

“The Curator” by Carmen

Phil May should not be dismissed by curators who wish to avoid acknowledging or dealing with the racist stereotypes a Negress represents.

To do so would be to sanitise and therefore distort both his legacy and the legacy of race and racism in Leeds art history. Which ultimately perpetuates and protects the racist ideology of colonialism that British art history partook in. Yet I think we should resist the urge to correct or make up for his racism. May's piece is simply not a reflection of a black woman, it is a reflection of an inhumane stereotype. Why should we protect Phil May from his own racism and the legacy of this works curation.

I argue we should not try to fix the sad fact that the Negress is a relic of racism in Leeds, but instead acknowledge it and accept it as a fact of Leeds art history. But also as another reason to keep redefining and learning to atone for that past.