

Press Release: December 2021

BHARTI KHER | AT ARNOLFINI AUTUMN 2022

Exhibition dates 22 October 2022 to 29 January 2023



From the 'Spell drawing' series Bharti Kher 2019
Watercolour on paper 76 x 60 cm / 29 7/8 x 23 5/8 inches
Photo: Dominic Brown Photography
© Bharti Kher Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Autumn 2022 at Arnolfini sees internationally renowned artist Bharti Kher return to the South West with a major solo exhibition, including new work, following her successful show at Hauser & Wirth Somerset, 2019 to 2020.

A collector of material and meanings, Kher gathers words and marks, simultaneously filling up the blank pages of sketchbooks and diaries, so that the two interweave within her work. An exploration of her visual language – an often overlooked, yet hugely **accessible, aspect of the artist's practice** – forms the focus of her exhibition at Arnolfini.

Featuring a body of previously unseen drawings created during her time in Somerset (residencies in 2017 and 2019), **Arnolfini's** exhibition unfurls the cyclical nature of **Kher's work, exploring** the notion that her sculptures are born out of the act of drawing. **Described as the 'beginnings of a narrative or pointers that mark the way', Kher has also spoken of drawing as a means of 'knowing', an idea that lies at the heart of this exhibition, encouraging audiences to adopt the artist's own curiosity in feeling out narratives amidst the vast array of materials and processes on display.**

In addition to the delicate mixed media drawings above, works (drawn from the last 10 years) will also include her highly complex and textured bindi drawings – a material **that creates a 'language you know but that you cannot read'** – and a new, large-scale, site-specific version of *Virus*; conceived and executed annually as a 30-year on-site project using bindi drawings and text.

Alongside these the artist will present sculptures and installations, interwoven with a rich mix of materials, resonant with cultural and political meaning, such as **Kher's** sari works using resin and the intimate plaster cast portrait series, *Chimera*, in which the artist buries 'the secrets of the soul' under layers of wax and plaster.

Together, these works **offer an intimate portal into Kher's world in which drawing, sculpture and installation intertwine, straddling two cultures but speaking one visual language: 'I speak my own hand-brain-body-art language. I hear it, taste it, eat it, write it, draw it.'**

The exhibition is accompanied by a publication from Arnolfini, **exploring Kher's** visual language, and interweaving a new collection of intimate words and images. Included within are the **artist's own words** as part of a durational conversation with the curator, alongside newly commissioned writing, and over 60 images, and selected works from across the last ten years.

The exhibition will be open Tuesday to Sunday each week, 11am to 6pm, entry is free and will be bookable in advance via arnolfini.org.uk.

Bharti Kher is represented internationally by Hauser & Wirth, Galerie Perrotin, and Nature Morte (New Delhi, India).

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For further information please contact Sara Blair sara.blair@arnolfini.org.uk
Additional images are available at <https://bit.ly/BhartiKherArnolfini>
Twitter / Facebook / Instagram / www.arnolfini.org.uk

LISTINGS

Bharti Kher at Arnolfini

22 October 2022 to 29 January 2023

Arnolfini, 16 Narrow Quay, Bristol BS1 4QA 0117 917 2300 arnolfini.org.uk @ArnolfiniArts

Tuesday to Sunday, 11am to 6pm, bookable in advance. Free

A collection of sketches, drawings, paintings, sculptures and installations form the focus of Bharti Kher's exhibition at Arnolfini, featuring a body of previously unseen drawings created during her time in Somerset.

arnolfini.org.uk/whatson/bhartikher/

#BhartiKher #Arnolfini

Images at <https://bit.ly/BhartiKherArnolfini>

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Bharti Kher

Bharti Kher was born in 1969 in London, UK. She studied painting, graduating in 1991 from Newcastle Polytechnic with a BA Honours, Fine Art, before moving to New Delhi, **India, in 1993. Experimentation and alchemy are key to Kher's practice, which explores materiality, religion, secularity, and spirituality, creating new meaning in objects and hybrid narratives that move fluidly between fact and fiction, and certainty and uncertainty. Deeply interested in our experience of an artwork and its relationship to the body, her work often challenges preconceived ideas of gender and femininity, 'tapping into mythologies and the numerous diverse associations a thing or place can bring'.**

Kher is recognised within India as a leading contemporary artist with a career spanning over three decades and has developed a well-earned reputation from a multitude of international exhibitions and installations. While less well-known in the UK, where she spends half the year in her London studio, there have been a handful of UK solo **exhibitions of Kher's work in the last 20 years, with commercial showings** such as *A Wonderful Anarchy*, Hauser & Wirth Somerset, 2019; and gallery and museum presentations: *This Breathing House*, Freud Museum, London; 2017; Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art, London, 2012; and *Virus*, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, 2008. Her work has also been shown in numerous international group exhibitions and is held in public and private collections across the world. Significantly she has been recognised elsewhere by awards such as the prestigious Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters),

in France, 2015; the ARKEN Art Prize, Denmark, 2010, and the Sanskriti Awards, India, 2003. She is represented internationally by Hauser & Wirth, Galerie Perrotin (Paris, France) and Nature Morte (New Delhi, India).

bhartikher.com and www.hauserwirth.com/artists/2793-bharti-kher

About Arnolfini

Woven into the fabric of Bristol since 1961, Arnolfini is an international centre of interdisciplinary contemporary arts, presenting an ambitious, diverse programme of visual art, performance, dance, film, and music, designed to appeal to a broad audience.

Housed in a prominent Grade II listed, accessible building on **the city's** harbourside, Arnolfini is a pioneering, inspiring public space for arts and learning, offering an innovative, inclusive, and engaging experience for all.

A world-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 nurtures long-standing relationships with a wide range of community and creative partners, while continuing to explore and develop new opportunities across the city and beyond.

Through sharing a 60-year archive of exhibition slides, publications, and an extensive artist book collection Arnolfini celebrate the heritage and wide-reaching impact the organisation has had throughout its history.

Since 2019, Director Gary Topp and team have sought to honour Arnolfini's founder Jeremy Rees' principle to 'Enjoy Yourself'; welcoming everyone into the space, and inviting engagement with the wide-ranging programme, in any number of ways.

Arnolfini is an independent charity (CIO) and part of the University of the West of England, Bristol, supported by Arts Council England and the Ashley Clinton Barker-Mills Trust.

About UWE

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 21st in the Guardian university league table, as well as 7th in the UK for student satisfaction, and has been awarded the highest possible rating in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) 2018, achieving GOLD Standard.

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