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'Lucy Orta Traces: Stories of Migration'

New exhibition showcases the latest body of work by international artist Lucy Orta alongside the makers involved in her 2-year programme of workshops.



Lucy Orta | Traces: Stories of Migration

Private View: Thursday 1st June 2023 | **Exhibition Dates:** Friday 2nd June 2023 – Sunday 27th August 2023

Opening in June 2023, *Lucy Orta Traces: Stories of Migration* will create a collective tapestry of lived experiences, an installation that offers an insight into the diversity of first and second-generation migration histories woven into the landscape of east London.



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The exhibition is the culmination of a 2-year community engagement process involving over 80 residents across Newham and Tower Hamlets, each with their own migration story. Led by international artist and researcher Lucy Orta, in partnership with London College of Fashion's Making for Change as part of The Portal Centre for Social Impact, the participants came together to share textile knowledge, follow the threads of community migration in the context of the East End rag trade, and celebrate east London's history of clothing and textile industry.

The walls of the Nunnery Gallery will reveal two distinct artistic responses that celebrate the collaboration. A **'Portrait Gallery'** by Lucy Orta, a new body of work displayed in a frieze of 40 large format canvases (90 x 90cm). The portraits depict the makers involved in the workshops and recall motifs from their migration stories. Each portrait took several weeks to make using techniques developed during the project, mainly silk organza appliqué, hand and machine embroidery and beadwork. 'Story Cloths' made by each maker depict their physical or metaphorical journeys using a range of textile craft techniques. To coincide with the exhibition, a collection of poems penned by author and Royal Literary Fellow Nathalie Abi-Ezzi, introduces a third layer to the story telling process. *Needle Around Her Neck*, will be published by Fair Acre Press. A film produced by AKO Storytelling Institute that follows the journey of the Story Cloths will debut at the exhibition.

An inspiring programme of events includes workshops on upcycling, Kantha embroidery techniques, natural dyeing with petals and oral history led by *Traces: Stories of Migration* participants. The programme gives attendees the chance to experience and appreciate the deep connections between heritages, migration, and climate justice as part of sustainable practice.

Lucy Orta Traces: Stories of Migration at the Nunnery Gallery follows two community showcases at the Making Space Aberfeldy E14 (November 2021) and The Lab E20 (December 2022). *Traces: Stories of Migration* will feature as part of a larger exhibition at London College of Fashion, UAL's



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new home at East Bank, the UK's newest Cultural Quarter at the heart of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, this September 2023.

Traces: Stories of Migration is supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, the Portal Trust, Foundation for Future London, and the AKO Storytelling Institute. As well as Bromley by Bow Centre, Making for Change as part of The Portal Centre for Social Impact, Rosetta Arts, The Fashion District, and The Lab E20.

ENDS

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#traces #migrationstories #tracesstoriesofmigration

Notes to Editors

Portrait Gallery: artworks representing the participants and their migration stories created by Lucy Orta.

Story Cloths: artworks by makers who took part in workshops.

Lucy Orta b.1966



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Lucy Orta's visual arts practice investigates the interrelations between the individual body and community structures, exploring their diverse identities and means of cohabitation. Her process of representing community voices incorporates co-creation and inclusive methods of engagement to empower participants through shared creative practice. She has collaborated with a wide range of people, often those who are vulnerable or excluded. Her most recent projects include 'Banner Processions' with female prisoners at HMP Downview, which explores women's rights through text and stitched motifs; and 'The Lost Species' which investigates species interconnectivity and biodiversity loss.

In recognition of their contribution to sustainability, Studio Orta received the Green Leaf Award for artistic excellence with an environmental message, presented by the United Nations Environment Programme in Oslo, Norway (2007).

Studio Orta's work has been the focus of major exhibitions at Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France (1994); 2nd Johannesburg Biennale, South Africa (1997); Weiner Secession, Austria (1999); Gwangju Biennale (2004); The Curve, Barbican Art Gallery, London and Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Italy (2005); Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, The Netherlands; 9th Havana Biennale, Cuba (2006); Biennial of the End of the World, Antarctica (2007); Pirelli Hangar Bicocca, Italy (2008); Natural History Museum London, UK (2010); MAXXI National Museum of XXI Century Arts, Italy and Shanghai Biennale, China (2012); Yorkshire Sculpture Park, UK (2013); Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, USA (2014); Attenborough Arts Centre, UK; Peterborough City Gallery Museum, UK (2016); Humber Street Gallery, Hull (2017); Ikon Gallery, UK (2018); Palazzo Vecchio, Museo Salvatore Ferragamo, Museo Novecento, Italy (2019); Les Tanneries, France (2020); Flughafen Tempelhof, Germany; New Tretyakov Gallery, Russia (2021); Centre Pompidou-Metz, France (2022).

Lucy co-founded Studio Orta with her partner the Argentine artist [Jorge Orta](#), in 1992. They have worked in partnership since 2005 under the co-authorship [Lucy + Jorge Orta](#). In acknowledgement of her innovative



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socially engaged research practice Lucy Orta was nominated as Head of the *Man & Humanity*, a pioneering master program for sustainable design, which she cofounded with Li Edelkoort at the [Design Academy Eindhoven](#), in 2002. She is a member of the Centre for Sustainable Fashion and holds the post of [Chair of Art and the Environment](#) at the University of the Arts London, where she founded the [Art for the Environment Artist in Residency Program](#).

Collaborators

We would like to thank all the participants involved in the workshops and the project team: Nathalie Abi-Ezzi (Author), Jess Amarel (Assistant Cultural Producer, LCF-Rosetta Arts) David Betteridge (Filmmaker), Lori Demata (Photographer), Jasmine-Karis Fontiverio-Hylton (Textile Designer), Cheski Granger (Project Coordinator, Making for Change, LCF), Jasbinder Jhumat, (Specialist Technician, LCF), Margaux Lalanne (Head designer, Studio Orta), Victoria Maira (Designer, Studio Orta), Lucy Orta (Artist and Researcher, Centre for Sustainable Fashion, LCF), Camilla Palestra (Associate Curator, Centre for Sustainable Fashion, LCF), Jo Reynolds (Projects Manager, Making for Change, LCF), Caroline Stevenson (Researcher, LCF), Yen-Yen The (Director, Emulsion Architecture).

London College of Fashion

The Portal Centre for Social Impact - Making for Change

The Portal Centre for Social Impact is London College of Fashion, UAL's community engagement and social impact hub. The centre works with artists, designers, industry, and early-stage businesses through a range of community engagement projects and social manufacturing using sustainable and ethical production practices through the award-winning Making for Change training programmes situated at Poplar Works and HMP Downview.



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www.sustainable-fashion.com/traces-stories-of-migration | www.fashion-district.co.uk | www.portaltrust.org | @making.for.change | @portal_trust | @sustfash

Bow Arts Trust The Nunnery Gallery

Housed in a former 19th-century convent building, surrounded by artist studios, the Nunnery Gallery is Bow Arts' not-for-profit art space. The programme pushes boundaries with an original and creative approach that explores the stories of east London and celebrates today's artistic talent. Bow Arts creates inspirational, supportive environments where artists and communities interact, learn and flourish.

Since 1994, Bow Arts has nurtured London's diverse creativity and talent, providing artists and creative practitioners with affordable workspace, connecting them with local communities and supporting their professional development. The charity gives communities throughout London greater access to and interaction with the arts, through a schools programme, workshops, exhibitions and events.

Web: <https://bowarts.org/nunnery> | @bowarts | www.twitter.com/BowArts | www.facebook.com/bowarts

