

INVISIBLE   
(MANCHESTER)

# BLACK HISTORY IN MANCHESTER



# INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER)

At Invisible Cities, we believe that the first step towards a more accepting world is understanding a diverse range of history.

Our Invisible (Manchester) team decided to learn more about our favourite inspirational black figures from Manchester.

We've compiled them all together in this booklet as part of our commitment to share more content on the black history of our city.



# BLACK INSPIRATIONAL FIGURES IN MANCHESTER:

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PHOTO CREDIT: ZAHID CHAUHAN/  
ZAHIDCHAUHAN.CO.UK

# DR ZAHID

# CHAUHAN

-NHS GP IN OLDHAM

CHOSEN BY ANDY,

INVISIBLE

(MANCHESTER) GUIDE

Dr. Zahid Chauhan is a general practitioner and elected councillor in North West. He strives to improve health, education and social care services for the local communities. He has also served as a deputy chair of Health and wellbeing board in Oldham and Non-Executive Director for North West Ambulance Services trust.

In 2018, Dr Chauhan launched Homeless Friendly, a social enterprise that aims to encourage organisations to adjust their practices to support those who experiencing homelessness. With GP practices and Hospitals signing up to the scheme, the charity has improved the vulnerable individuals' access to vital services

"I CHOSE CHAUHAM AS HAS TAKEN THE DECISION TO STAND UP FOR PEOPLE, WHO ARE HOMELESS THROUGH NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN, FOR MANY YEARS. DESPITE ONGOING CRITICISM FROM AUTHORITIES AND THE PUBLIC, HE CONTINUES TO SUPPORT THE PEOPLE WHO NEED IT MOST. IT IS HEARTENING TO KNOW THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE OUT THERE WITH THIS SENSITIVE APPROACH ATTITUDE." -ANDY, INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER) GUIDE

Dr Chauhan has been vaccinating homeless rough sleepers in Oldham – people who he believes should be in the high-risk category as they are vulnerable. This doctor has always supported those experiencing homelessness, as 3 years ago he distributed sleeping bags to prevent hyperthermia.

# SIR WILLIAM ARTHUR LEWIS

CHOSEN BY ALAN,  
INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER)  
GUIDE-IN-TRAINING

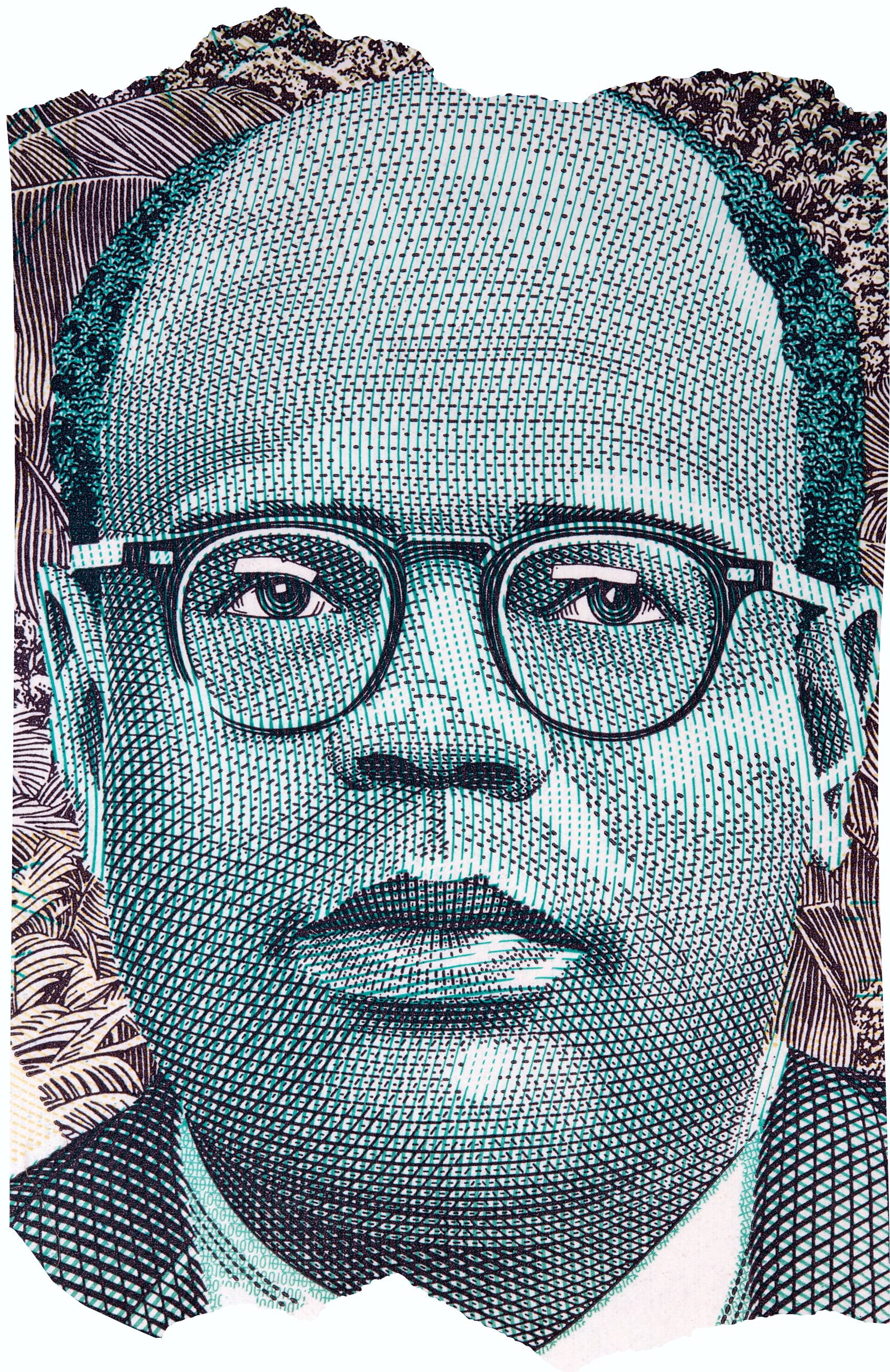
-NOBEL PRICE  
WINNER &  
PROFESSOR



IMAGE CREDIT: THE  
UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER /  
STEVE MCCABE

Sir William Arthur Lewis was born in 1915 in Saint Lucia. Lewis is best known as the founder of development economics. In 1947, he was selected as a lecturer at the University of Manchester – and thereby became Britain's first black Professor.

During this time, he published his seminal work in development and growth economics for which he was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics in 1979, jointly with Theodore Schultz.



Today, his legacy is celebrated in the Arthur Lewis Building on the University of Manchester campus. This is a place where I spent many hours studying as an undergraduate and therefore feel inspired by Arthur Lewis and his work that changed how we look at international development in terms of economics.

# ERINMA BELL

- PEACE ACTIVIST

CHOSEN BY LAUREN,  
INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER)  
SALES AND BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Dr Erinma Bell is a peace activist from Moss Side who has made a great impact on tackling gun crime by establishing CARISMA (Community Alliance for Renewal, Inner South Manchester Area) - an organisation that gives young people alternatives to street crime.



CARISMA is now part of a family support centre for migrant families called Chrysalis.





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"I CHOSE ERINMA BELL BECAUSE I'M IN ADMIRATION OF THE WORK SHE HAS DONE TO MAKE MANCHESTER A SAFER PLACE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. AS A MIXED-RACE FEMALE MYSELF, I'M INSPIRED BY THE IMPACT ERINMA BELL HAS MADE AND AM PROUD THAT AS A BLACK WOMAN, SHE HAS MARKED HISTORY BY BECOMING THE FIRST FEMALE TO HAVE A SCULPTURE IN MANCHESTER TOWN HALL." -LAUREN, INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER) SALES AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

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Erinma is the first woman to have a sculpture in Manchester town hall. After a gun amnesty in Manchester, local artist Karen Lyons designed the piece and Guns to Goods melted down the collected firearms to form the sculpture. This was to honour her campaigning efforts against gang violence in South Manchester.

Erinma currently works on projects with others across south Manchester to strive for a more inclusive community. She was awarded an MBE in 2010 and has an honorary doctorate from Salford University.

# HALIMA CASSELL -ARTIST AND SCULPTOR

CHOSEN BY LAURA, INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER) TOUR GUIDE

“HER WORK PORTRAYS COMMUNITY, AND THAT EVERYONE IS THE SAME, NO MATTER WHAT COLOUR YOU ARE, AND EVERYONE DESERVES TO BE TREATED THE SAME.” - LAURA, INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER)



Halima is a British sculptor and artist born in Pakistan. Raised in Lancashire, Halima now lives in Shropshire and her varied, multicultural background can be seen throughout her work.



(LAURA AND HALIMA CASSELL IN MANCHESTER ART GALLERY)

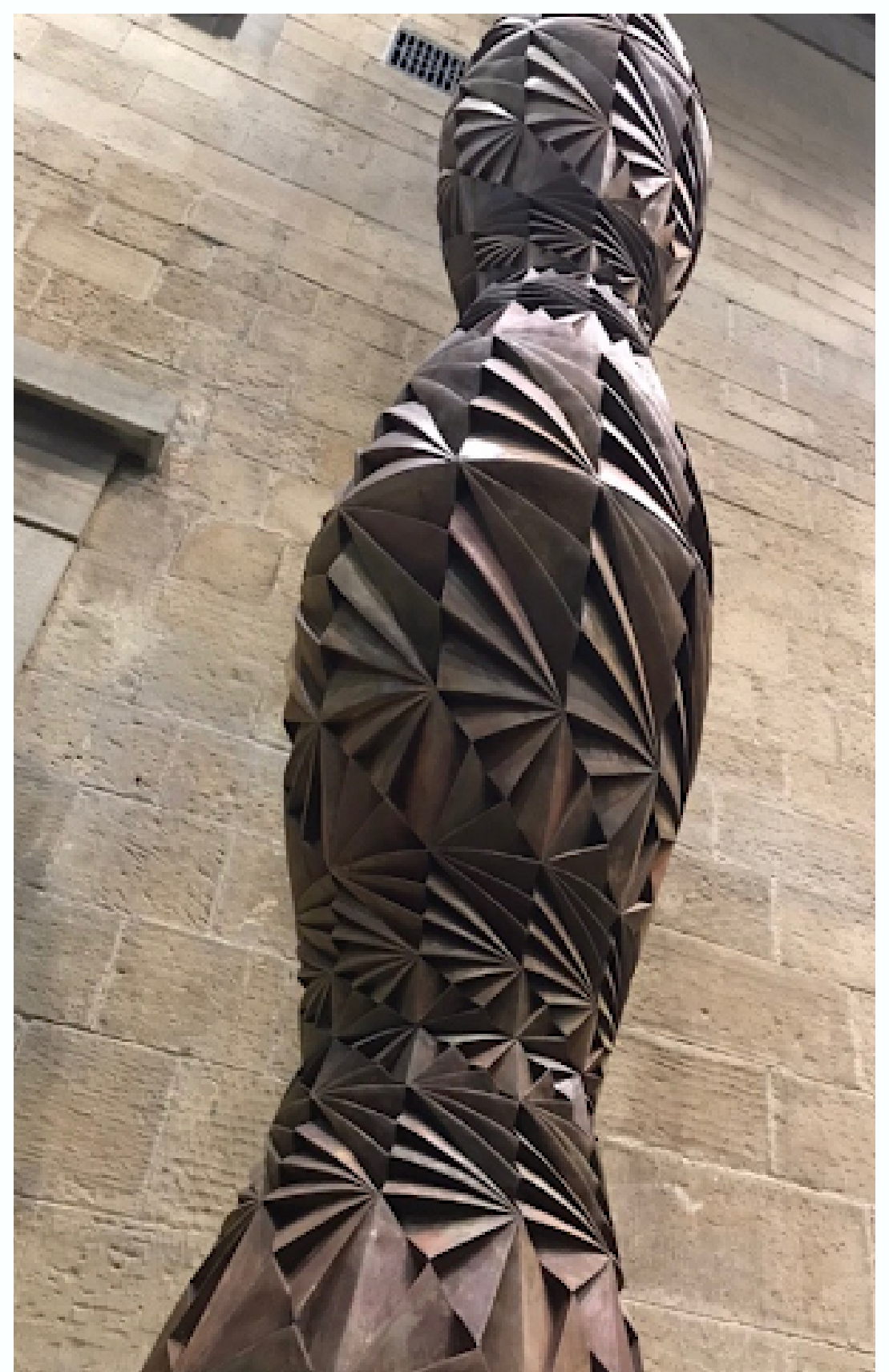
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'IN 2019 I VISITED HALIMA'S EXHIBITION AT MANCHESTER ART GALLERY ON EVERY SINGLE ONE OF MY TOURS, UNTIL THE SHOW ENDED. I THEN MET HER - SHE WAS FABULOUS! A PASSIONATE AND INSPIRATIONAL HUMAN BEING WHO PROMOTES THAT ART INVOLVES EVERYONE, NO EXCLUSIONS.' -LAURA, INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER)

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Halima embarked on a journey of art-based education, achieving an undergraduate degree in 1997 and an MA in 2002. Combining her Asian roots with a passion for African pattern, Halima's work is a fusion of the two cultures. You can clearly see the dynamic, geometrical patterns in her sculptures.

(ONE OF HALIMA'S SCULPTURES IN MANCHESTER ART GALLERY, PHOTO BY MILLIE)



Halima's exhibits have been held in the UK and internationally in both private and public collections. Halima's exhibition at Manchester Art Gallery had a lasting impact on all of us at Invisible (Manchester).

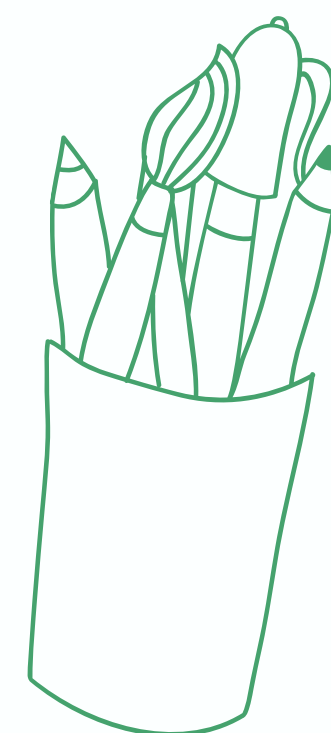


(INVISIBLE CITIES ON LAURA'S TOUR VISITING HALIMA'S POTTERY AT MANCHESTER ART GALLERY)

“HALIMA CHALLENGES PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVES IN DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES, THAT'S HOW I SEE IT” - LAURA, INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER)



(DANNY AND LAWRENCE, AT MANCHESTER ART GALLERY)



# LEMN SISSAY - POET



CHOSEN BY DANNY, INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER) TOUR GUIDE



PHOTO CREDIT: LEMN SISSAY/BLOG.LEMNSISSAY.COM

Lemn Sissay MBE is a English author and broadcaster. He is a BAFTA nominated International prize winning writer and was awarded an MBE for services to literature by The Queen. Lemn was also the official poet of the 2012 London Olympics and has been a chancellor of the University of Manchester since 2015.

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'PRESENT INFLUENTIAL FIGURE TO ME: LEMN SISSAY, A MANCUNIAN POET WHO IS PAINTED ALL OVER THE WALLS AND PAVEMENTS OF THIS CITY - I'VE MET HIM AND IT LED ME TO BE EVEN MORE INSPIRED BY HIM.' -DANNY, INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER)



” (THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER)

LEMN SISSAY'S BRILLIANCE CAN BE BETTER UNDERSTOOD IF YOU KNOW HIS HISTORY...

Sissay's mother arrived in England from Ethiopia in 1966. The following year, Lemn was born in a hospital for pregnant, unmarried women in Wigan, Greater Manchester.



His mother refused to give him away and wanted her child to be fostered while she studied. A social worker introduced Lemn to his foster parents, declaring his name "Norman". At 12, Norman was sent away to a children's home.

After living at many institutions, Lemn left the care system and tried to request his files. They refused. So Lemn embarked on a 31-year-long campaign until he received them in 2015. His shattering, light-searching memoir, "My Name Is Why", is the result of his saddeing experience.

### Some of Lemn Sissay's Books:

- Tender Fingers in a Clenched Fist
- Morning Breaks in the Elevator
- Listener
- Hidden Gems
- My Name Is Why



PHOTO CREDIT: LEMN  
SISSAY/BLOG.LEMNSISSAY.COM

# LINDA BROGAN

-ARTIST & PLAYWRIGHT

CHOSEN BY NIC,  
INVISIBLE  
(MANCHESTER) GUIDE-  
IN-TRAINING

The Reno was an underground funk and soul club in the 1970s that welcomed those not allowed in other clubs. At a time where signs saying 'No Blacks, No Dogs, No Irish' were common, The Reno became a welcome second home for many.



## *The Reno at the Whitworth Art Gallery*

For one year, Linda Brogan and a group of local residents who went to the Reno nightclub in the 1970s and 80s, occupied the Whitworth Gallery.



"PART OF MY TOUR IS GIVING A SPOTLIGHT TO MUSIC VENUES AROUND MANCHESTER, AND OBVIOUSLY MANY HAVE AN UNSEEN FUTURE DUE TO COVID. AN IMPORTANT PART OF MUSICAL HISTORY WAS LOST IN TIME, THE RENO, SO I ADMIRE AND THANK LINDA FOR KEEPING THE MUSIC ALIVE AND REDISCOVERING THIS GREAT MUSIC VENUE." - NIC, INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER)



"THERE WOULDN'T BE MUCH MUSIC IF IT WASN'T FOR BLACK HISTORY" - NIC, INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER)

# A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT LINDA'S EXCAVATION PROJECT....

Since the club was demolished in 1986 due to safety regulations, Linda Brogan decided to start the excavation project. The Excavation was funded with partners Manchester City Council and Salford University's Archaeology.

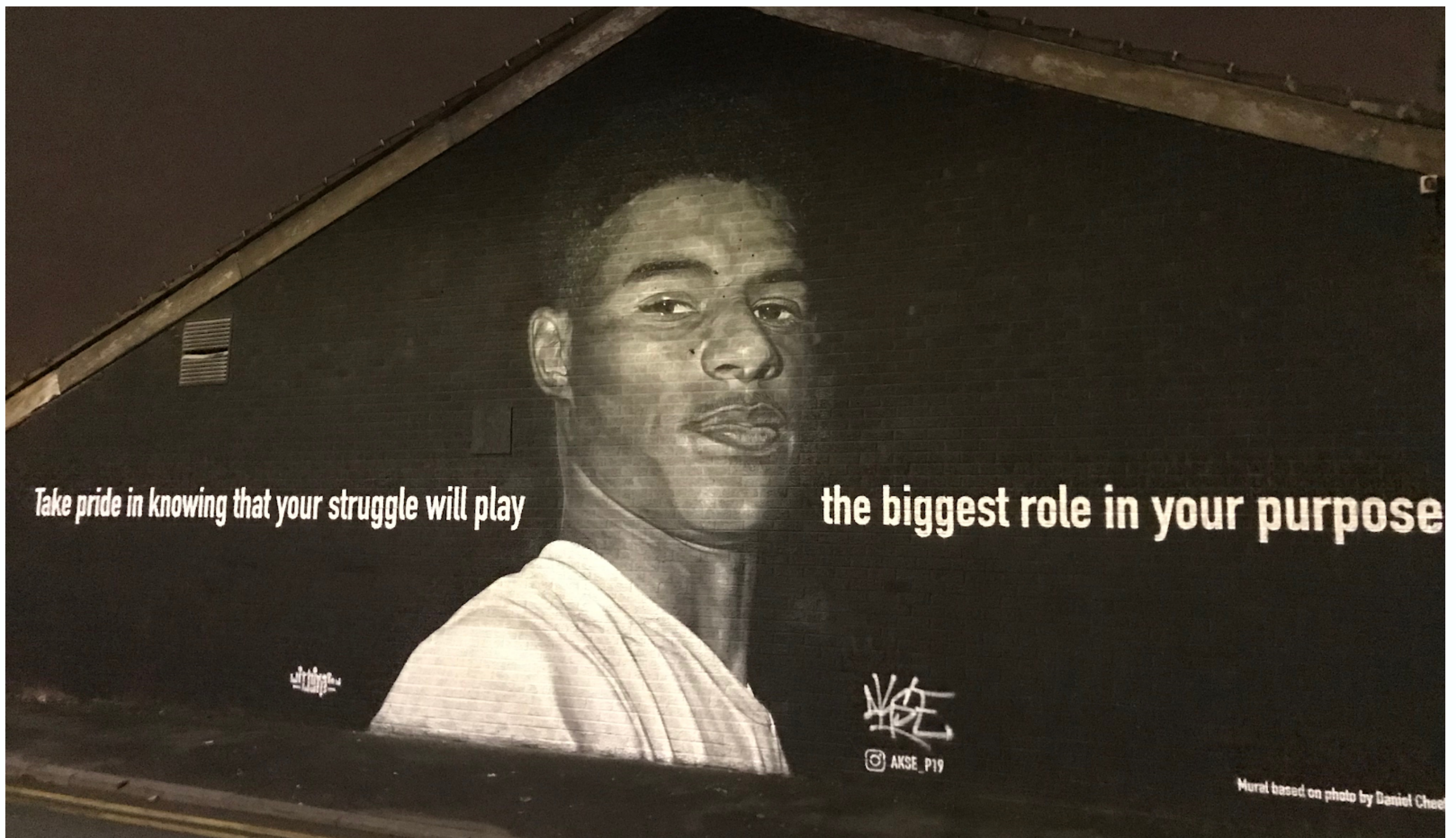
In 2017, Linda Brogan excavated the Reno nightclub, creating an exhibit to share the memoirs and stories of those who were regulars in the 70s. They can be viewed on - <http://the.reno.live>

Regulars - led by Linda Brogan - found the remains of the demolished building, and even parts of the dance floor. They were displayed in the Whitworth gallery together with photographs and memoirs collected by Linda.

# MARCUS RASHFORD

-FOOTBALL PLAYER

CHOSEN BY RICHARD,  
INVISIBLE  
(MANCHESTER)  
GUIDE-IN-TRAINING



'MARCUS SHOWS HOW FOOTBALL CAN BE A FORCE FOR UNITY AND GOOD'-  
RICHARD, INVISIBLE  
(MANCHESTER)

Marcus Rashford is an English professional football player who plays for Manchester United. He is from Wythenshawe, Manchester and he started his professional career at 17 years old.

Marcus Rashford has been striving to end child food poverty and called for the government to provide a guaranteed “meal a day” to all school pupils in England in financially struggling families. He has also volunteered at Food Banks to support lower income families.

Recently, Rashford launched an online petition calling for the government to provide children with free school meals during all holidays. More than a million people had signed Rashford's petition.

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MARCUS RASHFORD HELPING  
THOSE IN NEED SENDS A  
STRONG, POSITIVE  
MESSAGE.

- RICHARD, INVISIBLE  
(MANCHESTER)

Marcus Rashford will be given the City of Manchester Award for his campaign to extend Free School Meals into school holidays, ensuring all young people have enough to eat.



# SISTER ROSETTA THARPE - SINGER

CHOSEN BY MILLIE, INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT MANAGER

Tharpe, known as the Godmother of rock n roll, inspired many on that rainy day in Chorlton in 1964.

Though originally from America, Sister Rosetta Tharpe played a legendary gig in an abandoned train station in Manchester, which shaped our cities music scene forever. She stopped on her Blues and Gospel train tour to play to the Mancunions and echoing the city's regular weather patterns, she started her performance with Didn't It Rain.

Tharpe's electrifying guitar playing was hugely significant to the Black History of Manchester, as her powerful performance was during a time where the city's civil rights struggle of the sixties was watched by Manchester's black community. Tharpe being a figure of hope and motivation for many equality movements and anti-racism battles of the seventies.

# MORE INSPIRATIONAL BLACK FIGURES: 🔍

"I TOOK PART IN MY FRIENDS' LIA GOMEZ AND HOLLY POLLARD'S BOOK EXCHANGE FACES IN THE CROWD - A SPACE FOR REFLECTING ON RACE THROUGH SHARING INCREDIBLE WORDS OF BLACK AUTHORS." - MILLIE, INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER)

BERNADINE EVARISTO

CANDICE CARTY-WILLIAMS

ANDREA LEVY

"THESE THREE INSPIRING WOMAN CREATED AND WROTE THE CHARACTERS INTO THE PAGES OF MY 2020. EVARISTO'S FANTASTIC FEMALE CHARACTERS, CARTY-WILLIAM AND LEVY'S 'QUEENIE', WERE ALL GREAT COMPANIONS OF MINE THROUGHOUT LOCKDOWN." - MILLIE, INVISIBKE (MANCHESTER)

## MUHAMMAD ALI

Ali is a American professional boxer and social activist. Apart from his success in heavyweight boxing, Ali's message of Black pride and Black resistance to white domination was also on the forefront of the civil rights movement.

## ALEX WILLIAMS

Williams was a Manchester City goalkeeper and now a 'City in the Community Ambassador' at the club. He was awarded the MBE in 2002 for his services to young people and impacts to locals in Manchester.

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"PAST INFLUENTIAL FIGURE TO ME: MUHAMMAD ALI, MY HERO, I WOULD OF LOVED TO HAVE MET HIM AND I REALLY ADMIRE HIM AS HE DID WHAT WAS RIGHT FOR HIM." -DANNY, INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER)

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## SIR TREVOR McDONALD

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"SIR TREVOR McDONALD TRULY PAVED THE WAY FOR MANY BLACK JOURNALISTS AND DID A LOT FOR BLACK REPRESENTATION IN THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA" - LAUREN, INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER)

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# HOW TO KEEP SUPPORTING OUR BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES?

*Here is a list of resources that are recommended by us:*

## **Book recommendations:**

- *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernadine Evaristo – Following the lives of a dozen British women through generations and social classes, and tell the stories of their families, friends and lovers through the years.
- *Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race* by Reni Eddo-Lodge – Reni wrote about her frustration about the current discussions of race and racism in Britain, and explore issues from eradicated black history to whitewashed feminism.



## **Podcast recommendations:**

- *Brunch & Bantu Knots Podcast* – Mona, Ness & Rumbi from Manchester explore different topics surrounding the black community and culture. Available on Spotify.
- *Two Two's Podcast* – Rose & Nanalise create a space for the Black LGBTQ+ community in the UK, while explore topics like body dysmorphia and locs. Available on Spotify.

## **Other suggestions:**

- *T.A.P. Project* – a Manchester-based community initiative that seeks to promote social inclusion by providing service & training for the African communities locally, nationally & globally. You can support T.A.P. through donation, fundraising or volunteering.

- *Big People Music* – a creative agency producing art innovation projects worldwide. It has curated lots of events and exhibitions around Manchester related to black history in the past, including "Black Then, Black Now" and "See My Dunya, See My World". Follow them on social media to stay up to date with their latest news and events!
- *The Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre & Education Trust* – The centre is located at Manchester Central Libaray and is free to visit. They archive a wide range of documents and resources donated by BAME communities, and hold regular exhibitions and events in Manchester. They also offer different volunteering opportunities for people who would like to get involved.

# INVISIBLE (MANCHESTER)

This booklet was put together by Invisible Cities, a social enterprise that trains people who have experienced homelessness to become walking tour guides of their own city.

We believe that we should have honest and true conversations around the history of our cities as it helps us to understand the communities we live in today.

If you would like us to create more booklets like this one, let us know!



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