



PRESS RELEASE

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Bow Arts announces Laisul Hoque as winner of the 2025 East London Art Prize



Laisul Hoque, *An Ode to All the Flavours*, installation view at Nunnery Gallery.
Courtesy of Bow Arts. Photo: Rob Harris

Bow Arts is delighted to announce Laisul Hoque as the winner of the second iteration of the East London Art Prize. Established in 2023 with the aim of celebrating and promoting the diverse art and talent of east London, the Prize awards the winner £15,000 and a solo exhibition at the Nunnery Gallery in Bow, to take place in 2026.

Laisul Hoque's winning work, *An Ode to All the Flavours* (2024), is an interactive installation piece inspired by the artist's earliest memory of his father sharing his favourite childhood snack. Resembling an antique sodium-lit "Bangladeshi sweet shop" display counter, *An Ode to All the Flavours* invites visitors to enjoy these delicacies and contemplate on the nonverbal ways we sometimes express love.



The food is freshly prepared and supplied daily by Oitij-jo Kitchen, an East London-based social enterprise working with local Bengali women to help them achieve financial independence and autonomy from entrenched patriarchal systems. Hoque's installation establishes Nunnery Gallery as a paid retainer client of Oitij-jo Kitchen throughout the exhibition period, supporting their mission and amplifying their social impact.

The runner up, Lydia Newman, will receive a year's free studio space at one of Bow Arts' studio sites. Newman's triptych *In the Wake of Ruin, She is Here* (2024) draws on aspects from her multidisciplinary practice to examine inherited dialogues and internalised ideas of race, globalisation, class, and gender.

Laisul Hoque and Lydia Newman were selected by panelists Jonny Tanna, Founder of Harlesden High Street, journalist Louise Benson, artist Phoebe Collins-James, and Sam Wilkinson, Director of Public Art at UCL, from a shortlist of 12. This iteration of the East London Art Prize received almost 900 submissions, all by artists and collectives living or working within the 'E' postcode.

The shortlisted artists were: Darcey Fleming, dmstfctn, Eugene Macki, Fatima Ali, Gusty Ferro, Joseph Ijoyemi, Kuda Mushangi, Laisul Hoque, Liang-Jung Chen, Lydia Newman, Mo Langmuir, and Yang Zou.

The Prize's shortlist exhibition is on view at the Nunnery Gallery until 13 April 2025. All of the shortlisted artists will receive ongoing mentoring and career development opportunities in the year following the award.

Helen Simms, Manager of Arts & Events at Bow Arts, said:

"We are delighted to see Laisul Hoque and Lydia Newman named winner and runner-up in the 2025 East London Art Prize. The Prize epitomises Bow Arts' commitment to supporting and celebrating artists and creatives, and feels particularly special in 2025, which marks our 30th anniversary.

The power of the East London Art Prize is that we provide ongoing support for all the shortlist, including mentoring and opportunities to work with our amazing partners. I am thrilled to have the chance to work so closely with the incredible 2025 cohort over the coming months."



Speaking on behalf of the panelists, Sam Wilkinson said:

“Laisul and Lydia are worthy winners of the East London Art Prize. They are both at pivotal points in their careers, and I am sure that this award will truly help bring them further on their trajectories.

At UCL we are excited at the opportunity that the prize affords us to support awards the wider programming of the work of the 12 shortlisted artists, all of whom have achieved so much by being shortlisted for this prize.”

The winner of the inaugural East London Art Prize (2023-24) was filmmaker Kat Anderson, whose exhibition *Mark of Cane* was on show at Nunnery Gallery from 9 February until 21 April 2024. The second prize went to multidisciplinary artist Cora Sehgal-Cuthbert.

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About the East London Art Prize

The East London Art Prize celebrates and promotes the incredible talent and diversity of art made in the cultural hive of east London. Proudly sponsored by Minerva and Prue MacLeod, the winner receives a cash prize of £15,000 and a solo exhibition at our Nunnery Gallery. The runner-up second prize is a year’s studio space with Bow Arts. The entire shortlist is presented at an exhibition at the Nunnery Gallery, with all artists given mentoring and career development opportunities.

Headed by Bow Arts and supported by a network of local supporting partners, including The British Council, Dulux, The Line, LCF, LLDC, UCL, V&A East and Whitechapel Gallery, the Prize forms part of our ongoing support and development of opportunities for artists.



About the winners

Laisul Hoque (b. 1998, Dhaka, Bangladesh) draws from his memories and lived experiences to create image-based works and installations that explore and decode microhistories and their global impacts. His practice investigates communication, miscommunication, and adopts a reparative reading of the past. By creating spaces to revisit societal norms and traditions, and advocating for the recognition of adverse elements, Hoque imagines how we can act in society.

Lydia Newman's work spans painting, sculpture, live performance, and installations, aimed at fostering dialogue and connection through art. Focusing on themes such as social justice, mental health, and personal liberation, she brings a collaborative and inclusive approach to a deeply interconnected practice. Newman has extensive experience in community-focused projects, combining artistic expression with meaningful social impact. Her current body of work explores Black British womanhood; dismantling societal oppression and the multiple masks they adopt to navigate western capitalist society.

About the selection panel

Louise Benson is a writer and editor based in London. She is currently the Director of Digital at ArtReview, where she commissions widely on the visual arts, film, literature and music. She is also the co-founder of Scenic Views, an independent interiors magazine focused on overlooked design histories. Previously she was the Deputy Editor of Elephant for five years, and Editor-in-Chief of POSTmatter, a magazine about modern life and culture in the digital age. As a writer she is interested in exploring what happens at the edges of the art world, going behind the scenes to hear the stories of those who play a crucial role in the production of art but who often remain invisible. In addition to international artists and photographers, she has interviewed everyone from gallery attendants to life drawing models, and written extensively on the working conditions of the culture industry. She is interested in how art gets made, and in who gets to make it at all.

Phoebe Collings-James is a sculptor whose works function as "emotional detritus" that speak of knowledges of feelings, the debris of violence, language, and desire which are inherent to living and surviving within hostile environments.



Jonny Tanna is a North West London native and the Director of Harlesden High Street, a BIPOC led gallery space. Harlesden High Street was founded in 2020 with the mission of facilitating access between experimental/outsider artists and the traditional gallery system. Working across several spaces in London, the gallery exhibits contemporary art by both local and international artists with a focus on exhibiting work by people of colour. In addition to its gallery programme, Harlesden High Street also hosts a cultural outreach programme with an aim to engage audiences in un-gentrified neighborhoods, through workshops, talks and artist initiatives. In 2023, Tanna also co-founded Minor Attractions, an inclusive micro-fair that gives access to both London and international galleries during Frieze London art week.

Sam Wilkinson is UCL Head of Public Art and Cultural Engagement. Since 2017 Sam has developed public art policy for the university and commissioned works from Rachel Whiteread, Thompson and Craighead, Bouke de Vries, Emma Hart and David Blandy and Larry Achiampong amongst others. Sam is committed to the establishment of artist residencies and collaborative programmes of work where artists, academics and communities work in partnership co-creating work for the UCL Campuses. Sam has been commissioning artists working in the public realm for many years and was the curator in residence working with Neville Gabie for the Olympic Delivery Authority. Past clients have included Cambridge University, the Gatsby Trust, Land Securities, Hammerson, and various local authorities across the UK.

About Bow Arts

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

We're an arts and education charity and a social enterprise; our services support the growth of sustainable local creative economies. Over 600 artists, designers and makers are affiliated with Bow Arts through our workspaces, Nunnery Gallery, affordable housing for creatives, and award-winning schools and young people's learning programme.



About Minerva

Minerva is the sponsor of the East London Art Prize, committed to championing the talent of east London. Founded in 2013, Minerva provides executive search and leadership services for clients across the cultural, social impact and education sectors. Minerva stands out for its commitment to diversity, leadership development and supporting governance.

Minerva's commitment to art has been at the heart of the firm since it started, including previously sponsoring the FBA Futures exhibition at the Mall Galleries and working with the Van Gogh House in Brixton supporting summer residencies.

MINERVA