Good evening, everyone, and thank you for joining us to celebrate the opening of *Ronald Moody: Sculpting Life* here at Orleans House Gallery.

There are many people and organisations whose care, generosity and belief have made this exhibition—and the wider work surrounding Ronald Moody's legacy—possible.

I would like to thank Art Fund for supporting this journey; the Ronald Moody Trust for entrusting us with Ronald's work and history; and Ego Ahaiwe-Sowinski and Errol Lloyd for the knowledge, memories and perspectives they have so generously shared.

My sincere thanks also go to The Hepworth Wakefield, and to everyone at Orleans House Gallery who has worked with such dedication to bring the exhibition into this space. In particular, I would like to thank Devanshi, Andy, Millie, Julia and Joanna, as well as the technicians Joe, Martin, Shilpi and Milo and the whole installation teams whose skill, patience and care often remain unseen once an exhibition opens. Every object placed, every adjustment made, and every practical problem solved has contributed to what we are experiencing here tonight.

Standing here feels particularly significant because my journey to this position has not been straightforward or predictable. It began, in many ways, through Yorkshire Sculpture International, where I was introduced to Eleanor Clayton. From that introduction, we formed a relationship and continued a conversation around sculpture, artistic practice and the histories held within museum collections.

That relationship eventually led to my being commissioned to make new work in response to *Ronald Moody: Sculpting Life* at The Hepworth Wakefield in 2024.

A year or two later, The Hepworth had been gifted an important group of Ronald Moody's sculptures and ephemera by the Ronald Moody Trust. The gallery needed someone to help create the archive and accession the works into the collection. I was appointed to undertake that work and subsequently became a Collections Assistant at The Hepworth.

I wanted to share that journey because it shows how an artist's path can unfold—often through encounters, relationships and opportunities whose significance may not be immediately visible. One introduction can become a conversation; a conversation can become a commission; and a commission can lead to an entirely new relationship with an artist, an archive and an institution.

As a contemporary artist, I first encountered Ronald Moody's work through my own practice. I then came to know him differently through the archive: through his correspondence, photographs, writings, sculptures and the traces of a life lived across Jamaica, Britain, Europe and beyond. I moved between the roles of artist, archivist, researcher and collections worker. Each position allowed me to ask different questions

about Moody's life—and about the ways artists enter, or disappear from, cultural memory.

Central to this story is Ronald's niece, Cynthia Moody. Cynthia undertook an extraordinary amount of work to preserve her uncle's legacy. She gathered, organised and protected his papers. She maintained relationships, answered enquiries and ensured that his work continued to be seen and understood. Much of this was quiet and largely unseen labour, but without it, the archive—and much of what we now know about Ronald—might not have survived in the form that it has.

It is important that we recognise Cynthia not simply as the custodian of Ronald's legacy, but as someone with her own creative and professional life. She was a film editor with an international career, as well as a person whose care, commitment and persistence shaped what was able to endure.

Her work reminds us that archives do not simply survive by accident. They are made and remade through relationships, decisions and repeated acts of care. Behind the legacy of a celebrated artist, there is often someone writing the letters, keeping the records, remembering the dates and insisting that the work still matters.

Through my conversations with Ego, and through my own experience of working with this archive, I have become increasingly conscious of the importance of telling our own stories. We have spoken about what it means to inherit these histories, and about the responsibility involved in deciding how they are interpreted and carried forward.

Who gets remembered? Who is allowed complexity? Who is written into the history of British art—and who is left at its edges?

These questions are not only about the past. They are about how we work now, and about the structures we create for the future. They ask us to consider who holds the authority to tell a story, whose knowledge is recognised, and whose labour makes remembrance possible.

Ronald Moody's life and work form part of a much larger history of Caribbean contribution to Britain's artistic and cultural landscape. That contribution is profound, but it has too often been fragmented, overlooked or treated as peripheral. The work of recognition is therefore ongoing. It requires research, preservation, exhibitions and films, but it also requires us to create space for multiple voices—for family members, artists, archivists, scholars and communities to speak alongside one another.

This exhibition is part of that continued work. It is not simply a presentation of Ronald Moody's sculptures. It is an invitation to encounter the depth of his thought, his spiritual and philosophical enquiry, and his understanding of sculpture as something living.

It is also an opportunity to consider the people who carried his work forward: Cynthia, the Ronald Moody Trust, Ego, Errol and the many others who have researched, protected and advocated for his legacy.

For me, it has been a privilege to become part of that continuum—to move from encountering Moody as an artist, to caring for his archive, to helping shape how his story is now shared. I hope this exhibition honours not only the work Ronald Moody created, but also the many visible and invisible hands that ensured it could reach us.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this exhibition, and to all of you for being here to continue the conversation.

Thank you.