

PRESS RELEASE

## THE OPEN DOOR

THE OPEN DOOR is a collaborative exhibition about belonging and displacement across time and space by Aude Hérial Jäger and Tisna Westerhof. The project evolved from a series of conversations during the 2020 pandemic, when the two artists started exchanging thoughts and creative ideas about notions of home, the significance of childhood memories and family ties, especially during times of separation.

The result is a collection of intimate works based on personal experience interlaced with critical observations of contemporary life, in particular the role of women in society both past and present, expressed in works on paper, textiles and sculpture.

An integral part of the project is the *Women's Quilt of Pride*, a collaborative piece of textile art created in workshops with members of the local communities in France and London. Participants were invited to dedicate a textile square to an inspirational woman, family member, friend or public figure. The experience of personal expression through an ancient craft forming a cathartic bond between the participants while the resulting quilts serve as testaments of togetherness and hope.

First shown in the vast vaults of a former vineyard in rural France this Spring, the exhibition has been adapted to the urban setting of a converted motorbike garage. For the London iteration, the artists have worked closely with members of The Feminist Library who will present a selection of their large archive collection of feminist literature to complement the displays.

The exhibition opens with a conversation chaired by Vanessa Giorgio of The Feminist Library between the two artists and Nazira Mehmari, Operational Manager at IKWRO, the Women's Rights Organisation whose members contributed to the *Women's Quilt of Pride*, as well as Dr. Farhana Hoque, Social and Medical Anthropologist, University College London, who contributed to THE OPENDOOR catalogue, and Cristiana Bottigella, co-founder and director of hARTslane.

Local residents are invited to participate in a series of workshops held as part of THE OPEN DOOR programme on Saturdays 28 September and 5 October.

*"[...] Virginia Woolf, more than anyone, truly understood the degree to which the condition of women forced them to live in a constant tension between the inside and the outside. [...] The question of women is a question of space. It is impossible to understand the domination women are subjected to without studying its geography, without evaluating the constraints imposed upon their bodies by clothing, by places, by other eyes. Rereading Virginia Woolf's diary, I remembered that she had once imagined a sequel to A Room of One's Own. The provisional title was ... The Open Door. [...]"*

Leïla Slimani 'The Scent of Flowers at Night', Hodder & Stoughton 2023.

### Exhibition Details

25 September – 6 October 2024

THE OPEN DOOR - Aude Hérial Jäger & Tisna Westerhof  
hARTslane, 17 Harts Lane, New Cross Gate, London SE14 5UP

Private View: Wednesday 25 September, 5.30-8pm | Opening Remarks 6.30-7pm

Gallery Open Times: Thursday – Sunday, 2-6pm | Sunday 6 October, 12 noon – 3pm

## **Workshop Details**

Aude Hérail Jäger and Tisna Westerhof – Protest Banner: Saturday 28 September, 12 noon – 2 pm

The artists invite participants to create their own protest banners in response to the question: What message would you like to write to yourself to be reminded of your autonomy, aspirations and resilience? The workshop includes quilting and appliqué techniques and is based on storytelling as a way to free creativity as part of designing and making the protest banner.

The Feminist Library - Your DIY Manifesto: Saturday 5 October, 12 noon – 2 pm

The Feminist Library invites local residents of all ages to attend a community manifesto writing workshop. Participants will learn to think, converse, and map the intersections of their diverse stories and feminisms, exploring how the personal is political, and visualising what our collective power holds. They will explore intersections of feminist theory and how they relate to our everyday lives, and will collaboratively produce a collective manifesto that outlines their desires for imagining otherwise. By the end of the workshop, participants will have created individual manifestos and one communal one.

## **About the Gallery**

**hARTslane** is an art gallery in South East London rooted in the local community with an international reach that programmes ideas-driven group exhibitions and projects in a non-profit setting.

Located in a former motorbike garage in New Cross Gate, the exhibition space has a raw architectural quality and a warm, organic character. 17Harts Lane, owned by the London Borough of Lewisham, was derelict for eight years before being occupied in 2012 as part of a campaign to bring council property into public use.

In 2013 the Mayor of Lewisham recommended hARTslane be registered as an Asset of Community Value.

THE OTHER DOOR has been made possible by support from Arts Council England.

<https://www.hartslane.org/>

<https://www.instagram.com/h.artslane>

## **About The Feminist Library**

Originally known as the Women's Research and Resources Centre (WRRC), **The Feminist Library** was set up in 1975, at the height of the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) and a time of intense political campaigning and lively collective organising.

Based in Peckham, The Feminist Library supports research, activist and community projects in this field. The Feminist Library is trans-inclusive, welcomes visitors of any gender, does not require registration or membership, and provides an intersectional space for the exploration of feminism.

<https://feministlibrary.co.uk/>

<https://www.instagram.com/thefeministlibrary>

## About the Artists

**Aude Hérail Jäger** is French and lives and works in London, UK. She studied at Wimbledon School of Art (1988-89), Central St Martins College of Art and Design (1989-1992), The Slade School of Art (1992-1994) and The Royal Drawing School (2010-11).

Her work embodies some of our complex psychological mechanisms in visual language. She investigates what is not there in full view; she is drawn to explore the interface and elusive spaces between superficial and deep. Her themes focus on entrapment, traces, motion, enmeshments as she maps out what stands in the way of fulfilling human potential and offers ways to bypass obstacles.

Over the past twenty-five years, chapters have been developing, such as the *Enmeshed* series that looks at entanglements in relationships and their interferences with vital autonomy; or *Smithereens* that illustrates transforming the old into something new.

Hérail Jäger works in various media, including sculpture. Recently the solo exhibition *Sentinels* presented an installation of large drawings of over life-size female warriors on scrolls. These figures emerged as an assemblage of many small drawings executed in Art collections and Museums. The final figures are bridging across time, history, geography and ethnicity.

Aude Hérail Jäger teaches at The Royal Drawing School in London and is a member of The London Group. She has exhibited extensively in the UK and abroad, recently at The Parsonage, in Maine, USA. She has curated several exhibitions, including 'O Pas Là, Surprising Spaces' at L.A.C. in 1999.

THE OPEN DOOR is the second exhibition Hérail Jäger has curated for Lieu D'Art Contemporain (L.A.C.). A personal account of her connection to the space, the surrounding region and the concept for THE OPEN DOOR was published by The London Group, a collective both artists are members of.

<https://www.thelondongroup.com/going-back-to-my-roots/>

<https://www.audeherailjager.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/audeherailjagerart/>

Born in the Netherlands, **Tisna Westerhof** studied Printmaking at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague and has an MA in Scenography from Central St Martins, London. She is co-founder and director of hARTslane Gallery (2012), an experimental art project space in New Cross Gate, South London.

Tisna Westerhof is known for her political *Delft Blue* works and large-scale embroidered portraits of young male and female subjects. While her practice is grounded in printmaking, she revels in breaking down the limitations of materials and reinventing traditional handicrafts, a powerful, personal, political and poetic tool. Interested in people engaged in a project of self-transformation and motivated by the function of art education in society, Westerhof uses her voice in ceramics,

textiles, installation, painting and printmaking as well as organising, curating and collaborating with others. All are interconnected and attempt to give voice to the underrepresented and to dream a better world, free of social injustices and intolerance.

She currently lives and works between London and Amsterdam. She is a member of The London Group and has exhibited among others at the Venice Biennale, Royal Academy London, The Dutch Centre London, Whitechapel Gallery, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.

<https://www.tisna.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/tisnawesterhof>

### **Press Contact**

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