

# REFLECTOR

A collaborative project by GRAIN Projects  
and The New Art Gallery Walsall

**26 October 2024 — 9 March 2025**

Co-curated by Jodi Kwok

Timon Benson  
Marley Starskey Butler  
Jade Carr-Daley  
Anselm Ebulue  
José Luis Fajardo Escoffié  
Natalia González Acosta  
Yuxi Hou  
Tasha Hylton  
Myah Asha Jeffers  
Terna Jogo  
Luke Jones  
Khatun  
Jamal Lloyd Davis  
Vic Moyosola (Vicmoy)  
Lakshita Munjal  
Nicholas Olawunmi  
Yamuna Shukla  
Shashank Verma  
Georgia Williams

Exhibition guide

# REFLECTOR

1. *a person or thing that reflects*
2. *a body, surface, or device that reflects light*

In this group exhibition, featuring new work by nineteen photographers and artists, we become witness to an engagement with family, home and community. Many of the works are revealing and tender and have an intensity of approach which shines a light on race, relationships, identity, heritage, gender and personal histories. Photography is the tool whereby memory, emotion, guilt and intimacy are visceral in narratives and documentaries that explore lived experiences, black histories and representation.

The artists and photographers that feature are; **Timon Benson, Marley Starskey Butler, Jade Carr-Daley, Anselm Ebulue, José Luis Fajardo Escoffié, Natalia González Acosta, Yuxi Hou, Tasha Hylton, Myah Asha Jeffers, Terna Jogo, Luke Jones, Khatun, Jamal Lloyd Davis, Vic Moyosola (Vicmoy), Lakshita Munjal, Nicholas Olawunmi, Yamuna Shukla, Shashank Verma and Georgia Williams.**

The work in the exhibition addresses many complexities and offers unique and personal perspectives with depth and sensitivity. Co-curated by fellow participant, **Jodi Kwok**, this exhibition provides an opportunity to celebrate each of the artist's practices and to introduce them to a wider public.

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REFLECTOR is a year-long creative and professional development programme, specifically for Artists, Photographers and Curators of Colour. This national programme has seen 20 UK-based emerging practitioners take part in masterclasses, mentoring, advice sessions, portfolio reviews, group crits and talks led by leading, established and internationally acclaimed Artists and Curators of Colour. The participants responded to an open call and took part in activities and events online and in person.

REFLECTOR is a collaborative project by GRAIN Projects and The New Art Gallery Walsall, made possible through an Art Fund Reimagine Grant.

## Timon Benson

Timon Benson is an analogue photographer born in the North-West of dual heritage. He utilises the medium of photography as a function for self-reflection and self-discovery. He works with subjects close to him, creating personal work where he is able to explore longitudinal narratives and themes of displacement, solitude and transition. The pictures in this exhibition are from a longform photographic project based around exploring and documenting Benson's special attachment with his father, made whilst also dealing with the emotional pressures of his father's fluctuating health. The photographs observe the polarity of his father's sentiment and connection between his two homes of Kenya and England.

Instagram: [@timonbenson](https://www.instagram.com/timonbenson)

## Marley Starskey Butler

Marley Starskey Butler was born in 1987 in Leeds, England, and is now working as a multidisciplinary artist and social worker. Their practice includes visual, audio, and written mediums, exploring themes of opposites, parallels, memory, love, loss, reflection, process, and play. The artist's concurrent social work practice has seen them working in child protection, fostering, adoption, and mental health. All of these function as a jigsaw puzzle with their arts practice and in promoting wellbeing, social justice, and human rights. The intersections between art, social work, and their familial lived experience creates the foundations and tools for Butler to process, and make sense of the world, both outside and inside of themselves.

The artist has placed together two photographs from their archive, which act as a bridge from their previously exhibited body of work, *Thirty-Six*, to the future. Both photographs were made in 2019, following the first year photography became part of their practice. *IN/OUT* depicts the connection, relationship, and tension between hiding away inside your mind and being open to the world. *Where Do I Know You From?* is from a small series of portraits of Ena, the artist's mother/nan/aunt and private foster carer, depicting a morning scene with love, porridge, plantain, and silhouettes. The audience are invited to make up their own mind about why these two photographs are paired together while the artist also continues to ask the question.

Instagram: [@marleystarskeybutler](https://www.instagram.com/marleystarskeybutler)

## Jade Carr-Daley

Jade Carr-Daley is a social documentary and portrait photographer from Bristol. Her Jamaican-British heritage heavily influences her practice, as well as social issues affecting minority communities and Black Women. She studied BA (Hons) Photography at Bath Spa University and completed her MA in Photography at the University of West England in 2022. Her work has featured in SOURCE magazine, the British Journal of Photography, Eye Mama and the Royal Photographic Society Summer Exhibition.

*Not Ready Not Steady GO!* is an ongoing documentation of her experience and transition into motherhood. The images, individually and collectively show a transition from being cared for to becoming the carer, her final days of adolescence and irresponsibility, to motherhood. They show a vulnerability, the photographer at her happiest and her weakest, and growth, strength, independence, love, and the comfort she feels in her new skin. Carr-Daley remarks that there are missing elements of representation and visibility of pregnancy and black women which affected her and resulted in her feeling isolated, misunderstood, unheard, sometimes unsafe, and drained. The camera allowed her to visually capture the unedited and truthful depiction of a pregnant black woman, the early stages of parenting, and the mental and physical changes that bodies go through during these stages.

Instagram: [@jadecarrdaley](https://www.instagram.com/jadecarrdaley)

## Anselm Ebulue

Anselm Ebulue is a documentary photographer based in London. He was a winner in the 2018 and 2020 *Portrait of Britain* award and was awarded a scholarship for the LCC x Magnum Documentary Photography Short Course. He has recently graduated from the MA Photojournalism and Documentary course at UAL. His work has been published in a variety of publications including The Guardian, The Observer, The Modern House, Time Out Magazine and Red Bull.

*Whims of the Rye* is an ongoing documentary series exploring Ebulue's personal relationship with Peckham, in southeast London. Ebulue's approach is visceral, making pictures of mundane spaces that resonate with his emotive reactions where memory and change intersect. The work expresses a sense of loss, mourning the transformation of an area in a state of rapid flux that is most clearly evidenced by its gentrification. Ebulue is particularly interested in the relationship Black communities have with Peckham and through documentation, hopes to highlight the significance of the area to the Black British diaspora. *Whims of the Rye* serves as both a celebration and preservation of the Black communities who have called Peckham home for many decades.

Instagram: [@anselm.ebulue](https://www.instagram.com/anselm.ebulue)

## **José Luis Fajardo Escoffié**

José Luis Fajardo Escoffié trained as a visual anthropologist, has a Master's Degree and a PhD from the University of Manchester, and describes himself as always wanting to be a farmer. Born in Mexico, where he started taking photographs at the age of 10, he has since engaged with farmers and farms in Mexico, Wales, England, and Peru making photography projects and contributing to his research. He has worked with environmental NGOs and conducted research focusing on people's relationship with the land. His main interests lie in nature conservation as well as farming as a means of food production and a cause of environmental destruction.

The three photographs exhibited are from his series *That Interim Period; Agricultural Transition in Post-Brexit England*. The images are evidence of an immersive practice, where the photographer combines documentary photography with informal conversations, interviews, and participant observation to better understand and create collaborative representations. The photographs immediately feel part of the historical canon, not only in the way they represent the farming community, but in their homage to realist paintings of rural life and the history of rural photography.

**Instagram:** [@joseluisfajardo84](https://www.instagram.com/joseluisfajardo84)

## **Natalia González Acosta**

Natalia González Acosta is a Mexican photographer based in London. Her photography stems from a curiosity into connections, the feeling of home, the sense of belonging, spaces and our relationship to them. Interested in women and women's narratives, power structures and their connection to citizenship and migration, González Acosta is also exploring environments and how they influence us. She is inspired by light, the act of walking and conversations.

*Women and the City* is a photographic project exploring women's relationship with London and its streets. It presents images that reflect the photographer's connection to the city as well as text from several women who shared their experiences and feelings when walking alone in the city. By walking, observing and photographing, González Acosta intervenes in spaces across the city that perhaps were not made for women. There are invisible boundaries that invite some and exclude others, and that essentially determine how people move around. Women have to use urban spaces differently than men, finding coping mechanisms, considering their safety and creating strategies to avoid certain routes. *Women in the City* juxtaposes the emotions and moments of tension or stimulation that women can experience when walking on their own.

**Instagram:** [@nataliaga3](https://www.instagram.com/nataliaga3)

## Yuxi Hou

Yuxi Hou is a documentary visual storyteller born in Beijing and currently based in Nottingham. As a new immigrant and young adult herself, she is constantly reflecting on her marginalised position in society, exploring themes such as growth, identity, migration, memory and family, through a sensitive account of human interactions in distinct communities. Besides photography, her artistic expression continues in other mediums such as film and collage. Her works have been exhibited in galleries such as NAE (Nottingham), Centrala (Birmingham), Surface (Nottingham), BACKLIT (Nottingham) and online publications such as DOCU magazine (Finland), Truetube (UK), and Mirror project (China). She is one of three young photographers awarded the 'Focal Point-capturing Heritage and Community' commission by Photoworks and English Heritage.

*Those Who Leave, Those Who Stay* is a photographic exploration of Hou's journey through grief following the sudden loss of her father to a brain haemorrhage when she was twelve. Death is always a taboo in Chinese culture, and the collective response from her family was to forget and to move on. Following the discovery of a family photograph that had been 'adjusted' by her grandmother, to remove her father's head, and replace it with an image of her brother, Hou began to grieve for her father who she deeply loved but scarcely knew and to make the work. Seven years after his passing, she returned to her father's hometown, reconnected with his siblings, relatives, colleagues, and friends, uncovering stories about his life and learnt about how her life intertwined with his. The works are from a series which is a visual documentation of grief and a tribute to the people we love and the places we call home, capturing memory, loss, and the silent and strong bonds that persist through time and space.

Instagram: [@ciciyx](#)

## Tasha Hylton

Tasha Hylton is a Bristol-based photographer whose work mainly focuses on portraiture and fashion. She brings a passion to capture up-close and intimate images of her subjects which helps her build a connection to create strong pictures that we can emotionally connect with. In 2022 she was selected for the British Journal of Photography's Portrait of Britain Award and in 2024 her work was featured in the group exhibition, showcasing six contemporary female artists, '*To Shine A Light / Who Dared to Dream*' at the Royal Photographic Society. She is interested in exploring themes and subjects around her own personal experiences, race, culture and identity as a black female photographer.

*BLK L.O.V.E* is an interpretation around the feelings of love. The photographer describes the work as a form of self-expression, sharing the feelings they want to feel, an expression of a healing process, as they navigate away from their past to their future. As people emotionally connect with the pictures, they can feel the tenderness and intimacy expressed in the actions photographed and the space for vulnerability. The photography is expressing their feelings for a loving relationship and the feelings of love that are allowing healing from the past, a past that no longer serves them.

Instagram: [@tashahylton](#)

## Myah Asha Jeffers

Myah Asha Jeffers is a London-based, Barbados-raised, award winning artist whose practice spans photography, performance and film. Her work focuses on witnessing and documenting the nuances of daily life within diasporic communities. Her photographs have been featured in a host of publications including VOGUE, The Guardian, ELLE and The Sunday Times Magazine. She is a recipient of The Joan Wakelin Bursary (The Guardian and The Royal Photographic Society) and has won The Photography Foundation Awards (2024), is a two-time winner of the Portrait of Britain Award (2019/21), a Future High Streets Artist-in-Residence at KWMC and has upcoming residencies at Art Hub Studios and Visual Studies Workshop in New York. Jeffers has facilitated workshops / engaged in artist panels for the likes of The Photographers' Gallery, TATE Modern, Autograph ABP and Whitechapel Gallery. Her directorial debut 'BATHSHEBA' world premiered at Toronto's Inside Out Film Festival (TIFF Lightbox).

*Returning to Soil* is an ongoing photographic series exploring the tradition of Black Caribbean funerals in the UK. This work is a contemporary contribution to a living archive of the Black quotidian, acting as a capsule of sorts – encapsulating the histories of a generation of the Caribbean community (the Windrush generation) who are passing away and the legacy that remains in their absence. The work specifically focuses on the quiet moments of solitude, ancestral acts of ritualised service and poignant moments of connection - thus, contributing to the long-standing histories of the Black family archive. Jeffers is motivated to express the Black interior photographically, as although the subjects of this series are the deceased, it felt imperative to her to document those who are still living, those who hold a sense of familial legacy. The catalyst for this project was a contribution to her own family archive as in 2022 both of her grandmothers transitioned within two months of each other. Whilst grappling with the loss of these matriarchs and in a bid to cope with the depths of grief she began to document the ritual of Black funerals.

Instagram: [@myahismyname](https://www.instagram.com/myahismyname)

## Terna Jogo

Terna Jogo is a Nigerian-British artist and photographer interested in identity, creativity, storytelling, fashion and beauty through the lens of race. Other disciplines, including writing and production inform Jogo's photography practice which grew from an interest in media, in particular magazines, TV and film. Jogo is currently developing her art practice and is a PhD student at the London College of Fashion, UAL, researching how photography can be used as a tool to create personal narratives and worlds that contribute nuanced perspectives about black identity.

*Material Truths* explores how fashion photography can be used to communicate messages, in particular counter-narratives, primarily through the use of draping, pinning and tying material on her body to represent narratives that emerge from her research. The images are then arranged into a tetrptych as another method of narrative construction.

**Instagram:** [@shooter\\_terns](#)

## Luke Jones

Luke Jones is a social documentary photographer from the Black Country. Within his work he explores his lived experience incorporating themes and subjects including migration, heritage and class. His projects are often multifaceted as he utilises text, audio and moving image alongside his photography. Jones studied BA Photography at Birmingham City University and graduated in 2023.

*No Blacks, No Dogs, No Irish* is a new moving image work where Jones reflects on his own upbringing within a mixed heritage family. The work finds memories and experiences recalled as Jones thinks about what shaped him as a person and informed his outlook on life. Using a mixture of spoken word, archival images and objects he shares stories of the struggles and beauty of being born into a mixed heritage family. He speaks of a sense of unknowing, of not belonging and of being caught in the in-between. This project was created to increase understanding of culture, heritage and class, factors which play a part in the world today and at a more personal level the photographer's understanding of himself.

**Instagram:** [@pegography](#)



## **Khatun**

Working primarily with photography, film, and audio, Khatun works closely with notions of identity, belonging, family and intimacy. Originally from Leicester and having studied Photography in London, Khatun is inspired by her South Asian-British identity. She explores the idea of community, and the lines shared between culture and the influence of national identity in her work.

*In Bloom* is the depiction of a new season of life. The artist speaks of transitioning through turbulent times, walking through the unknown, their head barely above water, and their feet barely touching the ground. These years have been experienced as both tender and hard. Photographs for *In Bloom* have been made with the intention to become part of the family album. Images of connections, relationships - old and new, from the everyday, and from everything in-between, taken in an attempt to document their bloom, and to find some solace in the slowness of it unfolding.

**Instagram:** [@khatunfromleicestercity](#)

## **Jamal Lloyd Davis**

Jamal Lloyd Davis is a British-Jamaican Photographer and Filmmaker with a practice focused on themes of Black identity and mental health. His work explores familiar communities and surroundings, commenting on societal constructs that attempt to create limits and define people. He uses traditional documentary approaches and experimental techniques, such as cyanotypes in his practice. Davis is a member of Extra Ordinary People at Eastside Projects, Birmingham, and has shown his work at Vivid Projects, Dreamy Place, Factory International and Southbank Centre.

Davis's recent work delves into personal experiences with anxiety and mental health, examining the disconnect between well-intentioned advice and the challenges posed by the surrounding environment. Often encouraged by family, friends, and medical professionals to go for a walk or get fresh air to clear the mind, Davis finds that the urban landscape, rather than providing relief, heightens feelings of discomfort and stress. The subjects of his photographs serve as both a reflection of his state of mind and a documentation of what triggers Davis's anxiety. This body of work reflects the struggle to find peace in spaces that offer little serenity.

**Instagram:** [@j.amals](#)

## Vic Moyosola (Vicmoy)

Vic Moyosola (Vicmoy) is a Nigerian-Ghanaian and Irish photographer based in the UK. In her photography she explores her position as the eldest daughter in search of bridging the gap between emotional states, connection, community, and documenting identities, to understand people and process. She is spiritually, emotionally, and physically drawn to stories of the human experience as a tool to help herself and others to heal. She has previously worked and had group exhibitions with the Serpentine Gallery, Southbank Centre x Apple, and is a contributor in Booooooom 'Care Book' 2024. She is currently working with the Ikon Gallery, Birmingham. Her work in film and the commercial photography industry constantly influences her and helps her navigate her visual language.

'*Mo rí ẹ Àṣàké*' - I see you Àṣàké - is a love letter to her mother, Asake. The work is a vulnerable unveiling of honesty and the relationship between her mother and herself. In the pictures she explores this intangible and unspoken gift, only given with age, a rarity in Nigerian parental culture. The series is a thank you for her mother's sacrifices, and willingness to be honest when life is too heavy for her shoulders. She depicts the transition from seeing a parent beyond their parental role and features a letter from her journal. The portrait is taken from her ongoing personal project *Faith Olaide Asake*, (a title taken from her mother's names).

Instagram: [@vicmoy\\_](https://www.instagram.com/vicmoy_)

## Lakshita Munjal

Lakshita Munjal is a designer and visual artist based in New Delhi. She trained as an architect and moved to London to pursue her MA in Printing at the Royal College of Art in 2022, where her work began to integrate art and architecture using photography, sculpture and product design. She has exhibited work at Bankside Gallery, Southwark Park Gallery and the London Design Festival, in an attempt to question design and its representation across multiple mediums. As a founding partner of *blurck*, a multidisciplinary design collective, she continues to work at the intersection of the two disciplines.

*Chalo, bye!*

In the limbo of the unknown, I sometimes feel like I never fully unpacked when I first came to London. There was always this question of “What next?” even before I shifted here. It’s been two years since I first came to this country, and I have an answer for, “what next?”

I’m leaving!  
My maa told me not to tell anyone;  
A superstition, part of the evil eye  
But everyone knows,  
Everyone I know, knows.

They knew before I knew,  
I thought if I told everyone  
I might get the evil eye  
And then, I won’t have to leave.

*So, what's the confusion?  
Just stay.*

No!

*Why?*

Because I miss home,  
Because I feel guilty for living in the UK,  
Because I feel like I owe my country.

Because everything feels easier there,  
The comfort of familiarity seems addictive,  
The comfort of not sticking out feels calm.

*So, why was it a dilemma in the first place?*

It’s easy to be a woman here,  
Some stigmas are looser here  
It’s easier being an artist here  
Some professions are safer here

Anyways,  
let’s get to the point  
So, it’s final that I’m leaving  
And this is me packing up!

Chalo, bye.

Instagram: [@lakshita.munjal](https://www.instagram.com/lakshita.munjal)

## Nicholas Olawunmi

Nicholas Olawunmi is a British Nigerian documentary and still-life photographer, who uses photography to show the beauty of the everyday, with lost, found, and discarded objects, used to explore heritage and identity. Olawunmi draws inspiration from 17th century Dutch still-life painting, the Vanitas Tradition and still-life genre and abstraction. Born in London, he studied at the University of Westminster, where he earned a BA in Photography. His work has been exhibited at the London Gallery West, Free Range, Dali International Photography Exhibition, and Brady Arts Centre.

*Iyebiye* is a series of still life photographs that explore the photographer's culture and heritage through food. Nigerian ingredients are not widely known in the UK, unlike more familiar dishes from India and China, a fact that motivated Olawunmi to focus on specific ingredients. In these images he documents various meats, vegetables, and other ingredients widely used in Nigerian cuisine, such as yam, plantain, pounded yam and Amala. Combining still life photography with images from his family archive, the photographer conveys food as precious, loved, shared and forming a symbolic connection to Nigerian culture. In Yoruba, the word used for precious is iyebiye. The ingredients are precious to the photographer as they have shaped and fuelled who he is today.

Instagram: [@res\\_nicks](#)

## Yamuna Shukla

Yamuna Shukla is an emerging photographer based in southwest England. Recently graduating from Bath Spa University with a BA Hons Photography, they have taken part in Free Range and were shortlisted for the Royal Photographic Society International Photography Exhibition IPE165 in 2023. Their work explores themes of intersectional identity as they document the communities where they feel they belong. Their primary focus is on investigating their heritage and expressing queer identity, with work deeply rooted in understanding their own culture and family.

*Mother Satya* is a photographic exploration of Shukla's grandmother's ashes ceremony in India. The project highlights the complex relationship between generations of women in the family and emphasises the connection between the photographer and their grandmother. The images also look at gender roles in a traditional ashes ceremony as well as reflecting the ways that the photographer perceives their family.

Instagram: [@yamunashukla](#)

## **Shashank Verma**

Shashank Verma is a photographer from Dahanu, Maharashtra, India, currently based in London. His work looks at migration, belonging, post-colonialism and shifting cultural identities. His family migrated from the North of India and he was born in a coastal town situated on the West of India. At the age of 15, he moved to the urban spaces of Bombay and Toronto before moving to the UK. His artistic approach is characterised by vocabulary from historical and contemporary contexts as he explores a connection with the 'imagination' of home. His work combines the multifaceted dimensions of socio-cultural identity, diaspora and the concept of 'survival' that further transitions into cultural displacement specifically in South Asia.

*What is Home?* talks about the fluidity of identity and the search for a place to call 'home' in a world where boundaries are constantly shifting and identities are perpetually in flux. The series delves into the narratives of migration, belonging, and the emotional tension of conflicting identities in the modern world. 'Home' is portrayed not as a fixed location but as an elusive concept, often reconstructed through memories, stories, and the lived experiences of migration. For the past few years, Verma has always 'imagined' the idea of home as he found himself considering questions of identity. In this work he examines his own roots and the shared experience of displacement. Along with studying family archives and photographing his parents to answer questions about his identity, he has engaged with people from South Asia currently living in the UK.

**Instagram:** [@vermashashankk](#)

## **Georgia Williams**

Georgia Williams is a visual artist of British-Caribbean heritage. Her practice spans photography, writing, curation, conversation and stillness. She is interested in the space where conscious and unconscious sensibility meet, the act of looking, and reading of images. She utilises curatorial strategies and experimental display to find visual messages and meanings within her personal archives.

*Image Study* is an ongoing project that combines photography and braille as a conceptual reflection on themes of dual heritage experience and identity. In contrast to dual heritage identity located within conversations of geography or culture, this work engages with emotional and physiological nuances of complex inherited position. In processing her personal exploration of biracial psyche, the artist works to re visit both her personal and family archive to process a journey of deep self-consciousness. The work invites viewers to contemplate a reading of an image. What codes and connotations are driving individual visual literacy? What are we projecting when we look at an image and is this damaging to our understanding of race and identity? Utilising braille, this work then critiques broader ideas of accessibility and privilege.

**Instagram:** [@lookdeepenough](#)

## **This exhibition is co-curated by Jodi Kwok**

Jodi Kwok is a curator and producer based in Derby. She is Assistant Curator at Derby QUAD and FORMAT International Photography Festival and has been with the organisation for three years. She regularly curates and produces exhibitions for local, national and international artists, these include Petra Széman: *Towards a New Monomyth* (2024), FORMAT24: *Future Now* (2024), *Urban Space Definition of Univoice and Plural*, Zhi Art Space (2023), and LingFei Ren: *From That Day On* (2023), FORMAT Open Call (2023), and *FUTURE FOCUS* (2022).

In addition to her curatorial practice, she is committed to her work on artist development and mentoring programmes. She received an international curator grant from Photolreland to develop and network at the festival. She has led portfolio reviews, talks and residencies for organisations such as the FORMAT Festival, the University of Derby, SOURCE Magazine, and Photolreland. She has juried open calls and programmes including FORMAT22-25, East Meets West, Digital Participation Residency Artist and FORMAT Graduate Award, and worked on the Peer to Peer online exhibition programme and UK/China festival. She has recently been awarded a Jonathan Ruffer Curatorial Grant from Art Fund for a research trip to support her curatorial practice.

**Instagram: [@Jodikwoko718](https://www.instagram.com/Jodikwoko718)**

## THANK YOU

GRAIN Projects and The New Art Gallery Walsall would like to thank all the artists, photographers, curators and writers that have made such a strong contribution to REFLECTOR, including those that have led masterclasses, mentoring sessions, group crits and talks;

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[Taous Dahmani](#)

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[Roo Dhissou](#)

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[Aziz Sohail](#)

[Mohamed Somji](#)

[Bindi Vora](#)

[Yan Wang Preston](#)

[Nilupa Yasmin](#)

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# GRAIN Art Fund\_



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