

The Working Artist: East London Group to be shown at their home in Bow, East London



View of St Jude's from Claredale Estate A E Turpin Turpin Estate



Pulling Down Warner Place A E Turpin Courtesy private lender

Private View Thursday 28 September, 6-9pm

Exhibition 29 Sept – 17 Dec 2017

This September, the East London Group returns to the Nunnery Gallery with a new collection of paintings, selected and curated by writer, broadcaster, Michael Rosen and radio producer, filmmaker, Emma- Louise Williams.

Made up of ordinary working men and women, the East London Group attended art classes and exhibited their paintings alongside their day jobs. There were thirty five exhibiting members – including Walter Sickert, Phyllis Bray, William Coldstream, John Cooper, Elwin Hawthorne, the Steggle brothers, Brynhild Parker, Henry Silk and Albert Turpin – throughout the Group's existence (1920s-30s).

Their work grew in significance during the interwar period; showing frequently in London and internationally, side by side with such celebrated contemporaries as Mark Gertler, William Orpen and Augustus John.

Contextualising the valuable work of these artists, curator Michael Rosen said:

“For me, the East London Group represents a coming-together of several of my most strongly-held beliefs: creativity belongs to all and not just a privileged minority; there is as much to celebrate in the urban environment; East London is an area of fascinating variety and change; and painting offers us a necessary way of interpreting and reinterpreting moments in the passage of time.”

“The places the Group looked at, and the time in which they painted, overlap precisely with my own parents' and grandparents' lives, so there is a special emotional tug for me in looking at their work.”

The patronage provided by the East London Group's famed supporters – Sir Joseph Duveen, Samuel Courtauld and Arnold Bennett to name a few – led them to great heights, with their achievements contextualised in the press by the artists' means of earning a living, a “window-cleaner”, “shop assistant” and “pipe inspector”. This exhibition, with its wealth of previously un-exhibited material,

sheds new light on many of the characters of the group, who were accomplished artists – lauded by the art world – but also active war artists, heroes of east London politics and avid chroniclers of the changing face of the London of their time.

Nunnery Gallery Director said:

“Then, just as now, population flux and insistent remodelling characterised the streets sandwiched between the City and what is now the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park developments. Ordinary working men and women picked up paint brushes to capture the changing landscape.

“It is remarkable that these men and women achieved so much, Elwin Hawthorne & Walter Steggles represented Great Britain at the 1936 Venice Biennale – a feat that lent the title to the publication of an excellent account of the group’s achievements “From Bow to Biennale” by David Buckman, which will be available to purchase alongside this exhibition”.

Newly discovered and previously un-exhibited artefacts from the Group, including posters, political pamphlets, notebooks and sketchbooks, that haven’t been seen for 70 years, will be exhibited alongside the paintings, providing an insight into the lives of these remarkable characters.

ENDS

For interviews with Michael Rosen, Emma-Louise Williams or the East London Group families and images please contact:

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Notes to editors

Exhibition: East London Group

Dates: 29 Sept – 17 Dec 2017

Admission: Free

Opening Hours: Tues to Sun, 10am – 5pm

Address: Nunnery Gallery, Bow Arts, 181 Bow Road, London E3 2SJ

Travel: Bow Road Tube Station, Bow Church DLR

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About Bow Arts

Bow Arts Trust was established as an educational arts charity in 1995 and supports a community of over 500 artists with affordable, secure and creative workspaces. Bow Arts also runs the Nunnery Gallery, a contemporary art gallery which supports a diverse range of local, national and international exhibitions and events.

www.bowarts.org