

“The Curator” by Saraya

I've struggled with trying to think up a name for this piece. I think it's very important to acknowledge its history and journey.

Untitled - A Negress - Ruffled or The Ruffled Lady? I am hesitant to humanise such a caricature. Or give her any words. But I would like to highlight something other than her face. The ruffle also plays back into the idea of the clown and thus the initial purpose of the piece. A joke.

I believe galleries and museums have a responsibility to acknowledge history completely. And be critical when doing so. They have a responsibility to address their own histories, which is why I believe it's important to say that curators named this, not the artist. They are spaces for activism and challenging the way we think. Museums and galleries have a social and cultural responsibility to be open, truthful and anti-racist. Decolonisation starts here.

This portrait makes me tired. Had I seen it in a gallery with nothing addressing its racism and history I would have simply side glanced at it. I would not have felt welcomed into that space any longer. Which is why I'm glad that we are addressing it now. So museums and galleries can continue to work towards becoming safe spaces for displaced people and marginalised groups.