

that exile or displacement is the exhibition's theme, that the beholder is shuttled relentlessly between signal and noise, unable to divine which is which, and so effectively becomes lost within the exhibition. It is perhaps too strong to contend that the disorientating experience that the exhibition stages approaches those of exile; at least, it would be too strong for me to contend that, even though I can imagine it as a possibility. Whether it does or not, of course, is better judged by those who have that lived experience. However, by attending to how we traverse the exhibition, Basu invites us, through our sensate corporeality, to a distinct experience of how freedom can be recovered even through dislocation.

I hold onto one sequence in which we see the central character in the film seem utterly alone but also seem to find her own space. And, in another, archival imagery of women dancing; even if that film is distinctly nostalgic, placing liberty in the past, it nonetheless suggests future possibilities and embodied freedoms.

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Grace Ndiritu: Compassionate Rebels in Action

Cooper Gallery, Dundee, 10 October to 13 December

A 'compassionate rebel' – as defined by artist Grace Ndiritu in her 2025 publication *Glossary for Art and Action* – is someone who embodies 'the ethics of Peace Building and work[s] towards the unity of society'. Amid high inflation rates, scarcity of resources, growing global conflict, as well as emboldened racism on our streets, compassion is increasingly difficult to find in today's Britain. Yet Ndiritu invites us to consider this act through understandings of rebellion. This exhibition, which concludes the impressive five-year alternative art education programme 'The Ignorant Art School' (Reports *AM*453), gathers diverse ephemera and practices of community organising to answer the urgent question of what art and art education can offer amid this growing social division.

Visitors are first invited to take off their shoes in the glass-fronted entranceway, a space covered with photographs of the Women's Strike for Equality protest in New York City that took place in the summer of 1970. Initially the protesters appear calm, some smiling, their arms linked to form a solid barrier but, as their images repeat across the grey carpeted lower galleries, their arms become raised, fists clenched, shouting in anger and joy. In the darkened installation, I find pleasure in how my body lines up in a reflection of these 1970s protesters, as if collapsing these periods – a gesture that affirms Ndiritu's point that we continue to be implicated in such radical histories.

Exhibited on the walls and floor of the upper gallery, seven specially woven circular carpets depict archival images of protests that further visualise Ndiritu's explorations of community organising in art and activism, including how alliances of the left are connected; pertinently, the artist's mother was a founder of the intersectional feminist activist group 'Women in the Third World' and was a student of the Truth and Reconciliation Centre in Birmingham in the 1980s. The artist's own personal connection and admiration

for these groups are what determines her selection. These include rousing historic images from Aboriginal Land Rights protest events and the Women's Liberation Movement, which are shown alongside countercultural communities such as artist Li Yuan-chia's Museum and Art Gallery in Cumbria in the 1970s (Reviews *AM*473). One of the rugs, *APG, 2022*, gives a bird's-eye portrait of Artist's Placement Group founders John Latham and Barbara Steveni in conversation with German Industrialists and UK industry representatives in 1971; it is also where we can sit to watch a video of an esoteric discussion of Latham's essay 'Event Structure'.

Ndiritu's research into the practices of alternative communities can also be found in the short film *Labour: Birth of a New Museum, 2023*, in which the artist is seen dressed in a mixture of traditional African, Mexican and western clothes that she has collected or that have been gifted to her. Here we see Ndiritu's extensive shamanic training as she leads a performance at RAMM in Exeter for a small group of pregnant women – including, we are led to understand, the potential new art audience of unborn children. The sound of the gong reverberates across the galleries, as if extending ideas of how ritual inhabit all her works. Three documentary-style works (totaling 100 minutes) show Ndiritu in Argentina, UK and France, where she spent long periods living nomadically in rural, artistic and spiritual communities, each film demonstrates how the artist's proposals are shaped by her encounters, making for a less deifying image than the carpets.

'Being Together', which acts as a slogan for the exhibition, was acted out one evening prior to this show's opening when 80 or so attendees were invited to sit on the floor and participate in short breathing meditations led by Ndiritu. Her instruction diminished audience discomfort and drew those present into the shamanic practices advocated for in the project. It was part of seven communal action-based events organised by the gallery – a 'season of peace building' – with specialist practitioners such as Ndiritu's Tibetan Buddhist teacher Lama Rinchen Polma, writer Titilayo Farukuoye and grower Jek McAllister.

When understood in this totality, 'Compassionate Rebels in Actions' combines the powerful imagery of past protests and collaborative actions with spiritual practices and much-needed discussions of contemporary feminism, climate justice, decolonial and anti-fascist activism. The exhibition smartly emphasises its incompleteness without the active participation of others.

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Grace Ndiritu, 'Compassionate Rebels in Action', installation view