

LondonTown.com: Innovative outsider artist celebrated in London exhibition



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East London gallery holds exhibition of works of art therapy pioneer Mary Barnes.

LONDON, January 07, 2015 -- /[EPR NETWORK](#)/ -- London's quirky and adventurous art exhibition programme starts 2015 with a bang, with a fascinating display at the Nunnery Gallery in Bow looking at the work of outsider artist Mary Barnes. The Nunnery Gallery on the Bow Road is one of the city's many innovative small spaces that feature unusual and creative exhibitions. For more on the galleries of East London, see LondonTown.com, where you will also find information on the best [cheap hotels in London](#). The exhibition runs from 16th January to 29th March 2015.

The Mary Barnes exhibition at the Nunnery gallery is called *Boo-Bah*, which is the nickname Barnes gave to her therapist and friend Dr Joseph Berke. The paintings and drawings in the exhibition are largely drawn from Berke's collection of Barnes's work and she gave him the nickname in a love letter that scaled over a metre high, scrawled in Mary's inimitable handwriting.

The exhibition covers works spanning her artistic career which began in the 1960s in Bow. Barnes moved to Kingsley Hall in East London in 1965 following a breakdown and diagnosis of schizophrenia. Here she joined the Philadelphia Association which was an alternative and experimental treatment community, created by the radical psychiatrist RD Laing and his colleagues. It was at the same time that Joseph Berke travelled to East London, as a recent medical graduate from

New York, to work for Laing and this is where he met Mary Barnes. They developed a strong bond, dramatised in the play *Mary Barnes* by David Edgar which was itself based on the book *Mary Barnes: Two Accounts of a Journey Through Madness* written by Berke and Barnes. At this time, Barnes discovered her talent for art, producing vivid paintings often on religious theme. The exhibition launches the Nunnery Gallery's season *In Dialogue*, a year-long exploration of partnerships, artistic inspirations and deeply involved relationships between the artist and the muse. For more information on this and other exhibitions in London in 2015, see LondonTown.com.

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