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# Karl Foster

## LCC Library

## External Vitrine

## Guest Curator

Karl Foster is an illustrator, designer, writer and educator. He is the Year Two Leader and a Senior Lecturer on the BA (Hons) Illustration and Visual Media course at London College of Communication (LCC).

Karl is chiefly a practice-based designer who attempts to address the social attitudes in western societies and the impact on minority groups set against the legacy of imperial hegemony. This theme has been explored through a series of cartoon strips and animations titled 'The Neon Chicken and the Rubber Duck.'

In addition, Karl has conducted research into the production of artefacts made as a response to the perceptions of ethnicity within the genre Films Noir 1941-1958. His 2014 Heart of Darkness Project is intended to address this perception. At LCC, Karl teaches on the BA (Hons) Illustration and Visual Media course. Alongside teaching, he writes about his own image-making practice, detailed on his blog Happy Accident - Graphic Narrativ.

Karl also runs Narcissus Productions company, facilitating collaborations with other artists and designers, and creates artwork for exhibitions, web content, and national and international competitions. He is a regular exhibitor at the annual London Design Festival, contributor to The Association of Illustration's publications and Associate Consultant for illustrator representation agency Arena Illustration.

### 1. After Windrush by Karl Foster (2017)

From my mother's personal photographic archive, I have selected images and arranged them to act as the back drop to telegrams from the past. This written content I gathered from my BA Thesis 'Journey to Paradise' (written in 1988). I want to question the relationship colonised people have with the colonising culture. The lives of these British subjects have been distorted over the decades and quite frankly ignored. This narrative of British history contains an uneasiness that is mostly expressed as fear and rejection in the English consciousness. These subjects are treated as cyphers but they are in fact real lives lead in dedicated honesty. These people are the real heroes not Admiral Lord Nelson.

### 2. The Neon Chicken and the Rubber Duck by Karl Foster (2006)

I wish to create work that can make the viewer think carefully about some of the major problems that our society needs to tackle. I feel that designers have a social responsibility and must not work in a vacuum. I have begun to understand how I can use humour to aid this process. My former tactics of rants and polemics have turned audiences off. I have lost many an argument this way. This can be a terrible waste of one's energy.

### 3. March by John Lewis, John Aydin and Nate Powell (2013, 2015 & 2016)

I have written a review of this poignant graphic novel that illustrates the life of Senator John Lewis and his struggle for equality and dignity in a country where such things were considered at best a dream. I am inspired by the efforts made by these brave pioneers to assert the common humanity of all Americans. Often being sent to prison they risked and sometimes lost their lives. This was a time when their lives were considered cheap and disposable. In today's USA this battle may have to begin again - and in earnest.

### 4. 100 DATES Newspaper by Karl Foster (2013)

Produced to support my animated trailer this publication explores the world of 100 DATES set in a dystopian London of the near future where love is almost impossible to find. I have included it in this exhibit because it was originally intended to be a story where European tribes never evolved and the world was populated only by POC. There was a strong backlash against this concept showing me that a world without a white protagonist is an undesirable one.

### 5. DREAD BEAT AN' BLOOD by Linton Kwesi Johnson (1978)

This record was given to me by my Foundation tutor in 1984. It was a real game changer. In my teens I never enjoyed punk music and its dalliances with Nazi memorabilia troubled me greatly. However, this 'punk' record did it for me. I was used to seeing the world filtered through the bias of BBC news services. When I heard this album, it spoke to me and alerted me to the fact that there could be a powerful counter argument to the mainstream. Dub poetry became the rhythm of my heart. This was the devil's music that my Grandmother never would have approved of.

### 6. Nat Turner by Kyle Baker (2008)

The law is not always good in the USA and Britain. When the forces of law and order have access to black bodies bad things always seem to happen. This book depicts enslaved people rebelling and destroying their oppressors. This futile uprising has helped me to shape my opinions about justice.