



# If we ask, do we have to listen?

Presentation by:

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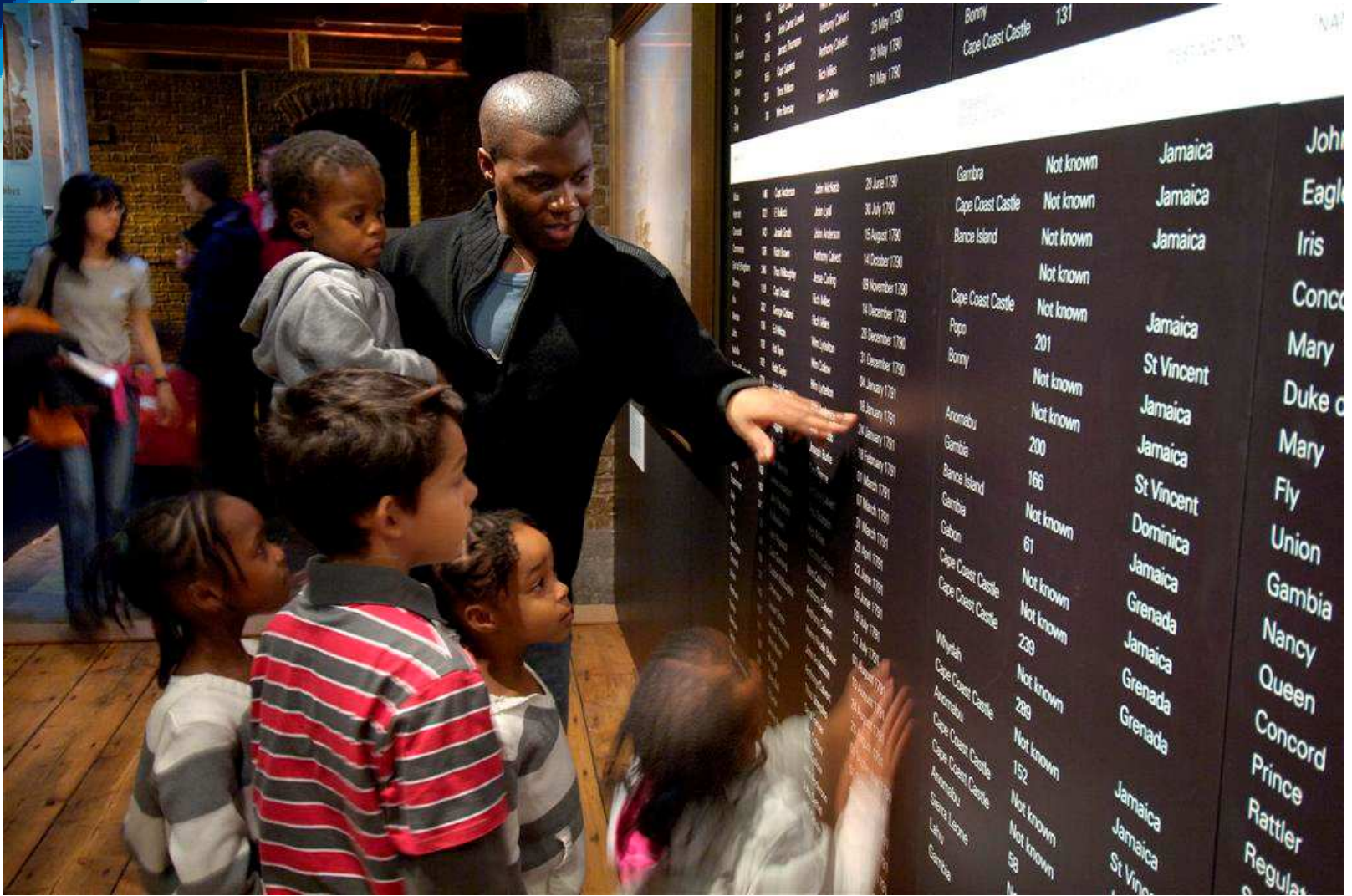




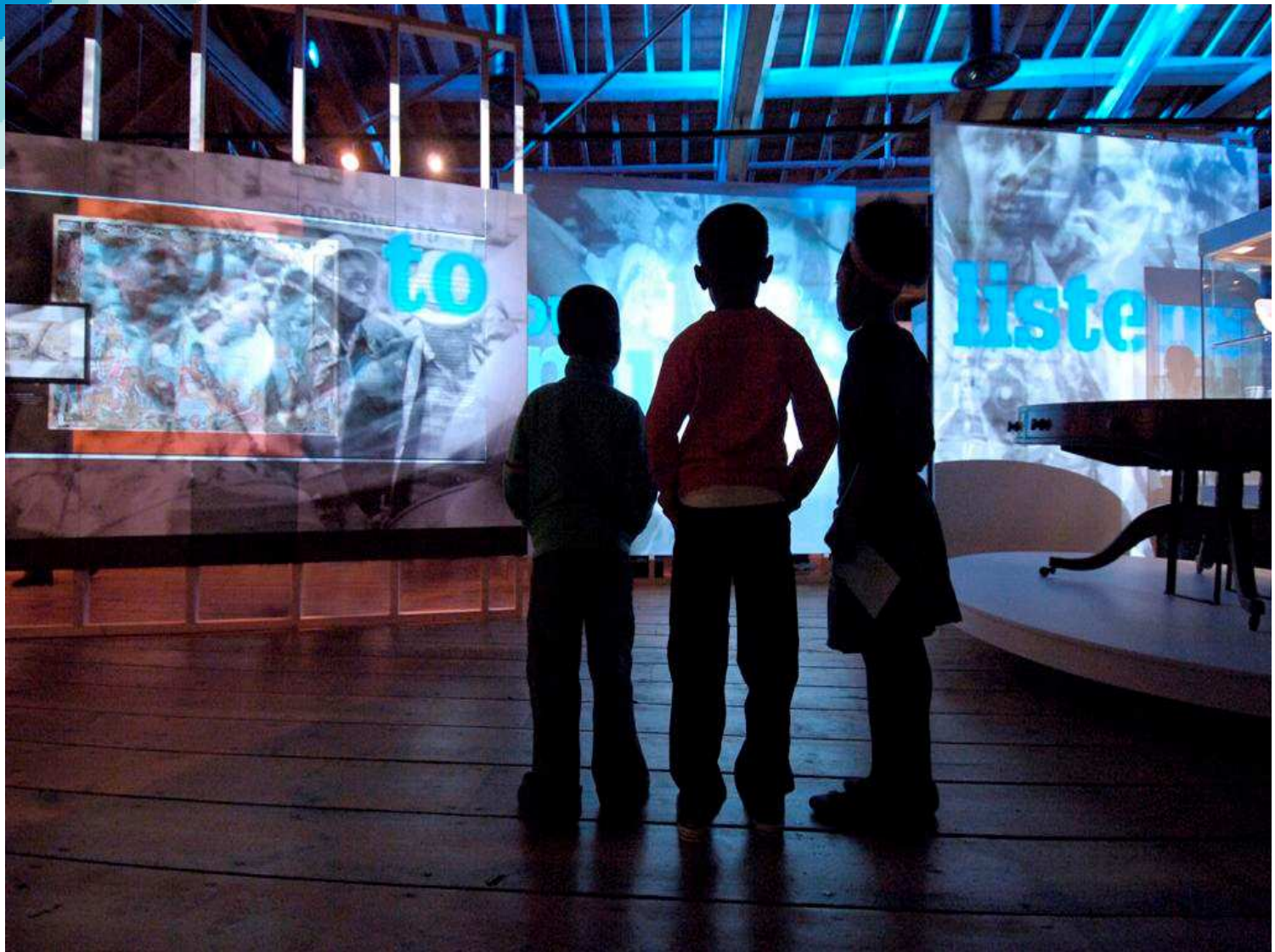


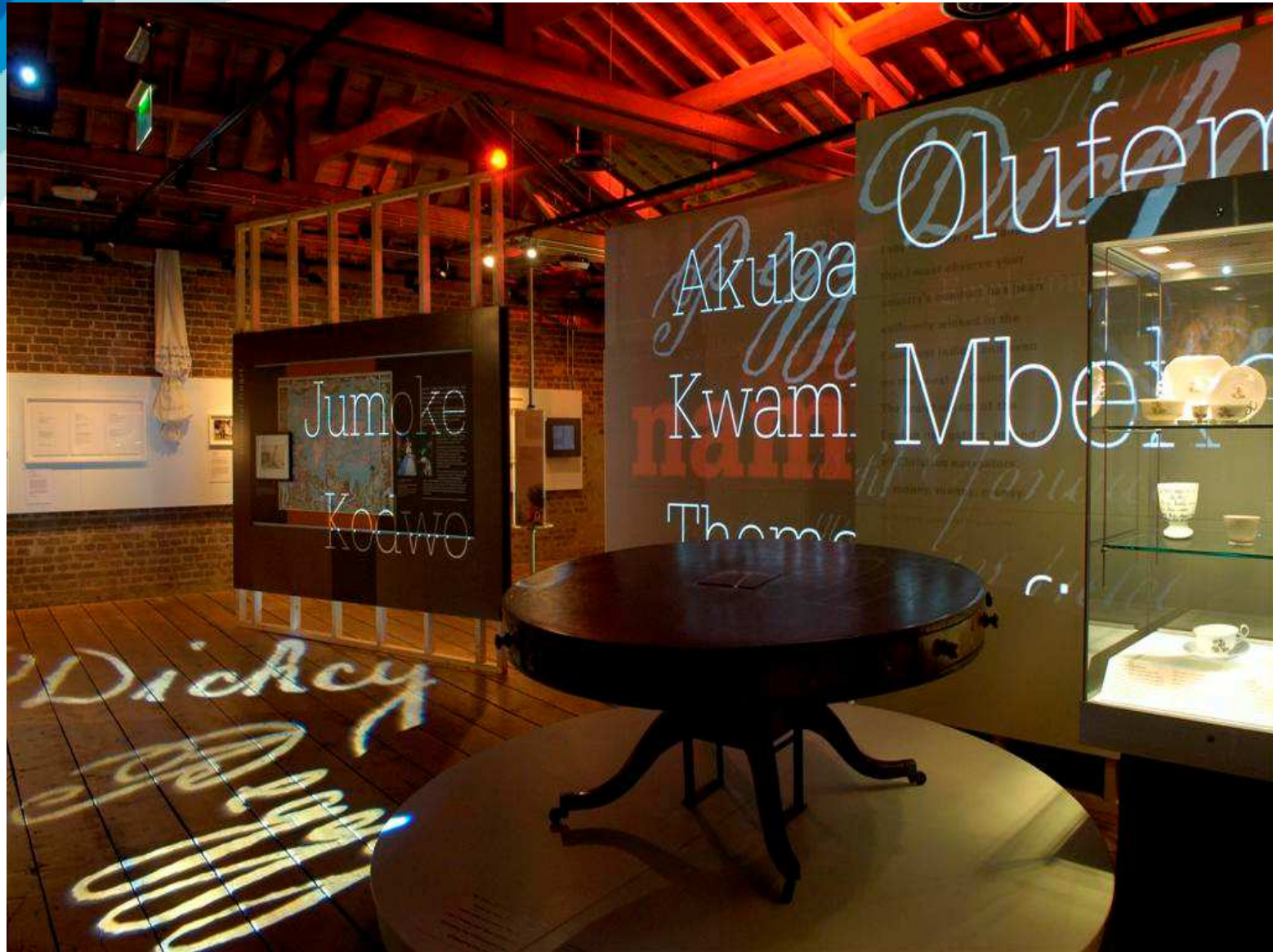














We have tried to be careful in our use of language in this gallery. In particular we have tried to avoid using terms that strip individuals of their humanity – since this was a tactic central to the imposition of slavery.

The word 'slave', for example, implies a thing or commodity rather than a human being. We have used the term 'enslaved African' wherever possible.

In the main we have avoided using the terms 'Black' and 'White', preferring 'African' or 'European'. But in the Legacies section of the gallery we engage with the word 'Black' as it is used to refer to the non-White post-war migrant settlers in Britain.

### Re: Exhibition on Slavery at the Museum of London Docklands

Yesterday, Monday 4 May 2009, my wife (who comes from Colombia, South America) and I paid our first visit to the Docklands Museum. We found it very interesting, and many of the displays resonated especially with me because of my experience living and growing up in London during the Second World War until I was evacuated to Wales on 8 July 1944 when I was seven years of age.

However, as an historian (of the Nazi Third Reich), I was more than appalled and even angered at the temerity of the 'information placard' (I don't know how you describe these things) set up on the wall in the galleries recounting London's role in the transatlantic slave trade in the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> and even 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Headed "Terminology", it was the worst piece of political propagandising for the loony 'political correctness' lobby I have ever seen in a museum (funded by public moneys from the City of London and the Greater London Assembly) supposedly devoted to the presentation of historical facts.


With its abject introduction about not wishing to cause 'offence' to any one or to special groups, it then went on to try to rewrite history by claiming to remove from the historical record – or rather, your museum's peculiar version of the 'historical record' as presented on the walls of your gallery - all factual references in the displays to 'slave(s)', 'blacks', and 'whites'.

Are all you people responsible for this travesty quite mad? Just in case you and yours have not realised it, we are a quarter of a century beyond the supposedly epoch-changing world of George Orwell's '1984' where double-speak was the order of the day. Or, I suppose, perhaps I need to be corrected there by reference to what we have experienced

This museum up to now has been very interesting and informing. It is wrong that we should apologise for something that happened in a previous life. It is also wrong that we should have "politically correct" thrust upon us in this way. Whoever compiled this museum should keep politics out of it. Just show it how it was !!!

**Table 4: Do the reasons for visiting the *London, Sugar and Slavery Exhibition* differentiate between BME groups and those who defined themselves as 'White' or 'White British'?**

Reasons for visiting the <i>London, Sugar and Slavery Exhibition</i>	Ethnicity			Total
	White	BME	Other	
Recreation/leisure	20	3	0	23
Education generally	29	24	1	54
Taking the children	5	1	2	8
To find out about Britain's role in slavery	17	15	3	35
To mark the abolition of Britain's involvement in the slave trade	3	6	0	9
Think about the abolitionists and their movement	1	2	1	4
Think about the lives of enslaved Africans, what they endured and achieved	5	16	0	21
Other	7	13	1	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>175</b>



The exhibition also attracted a high number of visitors who had not visited the museum before (73.7%, i.e. 128 out of 179). Half of those visitors were 'White' (60 out of 128) and another half belonged to BME groups (61 out of 128).

The second main reason, after education, for visiting the exhibition for those respondents who defined themselves as White or White British was *to find out about Britain's role in slavery*. For BME visitors, the second main reason after *education* was *to think about the lives of enslaved Africans, what they endured and achieved*. In addition, a significant proportion (16%) of BME respondents stated that they came for other reasons such as *to evaluate the museum's position, to see how the museum defines ethnic migrant identity, to learn about a hidden history, to teach their children, and to see whether the exhibition shows how Britain 're-invented' slavery back to India*.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S66J0ZAIPWY>

