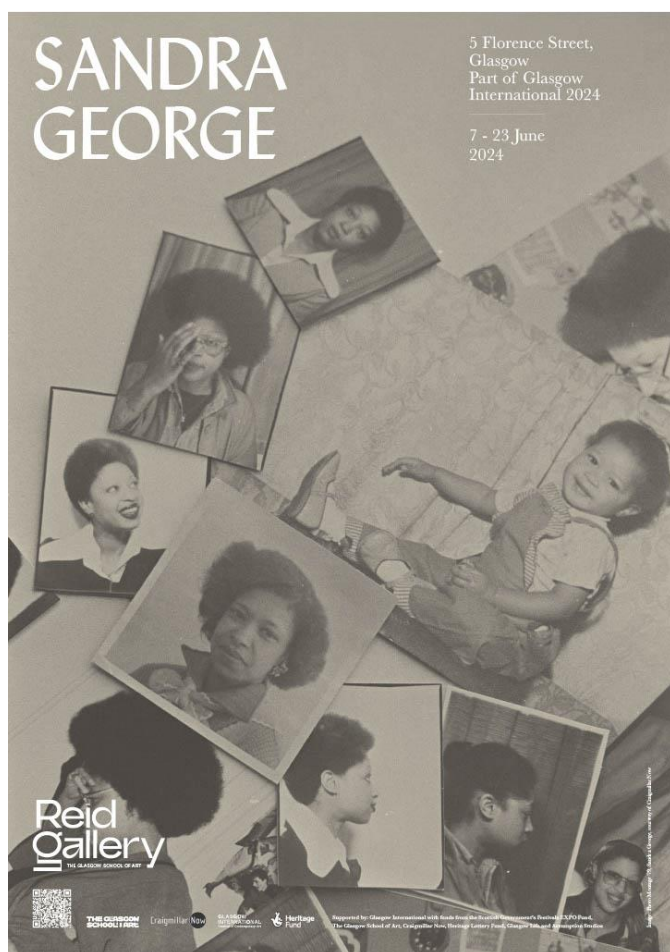


Report

Sandra George

7-23 June 2024

5 Florence Street, Glasgow G5 0YX



Summary:

An exhibition of the work of community artist and photographer Sandra George (1957-2013) was selected and received funding as part of Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art in June 2024. It was curated by GSA Exhibitions Director Jenny Brownrigg, in partnership with Craigmillar Now, a community-led arts and heritage organisation based in Craigmillar, Edinburgh, who holds Sandra's archive. Images of the exhibition can be seen [here](#).

The exhibition had **2604** visitors over 17 days, averaging 137 visitors a day. There were 98 photographs in the exhibition with relating ephemera.

As part of the exhibition programme, and chosen as one of Glasgow International's *Gatherings*, GSA MFA alumna **Christian Noelle Charles** programmed '*An Evening for Sandra George*' - an in-conversation event with writers Zoe Lorimer and Titilayo Farukuoye as part of Charles' Sandra George Archive Commission. **76** attended the event. Christian Noelle Charles also made an edition of 10 screenprint monoprints depicting a portrait of Sandra, which was Christian's response, paying tribute to Sandra George and her practice. One was exhibited at the exhibition.

The exhibition had **15** media outputs, including mentions of the exhibition being 'a revelation' Hettie Judah, *The Guardian*; 'one of Glasgow Internationals revelations' Louisa Buck, *The Art Newspaper*;

'The surprise of the festival is the work of Sandra George (****)', Susan Mansfield, The Scotsman; and 'surely the five-star show of this year's Glasgow International', Beth Williamson, Studio International.





All above images installation view Sandra George, 5 Florence Street, photo@ Eoin Carey



Above images installation view Sandra George, 5 Florence Street, photos: Alan Dimmick

Background:

Born in Nottingham, Sandra George (1957-2013) lived the first seven years of her life in Jamaica with her mother, before moving to Birmingham, and then Edinburgh, to live with her father. George was a community worker in Craigmillar, Edinburgh, taking thousands of images of community projects across Scotland between the 1980s through to the late 2000s. Social justice and equity was at the heart of both George's community and her artistic work, which was not exhibited during her lifetime. This solo exhibition that was part of Glasgow International 2014 presented George's photography and a selection from her wider artistic multi-disciplinary practice, including printing, painting, bookworks, textiles and jewellery.

Her black and white photography includes subjects ranging from Braille classes at Royal Blind School Edinburgh, to capturing sessions with disabled musicians. Her perspective and insight as a Black female social documentary photographer and artist add further importance to this collection – women photographers of colour capturing community life in Scotland over this period are significantly underrepresented. The message of her work – community, care, accessibility and equality in the arts and workplaces, ethics in working with others in under-reached communities, and exploration of identity – remain important issues today.

This exhibition was curated by Jenny Brownrigg, in partnership with Craigmillar Now, a community-led arts and heritage organisation based in Craigmillar, Edinburgh. Craigmillar Now holds George's archive and works with her family to digitise the photographs, and to grow George's photographic legacy through greater visibility and profile.

Sandra George studied at Napier University gaining a BA in Photography; then a BA in Fine Art at Edinburgh College of Art in Drawing and Painting. In 2004 she graduated in Community Education at The University of Edinburgh. George was a freelance photographer for over 30 years for organisations and publications such as the Sentinel, the *Tollcross Community Newspaper*, Shelter, and the Craigmillar Festival News and the *Craigmillar Chronicle*. In the 1980s she worked in Community Development in Wester Hailes. In the 1990s she worked in Craigmillar, Edinburgh for organisations including McGovan House, the Thistle Foundation, and the Craigmillar Community Arts Centre. In 2008 she was Youth Services Manager with Hunter's Hall Cooperative, Craigmillar. That year she launched Niddrie Community Youth Group.

Event:

As part of the exhibition programme, and chosen as one of Glasgow International's *Gatherings*, GSA MFA alumna **Christian Noelle Charles** programmed '*An Evening for Sandra George*' - an in-conversation event with writers Zoe Lorimer and Titilayo Farukuoye. This was part of Charles' Sandra George Archive Commission. **76** attended the event which was in person and online.

This event created space for meaningful conversation and connection, honouring Sandra's contributions while highlighting the ongoing importance of amplifying Black voices in the arts. It offered an opportunity to gain insight into Sandra's work and participatory practice and its profound impact on Scotland's artistic landscape, and to explore the intersections of art and community engagement. This discussion also engaged in a reflective dialogue on the experiences of living as

Black women in Scotland, and the pivotal role of community in navigating challenges and fostering resilience.

Christian Noelle Charles is a Black Female Artist currently living and working between Scotland, UK and New York. A Syracuse, New York native, Christian's work is an exploration of female representation and self-love in a contemporary world. She has acquired a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the Cooper Union in New York City and a Master of Fine Arts at the Glasgow School of Art. She has presented works with Tramway in Glasgow, Scotland, Edinburgh Printmakers, and South London Gallery in London.

Zoe Lorimer is a Black-Scottish artist, community worker, anti-racist trainer and writer from Edinburgh. Zoe's work focuses on how marginalised individuals can heal and reconnect with community through creative expression and working with nature. She is currently based in the west of Scotland after 8 years of teaching in East Asia. Read her story in the *Roots and Rebellion* (2024) anthology.

Titilayo Farukuoye (they/them) is a writer, educator and organiser based in Glasgow. Their work addresses social justice and community care and is informed by dreaming and the radical imagination. Titilayo co-directs the [Scottish BPOC Writers Network](#) and is a winner of the 2022 Edwin Morgan Poetry Award. Their poetry pamphlet [In Wolf's Skin](#) is available with Stewed Rhubarb Press.

Media

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[The Local's Guide to Glasgow International](#), Lisette May Munroe, *Elephant*, 6 June 2024

[Exhibition to celebrate the legacy of Sandra George](#), Craig Williams, 8 June 2024, *Glasgow Herald*

[Forces of Nature](#), *Aesthetica Magazine*, 8 June 2024

[Glasgow International review- so how many art critics can you fit in an Opel?](#) Hettie Judah, 10 June 2024, *The Guardian*: 'A revelation here is [Sandra George](#), a photographer and community worker based in Edinburgh from the early 1980s. Shooting in black and white, George documented communities she worked with – among them [Shakti Women's Aid](#) and the *Royal Blind School* – with stirring empathy. The results are beautifully composed and tender with fellow feeling.'

['Glasgow International has no title – but it certainly has a point'](#), Louisa Buck, *The Art Newspaper*, 12 June 2024. 'Communities from Scotland's recent past are celebrated in the solo exhibition of the photographer Sandra George, organised by the Glasgow School of Art exhibitions, which is one of this Glasgow International's revelations.'

Jan Patience, *Sunday Post* 9 June (see clipping)

[Sandra George: A Life in Pictures](#), Neil Cooper, 8 June 2024, substack 'Sandra George was a major artist. It is time she was treated as one'.

Exhibition of Sandra George's work, [Document Scotland](#)

[Greater Govanhill Newsletter](#) 10 June

[SCAN member + Staff picks](#): Glasgow International 2024 Kirsty Hendry, 6 June 2024

[Sugar rush: 10 shows to see at big arts festival in Glasgow](#), John Quin 10 June 2024, The National

[Sandra George, review, Studio International](#), Beth Williamson, 18 June 'An exhibition of photographs by Sandra George (1957-2013), and presented by Glasgow School of Art Exhibitions, is surely the five-star show of this year's Glasgow International. With so much to see and do across the city during its festival of contemporary art, this exhibition is a must-see.'

'A is for Art', The List, June 2024 (see clipping)

Burlington Contemporary, Editor Recommends 'Sandra George' at Glasgow International, 14 June 2024

['Glasgow International round-up: art in flats, art in shops, art in a car'](#), Susan Mansfield, The Scotsman, 18 June 2024. 'The surprise of the festival is the work of Sandra George (****) at 5 Florence Street, a community worker and documentary photographer in Edinburgh's Craigmillar in the 1980s and 1990s. After her death in 2013, her partner gave her archive to community arts organisation Craigmillar Now, and this show is beautifully curated by GSA's Jenny Brownrigg. One room celebrates her strong documentary work, recording the day-to-day of organisations such as Shakti Women's Aid, the Royal Blind School, the Victoria Hostel Women's Refuge, as well as everyday lives on Edinburgh's housing schemes and of people of colour in the city. A second space explores more personal work, including portraits of herself and her son Tyler, and jewellery and textiles she made as an art student.'

[Photo exhibition showcases legacy of late documentary photographer – Sandra George works on show in Scotland](#), Glen Munro, The Jamaica Gleaner, 22 June 2024.

[Glasgow International: Still Caring](#), Rose Higham-Stainton, Flash Art, 1 July 2024.

[GLASGOW INTERNATIONAL ART REVIEW: DOCUMENTARY PORTRAITS AND GUERRILLA INTERVENTIONS](#), Neil Cooper, The List, 9th July 2024.

Visits

The following groups were given a curator's tour of the exhibition:

- British Council international curators group for Gi (6 June)
- GSA Womens' Network (19 June)

Comments book:

"Such a brilliantly insightful exhibition – thank you for bringing he work into the public realm" - S

"WOW! Engaging and insightful. Such beautiful photographs" - Celine

“Profound, beautiful, layered, truth, in community. Thank you for bringing these important photos and experiences to life. Coming from Edinburgh this means a lot!” - Rhea Lewis

“Wonderful survey of the world in which Sandra lived. Both of its time and yet so relevant” - Anon

“I really love this important exhibition – a GI highlight for sure. Well done to Jenny Brownrigg & Craigmillar Now. The photographs speak for themselves, but the photographer adds her special gift of being able to say so much more.” - Sue John

“Beautiful exhibition, in a lovely setting. It’s amazing how one person’s activism / art can be a powerful message and document social history. I just wish she were alive to have seen this.” - Jackie

“Sandra taught me how to develop film in a darkroom back in the 90s when I was a teenage at Tolcross Community Centre. She also encouraged my interest in journalism at the time. She was a true inspiration and mentor. Just wonderful to see her work celebrated. Thank you so much for this.” - Corinne

Absolutely riveting show – the quality of this work’s simply wonderful. So hope that Sandra’s work will be made into a book. An inspirational show. Thank you so much Jenny Brownrigg and Craigmillar Now for giving us an insight into this amazing body of work.” - Wendy McMurdo

“I rarely get emotional at exhibitions, but this one holds a very special place in my heart. I am in awe of the woman Sandra was, her advocacy and work with minority communities and sensitive, deliberate documentation.” - Miriam Ali

Absolutely speechless! I am unable to find the words to describe how I am feeling after seeing this exhibition. The work of Sandra George is simply beautiful. Incredibly grateful to have seen this work in person.” - Niamh McNally

“An amazing exhibition with a deeper perspective into what it means to be human & different & equal.” - Laura Carole

“An incredible portrait of a fantastic and long over-looked portrait maker. Will look forward to what happens next and broadening recognition of her work.” - Richard Parry

“This has inspired me to take up photography.” - Joanie (14)

“An insight into S.G. wider creative processes – A genuine unique find. I wait to see the rest of her work.” - Ingrid Pollard

“Beautiful work by a beautiful artist. So moving seeing a mother making pictures as a mother and advocating for a better world. Well done Jenny, John, Rachael & all!” - Alicia Bruce

“It’s a total shame that Sandra didn’t get the recognition she richly deserved in her lifetime. We studied photography at Napier together and she was so dedicated to her work.” - Shawn Teague

“So very gorgeous! The self-portraits with the baby were my favourites and really enjoyed the inclusion of the negatives and her accessories!” - A

“So glad Sandra’s work is gaining a new audience – fab expo! Moving, full of integrity.” - BM

“What a beautiful and important collection. I hope this is the beginning of Sandra’s work reaching new audiences. So happy to see it all displayed so wonderfully.” - Lina

“Truly exceptional exhibition, so much is said in her photography – very moving and life-affirming. This is without doubt the best exhibition of GI. Thank you!” - Neil

Social Media

This is a selection of some of the social media at time of the exhibition.






 **hettiejudah** • Following
Florence Street Campus


 **hettiejudah** 9 m
A highlight of the first day of @gifestival was a display of newly printed photographs by Sandra George, all work that was not shown during her lifetime. Sandra was a community organiser working in Edinburgh and the photos date mainly from the 1980s and 90s. I'm going to do two posts, this first looking at self portraits as a mother and images of her so.

The show was curated by Jenny Brownrigg with @craigmillarnow - I was so pleased to discover this work. I think they're wonderful photographs.


#sandrageorge #womenphotographers #selfportrait

20 likes
10 minutes ago

 Add a comment... 



 **matthewhiggs2015** • Follow

 **matthewhiggs2015** Edited • 3 d
Glasgow. A stand-out in an already excellent Glasgow International was this revelatory survey of the photographic work of Sandra George (1957-2013), a community worker and social-documentary photographer working in Scotland from the late 1970s into the early 21st Century. Her work will clearly make for an excellent and important book. Kudos to all concerned. Don't miss. 📖
#sandrageorge @gifestival #jennybrownrigg @craigmillarnow @glasgow-schoolart

 **craigmillarnow** 3 d
Thank you for lovely words. We're so pleased you enjoyed discovering Sandra's work ❤️

 **141 likes**
3 days ago

 Add a comment... 



Acknowledgements

With thanks to:

Sandra George's family: Tyler Hewitt, Jimmy Hewitt, Kubara Zamani

Craigmillar Now team: Rachael Cloughton, Zoe Hamill, Anna Mayhew, Louise McLachlan

Craigmillar Now Volunteers: Mark Brunton, Joel Casey, Riley Clarke, Gabe Gardiner, John Gordon, Stevie Gordon, Heather Henderson, Kevin Henderson, Katy Hunter, Amy McCombes, Jonas Marshall, Laura McNamee, Lee McCormack, Wynne Luck, Billy McKirdy, Lesley Murray, Geoffrey Rae, John Reiach and many other volunteers

Craigmillar Now board: Kim Harsley, Sophia Marriage, Louise Donoghue, Lucy Wood, Andrew Crummy, Liam Smith, Debbie McMillan

GSA : Jenny Brownrigg, John Farrell, Michael Hill Johnston, Heather McDonald, Scott Crawford, Mark Burgoyne, Kan Chen, Caroline Grape, Sean Black, Gayle McGhee

Christian Noelle Charles

Supported by

Reid Gallery The Glasgow School of Art, Craigmillar Now, Glasgow Life, Heritage Lottery Fund, Assumption Studios, Glasgow International