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△ ‘What Are We Grown From’: Objects that represent the New Bloomsbury Set trainees / Illustration by Hitomi Hsu  
Our ways of being are embodied by everyday objects such as backpack, sketch book, childhood toys and tea bag. Notepad, ceramics or scarfs demonstrate various social lives. Objects such as hijab, necklace or bunnet (a kind of hat) suggest fragments of identity.

## Introduction

By Hitomi Hsu

Welcome to the special edition of the New Bloomsbury Set Newspaper, where our 2023 Festival Trainees take you on an exclusive cruise in Bloomsbury.

Curated with passion and creativity, this newspaper is a 21st-century version of Virginia and Vanessa Stephen’s handwritten newspaper, ‘Hyde Park Gate News’ (1891-95). Updating the 1890s version of the urban landscape, this newspaper is your passport to explore the fascinating intersections of art, history, and culture in modern Bloomsbury.

Join us as Hitomi introduces the enchanting Bloomsbury Group, while Georgie unveils an intriguing history of the Holy Cross Church’s occupation by the English Collective of Prostitutes. Sit in our book club, where Angelina, Hitomi and Labiba read captivating stories of Writers of Colour.

Hear out the backstories of Bloomsbury Festival — Angelina chats with curator Emily Momoh about the art of exhibition making, while Gabriel takes you on an audible journey with local creatives and hidden treasures. Our project curator Sandra also contributes with Bloomsbury’s contemporary culture.

From the secrets of Charleston’s garden to trainees’ literary insights, we have a brushstroke of creativity all wrapped up. With poems, monologues, book reviews, and even a crossword, this newspaper invites you to revel in Bloomsbury’s rich tapestry.

If you are finding a spot to sit and read, don’t miss out on the top picks for cafes, bookshops and picnic spots, handpicked by our passionate trainees. So grab your copy and sit still. Let’s dive into the blooming neighborhood where art and culture grow!

## Who ‘Lived in Squares, Painted in Circles and Loved in Triangles’?

By Hitomi Hsu

Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell, John Keynes, E.M. Forster — these are just a few of the big names you might have seen on the blue plaques around the neighbourhood. Do you know they all belong to the Bloomsbury Group?

The Bloomsbury Group was a radical collective consisting of English writers, philosophers, dancers and artists. An exclusive cool kids club hosted by the rebellious Stephen sisters — later known as Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf — in the early 20th century.

Long story short. Let’s break their tales down with shapes: as a wise saying by Dorothy Parker goes, this lot ‘lived in squares, painted in circles and loved in triangles.’

‘Squares’ refers to the Bloomsbury home of the Stephen sisters, the group’s meeting place. Back in the days when these brilliant thinkers were still at university, the Stephen sisters lived in Gordon Square. Interested in art, drama, and current affairs, the girls formed a secret society, inviting the top brains to their Thursday salons.

Each member of the group held their own creative interests. Whether feminism, impressionism or Keynesian, the members’ establishment in their fields might not be the most representative, but definitely pioneering.

Take Vanessa Bell’s ‘circles’ as an example — so colourful and so boldly abstract. She adores the shape to the extent that circles not only became



△ The NBS trainees got together around Vanessa Bell’s dining table in Charleston House in April 2023.

a trademark of her works but her whole house (including the fireplace and the dining tables) which are covered with dots!

Lock the artsy youths in some rooms, you’ll get a buffet of gossip. *Love Island* S11? Gordon Square was full of love ‘triangles’.

In addition to their pioneering literary and artistic ideas, the Bloomsbury Group is a community open to polygamy relationships and gay rights. Try searching for the love story between Vanessa Bell, Clive Bell and Duncan Grant, where you’ll find a thrilling ten-year love story in their new hub at Charleston.

Although there are way more stories in the neighbourhood worth exploring in addition to the notorious group, at least for now you have started to know the messy but fascinating lives of these Bloomsbury people.

## What is Bloomsbury’s Contemporary Culture?

By Sandra Lam

‘A fine spring day. I walked along Oxford St. The buses are strung on a chain. People fight & struggle. Knocking each other off the pavement. Old bareheaded men; a motor car accident, &c. To walk alone in London is the greatest rest.’  
— Virginia Woolf, *Street Haunting* (1930)

Walking in Bloomsbury has become my daily routine since I joined the Festival in autumn 2022. Bloomsbury is extraordinarily beautiful to me in spring, when cherry blossoms start to bloom alongside Marchmont Street, and the breeze gently cuts through the trees in Brunswick Square Gardens, whispering on the leaves.

I enjoy sitting outside of the cafés at Store Street and talking with our partners about the New Bloomsbury Set project, when the sun shines through the clouds, glistening on the windows of the Georgian houses around Bedford Square.

Since the beginning of the project, twelve months have passed, but to me it’s as fresh in my mind as if it took place yesterday. In February 2023, our 10 young trainees aged 18-23 were onboard. We went on a Bloomsbury’s Music Trail featuring emerging artists including Karen Wong Ka Wing, Nina Hudson and art duo Mario and Rama. We walked along the streets and squares with Camden Tour Guides and discovered Bangladeshi street artist Mohammed Ali’s mural about young people on Argyle Street.

We interviewed Rosie Peppin Vaughan and Fiona Khalastchy, local history researchers, in our oral



△ Artist Mohammed Ali’s mural at King’s Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association’s Youth Centre on Argyle Street.

history training. We discussed global literature in our Writers of Colour Book Club. We created beautiful silk banners with local community groups of Bangladeshi, Chinese and Somali heritage. We talked about football, cycling and silk painting with local youth groups. We shared stories of growing up, studying or working in Bloomsbury.

All these constitute the contemporary culture of Bloomsbury. Through researching, drawing, painting and storytelling, we felt more connected to Bloomsbury.

**Bloomsbury is more than Virginia Woolf or the Bloomsbury Group, but also a home to many people. Bloomsbury is about the people, communities, artists and thinkers of different origins that make it a thriving area.**

**What does Bloomsbury mean to you?**

# Swaying like a Hollyhock

An interview with Charleston's Head Gardener, Harry Hoblyn on the nonhuman, Nick Cave and feeling like water.

By Georgina Dettmer



△ Harry Hoblyn, Head Gardener, creates a beautiful floral landscape in Charleston, the modernist home and studio of painters Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant. Photo by David McHugh. © Brighton Pictures.

**'To experience awe, euphoria; to learn humility; to be more present; to take you away from the past or the future; to share joy and connection with other people; to nourish ourselves'. It's a short list which sums up the myriad of reasons why Harry Hoblyn, Head Gardener at Charleston, believes it is important for us to be outside, surrounded and immersed with the non-human.**

Following a tour to Charleston in April, Harry later agreed to speak with me about his work in the garden and his relationship with the 'nonhuman': a term intentionally vague, ranging from plants to insects to mammals and more. In one of his previous interviews, Harry described his artistic approach to gardening alongside some top tips, namely, 'experiment daily'. I ask him about the experiment he undertook today, after which he explains 'what I meant by that is don't be afraid to make mistakes.' Harry started working as Head Gardener at Charleston just as the pandemic began. With this came an opportunity for Harry to experiment, likening gardening to 'holding a paintbrush and doing abstract paintwork or trying different materials with sculptures or different glazes for ceramics'.

I was intrigued by his interdisciplinary perspective on gardening, art forms bleeding into one another through metaphor. 'You could say everything's pretty much an art form,' he says, 'like the natural things, the things that are created from nature - people make with their hands, there's the voice or instruments made from wood or brass'. All of it is art, including gardening.

On hearing comparisons to paintings and ceramic, I immediately thought upon the influence of the Bloomsbury Set upon the land, the garden, and Harry himself. I ask him about 'desire lines' - paths formed by consistent footfall in areas not originally designed to be paths. They become ingrained, the landscape an inheritor of personhood and history. I ask Harry about this, whether his inheritance of the garden, particularly from the Bloomsbury Set, is palpable. The first thing he mentions is the hollyhocks, the famous flowers which flourish in the garden 'especially at this time of year'. 'Vanessa [Bell] painted them [...] and she writes about hollyhocks. They're the quintessential Charleston plant I guess.'

He continues, describing the 'well kept secret' underneath the base of one

of the sculptures in the garden where there is a clump of pyramid orchids: 'I always wonder - that doesn't really make sense to me, that they're there - they're isolated to that spot. Maybe someone living knows the answer [...] I often wonder if someone planted them around the base of the statue or perhaps the statue was put there as a homage to the orchids?' Regardless of the answer (after all, we don't have one), landscape and memory intertwine; are the daffodils down to mysticism or is it purely ideal soil for drainage? I suppose we get to choose. 'Perhaps it's something richer than logical science?' I'm all for mysticism. Harry ensures me, however, that he can also be 'pragmatic and cynical'. You need a mix.

Over the last three years, Harry's relationship to gardening and the garden itself has changed. 'When it comes to nature, things are out of my control ultimately'. Through his metamorphosing practice, he has become more of a 'guiding hand' rather than trying to be 'master' of the garden. He reaches towards a horizontal, rather than hierarchical, approach to gardening that feels crucial in the ecological movement's desire to de-centre humans from the nonhuman. In other words, the world around us is not purely for us - it has a vitality of its own.

Harry's language is ripe with nonhuman imagery. He compares his learning process, and life, to a 'river'; 'sometimes you meander, sometimes a quick flow, sometimes it feels like you aren't moving at all, sometimes against the current'. How then, I ask, has the nonhuman changed him?

'Helping to nurture a beautiful space that people can visit [...] in the bleakness of winter or a day like today, people can be inspired to go out and grow food or be inspired or draw - whatever it may be'. Harry becomes a 'custodian' of the space, open 5 days a week (7 if Harry is there) for anyone to explore, to reconnect. Just before our interview, I checked my inbox for a new email from Nick Cave's mailing list 'The Red Hand Files'. I read an extract to Harry which feels particularly relevant to our discussion:

*'As humans, we so often feel helpless in our own smallness, yet still we find the resilience to do and make beautiful things, and this is where the meaning of life resides. Nature reminds us of this constantly.'*

He mentions Cave's song *The Lyre of Orpheus* and 'the line: "Orpheus sat gloomy in his garden shed/wondering what to do" which is pertinent to me occasionally - it's not all roses and daffodils'. For all the joys of this work - this integration with the nonhuman - it's a risk to elevate it without hesitation. It is not that this work is Godly or better than; Harry repeats that he is 'fallible', his position as Gardener does not give him the answers to life. Perhaps I want it to, desperate for him to say he's found the key! He's worked out what's gone wrong with the grey and polluting world we're living in and we can find the answer in the garden! It's not that. But it does offer something which I crave for whilst sat sweltering in my flat-share in London during the September heatwave.

'I live by the sea so I went for a swim this morning and felt like water for a moment, under the water, you know? You can feel like you're a part of the South Downs if you're on top of it sometimes and also feel totally like you need to surrender to it, a servitude to the South Downs, the pervading winds.' Sometimes, however, Harry is 'detached' from it. It's a tenuous relationship.

What do you mean 'feel like water'? I ask.

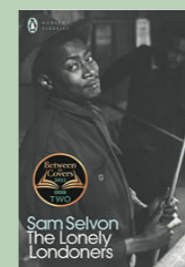
'Rather than being in the water to get something out of it - it's just about being in it'. He references a talk at Charleston last year by the Right to Roam movement, an activist group seeking to establish easy access across land in England. The group discussed the issue of seeing nature as something to use rather than simply appreciate for what it is. Harry agrees with this notion, wondering whether, by sitting and slowing down or perhaps 'swaying like a hollyhock', one can then 'feel like that thing'. Maybe it's too whimsical? Maybe an hour of chatting about the nonhuman over Zoom has gone to our heads? Yet there remains something disruptive about this notion; rupturing our incessant need for productivity or utility. We say our goodbyes and log off. I listen to Nick Cave. I go for a walk, meandering from manmade path to desired line, looking upwards and around. And maybe that's enough - out of answers - at least for the time being.



# 'Writers of Colour' Book Club



**Samuel Selvon**  
*The Lonely Londoners*  
Reviewed by Hitomi Hsu



It is a captivating narrative that delves into the challenges newcomers might face and their sense of isolation. Set against the backdrop of 1950s London, the novel unfolds the lives of Trinidadian immigrants and their journey to establish themselves amidst a foreign culture. A significant part of the Windrush generation, Selvon, hailing from the Caribbean, is among those who migrated to London post-WWII under the 1948 British Nationality Act. Almost like a buzzing street interview on TikTok, *The Lonely Londoners* uncovers the dramatic lives of Jamaican men in London, documenting their day-to-day activities in stream of consciousness — playing cards, pursuing romance, odd jobs and even eating pigeons — such true-to-life and thus unable to look away.

Selvon is shockingly honest in depicting the anxiety experienced by the Trinidadian immigrants. Through witty sketches of the new-come city dwellers, he explores the underlying apprehensions among characters and reflects on broader community self-doubt and distancing caused by oppression. It is sadly observed that under systematic discrimination, the male characters tend to hide their Trinidadian heritage as a way to fit in. A heart-breaking scene is when Galahad speaks to the colour black upon being teased during his night shifts in the underground — Their dream to become someone big implies their inner wish to be someone else.

In addition to the tongue-twisting plots, the novel's rhythmic narrative is groundbreaking. Using creolised English, Selvon combines colloquial slang and dialects that reflect the language of Trinidadian immigrants. Such fusion of languages opens new discussions on decolonisation and the fusing of cultures in London.

**Harman Kaur Phulkari**  
Reviewed by Labiba Ahmed



It is a self published beautiful collection of poetry that explores themes of love, identity and empowerment. 'Phulkari' refers to the intricate flower shaped design as seen on the cover and is a celebration of Punjabi heritage and the resilience of women. It is a book that resonates with readers who appreciate poetry that speaks to the soul and celebrates cultural identity.

I came across this book through TikTok and I'm pleased that I read it because each poem is so well written and you can feel the depth of emotion it carries. I don't usually tend to pick up poetry to read, however Kaur's writing style is simple yet impactful, making it accessible to a wide range of readers and a perfect short read.

The poems are written in a free-flowing style that captures the raw emotions and authenticity of the poet's voice and makes it relatable.

To read the full review please visit the Bloomsbury Festival's website.

**Khaled Hosseini**  
*A Thousand Splendid Suns*  
Reviewed by Labiba Ahmed

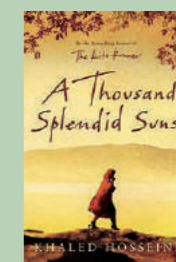
It is an incredibly powerful and emotionally gripping novel set in war-torn Afghanistan. It tells the intertwined stories of two resilient women named Mariam and Laila, who come from different generations and backgrounds as they navigate through hardships, love and sacrifice. The book explores their experiences and challenges in a country plagued by war, oppression, conflict and gender inequality.

The book explores themes of resilience, friendship and the enduring strength of the human spirit. It sheds light on the impact of war on individuals and the resilience of women in the face of adversity. Hosseini's writing is both poetic and impactful, painting a vivid picture of the characters' struggles and the harsh realities they face.

One of my favourite themes of this book is womanhood and as a man Hosseini really manages to capture the essence of friendship and struggle that women and young girls face making this book speak to so many women. The book is set from the early 1960s to the late 2000s so we experience the characters grow and blossom in each stage of their lives and watch them mature in thought and practice.

Overall be prepared to go through a rollercoaster of emotions and at times it may seem hard to continue however it is an extraordinary novel to read and leaves a lasting impression.

Reviewed by Angelina Lwanga



An emotional journey follows the lives of two Afghani women through the tumultuous history of Afghanistan. It starts with Miriam, an illegitimate child, married young into an abusive marriage by her father. Lila is then introduced, coming from an educated background and therefore a prosperous future, the backdrop of war forces her to enter this abusive marriage as a second wife. After initial friction, they are forced to navigate the challenges of an oppressive world as they now live for more than themselves with Lila's two children. They experience depressing losses in the search for their freedom.

The beautiful and emotional intricacy with which Hosseini presents the natural world makes this such an immersive read, offering so many of the harrowing moments with such emotional disparity that it is difficult to continue, but difficult to put down. The reverberations of Afghan history arguably shapes not only the storyline but the characters themselves, with Miriam and Lila's birthdays coinciding with either the take down of a regime or the establishment of a new faction.

With Hosseini's background, I believe that it would be hard to tell the story without this context, and his optimistic outlook on the future that I now read from, makes this book all the more devastating. It is a seemingly disregarded cry that has left an indelible impression on me.

# Three Important People You Need to Know in Bloomsbury

By Labiba Ahmed

Labiba Ahmed introduces you to three important People of Colour and their contribution to Bloomsbury.

**Mohammed Ali** is a street artist from Birmingham who made his contribution to Bloomsbury in 2019. He created a mural on the walls of Cromer Street, which is a home to the Bengali community. The mural embodies the struggles of migration that the residents experienced when settling into a new foreign country. The mural *A Few Pounds in My Pockets* features a Bangladeshi man wearing his traditional clothing, holding an umbrella and walking towards what seems like a money exchange shop in London as represented by the TFL logo. The mural symbolises the common story of many Bangladeshi men who worked long hours as the only form of financial support for their families who remained in Bangladesh.

Mohammed's artwork is a tribute to the residents of North Bloomsbury and signifies history lived within and showcased on the walls. It is also a reminder to the younger generation of Cromer Street to the struggles their elders experienced. Mohammed also worked on other projects for the Bloomsbury Festival in 2020 and 2021 such as the live projection of his interview with elderly Bengali

residents in Bloomsbury on the walls of the British Library.

**Sarah Parker Remond** (1826–1894) was a free-born African American, suffragist, anti-slavery campaigner and physician. She travelled to England in 1859 and is particularly significant because she was the first woman to give a public talk against slavery in this country as a prominent and accomplished abolitionist campaigner. Remond also spoke openly about the sexual exploitation of enslaved African women, a topic that was considered too scandalous to speak about in public at the time. Remond is featured in this article because she trained as a nurse at London University College (now known as University College London) in 1865.

**Dr Harold Moody** was born in Jamaica in 1882 and travelled to London in 1904 to study medicine at King's College. He found it difficult to find a job in a hospital after becoming a doctor, despite having the best qualifications, due to racial discrimination. As a result he set up his own GP practice.

Moody is a significant figure in Bloomsbury because he set up the League of Coloured Peoples in 1931 in Central YMCA Great Russell Street. The organisation worked to remove



△ Mohammed Ali's mural *A Few Pounds in My Pockets* (2019) was launched as part of Bloomsbury Festival's Cromer Street Welcomes the Moon creative street party with the Bangladeshi community. Photo by Stuart Keegan.

the colour barrier that prevented black persons from becoming officers in the armed forces; it also advocated for racial equality in housing, education and employment. The organisation had five objectives:

1. To promote and protect the Social, Educational, Economic and Political Interests of its members
2. To interest members in the Welfare

of Coloured Peoples in all parts of the World

3. To improve relations between the Races
4. To co-operate and affiliate with organisations sympathetic to coloured people
5. To render such financial assistance to coloured people in distress as lies within our capacity (added in 1937)

## Poems

By Solar Flight

### BLOOMSBURY

Calm, crafty, arty cottages  
That dot the urban landscape  
This is a street-like place  
That defines my namesake.  
It is somewhere I call home  
When I feel it is important  
And somewhere I wish to roam  
When I feel that I'm important.

Bloomsbury is a place  
And a wishful, washing land  
A great big island  
In amongst the urban strands  
It is a fatal ocean  
And it spits and calls to me  
It is that very, urban heart  
Of of, that London sea.

### ON BRUNSWICK SQUARE

I stand there alone  
Staring at the great big metallic sky.

I see a spot  
Of green-ness there.

And on that periphery  
I step into the past.

### Podcast



Listen to Gabriel Rogers-Mullen talking with two local creatives — storyteller Fran and singer Jordan — for his podcast 'Bloomsbury Creatives' on the Bloomsbury Festival's Spotify. The aim is to highlight local voices and why they are important.

## Curating Black British History

Interview with *We Were Here* Exhibition Curator Emily Momoh

By Angelina Lwanga



Emily Momoh is an independent Community Projects Producer who lives in Camden. She has worked with several arts and cultural organisations including the Walk Productions, the British Museum, and the Swiss Gallery, to name just a few. She has established herself as a treasured member of the community through her work with local community groups producing programmes and activities for people of all ages to enjoy, and learn from. Earlier this year she founded Camden's first Black British History Community Hub, in Kentish Town, where her latest installation - the Caribbean Front Room, is on show as part of Camden's Black History Season programme.

*We Were Here* is her debut exhibition curation - a collection of eight biographies of significant individuals of African and Caribbean heritage who lived, worked or studied in Camden dating back almost three hundred years. Their achievements led to significant change in local, national and international contexts.

This year the exhibition will be on show at Senate House, in the Crush Hall, as part of the New Bloomsbury Set Programme. I spoke with Emily Momoh about her first exhibition curation experience.

*So we're here to talk about exhibition curation, what is it and what does it mean?*

Exhibition curation is a process of selecting creative content and literature which is assembled in a meaningful and relevant way. You want to see your idea become a reality, and ideally, on display. The curator role is not so dissimilar to a community producer who is responsible for coordinating the different elements of a creative project. Part of the role of a producer or a curator is to oversee the process of

selecting content and also taking an active role in bringing together a team that will work on the project.

*So with your personal experience, what were your successes and what were the downfalls that you found in curating your exhibition?*

I think my main challenge was working on the project during the pandemic, when coronavirus lockdown measures were in place. It was difficult to be certain about anything back then. When I was told that the exhibition would have to be postponed due to the gallery having to close, I was gutted.

The key to the success of the exhibition has been the ability to adapt in order to accommodate change. Rather than design the display panels to be mounted on a wall, I suggested we use free standing panels to create a touring exhibition.

I didn't anticipate the interest the exhibition would attract from cultural institutions like the British Museum and Senate House. I curated the exhibition with community provisions, schools, and colleges in mind. The idea was to present it to people who wouldn't normally visit public galleries and museums, and to use it as an outreach resource for educational purposes.

*What other things would you say are essential to ensure success of curating an exhibition?*

Display your artefacts conveniently to captivate your visitors' interests. We used transparent glass cabinets to display books and other objects for viewing.

As with every major event, planning for an exhibition is limited to a budget and the success of your exhibition is dependent on how you utilise the funds

that are available. Allocate a proportion of your budget to marketing - you need to get the word out about your exhibition. Decide where to launch your exhibition carefully. The size of the venue will determine how many guests can attend.

*Focusing on your exhibition, We Were Here, my first introduction to your work when you came to talk to the Bloomsbury Trainees earlier this year, I wanted to know what inspired your theme for that, and if curators have a moral or maybe community inspired responsibility when it comes to choosing themes?*

The inspiration for the theme came from my interest in local history. At the time, when the idea to produce an exhibition came to me, I was working on a history project with a community group of people aged 50+ at the time. Many of them were born and bred in Camden, but like me, knew very little about the borough's black history.

They didn't know about people of African heritage living and working across London in areas like St Pancras and Holborn in the 1700s. Generally black history is airbrushed out of British history. Talking about Britain's involvement in the Atlantic Slave Trade can be an uncomfortable discussion to engage with.

I have to agree completely with that, there is an importance in showing the successful stories because of the incessant coverage of historic trauma and the systematic setbacks of black Britons, these stories are almost unheard of.

I do feel a sense of moral responsibility in redressing the invisibility of Black British History, and, just as importantly, redress the misinterpretation of our history across the African diaspora.

*Now for the process of exhibition curation, what are the deciding factors for what is included and what is discarded in the final cut of the exhibition, as I can imagine during your extensive research you encountered a lot of documents full of content, so how do you know what to include?*

I like looking at images - photographs, paintings, and imagery that brings stories to life, so I used a selection of visual artwork as well as texts to relay the stories.

Black history is more accessible now because of the internet, and the advancement of social media platforms. You have to analyse so much content to decide what is true and what is subjective. It was important to curate the stories from an objective perspective, working with factual information, rather than have my personal feelings and opinions dictate the narrative.

*So towards the end of the exhibition curation process there is the task of display, having touched on this a bit earlier with the footfall of your exhibit curation process turning out to be a great addition, what were some of the things you keep in mind when considering the layout of your exhibition?*

Because it's a touring exhibition the layout varies depending on the size of the exhibit space. It was an amazing feeling seeing *We Were Here* displayed for the first time when it launched at the Swiss Gallery in Swiss Cottage Library. It looked so professional. I was filled with a sense of pride and joy to have my debut exhibition in a public gallery. My feelings were intensified when I saw it on exhibition at the British Museum, last October. I remember thinking...WOW and just being speechless for a minute or so.

*Last question now, how do you advise our readers who may be really interested in the idea of exhibit curation, with a theme they want to portray or an idea they really want to show but maybe unsure with how to actually get started and get their foot in the door, producing something like you did?*

Communicate and talk to people about what you want to do. Don't be shy to put your ideas out there, and be open-minded about where and how you can showcase your work. There are some great outdoor spaces that complement large, bold display panels. Check out Granary Square in King's Cross to see an example of what I'm talking about.

Give yourself enough time to curate an exhibition. It takes lots of time, patience, perseverance and persistence to curate an exhibition from its conception stage through to its existence. Your time frame can be anything from six to twelve months, sometimes even longer. We had a timeframe of nine months to produce and deliver *We Were Here*.

If you can work in partnership with your local council, you have a good chance of producing something like what I achieved and getting the necessary support. Do some research into your local authority's equity, diversity and inclusion principles.

If your idea for an exhibition is compatible with, and reflective of the council's values and beliefs, it's worth taking the time to draft a proposal. You can also enquire about renting a pop-up property from your local council to host your exhibition. Usually the rent is pretty cheap for emerging artists and it's an effective way to attract a wider audience.

**Most importantly, don't give up on your dreams. Usually where there is a will, there is a way. Good luck.**



**London:  
A Bloom of  
Consciousness**

On 22 October, there will be a site-specific immersive soundscape and dramatic tour of Bloomsbury. Follow 3 performer-guides to trace connections to Virginia Woolf, herself an avid streetwalker of London, and explore their own relationships with Woolf's writing and the global cities in which they grew up: Kolkata, Lima and Wu Wei. More info please visit the Bloomsbury Festival's website.

## A Summer of Resistance?

*Climate Justice in Bloomsbury: Protest Then & Now*

By Georgina Dettmer

*'Look at the people. Look at ourselves. We are the people making the mess and the smells. What will our children think about what we leave them? They're telling us now, and we won't believe them.'*

Spotify shuffle has taken me into a deep dive of Labi Siffre music whilst sifting through research material on the tube. On comes 'Entertainment Value', Siffre's 1982 song from his album 'For the Children'. Whilst I sat on the Northern line, travelling from Camden Town to Goodge Street, I'm researching the 1982 Holy Cross Church sit-in, the exact same year in which Siffre's haunting melody was made. The sit-in was led by the **English Collective of Prostitutes (ECP)** which Selma James describes in her pamphlet, *Hookers in the House of the Lord*, as arising from demands 'that Local Authorities and society at large stand by prostitutes in their conflict with the police'. Only last year, Bloomsbury Festival collaborated with ECP, forming a reunion which I'd watched the night before on YouTube, one key but crucial part in a colossal constellation of Bloomsbury protest, both past and present.

In 2021, University and College Union members took to the streets in protest over pay inequality and working conditions. In 2018, London Cycling Campaign held a protest following the death of a cyclist at a Camden junction. In 2013, students demonstrated outside the University of London's student union against growing police presence on campus.

Protest is part of our geography; a plethora of protest history on different street corners. With the introduction of the Public Order Act in 2023, however, protest laws have changed for the foreseeable future. According to 'Liberty Human Rights', with this new implementation, the government's aim is 'to increase the police's ability to restrict and criminalise protest activity' through new powers including the expansion of stop and search and criminalising forms of protest including locking yourself to other people or objects and obstructing major transport works. Within the report, specific

climate justice groups have been named include Just Stop Oil and Extinction Rebellion. Crucially the definition of 'serious disruption' has been significantly lowered which results in increased chances of arrest. As I sit on the tube, reading James' pamphlet on the Holy Cross occupation, I wonder how protest, specifically climate justice, will manifest now within our local community. What does Bloomsbury protest look like in a post-Public Order Act London?

It's been a particularly wet and dreary summer. Whilst you may have jetted off to the (over) heated climes of Italy or Spain, England has seen rain, more rain and some bouts of intense sun. Regardless of your holiday destinations, you probably haven't been able to escape the growing news of climate destruction across the globe. Fires in Rhodes and Hawaii have forced us to face the reality of a warming world. My own research on climate justice and pollution in London has revealed to me that my commute into work everyday is one of 'the most polluted' in London, according to Tanya Beri's award-winning clean-air phone app.

Activist group, **Bloomsbury Air**, have been facing this reality in their own campaigning work. Their aim? They hope to put 'air quality on the agenda in Central London'. In recent weeks, pollution in London has been pretty high on the agenda, with the introduction of Ultra Low Emission Zones causing controversy amidst various groups. Bloomsbury Air is committed to reducing the pollution in the neighbourhood, spearheading and supporting campaigns to reduce traffic, introduce delivery levies and promote green spaces.

Another group working in Bloomsbury is **Wild Bloomsbury**, likewise working for the improvement of the local community. They have a goal of creating '10,000m<sup>2</sup> of extra biodiverse space by 2024' which they hope will improve biodiversity and community within the area. There's a lot of big partners involved in this project including UCL, the University of London, Bedford Estates, Birkbeck, and

Camden Council among others. According to their site, the main aims seem to seek for 'natural interventions' such as constructing green walls and small gardens around Bloomsbury. This work aims to not only offer community space, but also to reduce congestion and pollution. Offering infrastructure for healthier, cleaner, greener lives in Bloomsbury. They're open to emails if you're interested in getting involved: hannah.biggs@ucl.ac.uk

Over in Camden, **Climate Emergency Camden (CEC)** has been lobbying the Council to respond to the climate crisis since April 2019. Anyone or any group based in Camden can join (no fee, of course), partaking in the fight against ecological disaster. There's a variety of working groups you can partake in, ranging from transport, energy, education, and economy. Getting involved requires one quick email to climateemergencycamden@gmail.com.

CEC does not usually get involved in direct action but expressed that they 'encourage everyone to take part in bringing political pressure [...] in any way they can'. In an email with a representative from the group, they were clear that 'we cannot simply allow [the] 'business as usual' economic model to drive humanity of the cliff'.

With the changing landscape of climate protest arises new opportunities to engage with your local community and a commitment for a Bloomsbury that is both local, national, and global in its aspirations for climate justice. Bloomsbury is no stranger to political, scientific, and revolutionary thinkers and movements. Whilst the particularities of street protest may change, our capacity to engage in climate justice or other activist endeavours continues. Back on the tube, 2023 to 1982, with the Holy Cross sit-in and Siffre's tune of fear and change, the song continues,

*'Look at the people. Look at them running, uh-huh. Where are they going? Where are they coming from?'*

## Hidden Gems for Bloomsbury Newbies

By Hitomi Hsu

Welcome to the neighborhood full of stories and squares at the very heart of London. Here we recommend three hidden gems in Bloomsbury — just in case you want to avoid the crowd swarming to the British Museum!

### 1. An afternoon with global street food and pop-up performances

Join us for an afternoon street food and flower market with pop-up events, to celebrate the start of the Bloomsbury Festival 2023 including family-friendly after school activities from 3pm – 5pm. The food and flower market will open from midday with busking, local dance groups and performers bringing the street to life throughout the afternoon. Local restaurants and shops take part in the fun and there will be music and spoken word events along the street through the event.

### Bloomsbury Festival's Street Food & Flower Market

Store Street, WC1E  
Only on Fri, 13 October 12:00-17:00

### 2. Go for a book hunt at Gay's The World

The oldest LGBT+ bookstore in London holds a spirit forever young. If you ever want to celebrate queerness, take your grandparents, your children and your queer friends to Gay's The World. You will have a blast picking cute postcards, queer YA novels and essays. If you don't know where to start, go chat with Jim, the Manager for a book recommendation. Having worked here for over three decades, he reads from Judith Butler to Heartstopper.

### Gay's The World

66 Marchmont St, WC1N 1AB  
Mon-Sat 11:00-18:00  
Sun 13:00-18:00

### 3. Have a Thursday picnic at Bloomsbury Farmers' Market

If you're planning to go to chill in the squares in Bloomsbury, plan your visits on Thursday so you won't miss the weekly street food carnival at Bloomsbury Farmers' Market. (Although it's a shame that we no longer have the city farm around the corner, there are plenty of taco choices at the market.) You'll find curry, phở, burgers and wraps under a tenner with zero effort. Be chatty with the shop owners for free food samples!

### Bloomsbury Farmers' Market

Torrington Square, WC1E 7HX  
Thu 9:00-14:00

### 4. Fill your belly with Meze at Pitted Olive Cafe Restaurant

There are plenty of Turkish cafes in London, they usually serve the most generous brunch and lunch boxes. An all-time favorite is Pitted Olive Cafe Restaurant, a charming family-run lunch shop near Garden Hall. My go-to order is Gözleme Combo: where else on earth could you get a tea-towel-size crispy Turkish flatbread and a box stuffed with hummus, salad and yogurt with just a tenner?

### Pitted Olive Cafe Restaurant

3 Leigh St, WC1H 9EW  
Mon-Fri 9:00-17:00  
Sat 10:00-16:00

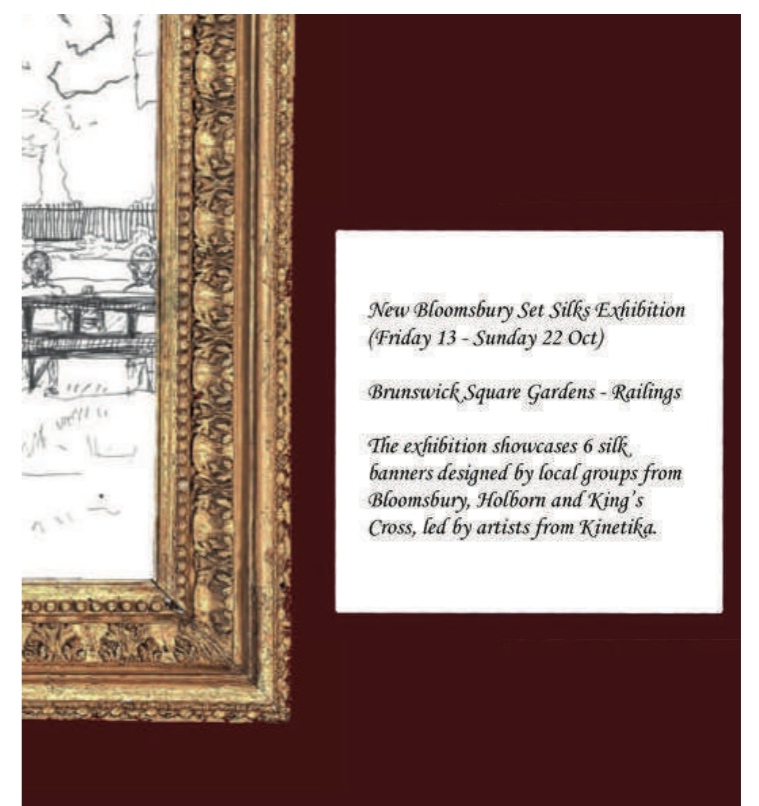
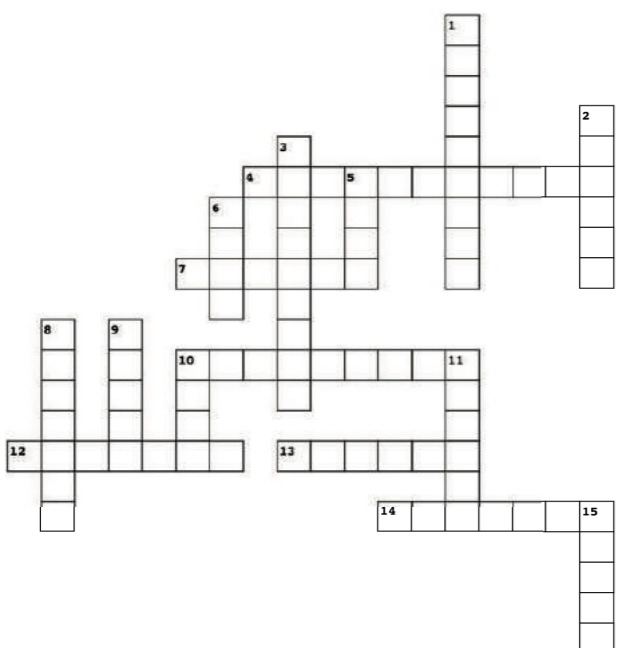


### Down

1. Which Community Garden got the public to plant 1000 bulbs during the 2011 Bloomsbury Festival.
2. \_\_\_ House is where the Ministry of Information used to operate during WWII.
3. What hospital/children's home was founded in Bloomsbury in 1739.
5. Famous comedian and actress Catherine \_\_\_ was brought up in the Brunswick Centre.
6. E.M. Foster (ex. Brunswick Square resident) wrote the famous book 'A \_\_\_ with a View'.
8. Which famous writer lived at 48 Doughty Street.
9. Married surname of Vanessa Bell's younger sister also from the Bloomsbury Group.
10. The tragic flood that occurred in 1814, where a 15ft wave of \_\_\_ burst out just west of Dyott Street.
11. Name the member of the Bloomsbury Set who was also an economist.
15. Which Russian leader lived in Bloomsbury in 1908.

### Across

4. Laid out in the 1660s, \_\_\_ Square created the garden area for what is now known as Bloomsbury Square.
7. \_\_\_ Street is the name of an underground station in Bloomsbury.
10. Name the iconic brutalist Bloomsbury shopping centre.
12. The \_\_\_ Estates are the largest private landowner in Bloomsbury.
13. James \_\_\_ was the main developer of the Bloomsbury area from rural to Georgian housing.
14. Name one of the largest garden squares in Bloomsbury that has its own Tube station.



Answers to the crossword:  
Beer / Brunswick / Keynes / Bedford / Burton / Russell / Lenth  
Marchmont / Senate / Founding / Southampton / Tate / Room / Goodge / Dickens / Woolf



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