



The Art Insider.

RUTHIE COLLINS, FOUNDER OF CAMBRIDGE ART SALON, GIVES HER ARTY PICKS OF THE MONTH

“It was the worst of times, it was the worst of times. Again. That’s the thing about things, they fall apart, always have. Always will...”

So starts *Autumn*, by award-winning Cambridge-based novelist Ali Smith, summing up British identity, post Brexit: divided, falling apart – hand in hand with the hope that autumn brings. As Cambridge turns golden, it’s hope that’s always, to me, evoked by those dazzling blue skies the city is blessed with at this time of year.

Increasingly, as divide, class war and post-truth suspicion apparently become the norm, art that celebrates the connections between us all (remember those?) is the new radical. Artist Ella Whittlestone is running a workshop at Heong Gallery, on 7 October as part of The Big Draw event. The workshop is part of her *Connect Draw* project, which has united prison residents, teachers, students and folks of all backgrounds. “I wanted to use drawing to show the connections between us all,” she tells me in the gallery, while efficiently enthusing my five year old with utter passion for drawing and all things Quentin Blake in a fun range of family activities. Go along for her drop-in workshop on the 7th alone or with your kids: you will be in good hands. The gallery, part of Downing College, is a pristine art space just a stone’s throw from the hustle of Regent Street and Parker’s Piece. This will be the last chance to catch Quentin Blake and the Folio Society’s exhibition *The Best of All Possible Worlds* – so worth the trip. Check connectdraw.wixsite.com to learn more about Ella Whittlestone’s *Connect Draw* project, or visit thebigdraw.org for more information on the workshop.

You can ‘exhibition hop’ from the Heong Gallery up to Bateman Street, where Alliance Française is hosting a long-awaited show from French-born Cambridge artist Catherine Lalevée this month, running until the 21 October. Perfect for this time of year, Lalevée’s work explores the beauty of colour, natural forms and how they can be expressed, and female sensuality. “Designers want me to dress like spring, in billowing things. I don’t feel like spring, I feel like a warm, red autumn,” Marilyn Monroe, one of the most famous icons of female sensuality, once said, a line that reminds me a little of Lalevée’s sumptuous work. Visit the show within Alliance Française’s opening times.

Blazing with colour and light will be a one-night-only light festival, a highlight of



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India Unboxed, on Wednesday 25 October at the Botanic Gardens – celebrating Indian Festival of Light, Diwali. India Unboxed is a fantastic programme from Cambridge University Museums as part of the UK/India Year of Culture, organised to mark the seventieth anniversary of Indian independence. Cambridge’s most stunning gardens will be lit up by installations from Studio Carrom, accompanied by music from the amazing Talvin Singh. You can try your hand at lantern making, plus contribute to a large-scale art work with help from Emergency Exit Arts. What a fabulous idea! Diwali, or Deepavali, marks the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil. We could all do with celebrating that.

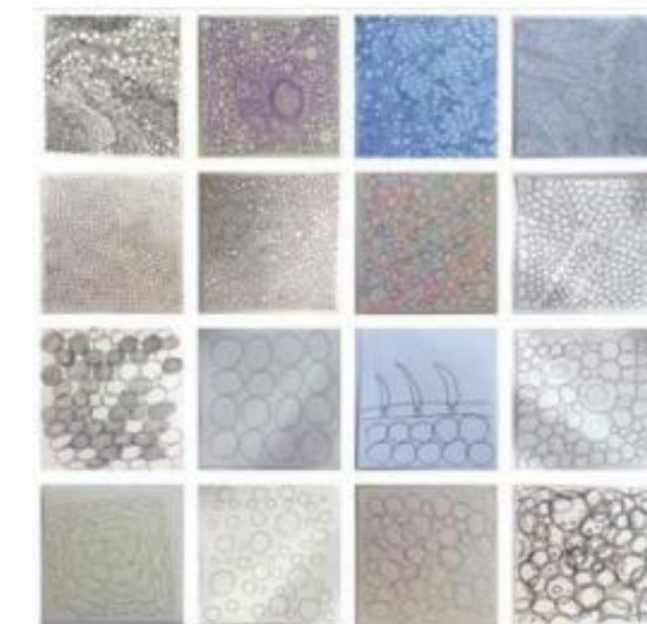
Malavika Anderson, India Unboxed Programmer, says: “The Festival of Light is a special opportunity to celebrate the success of



this season with a free, evening opening of the Botanic Garden. We welcome you to celebrate Diwali with us through spectacular light-based installations, creative making, music, food and more inspired by our collections.” Book tickets through Cambridge Live or for more information about the India Unboxed Festival of Light, visit www.museums.cam.ac.uk/festival-of-light.

India Unboxed is also part of the Cambridge Festival of Ideas, where you’ll find hundreds of events happening across the city, from 16 to 29 October. This year, the festival is putting truth under the spotlight – in a post-truth world dominated by fake news, what – and who – are we all to believe? I’ll be heading along to *Computing History: Where did all the women go?*, an exhibition at the Museum for Computing History starting on 13 October that gives pioneering women from the world of IT, previously written out of history, their time to shine (though shouldn’t really be necessary, right?).

Finally, become spellbound at the Neon Moon Grand Halloween Ball at Cambridge Junction, on Saturday 28 October – for an electrifying night of circus, cabaret and burlesque featuring world-class acts. Neon Moon have grown from strength to strength, with support from Cambridge Junction and the Arts Council, taking their scintillating work to the likes of Southbank Centre and venues all over the UK. Very much a place to escape the worst of times, fleetingly. And sparkle. As Martin Luther King once said: “darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that.” Have a fabulous October, all. ■



Opposite page Paintings by French-born artist Catherine Lalevée, now based in Cambridge and exhibiting this month at the Alliance Française. **Above** Cambridge University Botanic Garden is opening – and lighting up – after hours as part of India Unboxed’s Diwali celebrations. **Left** Ella Whittlestone’s *Connect Draw* project comes to the Heong Gallery for a drawing workshop on 7 October