

Press Release
6 September 2021

Wandsworth LGBTQ+ Forum and Studio Voltaire to unveil new Rainbow Plaque dedicated to film, *My Beautiful Laundrette*



Wandsworth LGBTQ+ Forum, Studio Voltaire and Lambeth Council will unveil a Rainbow Plaque on Friday 10 September dedicated to the iconic film, *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985). The plaque will be installed into the footway in Wilcox Road, Vauxhall, the location of *Powders* laundrette.

Starring Daniel Day-Lewis and Gordon Warnecke, and directed by Stephen Fears with an Oscar-nominated original screenplay by Hanif Kureishi, *My Beautiful Laundrette* broke major ground in its bold exploration of race and sexuality in Thatcher-era London. The film's depiction of, and significance to, British South Asian and LGBTQ+ communities cannot be overstated.

The iconic British Cinema classic was filmed across Wandsworth, Battersea and Vauxhall in 1984 with the set design and the site found on Wilcox Road in SW8.

Following a successful crowdfunding campaign – which included a special screening of the film at Clapham Picturehouse followed by a Q&A with the film's cast and crew – £2500 was raised to realise the project, the design and production of the plaque, as well as the official unveiling event. It will be the first of the Rainbow plaques to incorporate the Progress Pride (2018) colours.

The Rainbow Plaque is a national scheme that was established by York Civic Trust with York LGBT Forum in 2018 as a way to identify key figures and moments of LGBTQ+ History. The first Rainbow Plaque honoured lesbian diarist Anne Lister (1791–1840). The second Rainbow Plaque, dedicated to Oscar Wilde, was unveiled on Platform 10 at Clapham Junction station by Wandsworth LGBTQ+ Forum, Studio Voltaire and Network

Rail.

The *My Beautiful Laundrette* plaque has been generously supported by individuals through its crowdfunding campaign and the installation is supported by Lambeth Council.

Hanif Kureishi said:

“What a privilege and honour it is to see My Beautiful Laundrette being recognised with a Rainbow Plaque. I’m really touched to see that the film still has such resonance within the LGBTQ+ community after all these years. To everyone involved in making this plaque happen, on behalf of all the cast and crew, a huge heartfelt thank you.”

David Robson, Chair, Wandsworth LGBTQ+ Forum said:

“I’m so very pleased that our wonderfully diverse LGBTQ+ community feel the same level of affection for the film that we do and share in our vision for the Rainbow Plaque project. The reaction to this campaign has been a brilliant way to connect again, especially when so many have been isolated due to the pandemic. I’m also proud that this is the first to incorporate the progress pride colours. At a time when there are deep divisions in some parts of the community, it’s my hope that celebrating our shared history and culture will remind people that we are stronger when we stand together.”

Cllr Claire Holland, the Leader of Lambeth Council, said:

“This is a brilliant project and I’m delighted that the council has been able to throw its full support behind it. Celebrating our diversity, alongside our community partners, is a top priority for us. I’m proud to have been involved in this project and proud too that Lambeth Council has supported this community-led campaign from the beginning. The outcome is a very fitting tribute to this bold and ground-breaking film that serves to celebrate and preserve Lambeth and London’s LGBTQ+ cultural history.”

Joe Scotland, Director, Studio Voltaire, said:

“We are really pleased to be working with Wandsworth LGBTQ+ Forum and Lambeth Council to realise another Rainbow Plaque in our local community. It is important to commemorate and celebrate such key moments in LGBTQIA+ history and the significance of the film, My Beautiful Laundrette, continues to live on through this project. We are extremely grateful to all who have supported the project and look forward to unveiling it to the people of Lambeth and beyond.”

Notes to Editors

The *My Beautiful Laundrette* Rainbow Plaque will be unveiled on Friday 10 September.

For press enquiries, including visits to the plaque and interviews, please contact:
Meg Molloy, Communications Manager, Studio Voltaire: meg@studiovoltaire.org

About Wandsworth LGBTQ+ Forum

Wandsworth LGBTQ+ Forum is one of London's leading community LGBTQ+ groups which campaigns locally, across London and nationally to raise awareness and promote the interests of LGBTQ+ people. Not least because Wandsworth itself has a large and diverse LGBTQ+ population, but with no LGBTQ+ physical space in the borough, Wandsworth LGBTQ+ Forum exists to ensure that voice is not heard and lost.

Wandsworth LGBTQ+ Forum has established a broad programme of advocacy, health and cultural activities for LGBTQ+ people of all ages. The Forum have embraced provision of sexual health, primary care, cancer and mental health services and promotion of cultural and inclusion projects in partnership with other organisations such as the Furzedown Project 50+ Coffee Morning and Clapham Picturehouse (Out at Clapham).

wandsworthlgbtforum.co.uk

About Studio Voltaire

Studio Voltaire is one of the UK's leading not-for-profit arts organisations. Its pioneering public programmes of exhibitions, participation projects, live events and offsite commissions have gained an international reputation. The organisation has an outstanding track record of supporting artists at a pivotal stage in their careers, championing emerging and underrepresented practices and placing emphasis on risk-taking and experimentation. Many commissions are an artist's first solo exhibition in London or the UK.

Exhibiting artists have included Aaron Angell, Nairy Baghramian, Phyllida Barlow, Monster Chetwynd, Anne Collier, Thea Djordjadze, Nicole Eisenman, Sharon Hayes, Nnena Kalu, Sanya Kantarovsky, Ella Kruglyanskaya, Shahryar Nashat, The Neo Naturists, Henrik Olesen, Paulina Olowska, Elizabeth Price, Charlotte Prodger, Jo Spence, Cathy Wilkes and Rehana Zaman.

Studio Voltaire commissions a wide range of participatory and offsite projects working in collaboration with artists, local organisations, schools and community groups and provides a much-needed resource of affordable and accessible onsite artists' studios, supporting the development of diverse individual and collective practices, from recent graduates to internationally recognised practitioners.

Studio Voltaire is a registered charity and part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio.

studiovoltaire.org