

G A S W O R K S

PRESS RELEASE

Ufuoma Essi: *Is My Living in Vain* 6 October – 18 December 2022



Gasworks presents a major new film commission by London-based filmmaker and artist [Ufuoma Essi](#). Informed by Black feminist epistemology, her films and moving image works examine history as an embodied experience.

Essi makes abundant use of archival footage intercut with heterogeneous materials including homemade VHS tapes, YouTube clips and analogue 16mm footage shot on location. It is through an embodied exploration of archives that her work aims to disrupt the silences and gaps in the dominant visual narratives.

Is My Living in Vain is a meditation on the continuing history and emancipatory potential of the Black church as a space of diasporic belonging, affirmation and community organising. Weaving together archival imagery, oral histories and shot footage, Essi's film follows a tangled thread of personal and collective memories in order to interrogate the church's contribution to a Black radical tradition.

At Gasworks, Essi will celebrate the performativity within informal spaces of congregation, looking at the political, spiritual and existential connections between communities in Philadelphia and south-east London, two locations intimately bound to the artist's personal biography. The film will be presented as part of an immersive installation exploring parallels between the church and the cinema as sites of shared communal experience.

Is My Living in Vain is commissioned and produced by Gasworks and [Te Uru Waitākere Contemporary Gallery](#), Auckland, where a second instalment of the exhibition will be presented in 2023. The film is also generously supported by Arts Council England.

– ENDS –

PRESS CONTACT

press@gasworks.org.uk or +44 7885467181

[High res images are available here](#) (log in with email address)

IMAGE

Ufuoma Essi, *Bodies in Dissent*, 2021. Film still. Super 8mm film. Commissioned by Satellite. Courtesy of the artist.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Ufoma Essi

Ufuoma Essi is a filmmaker and artist from Lewisham, south-east London. Essi studied at University College London, 2014–2018 and the University of Pennsylvania, 2016–2017. She was the tenth Postgraduate Artist in Residence at the South London Gallery (2020–2021). In 2020, she was selected for Bloomberg New Contemporaries. Recent screenings and group exhibitions include Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival, Berwick; Lisson Gallery (curated by Ekow Eshun), London; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Maysles Documentary Center, New York; Black Star Film Festival, Philadelphia; and Chisenhale Studios, London.

About Gasworks

For over twenty five years Gasworks has played a unique role in the contemporary visual arts sector by working at the intersection between UK and international practices and debates. It does this by providing studios for London-based artists; commissioning emerging UK-based and international artists to present their first major exhibitions in London; and developing a highly-respected international residencies programme, mainly working with artists based outside Europe and North America. All programmes are accompanied by events and participatory workshops that engage local and international audiences with artists and their work.

Gasworks is also the hub of Triangle Network, an international network of small-scale arts organisations and projects that support and disseminate the work of emerging artists through artist-led workshops, residencies, exhibitions and outreach events. Gasworks and Triangle Network are registered as a charity in the UK under 'Triangle Arts Trust' and all their activities are free to the public.

Listings Information

Ufuoma Essi: *Is My Living in Vain*

6 October – 18 December 2022

Preview: 5 October 2022, 6:30–8.30pm.

Gasworks, 155 Vauxhall St, London SE11 5RH

Open: Weds – Sun 12–6pm. Free admission

www.gasworks.org.uk

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URL: <https://bit.ly/ufuomaessi> Hashtags: #UfuomaEssi #IsMyLivingInVain #gasworkslondon

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