

PAPER BAG

A group exhibition of works on paper by 30 members of the Bermondsey Artists' Group.

Alex Chalmers Alison Dunhill Anne Menpes Beth Elliott Claire Blundell Jones DS Allen Elisa Alaluusua Gail Dickerson Gary Winship Harald Smykla Jane Colling Jo Stockham Karin Wach Lewis Paul Louise Sheridan Malcolm Jones Mary Evans Michèle Fuirer Miyako Narita Paul Green Richard Wilson Ron Henocq Sarah Taylor Sophie Horton Sophie Yetton Stefania Batoeva Stephen Dunn Tony Fleming Vivien Harland William Chapman.

6 to 21 April 2013, Wednesday – Sunday from 11am – 5pm. (Please note new opening times).

Preview: Friday, 5 April 2013 from 6.30 – 8.30pm.

Founded in 1983, the Bermondsey Artists' Group (BAG) is an artist-led initiative that supports Cafe Gallery Projects (CGP) London and creates opportunities for artists who live, work or study in Southwark. To celebrate the 30th anniversary of the group's inception, formed round a Bermondsey pub table, the members are going back to basics and bringing together an array of works on (or using) paper, the simple starting point uniting every artist regardless of their chosen medium. Examples of works on display will include Mary Evans' large-scale paper cutouts, Harald Smykla's hieroglyphic-like 're-projection' drawings of films, and Lewis Paul's intricately sculpted paper garments.

This artists' group is a rare grassroots initiative that has impressively survived three decades of a changing landscape within visual arts. Collectively they have maintained a democratic framework and consistent core values; to support local artists to show their work and develop their practice, and to shape the artworld by pursuing and valuing engagement, innovation and quality.

Thirty years ago, Ron Henocq, Director of CGP London, had a simple but enduring idea: to bring together the disparate groups of artists who had settled in the Bermondsey area to provide mutual support, create exhibition opportunities and to actively engage with the local community. Remarkably, the Bermondsey Artists' Group continues to thrive to this day and to celebrate this fact they are presenting an exciting cross section of members' work on paper in the gallery that they founded.

To understand just how far the group has come it is important to remember that the London of the early 1980s was a very different place to today. Butlers Wharf and St. Katherine's Dock were full of artists' studios but, other than the established West End galleries, there were very few opportunities for artists to exhibit their work. Bermondsey was a tough working class district, still reeling from extensive bomb damage, populated with overly dense social housing estates and adjusting to the loss of all of the major local employers. Nevertheless, it was, and still is, a prime location, very close to central London, had a direct tube connection to the Whitechapel Art Gallery and affordable spaces for artists to live and work.

The group's first public act was a successful exhibition staged in the Chapter House of Southwark Cathedral. Shortly after, they rescued the derelict café in Southwark Park and created Cafe Gallery. At the beginning, the exhibition programme comprised of one or two-person exhibitions selected from the membership interspersed with curated group exhibitions and invited artists. This quickly grew to include more established artists, workshops for local residents, murals on local housing estates and the legendary Open Exhibition which continues to this day with its 'hang the lot' ethos.

1990 saw the establishment of international links with the foundation of the Kunstbrücke / Artbridge Project which was a ten year art and artists exchange project with the Prenzlauer Berg district of the former East Berlin together with occasional exchanges with the Quartair artists group and gallery in The Hague. Soon after, the artists' group engineered major change for their gallery with a capital grant from the National Lottery transforming the crumbling café into the pristine purpose-built venue we experience today. *Continues . . .*

Cafe Gallery, Southwark Park, Bermondsey, London SE16 2UA admin@cgplondon.org +44 (0)20 7237 1230

CGP London – Cafe Gallery and Dilston Grove – is managed by the Bermondsey Artists' Group which is an artist-led organisation, a not-for-profit company registered in England no.3353857 and a Registered Charity no. 1073851.

Financially assisted by Arts Council England and Southwark Council.



Over the years the group has benefited from a healthy balance of original members and new-comers, the members and their careers have developed in many directions. Some have become career artists, gallery directors, professors or Royal Academicians whilst others resolutely continue producing their art. What they all share is the collective triumph of continuing to make and share their work with others as well as their creation and management of the long-standing arts charity that manages oversees CGP London. Today CGP London comprises of Cafe Gallery, a purpose-built 'white cube' space and Dilston Grove, London's most important raw space for large-scale installations, video projections and experimental works. The programme presents the work of early to mid-career artists and curators at Cafe Gallery and more established artists with the artistic palette and experience to respond to the challenges of Dilston Grove's powerful interior. This programme is fully complimented by an extensive range of Community Learning and Access events that reflect the group's founding ethos of inclusion.

This anniversary exhibition is a rightful celebration of the success of the Bermondsey Artists' Group. Much more than this, it provides the opportunity to view works on paper by a truly diverse but committed group of contemporary artists. Whilst the members have never united in a common visual style as artistic movements usually do, they have always maintained a shared ethos and approach to shaping the way we encounter the artworld from the perspective of an artist rather than that of a patron, the state, or a financial market.

The exhibition will also contain archive material and a screening of local film-maker Michael Holland's film about the group's formation and development as told by the members themselves.

For press enquiries / image requests, please contact: admin@cgplondon.org | +44 (0)20 7237 1230

CGP London artist patrons

Ackroyd & Harvey, Andrew Kötting, Mike Nelson, Cornelia Parker, Iain Sinclair, Richard Wentworth, Richard Wilson.

CGP London patrons

Breckman & Company, Paul and Louise Cooke, Lord and Lady Stevenson.

Listings information

CGP London Cafe Gallery: **PAPER BAG**
Southwark Park, Bermondsey SE16 2UA.
www.cgplondon.org
+44 (0) 20 7237 1230

New Opening times

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Transport

Underground: Canada Water on the Jubilee Line and London Overground Line (Highbury & Islington to West Croydon). Rail: South Bermondsey.

Buses: 1, 47, 188, 199, 225, 381, 395, P12, C10 all stop at Canada Water station.

Canada Water station is seven minutes walk from Southwark Park.

Car/Taxi: Enter Southwark Park via the Southwark Park Road entrance. Free parking in the park.

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