



Press release

Laisul Hoque
The Ground Beneath Me

6 February – 12 April 2026
Private View: Thursday 5 February, 6-9pm



Laisul Hoque, *Legacy of a Heart's Injury (excerpt)*, 2026, video. Courtesy of the artist.

At the Nunnery Gallery, Bow Arts is delighted to present a solo exhibition by Laisul Hoque, winner of the 2025 East London Art Prize. Hoque premieres a new installation, film, and works on paper, each exploring micro-histories and personal memory in the context of political unrest and turmoil in Bangladesh.

Titled *The Ground Beneath Me*, the exhibition positions the viewer as an observer in the artist's bedroom, which has been relocated in its entirety to the centre of the gallery. Laid out to the exact footprint of the original bedroom, the installation forms an exposed room within a room, seemingly suspended in time. The room is made conspicuous by the artist's absence, raising questions of where he is, and when he will return.

The Ground Beneath Me reflects on a year spent between London and Dhaka, Bangladesh, where the artist was called due to his father's ill health - moving between differing political and familial landscapes, often longing to be in one after finally landing in the other. Suspended in this way, the pain and frustration held in the room is released as visitors are invited to interact, settle in and revisit their own personal memories.



Political turbulence in Bangladesh is a constant and looming presence. A lampshade—a cardboard mock-up of the General Assembly Hall of the National Parliament of Bangladesh—illuminates the room. A new series of wall-based works, *Scenes from Departure* (2025) features boarding passes from the artist's travels; marking repeated departures, each ticket is drawn over with scenes from elsewhere, depicting fleeting encounters, periods of despair, and moments of tranquillity. Together, these colourful drawings trace the journeys taken by the artist while the room remained still.

Hoque will also premiere a new film, *Legacy of a Heart's Injury* (2026), part of a longer work he is making as a Film London 2025-2026 FLAMIN Fellow. It records an intimate conversation between the artist and a friend, reflecting on their mutual grief as both contemplate the potential loss of their fathers, only one of whom survives. Cutting to the artist's father sitting on a beach and speaking about politics, the film interlaces personal loss and public history, as narratives of grief, survival, and political memory move alongside one another.

Hoque was awarded the East London Art Prize 2025 for the installation *An Ode to All the Flavours* (2024), an interactive sculpture resembling an antique sodium-lit 'Bangladeshi sweet shop' display counter. Previously shown at Whitechapel Gallery, the work is inspired by the artist's earliest memory of his father sharing his favourite childhood snack, with the sculpture holding spice-seasoned fried gram flour flakes and fried chickpea flour balls soaked in sugar syrup. During the installation in the Prize's shortlisted artists' exhibition at Nunnery Gallery in early 2025, the snacks were replenished daily by Oitij-jo, a charity that celebrates the cultural heritage and diversity of the Bengali diaspora with a social enterprise catering wing.

Sophie Hill, Director of Arts & Events at Bow Arts, said: "*The East London Art Prize is very special in giving an artist the opportunity and freedom to develop a solo show with no agenda or constraints. Hoque's exhibition truly embodies this spirit of freedom and experimentation; in his boldest installation yet, he invites us into his bedroom, takes us on his journeys, and moves us to share our own memories in the context of crossing continents, politics and personal grief.*"

Hoque was selected by panellists Jonny Tanna, Founder of Harlesden High Street, journalist Louise Benson, artist Phoebe Collings-James, and Sam Wilkinson, Director of Public Art at UCL, from a shortlist of 12 artists. The 2025 iteration of the East London Art Prize received almost 900 submissions, all by artists and collectives living or working within the 'E' postcode.

The runner up, Lydia Newman received 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.

Notes to Editors

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About Laisul Hoque

Laisul Hoque (b. 1998, Dhaka, Bangladesh) is a London-based artist whose work explores social, personal, and familial histories. His installations and films are informed by intimate conversations and created in collaboration with communities connected to these narratives, forming an experiential autobiography that opens into a wider collective story.



After studying literature in Dhaka, he completed an MA in Contemporary Photography: Practices and Philosophy at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London. His work has been shown at the Whitechapel Gallery, Barbican Centre, Experimenta India, and Alliance Française de Dhaka. He was a finalist for the 2024 CIRCA Prize, the winner of the 2025 East London Art Prize and a recipient of the 2025-26 FLAMIN fellowship.

About the East London Art Prize

The East London Art Prize was established in 2023 to celebrate and promote the incredible talent and diversity of art made in the cultural hive of east London. Accompanying the prize is a dynamic, free public programme, providing ongoing support, development, and networking opportunities for artists in east London and beyond. Supporting the career development of all artists included in the shortlist, the prize's mentoring programme connects the shortlisted artists with specially selected mentors, matched through research and discussion in relation to their needs.

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 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.

More than just a competition, the Prize is supported by organisations and institutions working within its catchment boroughs, including the British Council, Dulux, The Line, London College of Fashion, London Legacy Development Corporation, University College London, V&A East and Whitechapel Gallery. This creates a network that enables the Prize to uniquely support and open up opportunities for artists through an associated events programme, highlighting new connections, and providing resources.

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. Nearly 1000 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, an associated events programme, highlighting new connections, and providing resources. The inaugural year's judges are Larry Achiampong (artist), Louisa Buck (art critic), Ellie Pennick (Director & Founder, Guts Gallery) and Megan Piper (Director & Co- Founder, The Line).

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