

## Transcript of the Freedom Performance Project Documentary

**01.47: [Voiceover – Ken Teears]** “My name is Ken Teears and I’m the Tyne and Wear Museums Assistant Outreach Officer for the Borough of Gateshead. For the Freedom Performance Project I’ve been working with a group of young people from ‘Futures Plus’. We tried to make this as relevant as possible to the lives of young people, to get ownership for them over the objects and also over the topic, so they kind of guided us through what they wanted to learn. The young people were really impressed and proud that the photographs they’d taken were going to be included in the final outcome of the project, which showed that we *were* listening to them and they were actively participating and everything that they did was going towards the outcome. They saw that we were working with an artist and instead of the artist creating all the work it was them doing the work and the artist being able to draw it together at the end, so this was a key point that *they* were doing the editing and the selection, they were being able to select *their* photos that would go in, so that the piece of work was going to be theirs.”

**02.53: [Voiceover – Andy Morley]** “Hi, my name’s Andy Morley and I’m from ‘Futures Plus’ Youth Inclusion Programme. We’ve been working for now about 8 weeks with young people researching slavery and the abolishment of slavery. The young people have gained a lot of experience from it, they’ve been able to research the history of slavery in the Tyne & Wear area, and also looking at what freedom means to them.”

**03.31: [Voiceover – Ken Teears]** “They saw the Angel of the North as a place of freedom. We asked them why and they didn’t really say. The worker suggested that it might be because it’s a big freedom of expression, it’s also a very nice place, that they like the view from the top of the hill, being able to see across a lot of Gateshead, and when we got up there to take photographs they did really enjoy the photographic process of looking at the Angel through the lens and being able to explore it in a different way.”

**04.10: [Voiceover – Ken Teears]** “The final session saw the young people see the objects which they’d photographed and explored through video in the Remembering Slavery exhibition, which has been opened at Discovery Museum. The young people used activity sheets designed by the Learning Team to explore information within the exhibition, which was a really good learning tool so that they were actually seeing - reading the text panels, taking in the information and writing down the key dates and what had happened.”

**04.43: [Voiceover – Carl Greenwood]** “My name is Carl Greenwood and I’m Assistant Outreach Officer for South Tyneside. For the Remembering Slavery project I’ve been working with a group of young people from a mixed martial arts group called ‘Fighting Fit’. They’ve been exploring a variety of contemporary dance styles with Garner Harris, including body-popping, street-dance, elements of break-dance and they’ve incorporated moves from their martial arts background.”

**05.10: [Voiceover – Garner Harris]** “Hi, my name’s Garner Harris and I’m the Artistic Director of the Freedom performance. The subject matter was probably the most exciting thing about this project. I’ve been doing a lot of work around the ideas of freedom and my cultural past, which was affected strongly by the slave trade.”

**05.27: [Voiceover – ‘Fighting Fit’ instructor]** “It’s a nice little piece, you know? We’ve got other stuff to do as well and we’re working on that now. As you can see they’re working together. I think it’s how the slaves would get onto the ship and would move around because there’s so little space and it is a pretty good way to move for such a small amount of space – as you can see, they’ve done pretty well. The lads from ‘Fighting Fit’, they’ve done really well. I can’t wait for May 17<sup>th</sup>. The day before, we’re going to have a big session of practice, and I’m looking forward to that.”

**06.16: [Voiceover – Garner Harris]** “I’ve seen a lot of changes in a lot of people who’ve taken part in this project. From the time we started I’ve noticed confidence building, especially in a couple of groups – trying things they wouldn’t normally have tried. Some groups tried drumming, some dance, some photography and film, and I’ve seen them really get their teeth into these activities, gaining an understanding of a subject matter that they wouldn’t normally have tried. So far, the project has been successful in engaging all the participants and staff, including myself, and we’ve all learned something new. I hope on the night of the performance the sense of team and community spirit will shine through for everyone to see. This project is a real pleasure to be part of, for that reason more than any.”

**07.00: [Voiceover – Poem]**

“Communication is still possible.

Now.

Breathe.

A lack of freedom.

Somebody’s mobility is restricted.

Imprisonment.

A lack of freedom.

Somebody’s mouth is blocked.

Containment.

A lack of choice.

Somebody’s hand is stopped from making that choice.

Corruption.

Now.

Time.

Need.

Breathe.

Come close.

Come very close.

Pay attention and understand.

The blink of an eye.

The wave of a hand.

Something's going to happen.

Something is going to change.

Now.

Breathe."

**08.03:** "My name is Bekki French and I'm 23 years old. I'm here with 'Drummed Up' and we are a West African drumming group, all from different areas of Newcastle and I'm one of the dancers for the drummers and I'm really enjoying working on it because we're working with Sens, he's a dancer from Senegal."

**08.26:** Sound of people in 'Drummed Up' drumming.

**09.05: [Voiceover – Mark Barfoot]** "Hi, I'm Mark Barfoot, I'm here working with Nansady Keita and Sens Sagna – Guinean master drummer and a Senegalese dance teacher - and we're here to perform a rhythm - performance piece - called Liberté, which comes from West Africa and was written and performed and produced in the 1950's."

**09.24:** Sens and Nansady speak in Malinké.

**09.41: [Voiceover – Mark Barfoot]** "Yeah, so we're very lucky to have two authentic African artists: one master drummer and one dance teacher, to work with in this project."

**09.51:** Sens sings, and then everyone else sings the same thing back to him in a call-and-response fashion. The singing is a little hesitant.

**10.08: [Voiceover – Mark Barfoot]** "So there is still a lot of things we might consider to be slavery occurring in the world. So I think Liberté and this project has given people maybe a different idea of what slavery is today in its different forms."

**10.24: [Voiceover – Bekki French]** "I think projects like this are good because they get people involved who wouldn't normally get involved in something like this and from all different backgrounds, all areas of Newcastle and further out."

**10.45:** Sound of people in 'Drummed Up' playing a different rhythm.

**10.52: [Voiceover – Sens Sagna]** “My name is Sens, I come from West Africa - Senegal. I just came for this project, 200 years since the abolition of slavery. I’m teaching dance and I’m teaching singing and we’re doing some theatre in this project.”

**11.10:** Sound of people in 'Drummed Up' drumming.

**11.56: Thoughts on the slave trade**

**12.00: ['Fighting Fit' instructor]** “I’ve actually learned a lot, I didn’t know it was abolished 200 years ago. I was just so astonished. I thought that it was gone thousands of years ago, you know?”

**12.11: [Sens Sagna]** “It is important everyone come together and share their experience about Africa, about learning, about history.”

**12.26: [Bekki French]** “On the slavery front ... I think it’s a bit hypocritical for people to say that slavery has been abolished, because I don’t think it has.”

**12.36: [Sens Sagna]** “It is important if you know your history and you know where you came from ... that is part of your life, it is part of your roots – so for me it’s very important to have these kinds of things and to bring everyone together and just enjoy it.”