

WIMBLEDON 2017

Jo the Konquerer

Konta is first British woman to reach the semi-finals since 1978 **P5&SPORT**



'We were the world's leaders in democracy. Now it's Germany'

NICK CLEGG
REPORTS FROM BERLIN



THE **i** PAPER - BRITAIN'S FIRST AND ONLY CONCISE **QUALITY** TITLE

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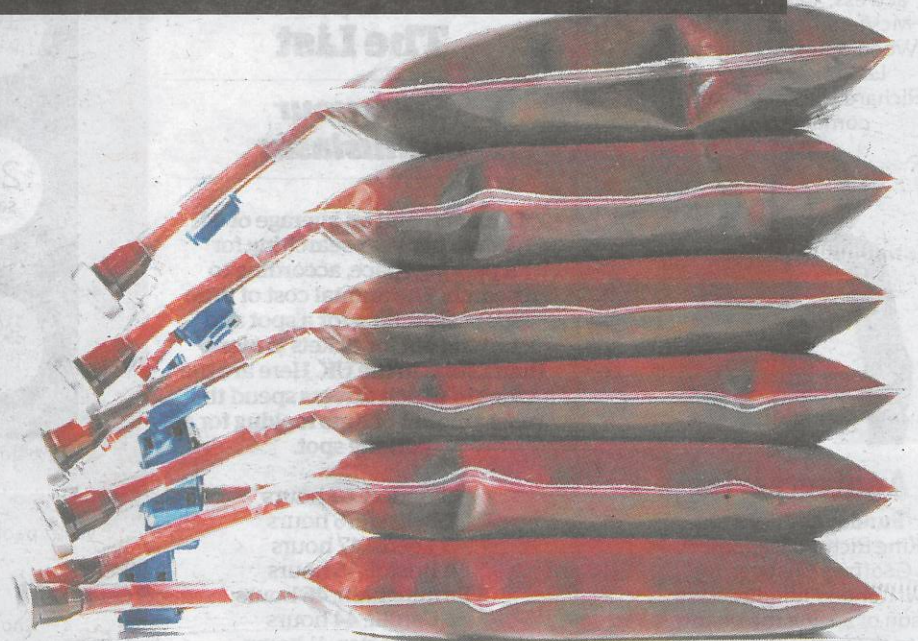
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Bad blood: PM orders inquiry into NHS deaths

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» More than 2,400 patients died after being infected with hepatitis C and HIV

» New evidence has emerged, says No 10



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PLUS
Patrick Cockburn



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HEALTH

Don't ignore that cough

Lucy Briers on dad Richard **P27**



UNITED STATES

Donald Jr wanted Russian 'dirt' **P7**

BREXIT

EU can 'go whistle', says Johnson **P7**



CULTURE

Tate Modern's summer blockbuster **P34**

INSIDE PUZZLES **P44** | SUMMER SKIING IN TRAVEL | MIDWEEK MONEY | BRITISH GP THREAT



The whole spectrum of black power

☛ *Tate Modern's epic new show celebrates the black artists who captured an extraordinary era in American history. By Karen Wright*

If you're staying in...

BOOKS The Bureau Of Second Chances

BY SHEENA KALAVIL

Thomas is in his 50s when he leaves London for a fishing village in Kerala, following the death of his wife. There

he agrees to look after an optician's shop owned by a friend and gets involved in its side business, which helps divorcees to have a second chance at love.

DVD/BLU-RAY

The Hippopotamus

CERTIFICATE 15, 90 MINS

The film of Stephen Fry's comic novel - about a washed-up, poet who is employed to investigate miracle healings in a country manor - stars Roger Allam, Emily Berrington and Fiona Shaw.

Extraordinary times call for extraordinary shows. *Soul of A Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power* arrives at Tate Modern at a moment when Europe faces the challenges of dealing with a new America and Britain faces the dilemma of how to remove itself from Europe. This show brings together 150 works by artists working across the spectrum in the period between 1963 and 1983, many of whom are almost unknown in the UK.

Setting the scene is the Spiral, a New York-based black artist collective formed in 1963. Norman Lewis chose semi-abstract in his monochromatic extraordinary canvas ironically titled *America the Beautiful*, which depicts the cloaked figures of the Ku Klux Klan, their white garb discernible almost as an afterthought, a graphic pattern in the murky darkness.

Nearby the scene is set with a room of printed material - posters and newspapers relating to the Black Panthers, whose cultural leader Emory Douglas proclaimed "the ghetto is the gallery".

The fight between abstraction and figuration continues with the work of Faith Ringgold, one of the powerfully skilful black woman showcased here, with *American People Series #20: Die*, where black and blond are juxtaposed in almost caricature style. Shocking bright red blood sullies the white shirts of the protagonists, a gun held in the hands of a white man,

a knife in the hands of a black man, while in the foreground two small children, one white, one black, huddle together and stare out at the viewer in abject terror.

While New York was facing its devils, so too was Chicago, whose artists formed their own group, called AfrCobra (the African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists). They created a manifesto for black artists and used poppy, bright graphic images and colours.

In Los Angeles another group of artists were bearing witness to historic events. They included David Hammons, who commemorates the trial of Bobby Seale, a co-founder of the Black Panthers, who was charged with conspiracy in the wake of the 1968 Democratic convention, in his 1970 work, *Injustice Case*. Seale was

bound and gagged and not allowed to speak at his own trial.

Hammons frames the work with a defaced, cut-up American flag (thereby breaking the law). He created the body print of a bound and gagged man by smearing himself in fat and grease.

Later, in a room entitled "Just Above Midtown", a homage to the gallery that first showed Hammons' work and that of other avant-garde black artists, we encounter a group of his abstracted sculptural reliefs, including my personal favourite, *Bag Lady in Flight*, made of paper shopping bags, grease and hair. Hammons said of this work that it is not about the degrading of materials but a new kind of pride: "Old dirty bags, grease, bone, hair... we should look at those images and



Faith Ringgold's two-panel painting 'America People Series #20: Die'

see how positive they are, how strong, how powerful."

Nearby is the work of Senga Nengudi, whose studio Hammons shared in Los Angeles. She is another of several strong female presences in the exhibition. *Internal II* shows the strains on a human body that is being twisted and pulled - I imagine in this case by bearing children - made with the simplest of materials: nylon tights.

Betye Saar, an artist from Los Angeles whose work has recently, rightly, been internationally feted, introduces both wit and pathos in her assemblage works. She co-opts and explores images used as shorthand for black people, such as a watermelon. In *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima*, 1972, Saar depicts the well-known figure whose smiling face was the trademark for the pancake mixes of my American childhood with both her traditional broom and a more disturbing shotgun. Her powerful totemic works are worthy of any museum.

Frank Bowling now lives a few blocks from Tate Britain; he came



given a National Medal for the arts by Barack Obama in 2016.

This is an exhibition that is sprawling and could be indigestible due to the sheer number of works, but the curators have not put a foot wrong.

I would not have put Andy Warhol in the mix, but his silkscreen image of Muhammad Ali placed alongside the graphic works of the recently deceased Barkley L Hendricks sets up some interesting comparisons.

Hendricks' work includes the poster boy image adopted for the show, *Icon for my Man Superman (Superman Never Saved Any Black People - Bobby Seale)*. Hendricks had taught himself the technique of applying gold and aluminium leaf to canvases that he had observed on a trip to Europe. Here he turned the image on himself, depicting himself wearing a super-hero T-shirt naked from the waist down, although the image is cropped to preserve modesty. (No such modesty in *Brilliantly Endowed (Self-Portrait)*). Hendricks did not want to be part of any group, but as he said: "Much of what I was trying to do with my work was to be as good a painter as I could be." His work, confrontational and almost life-sized, shows both swagger and confidence.

There is photography and documentation here, and in a show of this scale it is easy to skate by it. Spend time, though, with the eye-popping and thoughtful works of

Betye Saar's powerful totemic works are worthy of any museum

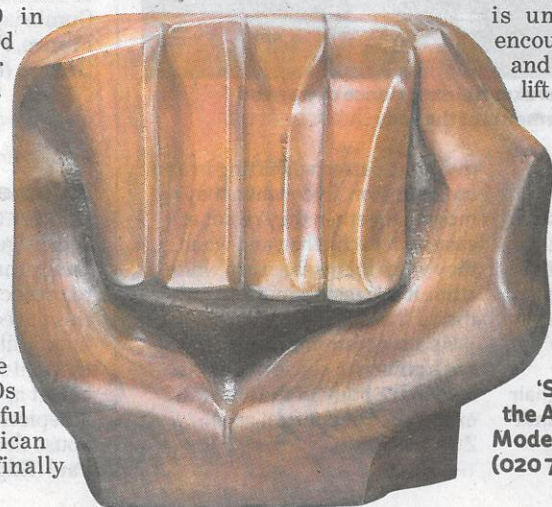
Ringgold, whose poster *The United States of Attica* highlights the divisions of America. Linger in the rooms designated "Improvisation and Experimentation" and the large, cloth works of Alvin Loving alongside glorious paintings by Alma Thomas, Bowling and Whitten and Sam Gilliam's *Carousel Change*, a swooping textile work full of pleasure juxtaposed with the barbed wire and chain curtain of Melvin Edwards.

What unites the work is the virtuosity quality of a group of artists, many of whom were largely written out of history until recently. Ringgold's powerful painting of the 1960s was only acquired by MoMA in 2016 courtesy of the Modern Women's Fund.

So why is this show important at this time? In a period where Europe is facing fracture and America is under its new leadership encouraging the return of racism and intolerance, we need art to lift the spirit.

Personally, I left America to escape the very ideological split that we are now facing. I came to England to be European and to escape the stinking politics of America. Observe this show closely. Enjoy its many pleasures and above all, heed its warnings. THE INDEPENDENT

'Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power', Tate Modern, London, to 22 October (020 7887 8888; tate.org.uk)



Barkley Hendricks' 'Icon For My Man Superman (Superman Never Saved Any Black People - Bobby Seale)' (above); Betye Saar's 'Rainbow Mojo' (above left); Elizabeth Catlett's 'Black Unity' wood sculpture (below)

to Europe from Guyana via New York. *Middle Passage* is a sprawling, colourful, semi-abstract work which encapsulates both sun-drenched colour and geography with its ghostly screened images of the continent and his family members.

Nearby is *Homage to Malcolm*, a triangular, largely monochromatic, glowering canvas by Jack Whitten. He was born in 1939 in Bessemer, Alabama, and migrated to New York after a peaceful sit-in to protest against segregation in the University of Louisiana, where he was studying, became national, with a march on Baton Rouge that eventually turned bloody. "I didn't fight, I didn't resist, but I realised I couldn't do that - that is what drove me out of the South."

Whitten was shown in the Whitney lobby in the 1970s but only assumed his rightful central position in American painting when he was finally

Last night's television

SALLY NEWALL



Another night, another gritty, but impressive, new crime drama

» **In the Dark** BBC1, 9pm

» **Phil Spencer: Find Me a Home** Channel 4, 9pm

The first instalment of *In the Dark* felt as if it should have been screened in autumn. It was lashing down for most of the episode, characters were toggled up in parkas, and there were falling leaves in the credits. The subject matter, grisly murder and decomposing bodies in woods, was curl-up-on-the-sofa-under-a-blanket stuff.

It was filmed in west Yorkshire posing as north Derbyshire, and this four-part adaptation of Mark Billingham's best-selling crime novels so far isn't doing the county any favours in staycation season - but it is gripping telly.

It's been at least five minutes since the last gritty British crime series, after all - *Line of Duty*, *Broadchurch*, *Unforgotten* - a genre my colleague has coined "Grittish", a favourite of mine, not least for the ballsy female leads.

DI Helen Weeks, played by MyAnna Buring (*Ripper Street*, *Downton Abbey*), is one of those straight-talking tough cookies with inner vulnerability. She returned to her home town to investigate the disappearance of two teenage girls. The chief suspect was the husband of an old school friend, with whom she has a Past, which no doubt we'll find out about. We also learnt that DI Weeks is in the first trimester of pregnancy, about which she has ambivalent feelings: "I can't see myself sitting in cafés with my tits

DI Helen Weeks is a straight-talking tough cookie with inner vulnerability

out all day," was one memorable line to partner and fellow "copper" Paul Hopwood, played by Ben Batt (*The Go Between*, *Shameless*).

With so much detective fodder out there, shows need a good script and top-drawer acting (take a bow *Happy Valley*, written by master of naturalistic dialogue Sally Wainwright and starring the peerless Sarah Lancashire). So far, the evidence is that writer Danny Brocklehurst (*Ordinary Lies*) has done a good job here, particularly in drawing a close-knit Derbyshire community where chat in the pub runs from Facebook to pig stealing, as well as the upsurge in business thanks to the murders coming to town. When crime hits a community, the minutiae - and humour - in life goes on more than



Helen Weeks, played by MyAnna Buring, is a ballsy detective

some of those bleak Scandi cop shows would have us believe.

The rest of the cast is strong, not least Sinead Matthews as another former school friend, Paula Days, and Ashley Walters (*Top Boy*), who was born to play cocky coppers. The jury's out as to whether *In the Dark* will make my Grittish hall of fame, but this was a good start.

Phil Spencer: Find Me a Home was commissioned before the Grenfell Tower fire highlighted some of the unpalatable truths about our country's inadequate housing system to those of us fortunate enough not to have first-hand experience of it, but this was a timely, eye-opening watch.

The *Location, Location, Location* host was helping hard-working, "hidden homeless" families to find long-term accommodation. Corvel, Meyrem and their young son were living in a cockroach and rat-infested flat in Southwark due for demolition - and paying over £900 a month in rent. Their low income meant they couldn't afford to rent privately in the borough.

In Kent, Bibi and her teenage son Oscar's home had been bought for redevelopment so they were evicted. Bibi was a full-time carer to Oscar and Phil had to ask 43 agents to find just one landlord willing to rent to anyone claiming housing benefit.

With a big name on the case, the council bumped Corvel and Meyrem up their list, and in Kent, Spencer's clout persuaded a landlord to consider a tenant on benefits. But the rest don't have Phil in their corner.

THE INDEPENDENT

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