

For immediate release



Horniman appoints new Musicians in Residence to celebrate the music of south London

Bloomer - Pouya Ehsaei - Shola

The Horniman Museum and Gardens has appointed the first three artists in its new **Musicians in Residence** programme, celebrating the musical scenes of south London through the creation of new music.

Made possible thanks to prize money received from **Art Fund** as winner of **Art Fund Museum of the Year 2022**, the Horniman's **Musicians in Residence** programme offers six six-month residences over the next two years, linking early career musicians with its Musical Instrument collection as a stimulus for them to create new work.

This new work will be showcased in a series of live concerts held at the Horniman, as well as recorded new music and digital content. A joint work in progress *Hear it Live!* performance takes place at the Horniman on Thursday 7 September at 3.30pm.

Building on the success of the Horniman's 696 Project, a key aim of the residency is to bring to the forefront artists and expressions of music from cultures, communities and peoples that have been historically underrepresented within museums like the Horniman.

The first three **Musicians in Residence** to be appointed are:

- **Bloomer**, a singer, producer and hair artist from Thornton Heath
- **Pouya Ehsaei**, a musician, producer, sound artist and radio host based in Peckham working with electronic music hardware
- **Shola**, an Afro-house, Amapiano and Afro-fusion music producer based in Lewisham

The musicians will work with the Horniman's Youth Engagement Producer, Rudi Schmidt and Assistant Curator of Musical Collections and Cultures, Saava Benjamin Busenze Balagadde to create new music, live performances and community engagement workshops. The musicians will each also appoint their own digital creative to produce visual content, to bring to life the music they create during their residency.

Rudi Schmidt says: 'We had a great response to our call out and a high standard of applicants but these three artists really stood out to us for their originality, musical style and passion for collaboration. We have appointed three very different artists who use a variety of mediums and we are really looking forward to working with them and seeing what they will produce. We are extremely grateful to Art Fund for our Art Fund Museum of the Year prize money which has enabled us to launch this exciting residency and build on our work engaging early career artists with our Musical Instrument collection.'

Bloomer says: 'I'm so excited and honoured to be a part of the Horniman residency. I can't wait to create art in a space where archives of vinyls, books and historic instruments dating back decades and centuries ago live.'

Pouya Ehsaei says: 'The residency at the Horniman will give me access to a vast collection of objects, musical instruments and textbooks which will allow me to research, explore and play in order to create a new body of work in response to the Horniman collection and also acquire the knowledge of how to curate objects and stories in order to convey my ideas and expressions more effectively.'

Shola says: 'I'm looking forward to learning more about the Museum's impact and involvement with local communities. We've already been told about some sessions the Museum does with schools and universities which was really good to know! I'm also looking forward to collaborating with the other creatives and staff.'

About the artists:

- **Bloomer (Faith-Melody Ramautar)** is a singer, producer, hair-artist based in Thornton Heath. She is drawn to both bold and unusual expressions of culture, and sees the spiritual in the accidental and the unexpected. Growing up singing in Pentecostal gospel churches, she has an emotional connection with music and a distinct sense of style, shown in part through expressive digital content. @faiththebloomer
- **Pouya Ehsaei** is a musician, producer, sound artist and radio host based in Peckham working with electronic hardware including mixing desks, synthesisers and FX units. Highly collaborative, he regularly works with a diverse range of instrumentalists, DJs and vocalists and has a talent for bringing together different styles in the spirit of fusion, synthesis, radicalism and experimentalism. @pouyaehsaei
- **Shola (Shola Dayo)** is an Afro-fusion, Amapiano and Afro-house producer based in Lewisham. She has a contemporary sound and collaborative approach, working with artists both in the UK and Nigeria. A talented music producer and digital synthesiser with a passion for detail, she wants to motivate a future generation of female producers in the local area. @its_sholaa

A call-out for the second round of the Musicians in Residence programme takes place in early 2024.

Pictures show:

- Bloomer: credit Faith-Melody Ramautar
- Pouya Ehsaei: credit Monika S Jakubowska
- Shola: credit Shola Dayo

Ends

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Notes to Editors:

- **The Horniman Museum and Gardens** was [Art Fund Museum of the Year 2022](#), the world's largest museum prize.
- **About Art Fund** – Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art. It provides millions of pounds every year to help museums to acquire and share works of art across the UK, further

the professional development of their curators, and inspire more people to visit and enjoy their public programmes. Art Fund is independently funded, supported by Art Partners, donors, trusts and foundations and the 130,000 members who buy the National Art Pass, who enjoy free entry to over 240 museums, galleries and historic places, 50% off major exhibitions, and receive Art Quarterly magazine. Art Fund also supports museums through its annual prize, Art Fund Museum of the Year. artfund.org

- The Horniman's [Musicians in Residence](#) programme launched in April 2023 and builds on the success of its [696 Project](#).
- **The Horniman Museum and Gardens** opened in 1901 as a gift to the people in perpetuity from tea trader and philanthropist Frederick John Horniman, to 'bring the world to Forest Hill'. Today the Horniman has a collection of 350,000 objects, specimens and artefacts from around the world. Its galleries include natural history, music and an acclaimed aquarium, alongside a World Gallery of anthropology and a flexible arts and exhibition space, The Studio. Indoor exhibits link to the award-winning display gardens – from medicinal and dye gardens to an interactive sound garden, Butterfly House and an animal walk – set among 16 acres of beautiful, green space offering spectacular views across London. horniman.ac.uk
- **Coronavirus impact: Every month the Horniman was closed cost around £150,000 in lost income** from ticket sales, memberships, the shop and café. In recent years, the Horniman has increasingly relied on this vital income to help care for the Gardens, animals and Aquarium residents, to run events and to look after the collections. The support of returning visitors, our supporters and their generous donations are more needed than ever. horniman.ac.uk/support-us
- The **Horniman Museum and Gardens** is core-funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and since 1990 has been governed by an independent charitable trust, registered charity no. 802725.
- On 29 July 2019 the **Horniman Museum and Gardens declared an ecological and climate emergency**, pledging to place carbon reduction and environmental issues at the heart of its work. The declaration – and the subsequent **Climate and Ecological Manifesto**, published in January 2020 – is a consolidation of existing work and a commitment to renewed ambitions to reduce the Horniman's environmental and pollution footprint, increase biodiversity, and inspire others to do so. Find out more about the Horniman's manifesto commitments and progress so far at horniman.ac.uk/climate.