

Slavery in the AGE OF REVOLUTION

WHAT THE PRODUCER SAYS:

See this reference for images of the caravans of slaves. [Link to XXX website](#). We wanted to show the next cargo of people being marched towards the coast to indicate the constant flow of people.

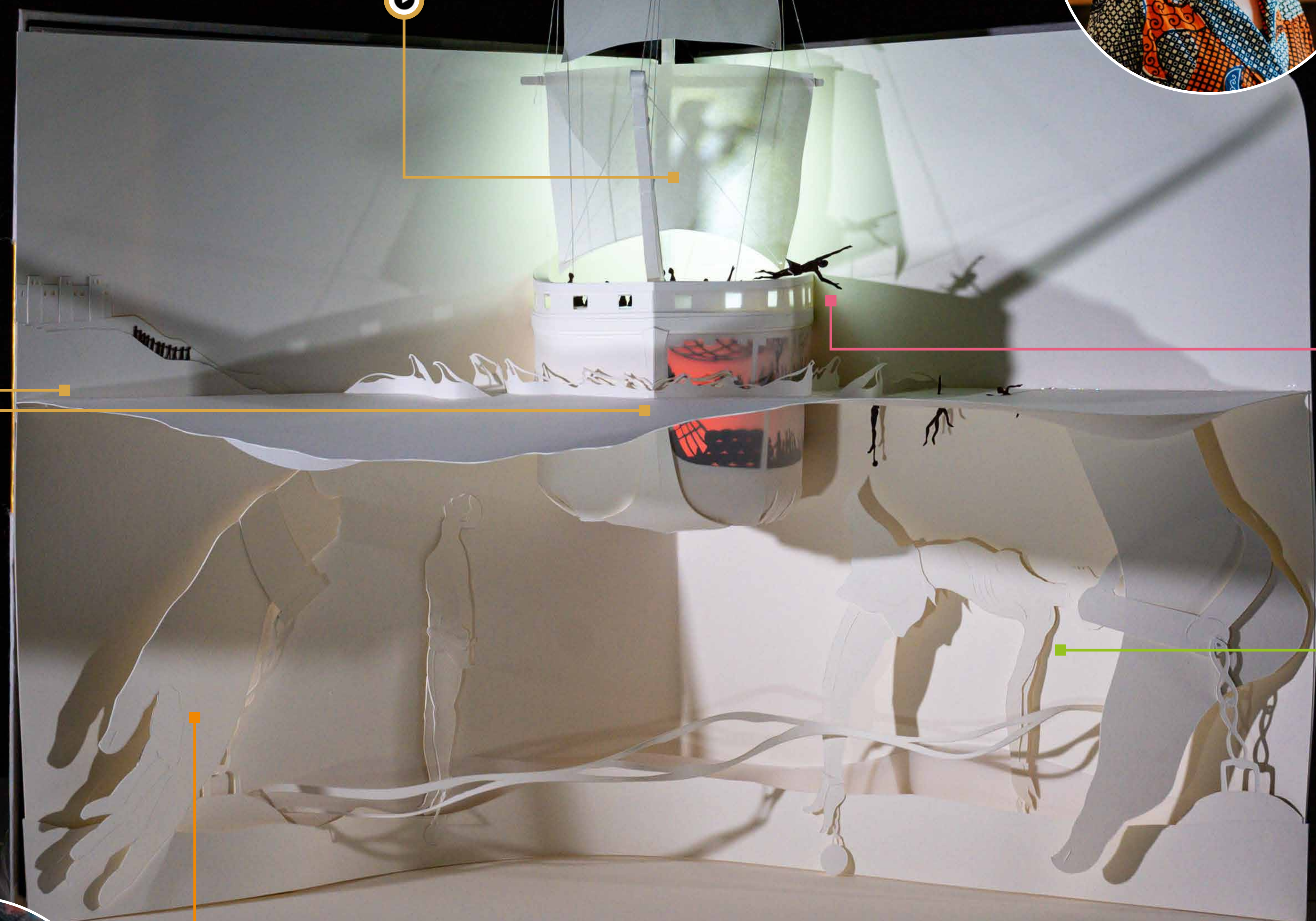
We filmed this using a macro probe camera lens so that we could place the viewer within the artwork so there was a sense of scale of the ship and of the ocean.

The lens and the lighting also enabled us to move the picture from above to below the water line where the viewer realises even more people are enduring terrible conditions below deck. [PLAY VIDEO](#)

When you watch the film listen out carefully for the music sound track, which was composed especially for this scene called *Landbound*, and for the Foley sound which is the soundscape subtly blended in the edit. Listen for the waves and the chaos of people's voices. [CLICK TO LISTEN](#)

Why didn't we mix in more obvious cries or screams?

If you look carefully you can see we filmed the shadow figure of the sailor on the sail. No European or slaver or sailor is given any actual form or colour within the artwork – ask the students why we did that?



We didn't want to give the slave fort prominence in an art scene on its own so we placed it on the land in the background. The viewer is left in no doubt this is a sophisticated and highly organised trade route that has been built by the European slavers.

We thought that lighting the inside of the hull of the ship with an orange glow would highlight the cramped interior conditions when filming this scene, using the paper art figures in silhouette.



“The violence, the horror and the terror that they experienced.”

Marisa J. Fuentes, Rutgers University

ACADEMIC ESSAYS Interpreting slavery in the British Colonial Archives by Marisa J. Fuentes

There were two scenes - above the water and below the water - having that solid line dividing the two scenes opened up several different narratives for me. Especially the way the artist had depicted the enlarged body parts under the water compared to the size of the people in the boat. There were discussions about the use of lighting and the slight green light on the sails gave the top part of the image an eery feel especially with the shadow in the

sail. The glow of light in the boat tells its own story and really drives home the enormity of this period. I played with the shadows in this piece as I thought it was important to give as many perspectives/stories as possible. The decision to use a shallow depth of field focuses the viewers attention to specific elements of the artwork and allows them to wonder what else is there to see, where is the story going, what more is there to know.



“One in ten slaving voyages experienced major rebellions, of which the attempts to control increased the costs of a slave voyage to the point where far fewer enslaved entered the traffic than would have been the case without resistance.”

The Researcher

Resistance Onboard the SHIP



“Sharks followed the ships across the Middle Passage because they knew they would get human bodies thrown over the side.”

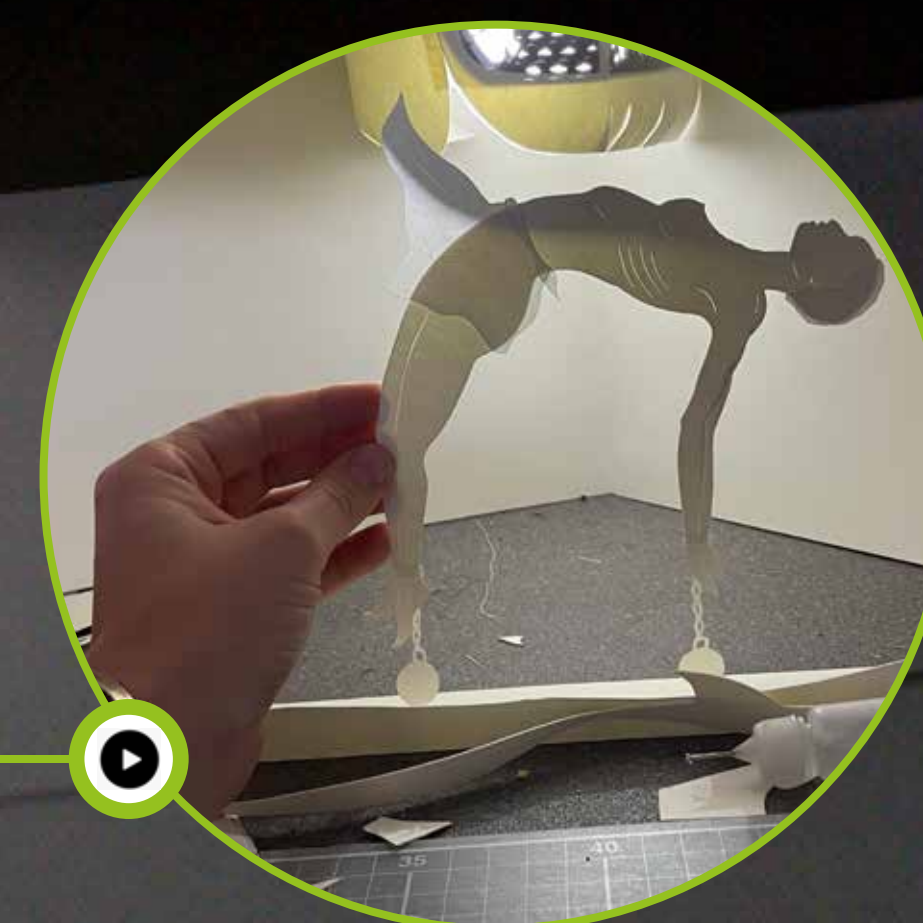
Naomi Tiley, librarian at Balliol College

Olaudah EQUIANO



“One day, when we had a smooth sea and moderate wind, two of my wearied countrymen who were chained together (I was near them at the time), preferring death to such a life of misery, somehow made through the nettings and jumped into the sea.”

Landbound: a music track composed especially for the Middle Passage.



“The Sailor Who Had Served in the Slave-Trade”
Robert Southey (1774-1843)

It was a Christian minister,
Who, in the month of flowers,
Walked forth at eve amid fields
Near Bristol's ancient towers,—

When, from a lonely out-house breathed,
He heard a voice of woe,
And groans which less might seem from pain
Than wretchedness to flow.

Heart-rendering groans they were, with words
Of bitterest despair,
Yet with the holy name of Christ
Pronounced in broken prayer.

[CLICK TO LISTEN](#)

Robert SOUTHEY



“As readers we question whether we should feel sympathy towards the Sailor - is he simply doing the job he was employed to do, without the option to intervene from a humanitarian perspective? Or is he complicit in the brutality that was meted out on the Middle Passage?”

Ben White, Producer

WHAT THE ARTIST SAYS:

A word from the Artist:
“The concept for the Middle Passage is heavily rooted in the the overall concept of the paper boat. From within the boat, a huge slave ship sails from the spine, the jibboom, choppy waves, the waves of the waves peering over the horizon and the sea. The foreground details are the compartments of the boat. The back of the boat is the sea. This is the first impression that I had in mind. The ship, sailing on the sea. The ground is the location of the ship, we see it is a slight curve showing above a below the water line. And then, the real drawing of what is being seen takes place.
The journey to below the waterline, where haunting figures of the enslaved souls of slaves are forced to rest on the sea bed, forever chained in the common walls that dogged them there.
We then see the moment of rebellion: an enslaved man throws himself overboard, seeing a watery death preferable to that of a life of enslavement.
As we move to the hull of the ship, we see a man, woman and children, a common view of the heads of the ship along with the camp and nesting. A green field awaits them if they survive the treacherous journey.
A slave fort stands prominently on the shore line, with the next caravan of slaves being led to their fateful future.”



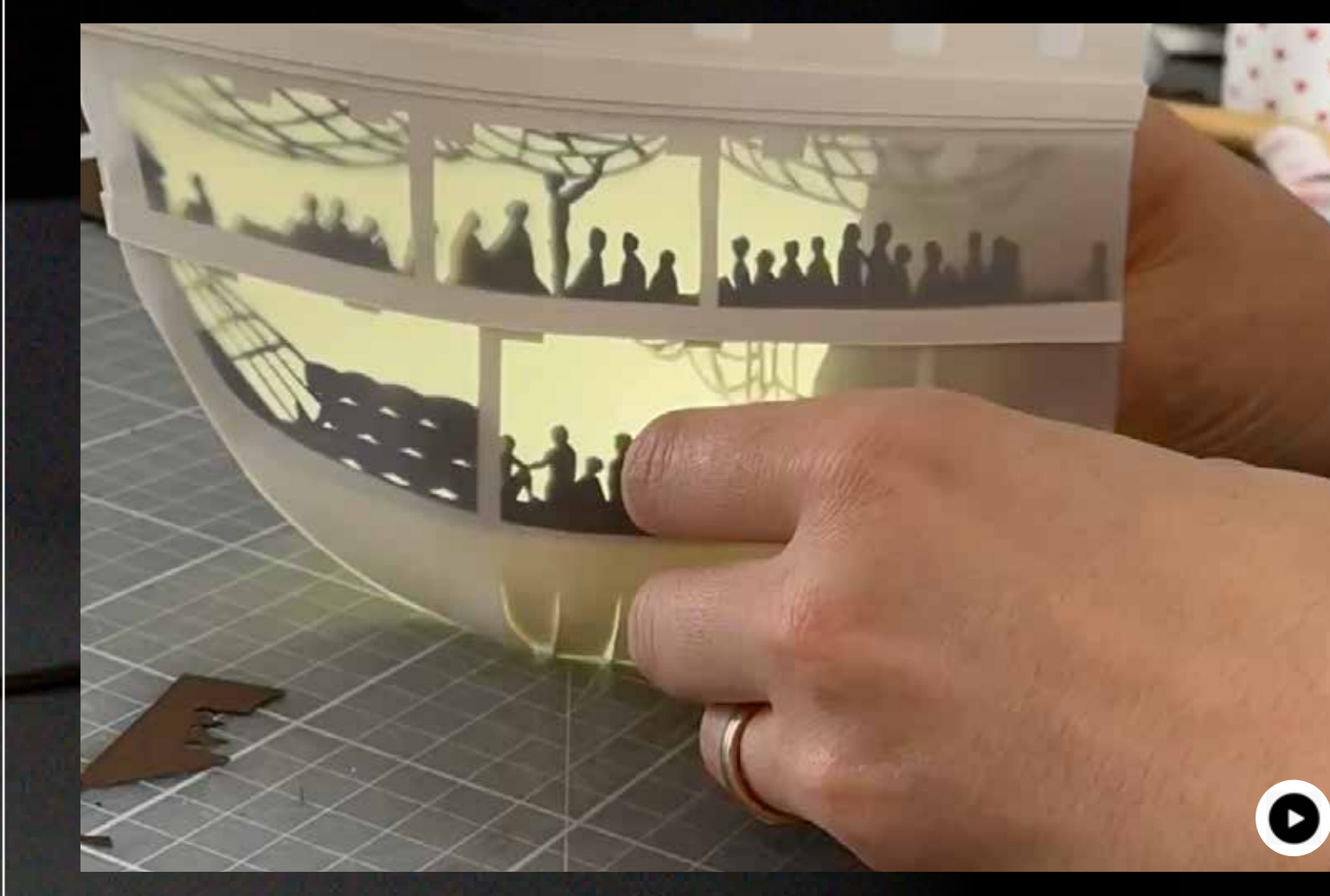
“The sexes were separated, often kept naked, packed close together, and the men were chained for long periods.”

The Researcher

WHAT THE PHOTOGRAPHER SAYS:

I have two approaches to photographing a piece of artwork:

- 1: Technical approach - making a factual recording of the artwork - everything is in focus / lighting sets the scene and gives it the account
- 2: Creative approach - the artwork tells me a story / I look at all the angles, walk around the piece / get absorbed by each element / I then focus on small sections that can spark conversation / make the story of the one piece come alive / I try and enhance the story by using lighting to accentuate the depth with shadows / I change the angle and depth of field to draw the focus onto a specific character or element of the artwork.



“As late as 1820 nearly four Africans had crossed the Atlantic for every European.”

The Researcher