ROMAN ROAD PRESS RELEASE

when i was walking on the edge of a teacup

Participating artists:
Alina Vergnano, Minh Lan Tran,
Harriet Gillett, Channatip Chanvipava,
John Fou, and poet Sonny Hall.

Private View: Exhibition: Opening Hours: Thursday 19 January 2023, 6 – 8 PM
Friday 20 January – Friday 17 February 2023
Wednesday – Friday, 11 AM – 6 PM; Saturday, 11 AM – 5 PM
Monday – Tuesday, by appointment
Roman Road, 50 Golborne Road, London, W10 5PR

Address:

Roman Road is delighted to present when i was walking on the edge of a teacup, a group exhibition bringing together works by a new generation of emerging artists exploring the uncertainties and fragilities of life. Carefully selected by Roman Road's creative director, Marisa Bellani, the five artists have each created new and unique paintings that will be shown alongside a poem written by Sonny Hall, exploring the interconnection between art and words within a space where sensuous and emotional visual dialogues converge.

The exhibition takes its title from a conjured feeling of constant tension, captured in the idea of watching an equilibrist walking along the edge of a giant china teacup, balancing precariously above the dangers of falling either side, onto the breakable surfaces of both saucer and cup. Bordering between the abstract and the figurative, capturing light and intense emotions, the exhibited works evoke the changeable and ambivalent nature of our lives, being uneasy at times and exhilarating at others. Capitalising on the dualities of light and darkness, stillness and movement, a tangible sense of instability echoes throughout the display, with each piece embodying its own distinct choreography.

As visitors enter the space they are immediately confronted with *The Ventriloquists Denial* (2022), the specially commissioned poem by Sonny Hall, with sections selected by the artists reproduced as a site-specific piece on the gallery walls. Igniting readers' imagination through figurative language and vivid imagery, his words paint an affecting picture as viewers proceed on a journey, as he writes, "into the mouth of migrating speech."

Using fine colouring pencils, John Fou meticulously creates highly contrasting and graphic works that show us a glimpse of a fantastical realm of his own making. His former years working in a circus and as a dancer are almost palpable to see here as

otherworldly characters, mythical and vibrant creatures emerge as he beckons figures from his dreams to cavort with the borders of reality. Drawing on the verses of an inner world, Fou's ultracontemporary pieces manifest emotions through an absurd yet attracting visual storytelling, where one can easily lose oneself in the shimmering and hyperreal details.

In between painting and drawing Alina Vergnano's work teems with cursive lines, abstract traces of the female body and limbs which unfold in poetic entanglements across the canvas. Through the artist's hand these lines have become at once solid and blurred, fluctuating as a distinct yet merging intersection of the corporeal with the empty space, existence with nonexistence. Vergnano draws on the contrasts between the filled and white spaces of her supports, investigating the convergence of the inner and the outer and examining the flowing and transformative nature of human emotions and experience.

The feeling of fluidity and movement is echoed in Minh Lan Tran's work, for which she uses the materiality of words, paint and organic matter to create highly tactile and layered artworks that manifest her bodily actions. For Tran, the act of painting is a channel for outward expression, a media for embodiment where her innermost mental and physical states unfold as preverbal communication. There's a palpable sense of tensity and turbulence in her works; coats upon coats of paint and raw materials are progressively built up then subsequently abraded and incised, evolving through the artist's gestures and exploring myriad sensations and dimensions of being.

Working with a contrasting and luminous palette, Harriet Gillett's work draws our eyes into a realm of reverie through her signature use of fluorescent pink spray paint emerging from the base of her composition. At once demonstrating nostalgia for a bygone era and inquisitiveness for the social behaviours of today, her works manifest multiple perspectives and narratives, combining traditional subjects with contemporary materials as she cultivates a fluid and somewhat facetious way of exploring her psychosomatic interactions with our increasingly digitalised world. The negative spaces in Gillett's paintings play an equally important role to her murky figures, with every inch of the canvas being used to convey a certain atmosphere.

In a similar vein, Channatip Chanvipava aims to create an immersive experience with his paintings, working to communicate the ambience of the emotions defining his subject. His typically large-scale works present snapshots of psychological states derived from past experiences, employing the medium of painting as a linguistic tool for self-expression. Teeming with bold and gestural brushstrokes, Chanvipava's abstract piece exhibited in when i was walking on the edge of a teacup revisits a memory of him standing in the middle of a vast desert, using redolent colours and expressive forms to transpire a moment of transcendence and liberation.

when i was walking on the edge of a teacup serves as an introduction to Roman Road's 2023 programme of exhibitions. This year the gallery intends to shift its focus to more group exhibitions, promoting a sense of community and togetherness for artists that are self-taught, still at school or have recently graduated. We aim to bolster both local and international emerging artistic talent through multidisciplinary and thematic exhibitions, alongside a varying programme of collaborative talks and events.

About the Artists

Channatip Chanvipava (b.1993, Bangkok) is a Thai-Chinese artist based in London, working with painting. He completed a BSc in management from the London School of Economics and Political Science in 2017. A self-taught artist, Chanvipava transitioned into art whilst working as an interior designer. During these years he gradually devoted more time to painting and has since been solely focused on building his career as an artist. when i was walking on the edge of a teacup at Roman Road, London (2023) is Chanvipava's first exhibition, presenting his latest work made in his studio in London.

John Fou (b.1983, Les Lilas) is a French artist based in Paris, working with drawing and painting. A self-taught artist, Fou transitioned into art after years of working in the circus, dance and theatre, and these experiences continue to play a central role in his ultra-contemporary works. His recent solo exhibitions include *But does it float?*, Stems Gallery, Paris (2022); *Project room*, Galerie Julien Cadet, Paris (2021); and *Mon métier*, Château du Marais, Le Val-Saint-Germain (2021). Fou's work has also been exhibited widely in group shows since 2014, including at NADA Miami 2022 (with Stems Gallery), Ice Palace Studios, Florida (2022); *So close*, curated by Guido Romero Pierini, Galerie Joseph, Paris (2020).

Harriet Gillett (b.1995, East Yorkshire) is a British artist based in London, working across the mediums of painting, drawing and printmaking. She recently graduated with an MA in fine art from the City and Guilds of London Art School (2022). In 2021 Gillett was awarded the Federation of British Artists Mentorship Prize and was shortlisted for the 2020 Ingram Prize. Her work has been exhibited widely in group exhibitions around the UK, including recently in *Power to Emotion* (curated by Tart Gallery), Fitzrovia Gallery, London (2022); *The places we go*, Soho Revue, London (2022); *Synthesis* (curated by Delphian Gallery), Saatchi Gallery, London (2022); and *A Chorus of Bodies*, Liliya Art Gallery, London (2021).

Sonny Hall (b.1998, London) is an English poet and model. He began writing in 2017 during his stay in a rehab facility in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and two years later published his debut collection of 109 poems in *The Blues Comes With Good News* (Hodder & Stoughton, September 2019). In 2020 Hall and Ryan Kevin Doyle cofounded the publishing house Blue Beggar Books, and their first publication titled *Introducing The Beggar* was released in early 2021.

Minh Lan Tran (b.1997, Hong Kong) is a French-Vietnamese artist based in London, working with painting, writing and performance. She completed a BA in history of art at the University of Oxford (2019), an MA in history of art at The Courtauld Institute of Art, London (2020), and is currently studying at the Royal College of Art for an MA in painting. In 2020 Minh Lan Tran also completed the Lucrèce Residency in Yordas Cave, UK, followed by a residency and solo exhibition with the Fondation Prince Pierre, Monaco, in collaboration with Association WAMM. She has since exhibited in numerous group exhibitions, including *Manifestation* at ZÉRUÌ, London (2022) and *RAW* at Soho Revue, London (2022), as well as in a duo show with Evelina Haggünd titled *Somewhere I have never travelled, gladly beyond* at Nicoletti Contemporary, London (2022).

Alina Vergnano (b.1989, Turin) is an Italian artist based between Norway and Sweden. Her practice is rooted in drawing but spans through painting, installation, writing and sound. She holds a BA in illustration and animation from the European Institute of Design, Turin (2012) and is currently studying for an MFA in fine art at the Faculty of Fine Art, Music and Design in Bergen, Norway. Her recent solo exhibitions include *Dissolvenza*, Mikey Laundry Art Garden, Bergen (2022); *Fleeing Feeling*, Galleri Cora Hillebrand, Gothenburg (2021); *Adrift*, *A Dream*, *A Reef*, Stene Projects, Stockholm (2019); and *Scattered*, Gallery Thomassen, Gothenburg (2019). Vergnano's work has also been widely exhibited in group shows around Europe and in China, and is held in numerous public collections, including at the Västra Götaland Regional Council and Statens Konstråd.

About Roman Road

Roman Road is a contemporary art gallery based in London and founded by Marisa Bellani. The gallery has recently redefined itself with a more fluid and ethical approach, becoming a platform for collaborative exhibitions in 2019 and focusing on Ultra-Contemporary art. Since 2020, Marisa has organised art residencies in London as part of the gallery activities. Roman Road exists since 2013, following and fostering notable projects and dealing with artists all over the world. Since completing a full renovation in 2015, Roman Road has established a qualitative programme and has seen its represented artists become internationally recognised by institutions and collectors. Roman Road has established a qualitative and thematic programme and realised the creation of a research cell and Roman Road Journal in 2018, an online platform dedicated to publishing articles and exploring topics on art, science, technology, anthropology and literature.

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