

# The Next Round

## 14th April- 15th June

@thenextround\_csm  
www.thenextround.uk

Since 2000 more than 13,000 pubs have closed their doors across streets and towns of the United Kingdom. The pub, like the library, has long been a space for communities to meet. This link has become stronger in times of high gas and energy prices, food shortages and the underfunding of community spaces, with pubs and libraries acting as warm spaces of solace in which people can gather. The pub can be regarded as a location of escapism and comfort for many - an escapism in which individuals can gather in a social setting away from their domestic and working realities. However, it has not always been a space of inclusion. The pub has often been a space associated with white male heteronormativity, and despite its atmosphere of community, minorities have often been disregarded. Until 1982 pubs were legally allowed to refuse women.

### Introduction

As a Great British institution, the pub plays a vital role in forming aspects of British identity and creating unity in times of political injustice and dismay. Although the pub is a place for alcohol consumption, it can also be read as the heart of community life in villages, towns and cities, thus maintaining its distinct character within British cultural consciousness.

Kitchen Sink Realism is the cultural movement that emerged during 1950's Britain responding to work class domestic realities. The genre would take form within theatre, visual art, novels, film and television, and the male protagonist's stock-character type became known as the "angry young man" — hypermasculine and disillusioned by a wounded post-war society. Such settings are traditionally seen in the Kitchen Sink Realism movement, as the pub offers a space of rest and reassurance in times of dismay, offering a pseudo-domestic setting, away from the stress of one's own.

### Masculinity

Historically the pub has been perceived as a male dominated space, and a breeding ground for the British subculture known as 'lad culture', a term established to label heterosexual groups of young men. The rise of football culture became a label for masculinity, creating a community of passion and discussion, amounting to a shared sense of identity. The pub becomes a reflection of societal hierarchy, and further highlights the hegemonic power of white male privilege. The patriarchy was often reinforced in the pub setting - up until 1982 women were legally allowed to be refused service in pubs. Tessa Gill and Anna Coote, as victims of this outdated law, successfully fought legal action under the Sex discrimination act of 1975, ultimately allowing women to enjoy a pint.

### Cost of Living

The cost of living crisis reflects the political terrains the UK is currently faced with, rising prices of domestic living are equally harming the business of the public house. Gas and heating prices are in inflation, and household energy bills are rapidly increasing along with food prices. On average across the country, fifty pubs a month are being forced to close their doors. In order to maintain business the pub must also increase its prices, putting the customers suffering from the cost of living crisis in a vulnerable position. This dynamic holds complexities as the pub has always offered a place for escapism. Customers look to go there for refuge from their domestic settings, seek warmth in the winter months and meet with their friends. However, currently customers are still constrained as to how much they can spend. Now more than ever the British demographic is in need of community after such a hard hit on the financial and social aspects of everyday life.

### Public Ritual

The Pub itself is derived from 'The Public House', encapsulating in this name a sense of community and gathering, providing sanctuary amongst hardship. The pub fosters recreational habits, and acts as a place of social freedom for the public. It can be recognised as a liminal space, where storytelling becomes a common ritual of the pub's atmosphere. To get a round in is to buy drinks for the guests you're sat with - this unity and efficiency perfectly encapsulates the transactional nature of the British spirit. The history of the pub has also been a place where union workers, miners specifically, gathered in Britain under Thatcher rule. This political history is important when seeking the habits of the ritual within the pub, where the proletariat can voice action against political injustice, and speak their mind in a safe space uniting over shared oppression.

**Bryony Hillman** is a London born painter. Her practice derives from her experience of city life; she is a painter of contemporary landscapes polluted with contemporary artefacts and embellishments. Hillman's practice is concerned with synopsising 'today' with speculative precision, entertaining peculiar tensions between the depicted, the painted, and the illusionary. Her paintings are ambiguous renderings of modern life, which cultivate a sense of domestic anarchy, or mundane disorder, executed with a bleak and despondent irreconcilability.

**Corbin Shaw** is a British artist based in Bethnal Green, East London. Originally from Sheffield, Corbin explores ideas of masculinity through the medium of textiles, known for his unique take on the St George's cross, where he hijacks the stereotypes associated with the flag with text, sometimes messages of support and love, sometimes satirical takes on the 'Englishman' so when finished, they form a witty take on the ever-recognisable symbol. Using his upbringing in a South Yorkshire ex-mining town Corbin investigate's masculinity and how that was defined to him growing up. Breaking stigma's and stereotypes through his re-imagination of masculine 'icons' and objects. The artist pays homage to the people and places that have shaped his northern identity - the pub, football pitches and boxing gyms.

**Eleanor McLean** is a British artist and MA Sculpture Royal College of Arts graduate based in London. Her practice centres around sculpture and installation, translating in poetic forms of nostalgia and dreamlike memories, playing on heterotopia- worlds within worlds and the fluidity of the subconscious. Eleanor's work combines found objects and her artistic thematisations to draw on intimate memories, often shared memories found within British culture.

We would like to say thank you to the pubs of Camden for allowing us to conduct research and sample recordings. The Hawley Arms, Quinns, Tapping the Admiral, Oxford Arms, Ye Olde Swiss Cottage, to mention a few. A special thank you should be extended the team at LASSCO for their generous loan of rugs and further memorabilia. Not to forget a thank you to Finn Mayhew for editing the audio that is played throughout the space. Additional thank you to Francesca Hender, CSM BA Fine Art, for letting us use her sketches.

**LASSCO**

**BA Culture, Criticism and Curation in collaboration with Camden Council.**