



## PRESS RELEASE

August 2023

### The South London Gallery announces its upcoming programme for autumn 2023 and 2024

In November 2023, the SLG presents the first institutional solo exhibition in London by Chicago-based artist Pope.L. Spanning both SLG sites, it comprises new and existing works by this ground-breaking figure in contemporary art and performance. Opening in spring 2024, a group exhibition organised in partnership with the V&A brings together a selection of international lens-based artists working at the intersection of activism and feminist practice. This will be followed by a major presentation of work by New York-based artist Firelei Báez in June 2024, which will be organised by the first cohort of New Curators students with the SLG programme team. New Curators is a paid twelve-month curatorial training programme for twelve individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

#### Autumn 2023

##### **Pope.L**

21 November 2023 – 11 February 2024

Main Gallery & Fire Station Galleries

Opening this winter, the Chicago-based multi-disciplinary artist Pope.L (b. 1955, Newark, NJ) has his first institutional solo exhibition in the UK at the South London Gallery. His practice spans writing, painting, performance, installation, sculpture and video, which will be explored across both the SLG's Main Gallery and Fire Station. With roots in philosophy and theatre, Pope.L's career since the 1970s has centred on society, politics and contemporary culture. The work often reveals contradictory and provocative themes in language, gender, race, economics and community.

At the core of an expansive new installation in the SLG's Main Gallery will be a set of three towers, all in different states of gradual collapse. The 3 metre high wooden structures, each topped with a toilet, are based on that used in one of Pope.L's seminal performances, *Eating the Wall Street Journal* (2002). Covered in flour and wearing only a jockstrap, the artist scaled the tower to consume pages from the 134-year-old business and economics newspaper whilst sitting on the elevated toilet. Known for working in 'sets', there have been various iterations of *Eating the Wall Street Journal* over a number of years, each one representing an evolution of the many ideas it expresses. For this latest reworking Pope.L has removed the live performance element from public view, shifting the focus to the dynamic of the toppling tower structures and viewers' capacity to imagine what might have happened or what is still to come.

Alongside the towers will be a new set of shelf works, shown in both the Main Gallery and two galleries in the Fire Station, in which arrays of bottles of cheap alcohol are showcased on simple wooden shelves. Also in the Fire Station will be a screening of a reworked version of *Reenactor* (2012), a 3-hour documentary style film featuring wandering performers, possibly lost, dressed in Confederate uniforms and Robert E. Lee fake beards, as well as footage of Civil War reenactments in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The 'reenactors' populate spaces and streets in the city of Nashville, Tennessee, with the odd stranger passing by making a stark contrast to the actors. Pope.L describes: '*Reenactor is a film about how we costume and*

*theatricalize time in order to make sense of our mortality. We dress reality up in history, documentary, biography, or art to restage and reorder the chaos of getting from one side of life to the other.'*

Pope.L (also known as William Pope.L) is an artist best known for his provocative performances and public installations. While centering on themes such as gender and race, his works explore the systems, conflicts, and beliefs inherent to our society and culture. Pope.L studied at Pratt Institute and Montclair State College, where he received a BA in 1978. He also participated in the Independent Study Program at the Whitney and received an MFA in 1981 from Rutgers University. His works have been exhibited at many significant institutions, including the Anthology Film Archives, Franklin Furnace, Artist Space, Museum of Modern Art, New Museum, Performa, The Sculpture Center, the 2002 and 2017 Whitney Biennials, the Carpenter Center in Boston and the Geffen at MOCA Los Angeles.

### **Spring 2024**

#### **International group exhibition exploring contemporary feminist activist practices through photography and film (title TBC)**

Dates: 8 March – 2 June 2024

Main Gallery & Fire Station Galleries

This collaborative exhibition between the South London Gallery and the Victoria and Albert Museum is part of the V&A Parasol Foundation Women in Photography Project. It will take place across the South London Gallery's Main Gallery and Fire Station, opening to coincide with International Women's Day in March 2024.

The medium of photography is deeply associated with histories of protest. This exhibition will explore the subject of the artist-activist with a particular focus on artists who are moving beyond traditional modes of protest photography to reimagine contemporary feminist activist practice.

Work included in the exhibition spans 2010, the year that fourth wave feminism is widely accepted to have emerged, and concludes in the present day. The show reflects on the extent to which this wave manifests within different feminisms across the globe. At the same time, it highlights the wave's common traits including expanding intersectionality, deepening solidarity, and foregrounding the role of the internet and social media.

The exhibition has been conceived within the context of key events that have unfolded over the past decade. In the latter half of 2017 the 'Me Too' movement, originally founded by the US civil rights activist Tarana Burke, gained global attention. The movement catalysed societal reckoning as millions of women spoke out against sexual violence, bringing gender inequities and power dynamics into sharp focus. In 2022 the US Supreme Court overturned Roe vs Wade, the landmark piece of legislation that made access to abortion a federal right. Today, protests in Iran which began over the enforcement of the hijab, are now one of the greatest threats the regime has faced in at least a decade.

*An exhibition at the South London Gallery in partnership with the Victoria and Albert Museum as part of the V&A Parasol Foundation Women in Photography Project. Curated by Sarah Allen, Head of Programme, South London Gallery and Fiona Rogers, The V&A's Parasol Foundation Curator of Women in Photography, with Lily Tonge, Curator, Exhibitions and Events, South London Gallery.*

## **Summer 2024**

### **Firelei Báez**

Dates: 26 June – 9 September 2024

Main Gallery & Fire Station Galleries

Next summer, the South London Gallery will stage the first solo exhibition in the UK by Firelei Báez, organised by the first cohort of New Curators with the SLG team.

Báez's paintings, drawings, sculptures and installations are characterised by a flair for lush colour, mingling between rich detail and fluid abstraction. Investigating the historical relationships between diasporic African and Caribbean cultures, and European and American colonialism, Báez often centers images of women ignored by official histories. By acknowledging the limitations of archives, Báez explores the use of mythology and spiritual traditions in order to share new narratives – for instance, the artist's representations of *ciguapas* (a central figure of Dominican folklore) or the reimagined underwater society of Drexcia. Báez will make new work for the exhibition, stemming from her engagement with the site and London archives.

Báez was born in the Dominican Republic in 1981 before moving to New York where she studied art at Hunter College and Cooper Union. She has participated in the 10th Berlin Biennale in 2018 and in 'The Milk of Dreams', the Venice Biennale in 2022, as well as the Artes Mundi Prize in Cardiff in 2021.

New Curators is a paid year-long curatorial training programme for twelve individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds. <https://www.newcurators.org/>

### **ENDS**

For further press information, images and interviews please contact Anna Jones, Head of Communications: [anna.jones@southlondongallery.org](mailto:anna.jones@southlondongallery.org)

### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

#### **Address and Opening Hours**

South London Gallery, Main Building  
65–67 Peckham Road, London, SE5 8UH

South London Gallery, Fire Station  
82 Peckham Road, London, SE15 5LQ

The gallery is open Tuesday – Sunday.  
[www.southlondongallery.org](http://www.southlondongallery.org)

#### **Social Media**

Twitter: [@SLG\\_artupdates](https://twitter.com/SLG_artupdates)

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

Facebook: [South London Gallery](https://www.facebook.com/SouthLondonGallery)

TikTok: [southlondongallery](https://www.tiktok.com/southlondongallery)

#### **About the V&A**

The Victoria and Albert Museum, London (V&A) is the world's leading museum of art, design and performance with collections unrivalled in their scope and diversity, spanning 5000 years of human creativity. It was established in 1852 to make works of art available to all and to inspire British designers and manufacturers. Today, its purpose is to champion creative industry, inspire the next generation, and spark everyone's imagination. [vam.ac.uk](http://vam.ac.uk)

The V&A Parasol Foundation Women in Photography Project is a major new international curatorial programme that supports women in photography. Generously funded by Ms. Ruth Monicka Parasol and the Parasol Foundation Trust, the project encompasses a new curatorial post and an ambitious programme of activity that spans acquisitions, commissions, research, education, displays and events.

### **About New Curators**

New Curators is a paid year-long curatorial training programme for twelve international and UK based individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

### **About the South London Gallery**

The South London Gallery (SLG) was founded in the 19th century by philanthropist William Rossiter to 'bring art to the people of south London'. Today the gallery comprises its original site at 65 Peckham Road; the Fire Station which opened to the public in 2018; Art Block, a space for local children and families on Sceaux Gardens Estate, and two permanent gardens.

The SLG has an international reputation for its contemporary art exhibitions by established, mid-career and younger artists and programme of film and performance events. Its highly regarded, free education programme includes a peer-led young people's forum; family workshops; artist-led projects and commissions on local housing estates; and a programme for looked after children.

### **South London Gallery Core Funders**



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



**Freelands  
Foundation**

