

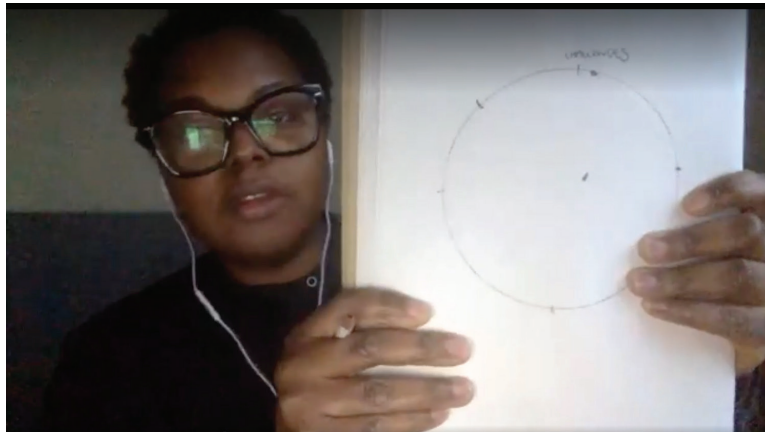


# **PRESSING THE RESET BUTTON**



# INTRO

You will encounter two voices in this resource – one belonging to Beverley Bennett who will guide you through the activities and the other, Josephine Evans, offering responses and supporting information. There is also a quote and painting by Rashid Johnson who Beverley references.



## BEVERLEY:

Beverley Bennett is an artist-filmmaker whose work revolves around the possibilities of drawing, performance and collaborative experiments with sound.

Her practice is connected to multiple ways of making. The first of these is a concern with the importance of sound in art, the second is an investigation into the idea of 'The Archive' and the third is collaboration.

Frequently through socially political work with other creatives, fine artists, community members, young children, and their families, Beverley's practice provides spaces for participants to become collaborators. She provides a point of focus from which ideas around what constitutes an art practice and for whom art is generated can be explored.

## JO:

Josephine Evans is a registered Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist and works as the Counsellor for a secondary school in Southwark.

Jo's therapeutic specialism is bereavement, and she has contributed a chapter on this subject for the book, *Therapeutic Practice in Schools*, published by Routledge. She is currently collaborating with A Space on another book, due out in 2022.

Jo worked in the Arts for twenty years as an actor/musician, performing in the West End, touring and repertory theatre, film and television, before training as a child and adolescent school counsellor and psychotherapist on the Birkbeck University MSc course. She has since worked for A Space for Support in Hackney, setting up new services in primary and secondary schools, developing Year 6/7 transition support projects, seeing school staff for counselling, and supervising student trainees on placement at A Space.

# INTRODUCTION



## BEVERLEY:

The words listed above reflect a small insight into how I'm feeling, and my current thoughts at this moment in time.

I have found this form of an introduction useful when creating resources that are based on projects I have worked on. One important part of my practice involves working with a range of participants, from young children through to elders.

Right now there is a need for human connection: a shared desire to unpick the inequalities made visible during the global pandemic, and the brutal murder of George Floyd, which was shared on our TV and social media feeds, bringing global visibility to the Black Lives Matter movement.



## BEVERLEY:

I think last year's sense of grief can be felt in a multitude of ways, from being unable to leave your house to see family or friends, to not getting the opportunity to say a final goodbye to a loved one.

I recently created a drawing that attempts to describe how I and any number of us might be feeling, called *Touch (Personal and Collective Grief)*. This creative process of uncovering brought an aesthetic to my work which hasn't materialised before. The period during lockdowns was also teamed with limited access to materials. But I still had the urge to create something.

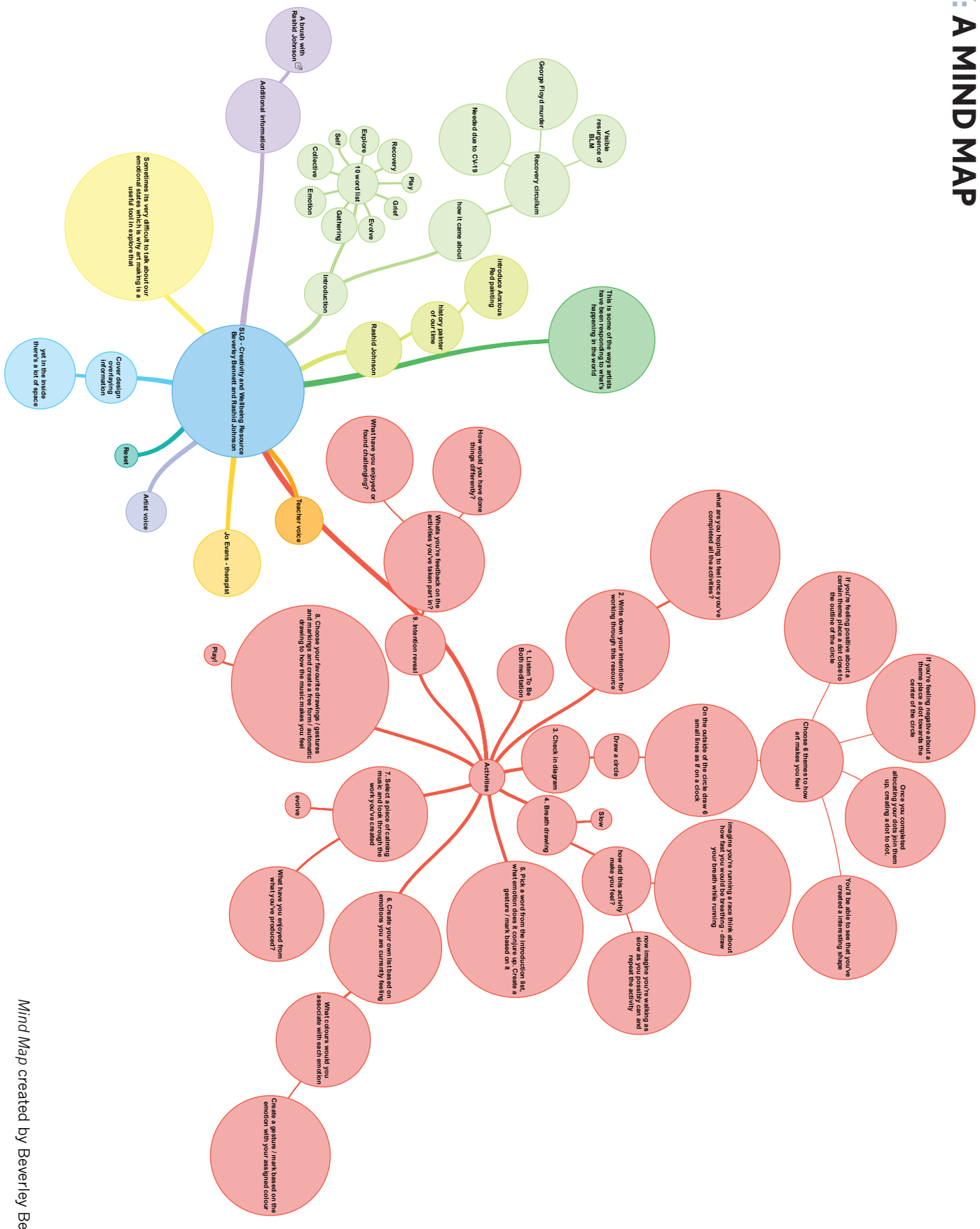
I often use creative processes and art-making to excavate how I'm feeling. Hopefully this resource will enable you to do the same.

## JO:

The title of Beverley's drawing, *Touch (Personal and Collective Grief)* reminds us that life experiences can affect us as an individual or as a whole group. For instance, if we've lost a family member due to Covid-19, we will be personally touched, feeling grief as well as anger that someone we love has been taken from us; while a death such as that of George Floyd touches us all. It is distressing and upsetting when the police, who are meant to look after their community, do such wrong.

In the case of George Floyd's death, it was as if the policemen involved were communicating another message: that Black Lives, to them, didn't matter. Situations like this can bring up deep anger as well as shock, confusion, and even loss of hope. Whenever we face a big life experience, especially a death, either individually or collectively, it helps for us to share our feelings and draw strength and renewed hope from each other. We need to try and feel all of our emotions honestly and openly, in order to then let them go. This resource offers some creative ways to start to examine our thoughts and feelings.

# BEVERLEY: A MIND MAP



# ACTIVITIES

# ACTIVITIES

These activities could be used either in sequence, or as a pick and mix. They are intended as either a personal reset moment for teachers or anyone to use, or as a collective one for a class.

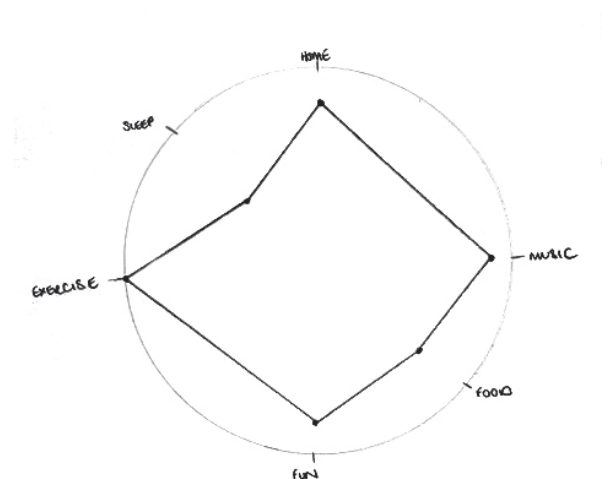
Materials: Paper (any sort you can get hold of), pencil, colouring pencils, felt tip pens, wax crayons, if you have them – charcoal, watercolours paints or pencils.

## LISTEN

Listen to Dora Kamau's [To Be Both](#) meditation

## INTENTION

Write down your intention. What are you hoping to get or feel from working through this resource?



Check-in diagram

## CHECK-IN DIAGRAM

Draw a circle, on the outside of the circle draw six small dashes as if on a clock. At these points add 6 words that describe how art makes you feel.

Then, if you're feeling positive about a certain word, place a dot close to the edge of the circle. If you're feeling negative about a word, place a dot towards the center of the circle.

Join them up, like a dot-to-dot drawing.  
What kind of shape have you created?



## BREATH DRAWING

Quieten your mind and focus on your breath. Breathe in and breathe out. As you breathe out create a mark on your piece of paper, as you breathe in do it again. The marks you make can be the length of your breath in or out, it's up to you. Continue this process for 10 breaths. If it helps experiment with closing your eyes.

### JO:

Try the 'square' breathing technique whilst drawing. Picture in your mind the shape of a square. You're going to trace the lines of the square with your breath. Starting at the bottom left-hand corner, slowly breathe in to travel up the left side, hold your breath to travel across to the top right-hand corner, breathe out to travel down the right side, hold your breath to travel across to the left corner. Repeat.

## EMOTIVE WORDS

Pick a word from the introduction list.  
What emotions do you feel for each word?  
Create a mark or a gesture on paper exploring it.

## MY WORDS

Create your own word list based on the emotions you are currently feeling. What colours would you associate with each word?

### JO:

We can feel many different things at the same time, such as sadness and anger, so your word list can reflect this range of emotions. Try writing them large, like a shout or very small like an internal thought.

## CHOOSE & REVIEW

Select a piece of calming music and look through the work you've created. What drawings are you happy with? What drawings are you not happy with?



Beverley Bennett workshop at Oliver Goldsmith Primary School

## AUTOMATIC DRAWING

Actively listen to the calming music and create a free form drawing based on what you can hear.

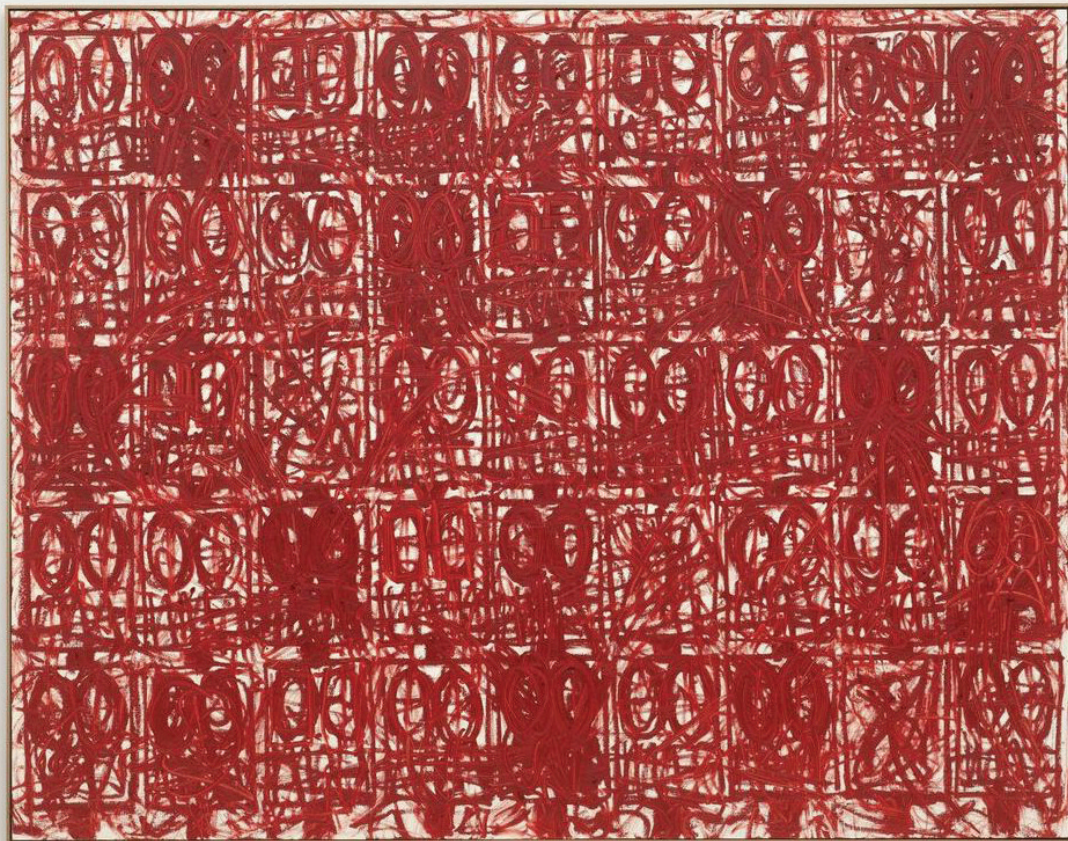
Include your favourite gestures, mark making processes and colours you've used in the previous activities.

## INTENTION REFLECTION

Have you been able to fulfill your intention?  
How would you have done things differently?  
What have you enjoyed or found challenging?

## REFLECTION

Look at Rashid Johnson's *Anxious Red* painting on the following page, what emotions does it bring up for you? What marks do you enjoy within the painting?



Rashid Johnson, *Anxious Red Painting August 20th, 2020*  
 Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth. Photo: Alex Delfanne

## RASHID:

*[Anxious Red] is something that I built in collaboration with a paint company [...] I was using some different oil stick colours that they had already made, one is called 'Turkey Red', another is called 'Quinacridone Red' [...] I said well these are great but there was something that I wanted to make myself [...] so I started to collaborate with them to create both a colour and a material, which becomes 'Anxious Red' [...] It is incredibly descriptive for me of the time that we are living in and some of the obstacles and some of the things that are concerning us. Including the Covid crisis; including the more recent reckoning in social justice and the interrogation of institutions [...] there are so many different things that are happening that I think we are so conscious of and so anxious about."*

*A brush with... Rashid Johnson*  
 Podcast by the Art Newspaper





Beverley Bennett workshop at Oliver Goldsmith  
Primary School

## JO:

Anxiety is the word we use to describe feeling worried, nervous, unsettled and uncertain. How would you describe anxiety? For instance, we might feel anxious if we know we're going to sit a test, or fearful of a decision we're facing. We can also feel this way if something's about to change in our life, such as moving to a new school or job, relocating to another city or country, or experiencing the end of a relationship.

Perhaps we are going through a difficult time, which has been made worse by the global pandemic. This can create more anxiety within us. When we feel this way, it's hard to believe we'll ever feel happy and relaxed again, but feelings can change. One way to deal with anxiety, and also other uncomfortable feelings, is to talk about it. If you do, you'll find that everyone, adults and young people alike, have anxious moments and anxious thoughts from time to time. It's normal.

Life has ups and downs for everyone, as there will always be new experiences and challenges to deal with, which can unearth strong feelings we might not want to face. However, we can feel less overwhelmed if we're able to share what we feel with someone who understands. It takes courage to reflect on our emotions and how we really feel. Over time, we learn to trust that we can manage our feelings, especially with the support of others.



# OUTRO

Drawing from direct work created with Oliver Goldsmith Primary school in Autumn 2020, this resource aims to support the wellbeing of school communities through creative engagement, in line with the 'Recovery Curriculum' – the recognition that there needs to be a whole-person approach to children's education which foregrounds their wellbeing as the basis for all engagement and learning.

The events of 2020–2021, Covid-19 and the murder of George Floyd have had a wide-ranging impact on people's health and wellbeing globally, much of which is still being processed and yet to be understood. We acknowledge this complex backdrop, and this resource aims to support teachers in creating space for both their own wellbeing and children who they teach.



Beverley Bennett workshop at Oliver Goldsmith Primary School

## JO:

At times, specific difficult memories and associations could arise when using this resource, both for teachers and the children involved when exploring their own personal reflections. For many, the experiences of these recent years will have provoked profound grief and anguish, ignited by the pandemic and the murder of George Floyd.

Our own mental wellbeing needs to be treated with respect in every situation, and sadly at times this can be overlooked instead of being prioritised. Just as some people become physically very unwell, so too can mental illness take hold. This is almost always a result of painful past experiences which have been buried and not thought through.

We all can experience times where we move up and down the emotional scale, and our feelings can be changeable, like the weather. It is normal to have moments when we feel upset or overwhelmed by our feelings and thoughts, which can be difficult states of mind to bear.

## JO'S SUGGESTIONS & SUPPORT

### **Some suggestions to support in times of anxiety:**

- Talk to a trusted friend or family member
- Book an appointment with someone trained to help, just as you would see a doctor if you were physically unwell
- Keep a feelings diary – writing down how you feel in a private journal at the end of the day can sometimes help
- Be active – exercise can reduce emotional intensity and help clear our thoughts
- Try to challenge any negative thinking, and talk to yourself as if you were comforting a close friend
- Look at online websites offering support such as [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk) and [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com) as well as (for adults) <https://www.qwell.io>

### **Below are some important points to bear in mind in preparation and delivery of this resource:**

- Individual participants' felt responses may be personal and emotionally charged, if the themes being explored relate to a direct experience of significant loss and/or trauma. How this is managed to support the young person or staff member if additional specialist support is indicated, needs to be addressed as part of any school's risk assessment policy.
- The teacher/facilitator would need to be alert to signs of distress in the participants in relation to the above, as well as their presence having a kindly, reassuring interest.
- Safeguarding protocols need to be in place regarding the above, so that where necessary, those affected (including children and staff alike) have subsequent access to appropriate support.
- It is advised that there should be a period of time incorporated towards the end of the gathering as part of a structured time-boundary. The aim of this is to provide an emotionally containing sense of 'closure' in this process, even if the thinking and reflections continue beyond the space.





## FURTHER INFORMATION

### LISTEN

*A brush with... Rashid Johnson* Podcast:

<https://soundcloud.com/theartnewspaperweekly/a-brush-with-rashid-johnson>

*Care & Empathy*: Jennifer Martin & Beverley Bennett

<https://soundcloud.com/cap-rca2020/empathy-and-care-as-a-form-of-resistance>

### WEBSITES

Young Minds

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people/>

Child line

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

Family Lives

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/>

Winston's Wish

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

Child Bereavement UK

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

Candle Child Bereavement Service

<https://www.stchristophers.org.uk/candle/>

### SERVICES AND SUPPORT IN SOUTHWARK

Southwark Wellbeing Hub

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/social-care-and-support/adult-social-care/your-wellbeing/your-health/mental-wellbeing>

Mental and emotional health services

<https://localoffer.southwark.gov.uk/wellbeing/mental-and-emotional-health-services>

Mental health and wellbeing support services

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/coronavirus/health-advice-during-covid-19/taking-care-of-your-mind?chapter=5>

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Healthy ways to calm anxiety

<https://bit.ly/3vmdp9V>

Reflections and guidance on bereavement

<https://bit.ly/30hZia8>

Emotionally intelligent schools

<https://bit.ly/3vpID05>

Find a therapist - suggestions for adults

<https://bit.ly/3j4t88F>

The SLG Schools' programme is generously supported by Charterhouse in Southwark and Hauser & Wirth.

**SLG**

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