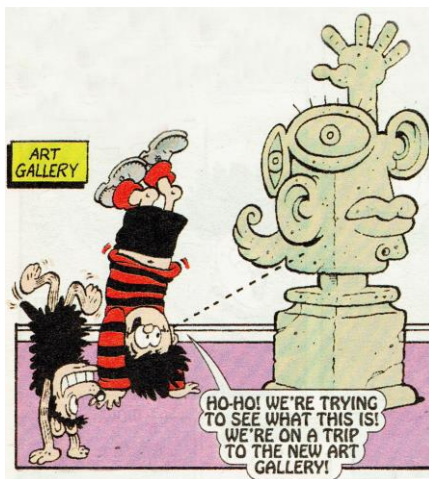


**SOMERSET
HOUSE**

BEANO: THE ART OF BREAKING THE RULES

NEW ARTISTS AND WORKS ANNOUNCED TO MAJOR EXHIBITION THIS OCTOBER



NEW EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS:

- Young fiction writer and subject of Small Axe film **Alex Wheatle** recounts how reading **Beano became his safe space growing up in Shirley Oaks children's home** in Surrey
- Artist **Nicola Lane** creates new work **reimagining Dennis at 70 years old**, the mischief-maker-in-chief who was first introduced into the comic in 1951
- **Peter Liversidge** – whose patchwork of signs in east London paying tribute to NHS and key workers, which went viral last year – presents a participatory workspace where visitors can do away with old world order and **choose a new rule for life, painted onto a protest sign live in the exhibition**
- Jukebox filled with **music influenced by Beano's rebellious streak** – curated by **Bob Stanley of indie dance band Saint Etienne** – invites visitors to choose soundtrack to the show
- A new catapult game allows audiences to take (virtual) aim at the world's great works of art

Tickets now on sale, priced at £16 (concessions, child and family tickets also available) via www.somersethouse.org.uk. Exhibition opens 21 October 2021 and runs until 6 March 2022.

This October, Somerset House presents *Beano: The Art of Breaking the Rules*, a major exhibition celebrating the **world's longest-running weekly comic's mix of mischief, mayhem and fun** – where, within its pages, restrictions are always eased.

Set to be a show like no other, Somerset House has confirmed a number of new artists to the line-up of this landmark exhibition including writers, musicians, painters, sculptors and photographers.

BEANO: THE ART OF BREAKING THE RULES

21 October 2021 – 6 March 2022

Contributors include young fiction writer and recent subject of Small Axe film **Alex Wheatle**, sculptor **Phyllida Barlow**, Turner Prize-winning artist **Martin Creed**, comedian and pop star **Chris Sievey** (otherwise known by his alter-ego **Frank Sidebottom**), **Bob Stanley of indie dance band Saint Etienne**, **Horace Panter of ska band The Specials**, Swiss artist duo **Fischli/Weiss**, painter **Beryl Cook**, one of the few female artists involved in the original Pop Art movement **Jann Haworth**, rising star **Rene Matić**, typography artist **Babak Ganjei** and artist **Ryan Gander**. They join artists already announced, such as **Sarah Lucas**, **Bedwyr Williams**, **Hardeep Pandhal** and **Heather Phillipson**. Inspired by the antics of Beano's mischievous heroes, they have all been brought together by their own spirit of rebellion and sense of playfulness, and their audacious artworks will be shown alongside original artwork from Beano's archive, in an **exhibition that is just as unconventional as its content**.

Curated by artist and lifelong Beano fan **Andy Holden**, *Beano: The Art of Breaking the Rules* opens with a large selection of **original comic drawings**, never previously seen in public, chosen across its 4,000-plus editions (to date) and rare archive artefacts relating to Beano's 83 years of irreverence. As well as Beano's beloved band of characters - **Dennis and Gnasher**, **Bananaman** and **Bash Street Kids** to name just a few - it also introduces their maverick artists from **Leo Baxendale**, who brought **Minnie the Minx** to life, to **Laura Howell**, who draws the all-round rebel today.

Visitors will then take a trip through Beanotown itself with **larger-than-life recreations of Beano's most iconic backdrops**, as if stepping inside the pages of the comic. Hanging on the walls of Bash Street School, the homes of Gasworks Road and Bunkerton Castle, and situated outside on the streets of Beanotown, visitors will discover an **eclectic collection of contemporary artworks from today's greatest creative rule-breakers**, who push the boundaries in their own original and wonderful ways. A number of works have been commissioned especially for the show and some – such as popular painter **Beryl Cook's** illustrations for children's book about Rufus the Rat – have never previously been released to the public.

Some of the contemporary artists will express a very personal – and frequently playful – appreciation of Beano, incorporating it directly into brand-new works, providing fresh perspectives on the comic masterpiece.

A new recording will feature young fiction writer **Alex Wheatle telling his own fascinating story**, focusing on how reading Beano became his safe space growing up in the notorious Shirley Oaks children's home in Surrey. In a recent film about his life as part of the **BBC's Small Axe** series, he is seen clutching a stack of comics as he is driven away from the home as a young adult – his most prized personal possession.

Artist **Nicola Lane** is creating a **brand-new comic strip for the show**, allowing time to enter into the frame by **imagining Dennis as a 70-year-old**. First released in 1938 and still crafted weekly from its home in Dundee, Beano introduced its most famous star in 1951 after the Beano editor, George Moonie, heard a music hall song called 'Dennis the Menace from Venice' – coincidentally in the very same week that the American comic strip of the same name also debuted in US newspapers.

BEANO: THE ART OF BREAKING THE RULES

21 October 2021 – 6 March 2022

Leeds-based artist **Simeon Barclay** presents a new neon, two-way mirror **inspired by Bash Street Kids character Plug**, who believes he is so good-looking he can smash a mirror by winking at it. The two-way mirror first shows a neon silhouette of Plug, before flipping to another neon sign saying 'ugly' below which the visitor can see their own reflection. Barclay challenges traditional conventions of beauty by taking the charge out of the word 'ugly' and instead owning it, just like Plug.

Whilst not all of the contemporary artworks feature overt references to Beano, they all share a rebellious sensibility, often mixing comedy with subtly coded social commentary, touching upon Beano's recurring themes of **Class, Education, Art** and **Feminism**.

An original model of **Heather Phillipson's** Fourth Plinth piece, THE END, will sit inside Beano's editor's office. At first glance, an appetising blob of whipped cream topped with a juicy cherry has, in actual fact, a fly squatting on one side and a drone perched on the other, and the cream is melting around the base of the sculpture, almost on the verge of complete collapse. The seemingly mundane subject of food is also used to cultivate such tensions in a new painting from recent RCA graduate **Olivia Sterling**, featuring a slapstick scene from a children's tea party to address identity in modern-day Britain.

An archive of street artist **Mark McGowan's** (aka Artist Taxi Driver) stunts is displayed for the first time, from pushing a peanut along the floor with his nose across London in protest at student debt, to attempting to cartwheel from Brighton beach to London to highlight the damage caused to British shores by people taking stones home. **Bedwyr Williams'** new series of drawings take a satirical, sideways look at the players of the 'art world' and their affectations, whilst **Cory Arcangel's** re-creation of Arnold Schoenberg's Three Piano Pieces, op. 11, edited from YouTube's sub-culture of piano-playing cats, pokes fun at this cultural fetish.

At the end of the exhibition, artist **Peter Liversidge** – who created a colourful patchwork of signs in east London paying tribute to NHS and key workers, which went viral last year – hosts an interactive workspace. **A new rulebook for life will be created by children** in advance of the exhibition, where it will go on view. After seeing this new world order, visitors can choose the rule that they'd also like to live by and get it **painted onto a protest sign live in the exhibition**, to go straight up on display.

Visitors can further unleash their rebellious streak by **slinging rotten tomatoes at the great (virtual) works of art using that iconic Beano weapon, the catapult**, and enjoy the splats and splots of their destruction.

The special exhibition shop will feature an exclusive range of limited-edition Beano x Somerset House items alongside a selection of original and inspired gifts for all ages, from clothing, accessories, collectibles and limited edition prints to homewares, games, books and stationery.

FOR PRESS ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:
press@somersetshouse.org.uk/0207 845 4624

BEANO: THE ART OF BREAKING THE RULES

21 October 2021 – 6 March 2022

NOTES TO EDITORS

Tickets now on sale via www.somersethouse.org.uk/beano

Address: Somerset House, Strand, London, WC2R 1LA

Transport: Underground: Temple, Embankment / Rail: Charing Cross, Waterloo, Blackfriars

Website: www.somersethouse.org.uk

Somerset House Facebook:

www.facebook.com/SomersetHouse

Somerset House Twitter: @SomersetHouse

Somerset House Instagram: @SomersetHouse

ABOUT SOMERSET HOUSE

London's working arts centre

Somerset House is London's working arts centre and home to the UK's largest creative community. Built on historic foundations, we are situated in the very heart of the capital.

Dedicated to backing progress, championing openness, nurturing creativity and empowering ideas, our cultural programme is ambitious in scope. We insist on relevance, but aren't afraid of irreverence, and are as keen on entertainment as enrichment. We embrace the biggest issues of our times and are committed to oxygenating new work by emerging artists. Where else can you spend an hour ice-skating while listening to a specially commissioned sound piece by a cutting edge artist?

It is this creative tension – the way we harness our heritage, put the too-often overlooked on our central stage and use our neo-classical backdrop to showcase ground-breaking contemporary culture – that inspires our programme. Old and new, history and disruption, art and entertainment, high-tech and homemade, combined with the fact that we are home to a constantly shape-shifting working creative community: this is our point of difference. It is what we are proud of. And it is what makes the experience of visiting or working in Somerset House inspiring and energising, urgent and exciting. www.somersethouse.org.uk

ABOUT BEANO STUDIOS

Beano Studios is a rebellious content business, driven by insight and data, which creates, curates and delivers entertainment for kids of all ages worldwide. The Studio produces diverse entertainment across multiple destinations; including TV, digital content, theatrical projects, consumer products, plus the legendary comic and annual.

Keep up to date with Beano:

- @BeanoOfficial
- @Beano_Official
- @BeanoOfficial