

Aboutface: regroup, reorganise, reimagine | gal-dem selects the 2021 Bow Open Show



Image: Scallywag Fox, *Non-Binary Finery* © the artist

Private view, with live performance: Thursday 7 October 2021, 6-9pm

Exhibition Dates: 8 October – 19 December 2021

Artist, curator and gal-dem founding member, Leyla Reynolds has selected 24 artists for Bow Arts' annual Bow Open Show, all responding to her title *Aboutface: regroup, reorganise, reimagine*.

Following a year that has challenged those in the cultural sector particularly, gal-dem's Bow Open demonstrates the power of artists and their imaginations to *regroup* following disaster, and *reorganise* with humour, frankness and inspiring visual potency. Works range from politically charged banners, a delicate spine of ceramic COVID masks and jewellery inspired by the Hindu Goddess Kali Ma, a beacon of hope and resistance to anti-colonial movements during the Bengal revolution. Powerfully commenting on many of the overarching political themes of the past year – gender identity, the environment, the pandemic, decolonisation, digital overload – the exhibition offers realism, satire, beauty and optimism.

A participatory events programme for all ages will run alongside, featuring creative workshops including porcelain and banner making, family days, after hours openings and a curator's talk with Leyla Reynolds.

Leyla Reynolds says:

“The standard of the submissions for this year's Bow Open has been truly exceptional; the innovativeness shown in fulfilling the brief has been truly inspiring, with the artist responses demonstrating the variety of thought housed in Bow Arts Studios.

Overall, the exhibition captures an obstinate optimism that in March 2020, following the December 2019 crushing defeat of the Left, and the accelerated worker precarity that the UK pandemic encouraged, we doubted, for a moment, might re-occur.

This exhibition is a testament to the humour, craftsmanship, and tenacity of its makers, as well as their ability to capture an overwhelmingly determined spirit of collective joy and resilience.”

Award winning media company gal-dem are committed to sharing the perspectives of people of colour from marginalised genders. Bow Arts is celebrating 25 years working in east London and the charity is thrilled to be working with gal-dem for its annual open this autumn, showcasing the diversity and talent of its studio holders.



Image: Luke Anthony Rooney *Bizzie* © the artist

Exhibiting artists: Nitin Amin; Annamaria Antonazzo; Reza Ben Gajra; Nell Brookfield; Victoria Burgher; Ellie Burkett; Isabel Castro Jung; Nathalie Coste; Franco Di Cesare; Tom Foulsham; Romulo Gonçalves; Rebecca Griffiths; Nicci James; Eve Lam; Rachel Mercer; Marcus Orlandi; Harry Owens; Ayesha Sureya Patel; Tabitha Powles; Luke Anthony Rooney; Kyungmin Sophia Son; Scallywag Fox; Tara Versey; Toby Wilson.

Events Programme

Workshop: Porcelain Making with Victoria Burgher - Saturday 23rd October 2021 (11am - 1pm)

Press Release: 14 September 2021

Bow Families: Make a Handwoven Paper Lantern with Nicci James - Sunday 31st October 2021 (11am - 1pm)

#FirstThursday Late Opening: Curators Talk with Leyla Reynolds - Thursday 4th November 2021 (11am - 1pm)

Bow Families: 'Rework: Collage Making Workshop' - Sunday 28th November (11am – 1pm)

Workshop: Banner Making with Marcus Orlandi - Saturday 13th November (11am – 1pm)

#FirstThursday Late Opening: After Hours Viewing – Thursday 2nd December (6pm – 9pm)

Notes to editors

Exhibition Dates: 8 October – 19 December 2021

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

Opening hours: Tues-Sun, 10am to 4pm

Transport: Bow Road / Mile End tube; Bow Church DLR



Images, left to right: Nell Brookfield *Dog & Chair*; Harry Owens *Mockingbird* both © the artist

For press information and further images please contact:

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bowarts.org | twitter.com/BowArts | facebook.com/bowarts | [#BowOpen](https://hashtagger.com/#BowOpen)

About Leyla Reynolds

Leyla Reynolds is an artist, curator and founding member of gal-dem magazine.

She has worked with clients including Black Girl Fest, BBC, Adidas, Greater London Assembly and Tate. Her work has been exhibited at the V&A. As part of her work, she has appeared on numerous panels, chaired live events and debated on national TV. She was a judge in the editorial category of the World Illustration Awards 2019.

About Bow Arts

Established in 1995, [Bow Arts Trust](#) has grown to become one of London's leading affordable workspace providers for emerging artists and creative professionals. With a community of near 500 artists, they champion lifelong learning and inspire future generations of young people to access the arts.

Alongside workspace provision, Bow Arts Learning runs an innovative programme of workshops, projects and training in schools, working with over 100 schools in London boroughs. Bow Arts also runs the Nunnery Gallery, a free public gallery with a local focus, championing the work of emerging artists and uncovering local history and heritage.

About gal-dem

[gal-dem](#) is a media publication, committed to telling the stories of women and non-binary people of colour. With an online and print magazine, they're addressing inequality and misrepresentation in the industry through platforming the creative and editorial work of their community across essays, opinion, news, arts, music, politics and lifestyle content.