

SETAREH

Forces of Nature

Abbas Zahedi, Emmanuel Awuni and Jamiu Agboke.

In collaboration with Harlesden High Street.

14. October, 2025 – 15. November, 2025

Forces of Nature inaugurates SETAREH's London gallery with works by London based artists **Abbas Zahedi**, **Emmanuel Awuni** and **Jamiu Agboke** realised in collaboration with **Harlesden High Street**. This partnership folds the community-oriented ethos of HHS into the heart of Mayfair, unsettling familiar hierarchies and proposing a more porous model of collaboration across scales and contexts.

The artists' practices emerge from diasporic lineages and lived histories, traversing memory, ancestry, and critical engagement with institutional systems. Though distinct in medium and approach, they share a sensitivity to how histories are carried through material and gesture; how memory, value, and belonging are continually remade in form. Together, they articulate a language of reciprocity and resonance, allowing *Forces of Nature* to unfold as an encounter, a meeting of energies.

Presented as both an archive and a symbolic space of categorisation, **Abbas Zahedi's** *11&9* installation includes 20 editions of biographical records (*semi-rational records of artchivement, created whilst an artist of Belmacz, 2021*). The work reflects on the neoliberal era and the eleven-year premiership of Margaret Thatcher alongside Zahedi's efforts to culturally integrate into modern British society, prior to becoming an artist. The photocopied records are housed within the drawers of an old filing cabinet, each tray repurposed as a frame mounted on the gallery wall. Together, they speak to systems of uniformity and control. Allowing a degree of risk, Zahedi invites the public to participate in an act of exchange—replacing the records with objects of equal integrity and personal significance. In doing so, he transforms the rigid visual order into a living, evolving organism shaped by collective contribution and individual offerings.

In *i'm from that mud (is not an achievement)*, Zahedi continues this interrogation. Porcelain bowls from his late mother's dowry, filled with soil from her gravesite, hold an intimacy that resists commodification. Together, these works question the aesthetics of legitimacy; what is deemed valuable, what is preserved, and what remains untranslatable. Zahedi transforms the gallery into a zone of ethical tension, and memory becomes a form of resistance.

Emmanuel Awuni — a poet and deeply informed by oral traditions — works across sculpture and performance, with music as a central thread. Fascinated by the connections between diasporic soundscapes such as hip-hop, jazz, reggae, and Afrobeats, he challenges institutional and cultural biases through quiet yet powerful gestures. At the front window lies a cast bust, mounted against a blue background reminiscent of the packing foam used in museum storage. Suspended on the wall, the restrained figure becomes a compelling vessel of spiritual resonance — an echo chamber for memory and vibration.

Working on copper and aluminium, **Jamiu Agboke** reimagines landscape as an unstable threshold between material and memory. His luminous surfaces shift between Lagos and the English countryside, between what is remembered and what is imagined. Reviving the lineage of painting on metal, Agboke transforms its reflective resistance into a living element: light flickers across the surface, gathering in the paint like water finding its rhythm.

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The waterfall reappears as a site of pressure and release; a choreography of gravity and surrender. In *Figure at the Base of a Waterfall* (2025), water turns to haze, to breath; the landscape dissolves into atmosphere, into emotion. Immersive and near-sublime, it holds the image at the edge of dissolution. The work becomes a meditation on that fragile threshold where stillness and intensity converge. Agboke's paintings invite a contemplation that is neither soft nor passive, but alive with elemental force. In a moment saturated with images, they resist instant readability, offering instead one that breathes, that lingers, that asks us to stay.

Together, these practices converge around a shared poetics of presence; the persistence of what is lived, remembered, and felt beneath systems of order. Each artist, in their own register, traces the forces that bind and unbind form: the pull of memory, the weight of inheritance, the shifting horizon between here and elsewhere. In *Forces of Nature*, collaboration becomes both method and metaphor: a reorientation of the centre through the force of relation.

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SETAREH London
2 Bourdon Street, Mayfair, London W1K 3PA

For press enquiries or to request a private viewing, please contact london@setareh.com

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Abbas Zahedi (b. 1984, lives and works in West London) is an artist working at the intersections of sonic and sculptural forms, exploring systems of care, thresholds of experience, and the social architectures of our time. Originally trained in medicine at University College London, specialising in psychiatry, before shifting his focus to art. From 2011 onwards, he developed community-organised projects, founding grassroots cultural and social spaces, including a food bank. He completed an MA in Contemporary Photography: Practices and Philosophies at Central Saint Martins in 2019 and is currently pursuing a PhD at Kingston University.

Recent exhibitions, projects and performances include *Begin Again* at Tate Modern, London (2025–26), part of the *Gathering Ground* series with an accompanying programme of public support groups; *Y/N* with TJ Shin for Condo London (Phillida Reid / Ehrlich Steinberg, 2025); *Holding a Heart in Artifice* at Nottingham Contemporary (2023); *Best Before End* at Bold Tendencies, London (2023); *Sonic Signals* at Eastside Projects, Birmingham (2023); *Metatopia 10013* at Anonymous Gallery, New York (2022); *The London Open 2022* at Whitechapel Gallery, London (2022); *Postwar Modern* at the Barbican, London (2022); *Testament* at Goldsmiths CCA, London (2022); *Temporary Compositions* at Gallery 31, Somerset House, London (2021); the *Frieze Artist Award commission*, London (2022); and the 57th Venice Biennale (2017). Recent workshops, lectures and residencies have taken place at the Outset Grant Ceremony, Raven Row, South London Gallery, New Art Exchange, Wysing Arts Centre, Tate Britain and Tate Exchange. His awards include the Stanley Picker Fellowship (2024), Artangel: Making Time (2023), Frieze Artist Award (2022), Paul Hamlyn Foundation Award (2021), and the Khadijah Saye Memorial Scholarship (2017). He is Associate Lecturer at the Royal College of Art, London, and has taught widely in the UK and internationally.

Emmanuel Awuni (b. 1993, Accra, Ghana; lives and works in London) studied Fine Art at Goldsmiths University of London (2017) and completed an MA at the Royal Academy of Arts (2022). Working across sculpture, painting, performance, and sound, his practice draws on diasporic oral traditions and musical vocabularies to explore rhythm, vibration, and gesture as forms of memory and resistance.

Recent exhibitions and projects include *SPIT* (with Divine Southgate-Smith), Public Gallery, London (2024); *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Copperfield, London (2023); *Walk*, Pipeline Contemporary, London (2022); *Lamps*, Sundry, London (2022); *Hammer*, Harlesden High Street, London (2021); and *Heat*, Harlesden High Street hosted by Sadie Coles HQ, London (2021). Group exhibitions include presentations at Kunstmuseum Solingen, Germany (2023); Nir Altman, Munich (2022); and the Royal Academy of Arts, London (2020). He was artist-in-residence at the Roberts Institute of Art, Scotland (2024).

Jamiu Agboke (b. 1989, Lagos, Nigeria; lives and works in London) graduated from the Royal Drawing School in April 2022. His practice centres on landscapes that capture the experience of moving through a place rather than its precise depiction, often blending memory and dream to evoke a fleeting, transitional quality. Working with atmospheric imagery and material transformations in copper, aluminium and stained wood, Agboke explores the interplay between nature, imagination and abstraction.

Agboke has exhibited internationally, with recent solo exhibitions including *Don't Go Chasing Waterfalls* at MASSIMODECARLO Pièce Unique, Paris (2025); *The Argonauts* at VIN VIN, Vienna/Naples (2025); *Veils of the Horizon* with Siegfried Contemporary, London (2024); *If The Ground Could Speak*, Sea View, Los Angeles (2024); and *Vertigo*, VIN VIN (2024). Group exhibitions include *Cirrus: On Landscapes*, Niso Gallery, London (2024–25); *Lights On*, Galerie Chastel Maréchal, Paris (2024); and *Body Symphonies*, Paris (2024), alongside further presentations at White Cube, Galerie Marguo (Paris), and VIN VIN in Austria and Italy.

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ABOUT SETAREH

Founded in 2013, **SETAREH** is a gallery with locations in Düsseldorf, Berlin, and now London, specialising in modern and contemporary art. The gallery presents a dynamic programme of exhibitions and participates in leading international fairs.

Representing over 25 artists across emerging, mid-career, and established practices, SETAREH brings contemporary work into dialogue with post-war and modern masters, fostering conversations across cultures, generations, and geographies.

Working closely with institutions and collections worldwide, SETAREH is committed to programmes that balance historical depth with contemporary innovation. The opening of the London space marks the next chapter of this vision—bringing the gallery's international programme into Mayfair while developing meaningful relationships within the city's artistic landscape and its community of artists, curators, and collectors.