

THE NEW BLOOMSBURY SET

# ~SILKS~



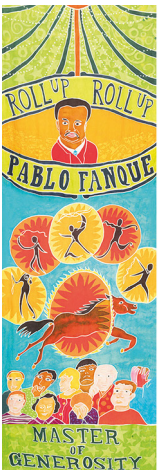
BLOOMSBURY   
**FESTIVAL**  
13 - 22 OCTOBER 2023



**KINETIKA**  
DESIGN THAT MOVES



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Flags designed and made by community groups with Kinetika

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BLOOMSBURY  
**FESTIVAL**



13 - 22 OCTOBER 2023

# WELCOME TO THE NEW BLOOMSBURY SET

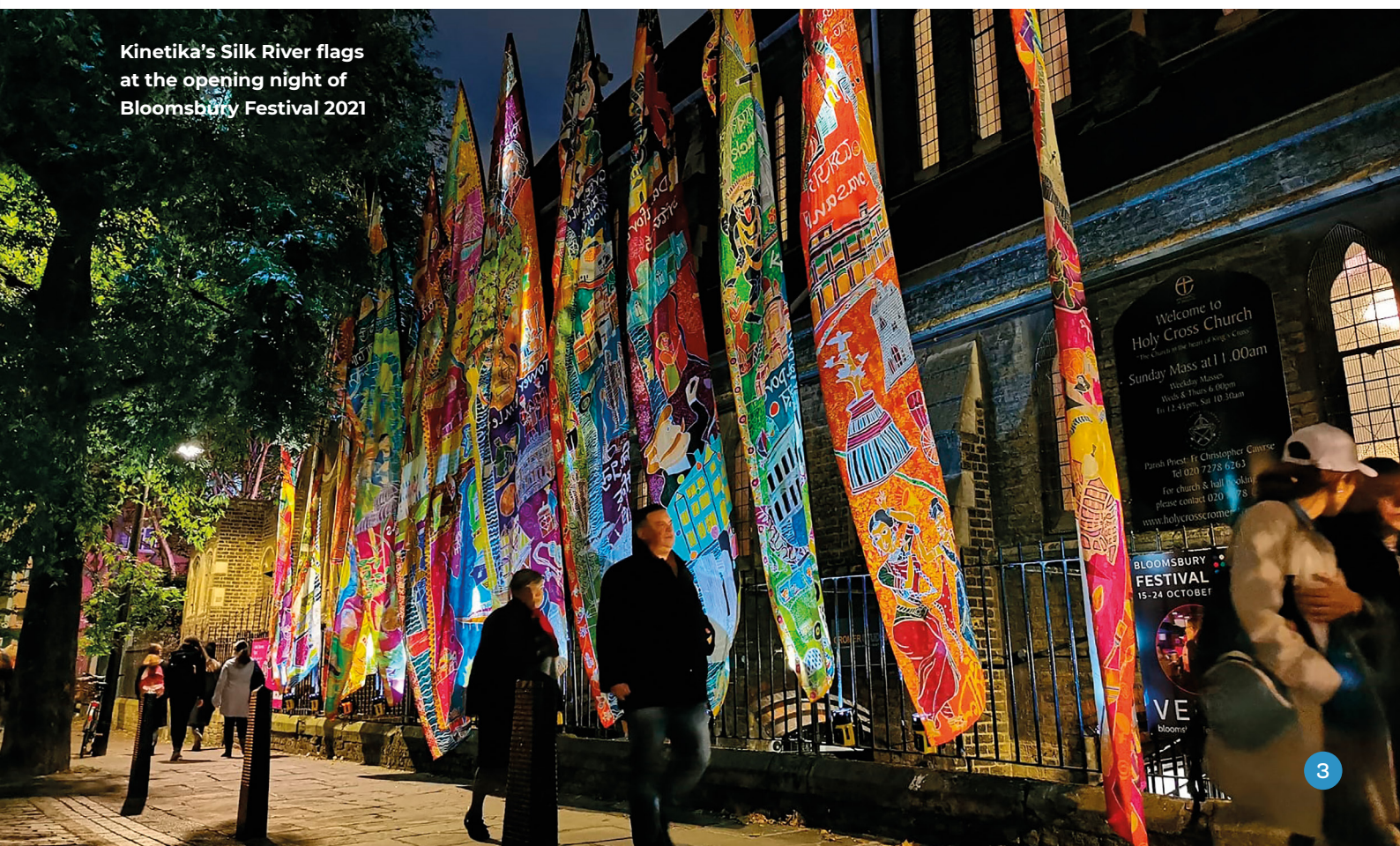
**'The New Bloomsbury Set' is an arts and heritage project run by Bloomsbury Festival and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The project will bring together local community groups, residents, and artists in Bloomsbury to create a series of exhibitions and events that explore Bloomsbury's diverse history, identity, and cultures past and present. The New Bloomsbury Set was launched at the 2022 festival and will culminate in exhibitions at the October Bloomsbury Festival 2023.**

As part of 'The New Bloomsbury Set', the festival has teamed up with internationally renowned artists Kinetika to produce a set of six silk flags telling the stories of local people and places in

Bloomsbury from the view of local residents of all backgrounds. These beautiful, colourful flags will be designed and painted by you and your groups over a series of workshops between March and July 2023. They will then be displayed in Holborn Library in October as part of this year's Bloomsbury Festival, for you to bring friends and family to see. You will also be invited to take part in a walk around Bloomsbury with the flags at the time of the 2023 festival.

This information pack will explain the step-by-step process of designing and making the flags, the wider context behind the project, and what you can do now to start thinking about your flag design.

**Kinetika's Silk River flags  
at the opening night of  
Bloomsbury Festival 2021**



# BLOOMSBURY

## AND THE NEW BLOOMSBURY SET

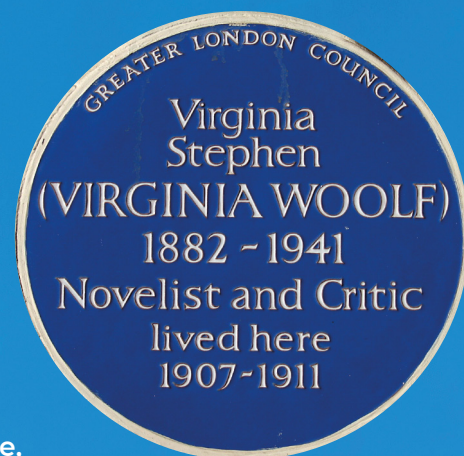
**We want you to show us your Bloomsbury.**

The name 'New Bloomsbury Set' takes inspiration from a group of writers, artists, and thinkers based in Bloomsbury in the first half of the 20th Century, known as 'The Bloomsbury Set'.

'The New Bloomsbury Set' project aims to bring together the local residents of Bloomsbury today and the academic and cultural institutions to review the history of Bloomsbury and reshape it to the present moment. We want to tell your stories about the buildings, streets and cultures of Bloomsbury today.

What does Bloomsbury mean to you?

Who are the people, communities, artists, and thinkers of different origins that make Bloomsbury a thriving community in 2023? What hidden stories should be celebrated alongside the historic stories of writers like Virginia Woolf and institutions like the British Museum?



# HOW TO TAKE PART

**We would like to invite you to take part in creating beautiful silks for The New Bloomsbury Set exhibition. This resource pack is to inspire you to get thinking about the stories you'd like to share about your local area, and explain more about the process from these stories to finished flags.**

We will be working with you in groups to design a set of six silk flags that represent the diverse identity, culture, and history of Bloomsbury's residents. We are asking you to take inspiration from the people, the streets, the buildings and places you visit in Bloomsbury to tell your own stories about your daily life. We would also like you to think about the food you eat and the plants you cook with, and encourage you to grow some small plants this year.

**INTRODUCTION** In our first session we will talk with you to discover your stories.

## **YOUR STORIES, MAPS AND PHOTOS**

We will then ask you to bring along any photos, images, or stories of your life in Bloomsbury to share with the group in a further 'gathering'.

**KINETIKA DRAWING WORKSHOP** We will then have a hands on design and drawing workshop on 22nd-24th May where you will begin to sketch out designs for the flags, based on the images and stories that you have brought along. Working with some of the festival's New Bloomsbury Set Trainees, the Kinetika professional artists team will finalise the patterns for the flags and then wax the outlines of the full design onto plain silk.

**PAINTING DAYS** The outlined flags will then be brought back to Bloomsbury for you to paint in all the colours, on the 12th and 13th July at Holborn Library.

**You will then be able to see the finished colourful flags on display at Holborn Library between 14th - 22nd October as part of the Bloomsbury Festival.**



# THEMES & INSPIRATION

We will be working with you and your groups to produce six silk flags that reflect your own heritage and culture, and the wider diverse identity, culture, and history of Bloomsbury past and present. Each group will produce their own flag themed on one or more of the following ideas:

- *Identity and culture*
- *The streets you walk and travel in Bloomsbury*
- *Food and plants from your culture*
- *How you celebrate your cultural heritage in Bloomsbury*
- *Important places locally - these could be shops, community centres, streets*
- *Buildings and architecture you like in Bloomsbury*
- *Bloomsbury garden squares and what they mean to you*



PLAYGROUNDS & SQUARES



STREETS



Each flag will depict your own community and what makes Bloomsbury 'home' to you: the shops, playgrounds, squares, centres, libraries, estates, and streets that make up your daily life in Bloomsbury. We would like you to tell us about people and places

in Bloomsbury that are important to you. Please see a few reference images below to get you started. You can start to collect material that you associate with your life and your culture in Bloomsbury. These could be images, photographs, objects, textiles, clothing, maps, or more.



# WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

At the introduction session we will ask you

- ***What does your heritage and culture mean to you?***
- ***Who belongs to the group?***
- ***Where do you meet?***
- ***What are the places you associate with Bloomsbury?***
- ***What images would you like to see portrayed on your silk flag?***

Maybe landmark buildings, parks, a favourite walk, landscape, trees and plants, notable people, patterns, festivals, friends, family, clubs and groups. You could brainstorm ideas, collect images, photographs, logos, words, articles, stories and anything that will help you start to create ideas for your flag.

# ABOUT BLOOMSBURY FESTIVAL

Each October Bloomsbury Festival creates an annual festival of cultural events made by people and organisations in Bloomsbury presented in venues and outdoors across the area. The Festival works with artists and communities to present and produce events that add value to Bloomsbury and the surrounding area. Bloomsbury Festival connects artists, scientists and residents of all ages to present work that reflects and demonstrates the contemporary spirit of this vibrant multicultural area. We inspire audiences with a trail-blazing original programme combining innovation with celebration to showcase contemporary Bloomsbury to the world. Bloomsbury Festival productions respond to the area and its people and the Festival develops these, and its outreach projects, in collaboration with partners such as King's Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association, Holborn Community Association, Age UK Camden and Coram's Fields.



**Highlights from the 2022 Festival.**  
**Right: Arunima Kumar Dance.** Far right, top to bottom: SOAS - Remembering Partition; A Trajectory to Unsuffocation; Impact Dance; Mangled - Kois Miah



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# ABOUT KINETIKA



Kinetika is an internationally renowned company, specialising in creating large-scale hand-painted silks. For over 25 years we have been combining world-class design with community projects to produce spectacular outdoor commissions that engage diverse audiences wherever

we work. Founded by artistic director Ali Pretty in 1997 and inspired by her training in carnival arts in Trinidad and India, Kinetika now has an unrivalled reputation for working with local communities on projects that change the way people feel about where they live. From

local community walks in Essex to high streets and city squares across the UK, out to the Great Wall of China, Ethiopia and West Bengal. In 2022, Kinetika co-created The Thank You Dance, the final section of The Platinum Jubilee Pageant that took place on the Mall.

[www.kinetika.co.uk/about-us](http://www.kinetika.co.uk/about-us)



Above left: Land of the Fanns community flags; above: the Platinum Jubilee Pageant; centre: Milton Keynes community flag



# ABOUT THE ARTISTS



## ALI PRETTY

Ali is best known as the founding member and artistic director of the international outdoor arts company Kinetika, which she founded in 1997 after an established career in carnival arts and a growing commitment to community engagement. Ali has collaborated with, and led teams of artists to deliver large-scale events to diverse audiences all over the world, such as; WOMAD (1985-1991), FIFA World Cup (2009), the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

In recent years Ali has been developing her practice to develop transformational walking arts projects with diverse communities.

Through these Ali brings people together by walking, talking and painting large-scale silk creations. Since 2012, Ali has led walking projects in Wiltshire, the Isle of Wight, Lincolnshire, Essex and Thurrock, where she has developed an annual walking, talking and making festival, Thurrock 100. This pioneering place-making model has been replicated internationally in various forms in Ethiopia, Chile and India. Her most ambitious project to date is Silk River, commissioned by the British Council as part of the UK / India Year of Culture in 2017. Ali has recently completed Beach of Dreams, leading a 500-mile walk involving 500 participants and 500 silk flags from Lowestoft to Tilbury.



## SARAH DOYLE

After graduating university, Sarah worked for ten years in the early years education sector and has always had a passion for art and inspiring creativity in young people. Sarah is currently a cake artist specialising in creating sugar models and bespoke cakes. After designing a flag for the Tilbury carnival in 2019, she soon fell in love with batik and creating stunning silk flags with Kinetika. Sarah has been



working as an artist with Kinetika for the past 18 months, supporting several projects including T100 mandalas, Grays community flags, Carnival Gold and Beach of Dreams. Sarah loves working with communities and individuals to help bring their ideas and creativity to life.

# ABOUT MURSHIDABAD SILK

Kinetika is an importer of this heritage-quality hand-woven silk from West Bengal. Sales support Kinetika's charitable work and help the weavers to continue their skilled craft. Murshidabad silk is now our preferred choice when making batik flags due to its ability to hold bright dye colours and the soft but durable texture.

Kinetika is internationally renowned for creating stunning large-scale hand-painted silks, using the process of batik to make beautiful flags, costumes and products for the last 25 years. While developing the Silk River project in India, Kinetika was introduced to a



very fine, high quality 100% hand-woven silk from Murshidabad, a district in West Bengal.

Kinetika were very keen to work with this exquisite silk and through the Crafts Council of West Bengal (CCWB) were able to connect directly with the local weavers who still had the original looms and the required level of skill. Realising that the weaving skill required for this heritage fabric is in

danger of being lost, Kinetika is now working closely with Ajoy, a local silk merchant and CCWB to make it available in the UK to silk painters and lovers who will appreciate how unique it is.

The silk is woven in Dangapara, a small village in Murshidabad by 14 families of weavers who are the last generation who have this skill. Kinetika hope that by creating a new demand for this silk, they will encourage this community to continue this ancient tradition.

**Find out more, and purchase, from [www.kinetika.co.uk/](http://www.kinetika.co.uk/) about-murshidabad-silk**



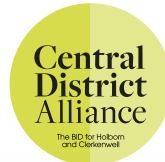
The Bloomsbury Festival takes place only through the generous support of our funders,  
and collaboration and support of local organisations and individuals.



UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON



THE BEDFORD ESTATES



Made possible with  
**Heritage  
Fund**

THANK YOU FOR  
TAKING PART IN

.....  
THE NEW BLOOMSBURY SET

~ SILKS ~

.....  
WE LOOK FORWARD  
TO SEEING YOUR  
WONDERFUL DESIGNS

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