



There were two places I knew I had to visit last academic year as a way of helping me contextualise the historical background of my PhD thesis. The RHUL Doctoral School Research Award enabled me to visit both sites only weeks apart. I first travelled to Bristol to visit The Georgian House Museum, once home to the wealthy sugar merchant and enslaver John Pinney and his wife Jane, the daughter of another plantation owner. The six-storey house in Bristol was built in 1790, and its interior demonstrates the opulence acquired through the cultivation of sugar by enslaved Africans in the Caribbean. What was particularly impactful about my trip to his home, now a free and public museum, was learning that often the British homes of enslavers were models for the construction of Great Houses on Caribbean plantations where enslaved domestic workers performed most of their duties. Noticeable differences in the objects and furnishings of the spaces also demonstrate the racialisation and class differences of those who spent time there. Connecting the upper and lower levels of the home is a 'hidden staircase', which enabled the labourers to get to most of the upstairs rooms without being seen. The visible traces on the islands are mirrored by British architecture, signs, and statues but speak to how space has been informed and rebranded in tandem with the erasure of the African Indigenous names of the people captured.



A few weeks later, I travelled to The International Slavery Museum in Liverpool, which was also an invaluable, indelible experience. With only a few places in Britain that teach and inform on Britain's involvement in slavery in the Caribbean and as the slave trading capital of the country, I needed to immerse myself in the city and engage with the history. Liverpool's legacy of slavery is unavoidable. The architecture, the royal docks, several street signs, statues, various museums, and many other cultural and educational spaces speak to Liverpool's economic wealth and cultural growth on the back of enslaved

people's labour in the Caribbean. The Museum also houses a small collection of racist memorabilia (especially in comparison to the Jim Crow Museum and other similar museums in America), with only about eight objects. However, these objects spoke so distinctly to the relevance of popular anti-Black stereotypical images to British advertising, literature, marketing, and business. In drawers across the Museum, archives are protected and stored.

I was directed by museum staff to their racist memorabilia drawers, where I found objects which draw on the connections between British history and the category of racist images I have decided to draw on in my research. Liverpool is a city which has made little to no attempt to erase the visible signs of trade, white supremacy, power, and wealth production which taint its streets. Because of such visibility, the city becomes a progressive and productive space to engage with history and its dark truths.

