

The Working Artist: The East London Group, curated by Michael Rosen and Emma-Louise Williams
Artists announced for new series of public artworks on and around Bow Road, to accompany East London Group painting's return to the Nunnery Gallery



Albert Turpin *Salmon and Ball* © A.E.Turpin Estate, 2017
Photograph Lucinda Douglas Menzies



Brynhild Parker *Portrait* courtesy Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery © the copyright holder

Private View Thursday 28 September, 6-9pm

Exhibition 29 Sept – 17 Dec 2017

Selected by open submission, **Lindsey Mendick**, **Marcus Orlandi** and **Maxima Smith** will each make a new public artwork to accompany the East London Group exhibition, showing in the Nunnery Gallery this September. The works will highlight the buildings still recognisable today from the Group's paintings, as well as celebrate the incredible tenacity of this little-trained group of artists that began in the 1920s – from their leading role in the anti-fascist movement to the everyday jobs they maintained alongside their painting.

Mendick, who recently performed at the Zabłudowicz Collection, will commemorate a new park bench in the Group's memory, installed at the iconic Bow Church and embedded with miniature ceramics that symbolise the views of then and now. **Orlandi** – known for his politically engaged work, as featured in the Art Licks Weekenders and the acclaimed Shuffle Festival – will explore the parallels between Turpin's fight against the extremist views of the 30s and our own generation's struggle with terror, while **Smith's** new film subtly remembers Turpin's day job of a window cleaner, by filming the mesmerising lines of contemporary East End window washers at work.

Curated by writer broadcaster **Michael Rosen** and radio producer film-maker **Emma-Louise Williams**, the exhibition's paintings will show the changing face of the East End following the First World War, then the drastic re-modelling of the area following the Second. With a focus on member **Albert Turpin** – leading political figure and Mayor of Bethnal Green – the works tell the story of the East End's resilience through a turbulent time of war and peace and will be shown alongside sketchbooks and political pamphlets that haven't been seen for 70 years, providing a vivid and contextual narrative to the paintings.

With loans confirmed from the Government and Arts Council Collections, Tower Hamlets archives, as well as a little-known portrait by **Brynhild Parker** from Blackburn Museum, other artists to be showcased include **B A R Carter**, **William Coldstream**, **John Cooper**, **Elwin Hawthorne**, **Cecil Osborne** and the **Steggles brothers**. Walking tours of the local area will guide visitors around the new public artworks, finishing at **Queen Mary University of London** – who have supported the new commissions – where remnants of a mural painting by East London Group member **Phyllis Bray** can still be seen in the People's Palace.

The exhibition coincides with a flurry of newly published books that encompass the Group and their stories, including the new illustrated memoirs of Albert Turpin: *East End Vernacular, Artists who painted London's East*

End streets in the 20th Century (The Gentle Author: Oct 2017); *So They Call You Pisher! A Memoir* by Michael Rosen (Verso: Sep 2017); *The East End – My Birthright* by Albert Turpin (Francis Boutle: Sep 2017); *The Story of Titania and Oberon, with illustrations by Phyllis Bray* (Pavilion Books: 2017).

Sophie Hill, Nunnery Gallery Co-Director, said:

“Our three commissions demonstrate the inspiring talent of young artists working in London, showing incredible skill and sensitivity in drawing our attention to the many layers of the East London Group – the local area, art’s narrative power, the politics, and the challenge of being an artist and having to keep a job down, something many artists juggle today.

The chance to commission new works of art that highlight east London’s rich social history is a real treat, and, installed in the public domain, we hope that visitors from across London will enjoy their presence, together with our local community.”

Of the focus on Albert Turpin, curators Rosen and Williams said:

“Admirers of the Group find themselves drawn more to one artist than another, and in our curation we’ve pinpointed the world of Albert Turpin. Turpin was an unstoppable sketcher, filling countless notebooks with drawings of his family, while bringing to the Group a Fauvist tendency to colour his East End in a robust and affectionate way.

“He was politically committed to the struggles of those around him and in putting this exhibition together we were delighted to meet Turpin’s daughter and granddaughters who were able to provide documentary materials to give witness to Albert Turpin’s commitment.”

ENDS

For interviews, with curators Michael Rosen and Emma-Louise Williams or the artists, and images 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
Contact: +44 (0)20 8980 7774 / nunnery@bowarts.com

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.

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