



Octavia Foundation

10TH ANNIVERSARY

Inspiring young people through media and art – our work with youth in the last 10 years.

The Octavia Foundation's Decade of Dedication



The Octavia Foundation was founded in 2006 with just one employee working out of a filing cupboard. Ten years on, we've grown to meet the increasing needs of the community in West and Central London, focusing on caring for older people, supporting young people and helping people into work. In 2015 alone, we helped transform the lives of over 2,000 people.

YO! London is the way we have chosen to celebrate the achievements and projects we have undertaken for the youth of West and Central London, but we couldn't resist taking the opportunity to look back on our work as well as forwards.

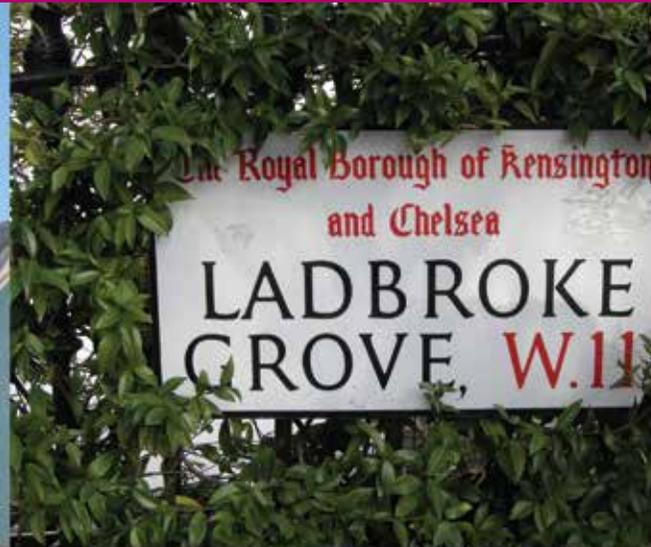


“Make individual life noble” (Octavia Hill)

As the former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams said reflecting on the legacy of Octavia Hill, the word nobility can feel “archaic” and “pompous” when applied to the 21st Century.

Such a sense can be heightened when the word is applied in the context of youth culture. Yet, inspired by the actions of Octavia Hill, the Octavia Foundation sought to do just that.

Here are some snapshots of the work we have done with the youth of London to introduce nobility, opportunity and prosperity to the inner-city life.



GROVE ROOTS



Eight young film-makers, all from the local area, researched, directed and produced the feature length documentary *Grove Roots*. The film won Best Youth Documentary at the Portobello Film Festival in 2009.

The project unearthed the pivotal history of the area, including the rise of the Notting Hill Carnival after the 1958 riots and the lives of unique local figures such as Claudia Jones, who is remembered in the UK as the 'mother of Notting Hill Carnival' and notorious slum landlord Peter Rachmann.

“Our local history is global history.”
(Colin Prescod, Institute of Race Relations)



“Grove Roots has taught me so many things. From how to use a camera to how the history of a small place can impact the world.”
(Jodi Cumberbatch, young digital media volunteer)



S.P.I.T Music (Sending Positive Images Through Music)

In 2009, the Octavia Foundation worked with nine young men from North Westminster. The project culminated in the creation of two amazing music videos and a documentary featuring grime music artist and actor Ashley 'Bashy' Thomas.

The area where the young artists came from is considered amongst the most deprived in London. Many of the youths engaged were characterised as 'at risk.' Through the project, creative energies were harnessed and dreams given fertile ground and nourishment to flourish.



S.P.I.T Music project participants at photoshoot





“The S.P.I.T Music project put young people back into their senses, encouraging work and study. It gave them a spark – what they needed to move forward positively. It changed their own perception of themselves; people were around them and caring from them. It was so needed, it needs to happen all the time.”

(Rachid Boufas, Octavia resident and organiser of S.P.I.T Music project)

Summer Fun Days

Over the last decade, the Octavia Foundation held a number of Summer Fun Days. The events were held in local community spaces in North Kensington; Avondale Park or Emslie Horniman Pleasance Park. They were a chance to host, entertain and engage with the local community, while promoting the work of the Foundation.



Capoeira training was one of the many free and fun activities the Octavia Foundation organised.

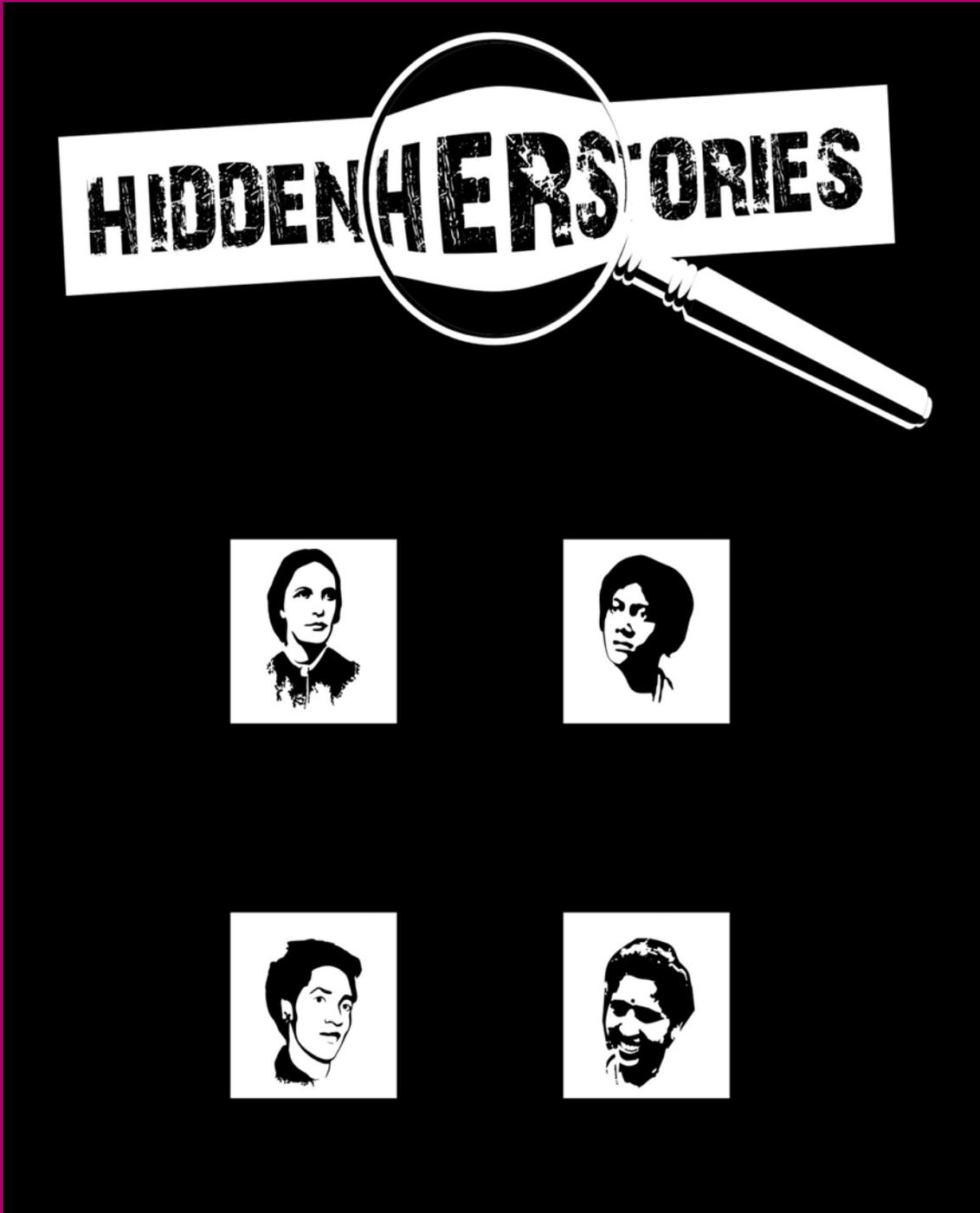






“Through their work the Octavia Foundation is able to touch people’s lives in a meaningful way that transcends diversity in the broadest sense of the word. Their various projects and services have had a positive impact on staff as it has the local communities they serve. I’m sure they’ll continue this trend into the future, and it was a pleasure to be part of their story so far.”

(Wray Bennett, former Octavia Foundation employee and spoken word artist)



Hidden Herstories, Women of Change

unveiled the achievements of Octavia Hill, Claudia Jones, Amy Ashwood Garvey and Jayaben Desai. These pioneers had significant international impact on the issues of race relations and social poverty. While their names are known to few, their legacies are anything but unsung.

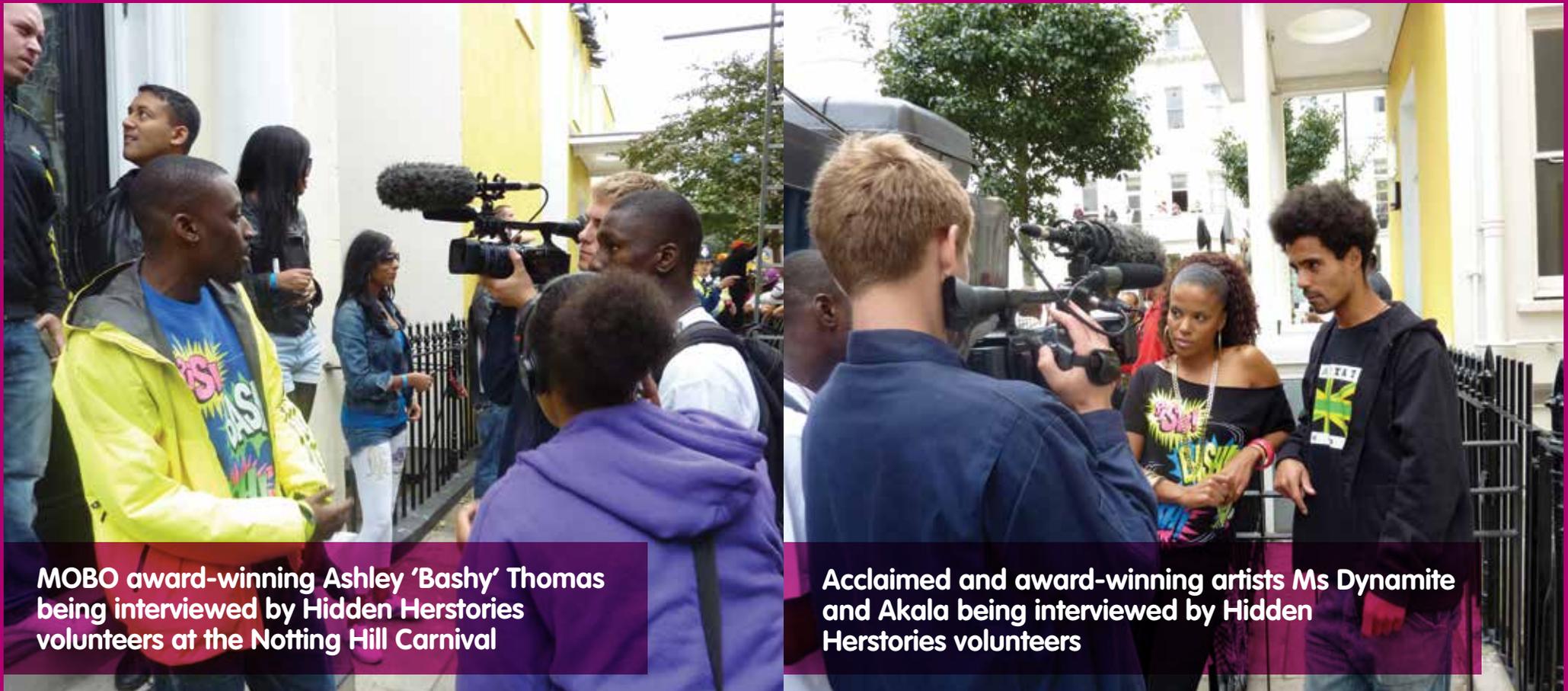
“Learning about the lives of these women has opened my eyes to the struggle that went to shape West London. I have lived in West London my whole life and before this project had never thought about how it became the place I live and love today. I was struggling to make films and that’s all I wanted to do; this project has allowed me to actually see a future career. I am forever grateful to the Octavia Foundation.”

(Max Robson, young volunteer on digital media work)



“We have had the chance to be involved in every aspect of film making...we are learning so much. The group work really well together, it’s really professional.”

(Stephanie Vaz, digital media volunteer)



MOBO award-winning Ashley 'Bashy' Thomas being interviewed by Hidden Herstories volunteers at the Notting Hill Carnival

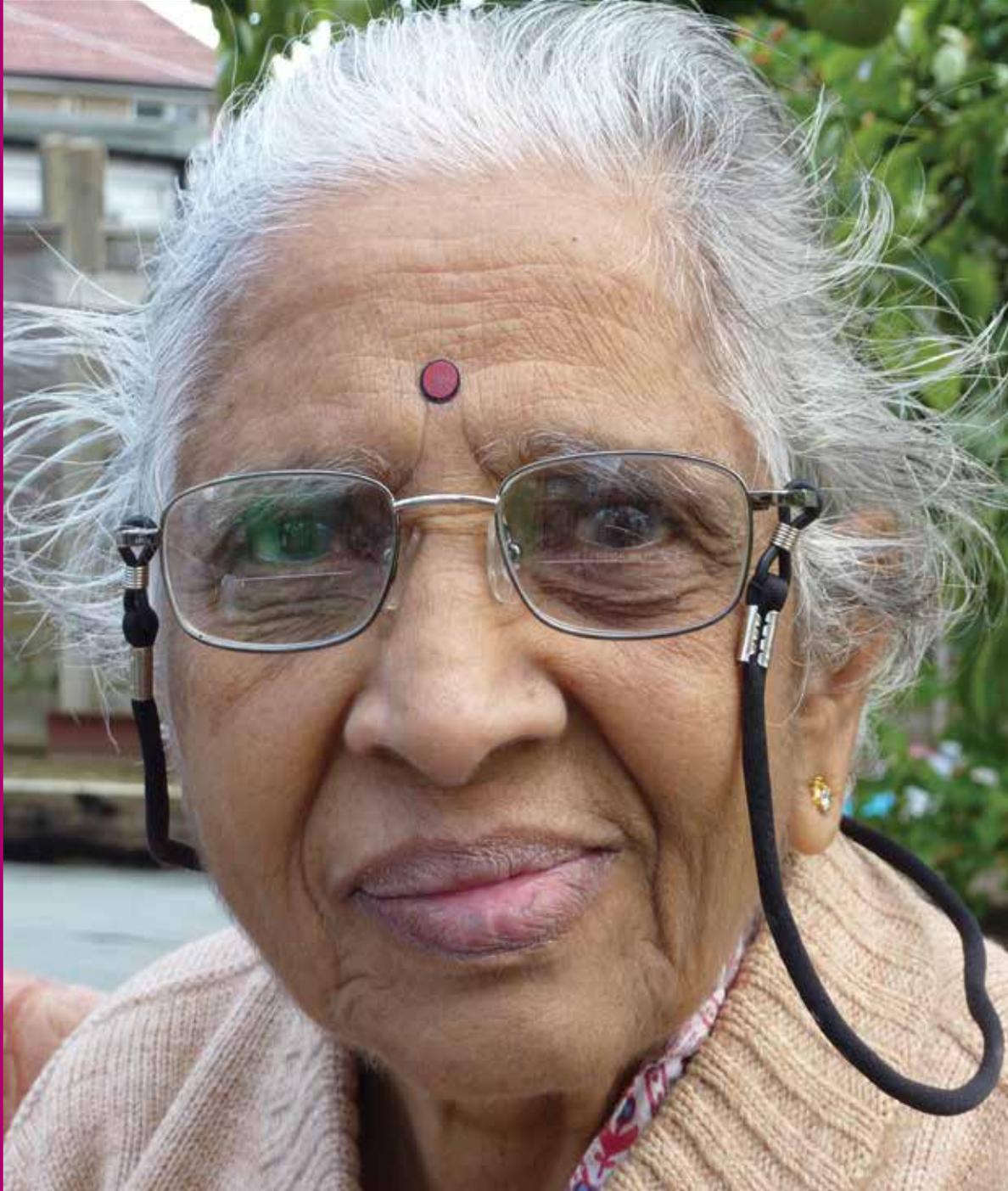
Acclaimed and award-winning artists Ms Dynamite and Akala being interviewed by Hidden Herstories volunteers



As part of the Hidden Herstories research, young volunteers interviewed an array of social commentators, including Bob Crow before he passed away. He spoke to volunteers about the legacy of Jayaben Desai.

“It was great to meet Bob Crow, he was a very interesting man who did so much for the people.”

(Rae Evelyn, young digital media volunteer)



“Meeting Jayaben Desai, who was one of the unsung heroes that our film aimed to celebrate, was a great honour and a memory I will forever treasure. Her legacy lives on through the difference that she inspired. A legacy that I am delighted was unearthed in the film. The truth is, I don’t believe she did what she did for fame, nor for recognition. Her bravery came from a place that was sincere and that is what makes her such a hero. Despite her small stature (Jayaben was not very tall at all), she was and remains a giant that must never be forgotten.”

(Moktar Alatas, young digital media volunteer)

Current Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn being interviewed by Hidden Herstories volunteers in 2009 on the importance of the Grunwick Strike leader.

“Mrs Desai’s legacy is that ordinary people do extraordinary things.”



BREAKING INTO THE MUSEUM



Breaking into the Museum was a creative initiative in partnership with Manifesta for young people to reclaim heritage spaces. They were given special access to the Museum of London in order to make their own three minute film on an item that spoke to them.

The project was hailed as a radical intervention in heritage curation and an exciting form of 21st century cultural activism.



The films developed through the project were submitted to international award bodies. A powerful short film called 'Black to Yellow' was produced by Octavia resident Chris Lamontagne, addressing the issues of class, stereotyping and individuality. It won two prestigious awards from a body established by the UN.

Chris was supported by the Octavia Foundation to travel to New York to receive his awards.

REPRAZENT



In the wake of the riots, and the media's vilification of large sections of the urban youth, the Octavia Foundation's young people organised an event under the provocative question 'does Britain hate young people?'

The event saw performances from Kat François (comedian, poet), Dave Neita, (lawyer, poet), Tameka Empson, (Eastenders actress), Paul Gladstone Reid MBE, David Akinsanya (Ambassador for Who Cares Trust) and Akala (MOBO award-winning hip-hop artist).

The event was so well attended, it was standing room only and #Reprazent trended on social media.





“Does Britain Hate Young People?’ Anyone who had been in the event would have been forced to answer; ‘not in here, right now.’ There’s no doubt they would leave on that summer evening infused by a willingness to spread that message of love and respect to the wider community, and perhaps on again, to the wider society beyond.”

(Courtia Newland, award-winning West London author)





BASE is our FREE creative and cultural space for children and young people.

Providing training and opportunities to those interested in film, music, photography, socialising and taking leadership.



The philosophy underpinning BASE aligns with the central mission of the Octavia Foundation which is to empower individuals to achieve positive personal change.



Every single session at BASE sees a freshly cooked, nutritious meal provided which is shared communally.





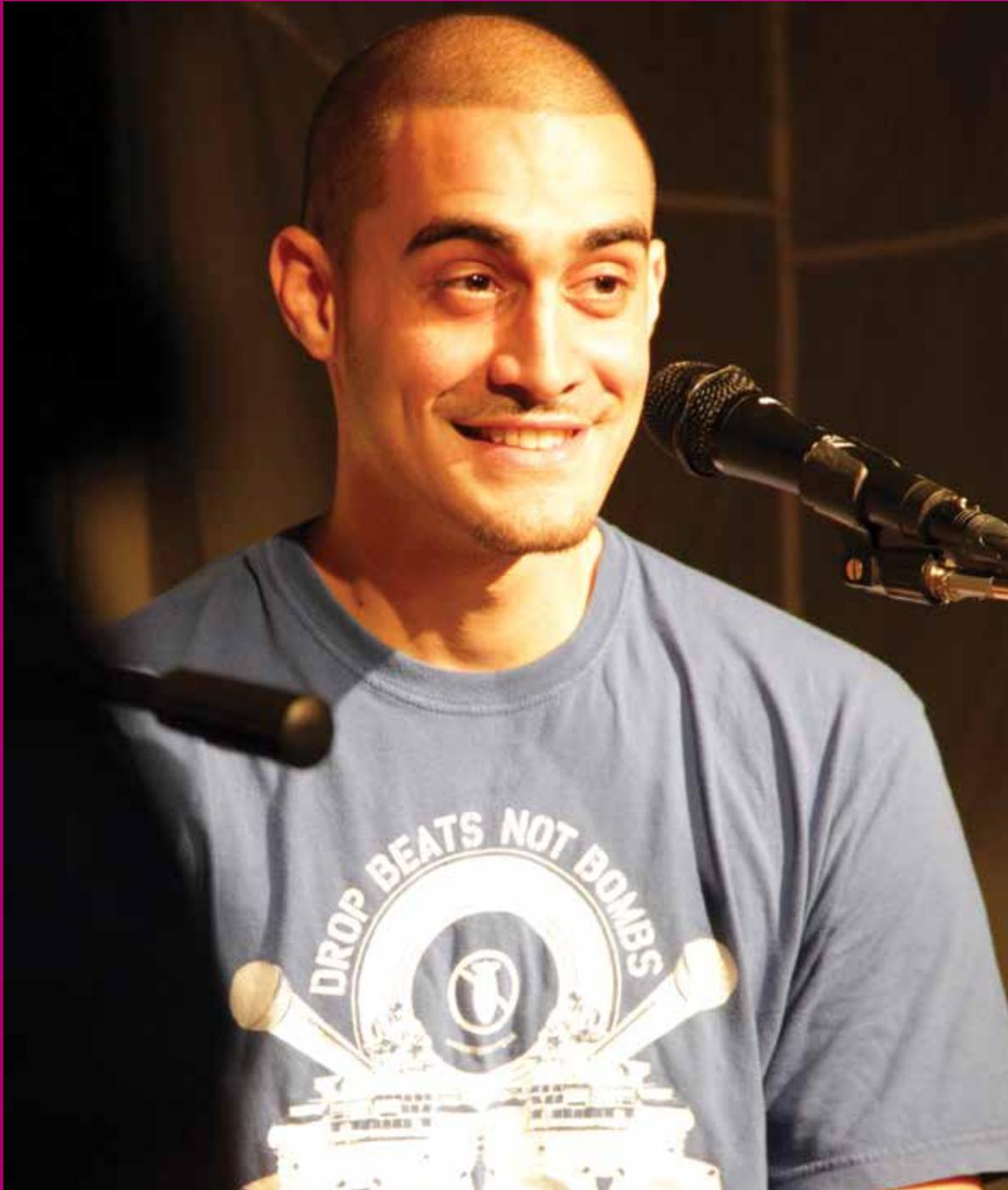


In 2010, the young people at the Octavia Foundation organised an event in Ladbroke Grove celebrating the hip-hop that has generated from the streets of North Kensington and beyond. The night saw performances from Akala, Lowkey and Kate Tempest among an array of other exceptionally talented young artists, who paid homage to the likes of Kevin Davies, who was one of the first hip-hoppers on the city's streets.

The experience for local performers to share the stage with internationally renowned artists is a source of continued pride and inspiration.

Lowkey's performance electrified the event





“I enjoyed working with the Octavia Foundation and especially seeing the development of several young people they worked with over the years. I saw them grow into fully empowered adults with the confidence to be agents of change and influential actors within a society which desperately needs them. Long may this blossoming of potential continue.”

Lowkey, hip-hop artist

A long-term supporter of the Octavia Foundation's work, Akala has performed for Hip-Hop History, produced tracks for Hidden Herstories, spoken at Reprazent and mentored and trained a number of the young people that the Octavia Foundation work with.



Kate Tempest, winner of the Ted Hughes Award (2013) and Mercury Prize (2014) performing





Fans, current players, managers and even QPR legends took centre-stage in this ground-breaking documentary charting the fascinating history of the QPR football club.

R'Story captures the highs, the lows and the silver linings of the QPR journey through a series of stunning visuals, hitherto unseen archive and captivating interviews. These include 'Sir Les' Ferdinand, Rodney Marsh, Joey Barton, Mark Lazarus and Kevin Gallen to name a few. This was not a club film though – it's a film by the fans, for the fans.

Digital media volunteers interviewing Garfield Hackett on his relationship to QPR Football Club





QPR fans coming to see R'Story

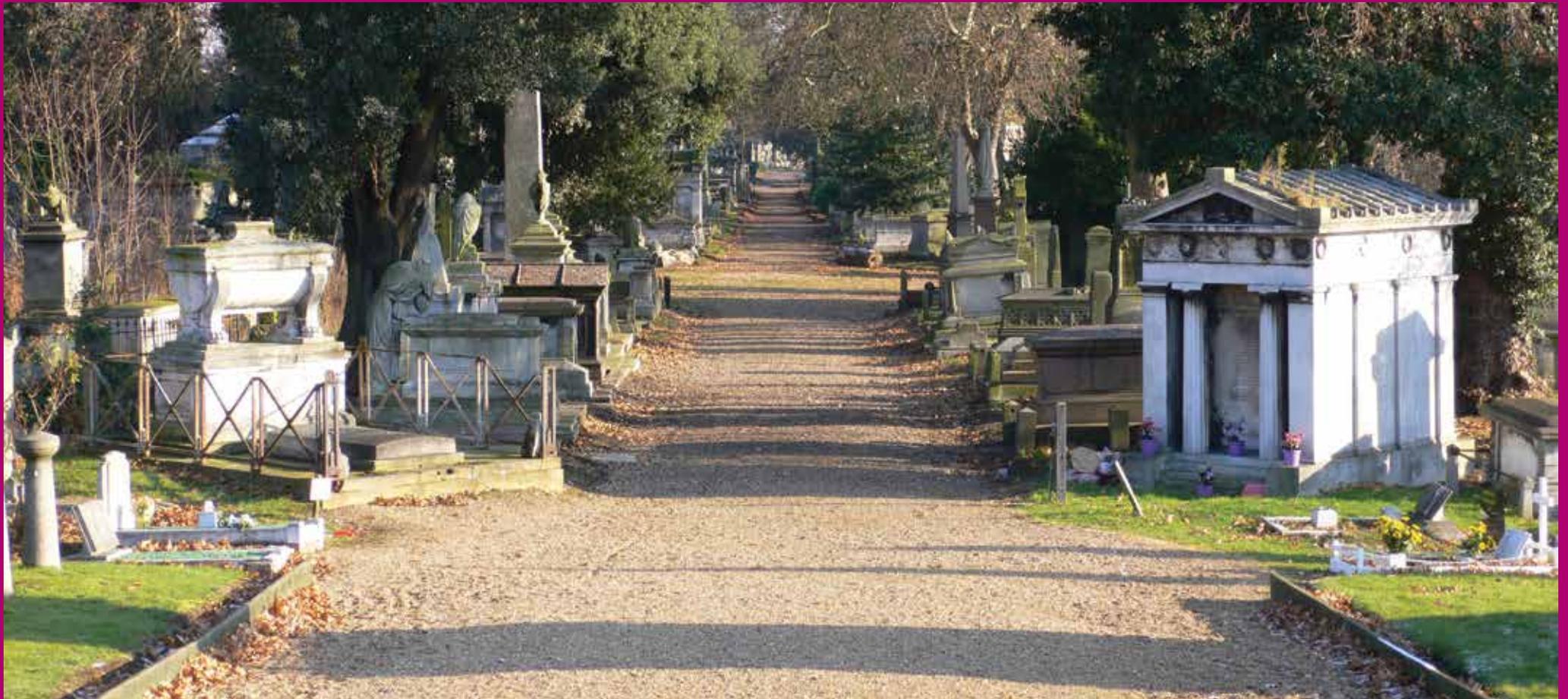


What's next? Waking the Dead

We are immensely proud of the work we have done and the young people we have worked with over the last decade.

Going forward, we are entering new territory with the Waking the Dead project, which will celebrate the lives of those buried and cremated at the Kensal Green Cemetery.

For the latest project, our young people will be developing a smartphone app to guide visitors around one of London's most magnificent and historical burial sites.





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We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the funders for the support they provided, it led us to achieve fantastic results.

We are forever grateful to the artists who gave us and the young people we work with their time, talents and inspiration.

The Octavia Foundation's staff made all this possible; their decade of dedication is worth a special mention.

We are most grateful for and proud of the young people who we have worked with. The films and projects are theirs to celebrate.

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