

Press Release: February 2021

FRANK BOWLING AT ARNOLFINI | 3 JULY - 26 SEPTEMBER 2021



Sir Frank Bowling OBE, RA. Photograph © Sacha Bowling

Arnolfini are delighted to announce a major exhibition with pioneering painter **Sir Frank Bowling** as part of their 60th anniversary celebrations in 2021. The exhibition will feature new and recent works which demonstrate the continued exploration and experimentation with the painted surface for which Bowling is renowned.

This is **the artist's** first museum exhibition since his critically acclaimed and long overdue retrospective at Tate Britain in 2019, **which cemented his reputation as a 'modern master'**. It will include new and previously unseen works - including several created during the pandemic - alongside key paintings from the last decade, providing a **fascinating insight into Bowling's work.**

New paintings including *As Above So Below* (2020) with its haunting hint of a horizon, or *Oriented Light* (2020) with its vibrant reds and yellows gesture back to iconic bodies of work such as **Bowling's** 'Map Paintings' while introducing new audiences to his signature scale and luminescent sense of light and colour. Shown alongside older works, they create threads that can be traced back to pivotal moments in **Bowling's** relentless exploration of **the 'possibilities and properties of paint'**.

Referencing his childhood in Guyana, *El Dorado with my shirt collar* (2019) reminds us of the narrative strands woven **throughout Bowling's abstract oeuvre**, and his use of geographical gestures can be seen in works such as *Essequibo Dawn Just Above the Equator* (2020). An art writer and critic in his younger days, **Bowling's** poetic titles offer playful entry points into his textured canvases.

Materials from **the artist's** personal archive reference his relationship with Bristol and emphasise the autobiographical elements of his practice. Alongside these, items from his London studio will evoke the sounds, colours and textures of his working life.

A new publication accompanying the exhibition focuses on the last decade of his practice. The book delves into the daily rhythm of his life in the studio, surrounded by family and friends, and presents a personal portrait of the artist and his work.

The exhibition follows the announcement of Bowling joining **Hauser & Wirth**, who will stage their first exhibition of **the artist's** work in New York and at the London gallery in May 2021.

@ArnolfiniArts @HauserWirth IG: @FrankBowlingStudio FB: @FrankBowlingRA

#FrankBowling #SirFrankBowling #ArnolfiniArts #HauserWirth

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Additional images are available [here](#)

Twitter / Facebook / Instagram / www.arnolfini.org.uk

LISTINGS

Frank Bowling | 3 July to 26 September 2021

Hailed as one of Britain's greatest living abstract painters and as a 'modern master', Frank Bowling's major exhibition at Arnolfini will feature new and recent work, as he continues his exploration and experimentation with the painted surface that has marked his lengthy and extraordinary career.

www.arnolfini.org.uk 0117 917 2300

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#FrankBowling #ArnolfiniArts #HauserWirth

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Frank Bowling

Sir Frank Bowling, OBE, RA, has been hailed as one of Britain's greatest living abstract painters and as a 'modern master'. His uniquely beautiful paintings are said to display a 'visionary approach that fuses abstraction with personal memories'. They have been described as 'late modern masterpieces' of 'astonishing physical power and stunning visual drama' made during a lifetime of relentless experimentation. Bowling's work has been exhibited in hundreds of group and solo exhibitions and can be found in fifty institutions worldwide.

Bowling's innovations in technique, the use of paint and surface texture have changed the practice of painting. Bowling has won a great many accolades during his career including the silver medal in painting and an honorary doctorate from the Royal College of Art (in 1962 and 2020, respectively).

He was made a Member of the Royal Academy of Art in 2005 and awarded an OBE for services to art in 2008 and has been given the honour of Knight Bachelor conferred upon him in the Birthday 2020 Honours List by Her Majesty The Queen. Bowling is an artistic pioneer who has shown dedication and dogged persistence in the face of obstacles throughout his life of painting, writing, and teaching. His work ethic is second to none, painting in his studio every day.

Bowling is an inspiration to younger artists and supports students at a number of art schools and many other good causes. Recognition has come late in Bowling's career. As well as 'magnificent', 'joyous', 'spectacular' and 'astonishing', his 2019 Tate Britain retrospective was described as 'long overdue'. Aged 86 Bowling's only ambition is to continue to work in his studio. Through his paintings, that 'crackle with experimental energy', his writing and impact on the canon of contemporary painting, and in his support for younger artists, Bowling has made a strikingly original and world-leading contribution to British painting and art history. www.frankbowling.com

Sir Frank Bowling is represented by **Hauser & Wirth** in collaboration with longstanding gallery **Marc Selwyn Fine Art** and dealer Emanuel Silberstein. www.hauserwirth.com

Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by a publication featuring newly commissioned essays, an interview with Frank Bowling, and previously unseen archival material, alongside works from the last 10 years. The publication is kindly supported by **Hauser & Wirth** and will be available for purchase and pre-order from **Arnolfini Bookshop** and for review via **Arnolfini marketing**.

Frank Bowling – London / New York

Hauser & Wirth New York, 22nd Street 5 May – 30 July 2021

Hauser & Wirth London, 21 May – 31 July 2021

About Arnolfini

Woven into the fabric of Bristol since 1961, Arnolfini is a pioneer of interdisciplinary contemporary arts, presenting an ambitious, eclectic programme of visual art, performance, dance, film and music, carefully curated to appeal to a broad audience.

Housed in a prominent Grade II listed, accessible building on Bristol's harbourside, Arnolfini is an inspiring public space for contemporary arts and learning, greeting over half a million visitors each year and offering an innovative, inclusive and engaging experience for all.

An internationally renowned institution, throughout its history Arnolfini's programme has welcomed artists from a wide variety of cultures and backgrounds, supporting and developing their work, investigating their influences and aspirations.

Arnolfini has long-standing relationships with a variety of partners and celebrates the heritage and wide-reaching impact of the organisation through sharing a 60-year archive of exhibition slides, publications and artist book collection.

In 2019, Arnolfini relaunched its major exhibition programme with *Still I Rise: Feminism, Gender and Resistance Act 3* and continues to build on the multicultural, diverse and inclusive ethos that has prevailed since its inception.

Arnolfini remains at the heart of the Bristol community, always mindful of founding **director Jeremy Rees' principle to 'Enjoy Yourself', inviting everyone to join in.** www.arnolfini.org.uk

About UWE Bristol

The University of the West of England (UWE Bristol) has a global and inclusive outlook, with approximately 30,000 students and strong industry networks and connections with over 1,000 employers. Research at UWE Bristol focuses on real world problems and the University plays a pivotal role in the regional economy. With over £300 million invested in infrastructure, buildings and facilities across all Campuses, UWE Bristol is creating a place for learning that is innovative, ambitious, connected, enabling and inclusive. UWE Bristol is ranked 28th in the Guardian university league table, as well as 11th in the UK for student satisfaction, and has recently been awarded the highest possible rating in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) 2018, achieving GOLD Standard. www.uwe.ac.uk

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. By 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. Between 2018 and 2022, we will invest £1.45 billion of public money from government and an estimated £860 million from the National Lottery to help deliver this vision. www.artscouncil.org.uk

About Ashley Clinton Barker-Mills Trust

Arnolfini Gallery is supported by a linked charity, the Ashley Clinton Barker Mills Trust (ACBMT). Arnolfini founders Jeremy and Annabel Rees were first introduced to the artists and benefactors Peter and Caroline Barker-Mill in 1963, by the London gallerist Lesley Waddington. It was a fortuitous meeting that was the catalyst in allowing Arnolfini to develop from a small volunteer-run private gallery into a major international arts centre. **The Trust's principle object is to 'support' Arnolfini and it does this primarily by making annual grants from the income earned on its investments to make quarterly payments.** It has also been able to make small fund one- off capital grants to help the Arnolfini transition to its current financial model. www.arnolfini.org.uk/about/ashley-clinton-barker-mills-trust