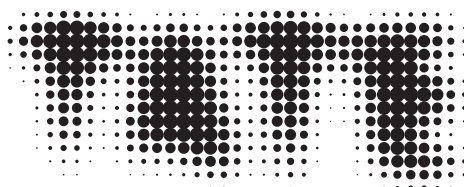


# FRANK BOWLING

31 May – 26 August 2019

## LARGE PRINT GUIDE



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# INTRODUCTION

## FRANK BOWLING

‘The possibilities of paint are never-ending’

Frank Bowling, 2017

Over the past 60 years, Frank Bowling (born 1934) has relentlessly explored the properties and possibilities of paint. He has experimented with staining, pouring and layering, adopting a variety of materials and objects. Throughout his career, Bowling has investigated the tension between geometry and fluidity. His large, ambitious paintings are known for their distinctive textured surfaces and colourful, luminous quality.

This is the first full retrospective exhibition dedicated to Bowling. It covers each phase in his long and sustained career. Beginning with his early figurative paintings, created in London in the early 1960s, it traces the progress of his work as he relocated to New York, US in 1966. Here, his paintings became increasingly abstract, without relinquishing references to his personal life. For many years Bowling lived and worked between New York and London. Both cities have had an impact on his work, alongside his childhood home in New Amsterdam, Guyana. The exhibition goes on to feature the ‘map paintings’, the ‘poured paintings’ and works from the **Great Thames** series. It ends with his most recent canvases in which his experiments continue.

At 85 years of age, Bowling still paints every day. His work relies on technical skill while embracing chance and the unpredictable. Bowling's paintings embody his ongoing pursuit of change, transformation and renewal.

ROOM 1

## EARLY WORK: LIFE, POLITICS AND PERSONAL NARRATIVES

Frank Bowling was born in 1934 in Guyana (then British Guiana), South America. In 1953 he left his home town New Amsterdam and travelled to London. He arrived here during the celebration for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. After some early attempts at poetry and two years of service in the Royal Air Force, Bowling enrolled at the Royal College of Art, London. From 1959 to 1962 he studied painting alongside a talented and ambitious group of students. These included artists Derek Boshier, David Hockney and R.B. Kitaj.

Bowling's early work demonstrates his interest in social and political issues as well as personal narratives. It often depicts painful memories and disenfranchised individuals. During this time Bowling started to use both figuration and abstraction in his work. Adopting the theme of a dying swan, he began to explore formal concerns. He used principles of geometry to shape the canvas and structure the composition. He also began to study colour theory and juxtapose planes of bold colours.



## Vitrine

### Left to Right

As a young artist in London, Bowling was part of various networks and showed his work in different exhibition contexts. Alongside several of his peers at the Royal College of Art (RCA), he was included in important exhibitions, such as **Young Contemporaries** 1961, and featured in the book **Private View: The Lively World of British Art** 1965. He was also involved in The Young Commonwealth Artists' Group, a society in which he made connections with other London-based artists from Commonwealth countries. Bowling's inclusion in these different art world contexts would play a major role throughout his career.



**Young Contemporaries**, exhibition catalogue,  
RBA Galleries, London  
1961

The 1961 annual selection of student work is famous for launching the career of a number of RCA students, including Bowling.

Tate Library and Archive  
Z74833

**Frank Bowling's letter of readmission to the Royal College of Art (RCA), London**  
December 1960

Bowling enrolled at the RCA in autumn 1959. His marriage to the writer Paddy Kitchen, a member of staff at the RCA, led to his expulsion in 1960. He transferred to the Slade School of Fine Art for one term, before returning to the RCA in 1961.

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive  
Z74837

**Image in Revolt**, exhibition catalogue,  
Grabowski Gallery, London  
1962

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive  
Z74839

**Frank Bowling photographed by Lord Snowdon**

**Private View: The Lively World of British Art**,  
by Bryan Robertson, John Russell, Lord Snowdon

Published by Thomas Nelson & Sons, London 1965

Tate Library and Archive  
Z74834

**Young Commonwealth Artists**, exhibition catalogue,  
Woodstock Gallery, London  
1962

Facsimile

Courtesy Jonathan Kingdon and Frank Bowling Archive  
Z74838

Frank Bowling's **Swan II** 1964 installed at the London Group  
exhibition, Society of Watercolour Painters, Piccadilly  
1966

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive  
Z74840

## Clockwise from wall text

### **Birthday**

1962

Oil paint on canvas

As an exercise, students at the Royal College of Art were asked to make a painting on the theme of birthdays. This was Bowling's response. He painted **Birthday** years after he had witnessed the intense pain of a neighbour giving birth. Bowling was inspired by the British painter Francis Bacon (1909–1992). We can see his influence in the gestural brush strokes and depiction of a dramatic subject in an ordinary environment. In 1962, **Birthday** was included in a two-person exhibition with Derek Boshier at the respected Grabowski Gallery, London. It was then acquired by the Arts Council Collection.

Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London  
X72830



## **Beggar no. 6**

1963

Oil paint on canvas

Bowling made a series of **Beggar** paintings following his first return visit to Guyana. He remembers his mother giving food to people begging in the street. She would gather them in front of her store on Saturdays, and, as the eldest son in the family, Bowling had to wash their hands and feet before they could eat. He remembers his feelings of both sympathy and repulsion, 'the indignity of having to wash them'. In **Beggar no. 6**, the expressive rendering of the figure, his mouth open in distress, contrasts with the more abstract way in which the street, pavement and background have been painted.

Private collection, UK

X72878

## Swan I

1964

Oil paint and feathers on canvas

After he had witnessed a dying swan covered in oil on the river Thames, Bowling made several paintings on this theme. He brought together different references in these works. The lozenge shape of the canvases is associated with the US painter Kenneth Noland (1924–2010). The coloured stripes are inspired by a painting by British artist Bridget Riley (b.1931). Flapping hopelessly, the forms of the swans are set against the regularity of the chevrons. We might see the swans as metaphors for the human urge towards freedom. The paintings also reflect Bowling's desire to confront the legacy of different strands of abstraction.

Private collection

X72952

**Swan II**

1964

Oil paint on canvas

Courtesy of Frank Bowling and Hales Gallery

X72879

## Big Bird

1964

Oil paint and velvet fabric on canvas

In **Big Bird**, the loosely geometric background is reminiscent of the grid-like compositions of Dutch artist Piet Mondrian (1872–1944). It contrasts with the expressively abstracted figures of the wounded birds. In 1962, Bowling had written his graduation thesis on Mondrian. He was interested in Mondrian's use of geometry and colour, but had reservations about abstract art theories that imposed too tight an order. In 1965, **Big Bird** was submitted to the **First World Festival of Negro Arts** in Dakar where it won the Grand Prize for painting. Bowling felt conflicted about this inclusion and about being categorised as a Black artist.

Victoria Gallery & Museum, University of Liverpool

X72693





## Wall text

### LOST AND DESTROYED PICTURES

In the early 1960s Bowling worked in various London studios. When he moved to New York he left behind a number of paintings. Many of these works have since been destroyed or their whereabouts are unknown.

Among the lost paintings are two which represented current political events. **Martyrdom of Patrice Lumumba** 1961 commemorated the first prime minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo following independence from Belgium. Lumumba was murdered in 1961, allegedly with help from Belgium and the United States. **Lent** 1963, with scenes of violence next to images of armed troops, addressed the political tension surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962.

In 1963, Bowling was commissioned to make artworks to commemorate 400 years since Shakespeare's birth. He produced three large paintings, up to ten metres wide. After they were exhibited, the paintings were stored at Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts in London. A tutor later cut them up to provide canvas for students. The only record of the commission is an image of **The Execution of Mary Queen of Scots** installed at the exhibition.

In **Self-portrait for E.J.** 1962 Bowling portrayed himself as the Shakespearean character Othello. The painting was dedicated to his friend, the artist Elisabeth Frink, at the time Elisabeth Jammet (thus the initial E.J.).

**Images left to right:**

**Martyrdom of Patrice Lumumba** 1961,  
oil paint on canvas, 1830 x 1525mm;

**Lent** 1963, oil paint on two panels, each 1829 x 1829mm

**Frank Bowling with The Execution of Mary Queen of Scots**  
1963, at Stratford-upon-Avon, 1964

**Self-portrait for E.J.** 1962, oil paint on canvas, 1840 x  
2450mm;

**Bowling posing with Self-portrait for E.J.** 1962, c.1965.  
Photo: Tony Evans/Timelapse Library Ltd. (Getty Images)

All images courtesy Frank Bowling Archive

ROOM 2

## PHOTOGRAPHS INTO PAINTINGS

Between 1964 and 1967, Bowling brought together many different pictorial approaches, sources and techniques. This was a period of great change in his life and career. In 1966, he moved from London to New York, and was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship the next year. This enabled him to establish himself in the US, where he spent most of the following decade.

Bowling continued to use figurative elements in his work. Some are expressionistic, painted in a gestural manner. Others are more graphic, rendered through printing techniques. Bowling adopted different images as sources for his figures. These include photographs of scenes he staged, family pictures and images from magazines. A silkscreened image of his family home in New Amsterdam became a central element in his paintings.

His mother built the house for her family, who occupied the upper floors, and her business, Bowling's Variety Store, situated on the ground floor. From 1966–7, Bowling also began to use stencils in his work, and the first outlines of continent-like shapes appear. These works signal his ongoing interest in geometry, intuitive use of bold planes of colour and exploitation of the unpredictable nature of paint.



## **Vitrine**

### **Left to Right**

**Frank Bowling with Michelle Delderfield, a receptionist for Vidal Sassoon, in his London studio**  
c.1966

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive  
Photo: Chris Morgan Davis  
Z74856

### **The Observer Magazine**

March 1966

This magazine cover features model Hiroko Matsumoto. It became the inspiration for Cover Girl 1966.

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive  
Z74842

**Bowling's Variety Store, the artist's family home and  
mother's business in New Amsterdam, Guyana**

1953

Bowling's mother posted him this photograph, taken on Coronation Day in 1953. In the 1960s, he enlarged it and created a stock of silkscreened images on canvas that he used in several paintings in this room.

Courtesy of Frank Bowling Archive.

Z74845

**Frank Bowling swinging out into space from the spiral  
staircase of the Royal College of Art, London**

1964

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive

Photo: Tony Evans

Z74844

**Paddy Kitchen descending the spiral staircase of the Royal  
College of Art, London**

1964

Bowling commissioned the photographer Tony Evans to take a sequence of images of himself and then-wife Paddy Kitchen. These images were used in **Mirror** 1964–6.

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive

Photo: Tony Evans

Z74843

## Clockwise from wall text

### **My Guyana**

1966–7

Acrylic paint, oil paint and silkscreened ink on canvas  
When he moved to New York in 1966, Bowling took with him several canvases he had printed with the stencil of his mother's house. In **My Guyana**, he stitched one of these screenprinted canvases onto a larger canvas, soaked with primary colours. The figure using crutches is taken from an earlier figurative work, cut-out and stapled to the main canvas. Bowling said that at this time he saw himself 'as a boy trying to fill in the gaps of bad memory. I used my mother's store as a window out of which I looked at the world'.

Private collection

X73352



## Mirror

1964–6

Oil paint on canvas

Bowling carefully worked out the composition of this painting in order to achieve a sense of dynamism. The central motif is the spiral staircase connecting the painting studios at the Royal College of Art to the Victoria & Albert Museum. Bowling based the work on photographs he had staged. In the painting he appears swinging from the top of the staircase and again at the bottom. In-between is writer Paddy Kitchen, who was married to Bowling at the time. The painting fuses several different painting styles. It suggests rebellion against conventions and epitomises a moment of transition in the artist's life.

Tate. Presented by the artist, Rachel Scott, and their 4 children: Benjamin and Sacha Bowling, Marcia and Iona Scott 2013

T13936



## Mother's House Overprinted x 3

1967

Acrylic paint on canvas

Although similar in composition to **Beware of the Dog**, this painting signals major changes. Bowling had begun to experiment with flooding thin acrylic washes over canvases spread on the floor. In addition, he started to include references to maps in his paintings. Bowling recalls how he began to trace the movement of shifting shadows thrown by the window light, which at one point assumed the look of the outline of South America. Here, this shape dominates the bottom part of the canvas. To its right is the outline of the map of Guyana, which schoolchildren of Bowling's age had to learn to draw from memory.

Private collection of Timothy C. Headington

X75668

## **Bowling's Variety Store**

1967

Acrylic paint on canvas

This work signals Bowling's desire to explore new pictorial possibilities, developing an increasingly simplified type of abstraction. The form of Bowling's mother's house and store has completely disappeared, its memory retained only through the stencilled lettering of the first part of the store's name. The lower right rectangle might represent the back of an empty canvas and seems to hint at a new beginning. By this time, Bowling had adopted acrylic paint as his primary medium, continuing to explore the use and juxtaposition of primary and secondary colours.

Joyner / Giuffrida Collection

X73315

## **Mother's House with Beware of the Dog**

1966

Acrylic paint and silkscreened ink on canvas

In this painting, Bowling brings together disparate elements in a playful manner. A canvas with a silkscreened image of Bowling's mother's house is glued to other sections of canvases, conveying a sense of ephemerality. The lower part of the work is subdivided into geometric fields of colours. The rat-like figure points towards the stencilled lettering 'beware of the dog', which was the sign that hung at the gate of his mother's property. He has also used stencilled symbols of electrical circuits and components in the composition.

Private collection, UK

X73314

## Cover Girl

1966

Acrylic paint, oil paint and silkscreened ink on canvas  
In this painting Bowling brought together an image of 1960s swinging London and a family photograph. The image of the house derives from a photograph of his childhood home and mother's business, Bowling's Variety Store, in New Amsterdam. When he was teaching in London, Bowling had screenprinted this image onto several canvases. Here, the ghostly image of the house sits beneath looming clouds. The image of the girl is derived from an **Observer** magazine front cover of the Japanese model Hiroko Matsumoto. Her Pierre Cardin dress and Vidal Sassoon haircut exemplify the use of geometry in 1960s fashion.

Private collection

X72880



ROOM 3

## THE MAP PAINTINGS

Soon after moving to New York in 1966, Bowling stopped painting the human figure. He began working on a group of paintings characterised by their scale, fluid application of acrylic paint and luminosity. Additionally, through his writing in **Arts Magazine** (1969–72), Bowling played a key role in debates around 'Black Art'. He championed the rights of artists to engage in any form of artistic expression, irrespective of their identity or background.

The works in this room, referred to as the 'map paintings', date from 1967–71. Fields of colour are overlaid with stencilled maps of the world and silkscreened images.

Bowling worked on unstretched canvases, placing them on the floor and on the wall. He applied paint by staining, pouring and spraying. The southern hemisphere often dominates these canvases. This focus marks Bowling's rejection of the western-centric cartography of many world maps. Images of the artist's mother and children are among those silkscreened onto some of the canvases. The results are complex, layered artworks. These 'map paintings' reveal Bowling's interest in the way identities are shaped by geo-politics and displacement.



## Vitrine

Displayed here are examples of preparatory stencils and screens Bowling used to make the outlines of maps of Guyana and South America.

They are shown alongside photographic portraits that Bowling screenprinted onto his 'map paintings'. He also made several works on paper featuring maps, one of which is in this vitrine.



## **Left to Right**

### **Stencil and map of Guyana**

c.1971, printed 2017

In several paintings, Bowling used paper stencils to spraypaint the outline of the map of Guyana.

In **Mel Edwards Decides** 1968 (displayed in this room), the map is silkscreened in different orientations and as a mirror image, becoming increasingly abstract.

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive.

Z74898

**Screen for screenprinting featuring map of South America created in 1969, photographed in Frank Bowling's London studio**

2017

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive. Photo: Rose Jones.

Z74899

**Pinboard in Frank Bowling's studio at 535 Broadway,  
SoHo, New York**  
c.1969

In 1968, Bowling travelled to New Amsterdam with the photographer Tina Tranter. They documented people and places of personal interest to the artist. When he returned to New York, Bowling pinned many of these photographs onto a large board in his studio. Among the portraits visible in this section of the pinboard are photographs of Bowling's young sons, Dan and Sasha (bottom of the photograph), and his mother.

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive.

Photo: Daniel LaRue Johnson.

Z74896

**Agatha Chrissie Bowling**

1968

This photograph shows Bowling's mother. It was taken during Bowling and Tranter's trip to Guyana in 1968.

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive. Photo: Tina Tranter.

Z74902

Frank Bowling

**Map with Spray Paint**

c.1969

Spray paint and ink on card

**Map with Spray Paint** belongs to a series of works where Bowling used fragments of texts discussing the activities of the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition (BECC). This group of African-American artists came together in January 1969 to protest against the exhibition **Harlem on My Mind: Cultural Capital of Black America, 1900–1968**, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (18 January – 6 April 1969). The exhibition did not include any paintings and sculptures by African-American artists based in Harlem.

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive.

Z74900

## Anticlockwise from wall text

### **Middle Passage**

1970

Acrylic paint on canvas

**Middle Passage** refers to the journey Europeans forced millions of enslaved Africans to take across the Atlantic to the Americas as part of the slave trade. Bowling includes screenprinted images of his mother and children in the work. The repeated portraits are at times barely legible. Bowling's decision to use personal images in a work titled after the history of transatlantic slavery is an interesting one. Bowling stated: 'I named the painting **Middle Passage** because I am a product of the middle passage. But ... I do not bring my images together because of the history and brutality of that terrible crossing, but rather in spite of it'.

Michael Nesbitt, Winnipeg, Canada

X72840

## **South America Squared**

1967

Acrylic paint and spray paint on canvas

This is one of the first paintings in which the outline of South America is centred on the canvas. The square around the continent gives it further prominence. Bowling transferred the continental shape onto the canvas using a stencil made with an epidiascope (an optical projector). This technique was introduced to him by the US artist Larry Rivers (1923–2002). The map is both a real thing – the vast mass of a continent – and a compositional device used to organise colour and shapes on the canvas.

Rennie Collection, Vancouver

X72835

## Mel Edwards Decides

1968

Acrylic paint and spray paint on canvas

The same visual elements are repeated three times over three rows in this painting: the outline of 'mother's house' at the top of the canvas, South America in the middle ground, and Guyana in the lower part. Bowling spray painted these outlines onto the canvas, using stencils. He also stencilled his name, as if to mark a place for himself within these three interlinked geographies of 'home'. The title refers to the US sculptor Melvin Edwards, whose work Bowling admired. Bowling included work by Edwards in **5+1**, the exhibition he curated at the State University of New York at Stony Brook in 1969.

Private collection, client of Adam Green Art Advisory  
X72837

## Who's Afraid of Barney Newman

1968

Acrylic paint and silkscreened ink on canvas

The title of this work refers to a painting by the American abstract artist, Barnett Newman (1905–1970), **Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue II** 1967. The central, narrow yellow area seems to quote the vertical 'zip' that Newman often used in his paintings. Bowling's vertical stripes of colour also feature stencilled outlines of his mother's house and of the map of South America. Bowling stated that Newman's art 'was like a wall, so I thought you should open it up'. It asserts the artist's desire to measure himself against and playfully challenge the father figures of US abstract expressionism.

Tate. Presented by Rachel Scott 2006

T12244



**Entering the next section, clockwise**

**Dog Daze**

1971

Acrylic paint and spray paint on two canvases

Private collection, Germany

X72843



## **Bartica**

1968–9

Acrylic paint on canvas

Bartica is the town in Guyana where Bowling was born. It is situated at the confluence of three large rivers: Cuyuni, Mazaruni and Essequibo. In 1968 Bowling travelled to Guyana with the photographer Tina Tranter (1938–1987). They documented people and places of personal significance. Back in New York, Bowling began to screenprint some of these photographs onto his paintings. In **Bartica**, we can also distinguish screenprinted images of two of his sons, who were living in England. The artist explained that, although pushing his work towards abstraction, he could not let go of these references – his memories of Guyana and his family.

Sheldon Inwentash and Lynn Factor, Toronto

X72836



## **Raining Down South**

1968

Acrylic paint and spray paint on canvas

Courtesy of Frank Bowling and Hales Gallery

X72838

## Penumbra

1970

Acrylic paint and spray paint on canvas

This painting is named after the penumbra, a region of shade between areas of full shadow, as seen during an eclipse. Here Bowling explores darkness and shadow, using blues and greens. The composition also reshuffles the western representation of the northern hemisphere. In 1967 Bowling had acquired a large studio in SoHo, New York and started working on large scale paintings. There he built a wooden platform on which he painted unstretched canvases, spreading and pouring diluted colour.

Courtesy of Frank Bowling and Hales Gallery

X72841



## **Polish Rebecca**

1971

Acrylic paint and spray paint on canvas

Polish Rebecca was one of six paintings presented in Bowling's solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1971. It was featured on the cover of the exhibition catalogue. The title refers to the Polish heritage of a close friend, Rita Reinhardt (née Ziprkowski), the widow of the New York painter Ad Reinhardt. Her parents and sister were killed during the Holocaust. In **Polish Rebecca**, the loose representation of the continental forms of Africa and South America, alongside the choice of title, hint at the geo-politics of both Jewish and African diasporas.

Private collection

X72891

**Barticaborn I**

1967

Acrylic paint, spray paint and oil wax on canvas

Lowinger Family Collection

X73395

ROOM 4

## THE POURED PAINTINGS

Around 1973, Bowling began pouring paint on to canvases to produce layered effects of contrasting colours. The resulting paintings reveal the processes of their making. They were Bowling's personal response to the challenges of formalism in modernist painting, a critical stance promoted by the American art critic Clement Greenberg. It suggested that the visual aspects of an artwork are more important than narrative content. Greenberg supported Bowling's work and the two were friends.

In his New York and London studios, Bowling built a tilting platform that allowed him to pour paint from heights of up to two metres. The spilling paint created an energetic and innovative painting style. These 'poured paintings' were the result of controlled chance. They reveal Bowling's interest in the tension between a structured approach to painting and accidental developments.

During this time Bowling's artwork titles became increasingly enigmatic. Bowling names a painting once it is finished, attempting to reconnect with what took place during its making. Titles often allude to aspects of the artist's daily life, referencing people and personal

associations. Yet they remain ambiguous, preventing a prescriptive reading of his work.





## Anticlockwise from wall text

### Tony's Anvil

1975

Acrylic paint on canvas

This painting is a homage to British sculptor Anthony Caro (1924–2013), known as Tony by friends. Bowling wrote about the artist: 'Caro's sculpture, for a long time, blinded me to all other work in this area [...] and dazzled me by its inventiveness and variety – those boundless, new juxtapositions of such ordinary found things.' In its bold use of primary colours, **Tony's Anvil** exudes the energy and strength of vision that Bowling admired in Caro. It also signals his desire to compete with the formalist artists he felt aligned with, such as US painters Jules Olitski (1922–2007) and Larry Poons (b.1937).

Private collection, London, courtesy of Jessica McCormack  
X72893



**Ziff**

1974

Acrylic paint on canvas

Private collection, London, courtesy of Jessica McCormack

X72892

## Kaieteurtoo

1975

Acrylic paint on canvas

Bowling achieved the layered effect of colours in this work by pre-mixing his paint, placing each colour in a different jar, then pouring the jars of paint down a ramp onto the canvas. Each colour of wet paint ran into the next. The title was inspired by a conversation Bowling had with the Guyanese sculptor Donald Locke (1930–2010). Locke commented that Bowling's poured paintings resemble the image of Kaieteur Falls used to advertise Guyana as a tourist destination. Kaieteur Falls is the world's largest single drop waterfall.

UK Government Art Collection

X72686



## **Trampoline**

1975

Acrylic paint on canvas

Collection of Miles Gerstein and Susan Davis

X75059

## **Yonder**

1976

Acrylic paint on canvas

Private collection

X73555

## **At Swim Two Manatee**

1977–8

Acrylic paint on canvas

In this painting, Bowling has combined a growing number of disparate techniques. These include variations of staining (from washes of paint), spattering (by flicking the brush), hand-applied splotches and pouring, at times allowing paint to run down in rivulets. The paint here is less diluted, the greater density giving the paint a sense of material presence. Bowling explained that his desire at the time was to continue experimenting with colour while enabling a looser and more spontaneous structure. He saw his direction as 'to make painting happen almost as if I didn't do anything about it'.

Courtesy of Frank Bowling and Hales Gallery

X72890

## Caesar's Plume

1975

Acrylic paint on canvas

Ar fenthyg gan / Lent by Amgueddfa Cymru – National  
Museum Wales

X72834

ROOM 5

## COSMIC SPACE

By the end of the 1970s, Bowling was fully in control of the painting techniques he had spent the last ten years fine-tuning. He had a deep understanding of the dynamics of the flow of paint and the drama of colour combination. In need of new challenges, he adopted a variety of interventions. Bowling began using ammonia and pearlescence, and applied splotches of paint by hand, producing marbling effects. He embraced accidents, allowing him to achieve unexpected results. For example, the round imprint of a bucket, left to rest on a drying canvas, contributed to the composition of **Vitacress** 1981 and became a recurring device.

The paintings displayed in this room might make us think of atmospheric impressions of skies, visions of the world and the cosmos, or alchemical transformations. Bowling doesn't create works with these references in mind. However, he welcomes different responses and interpretations from viewers.





## **Clockwise from wall text**

### **Bartica Bressary**

1978–9

Acrylic paint on canvas

Collection of Pete Miles, UK

X72898

### **Mazarunitankfeat**

1979

Acrylic paint on canvas

Collection of Pete Miles, UK

X72899

## Devil's Sole

1980

Acrylic paint on canvas

Collection of Pete Miles, UK

X72900

Unlike some of Bowling's earlier 'poured paintings', these works were not made by pouring different layers of pre-mixed paints. Here Bowling used paints of similar tints and applied them in different ways – by spattering, dripping and pouring. The dominant areas of pink, magenta and purple paint seem to hover on top of layers of darker and lighter colour, visible underneath. Through these means Bowling was beginning to further explore the properties of natural light, making pictures that seem to generate light from within. These works were produced in a studio in Claverton Street, five minutes' walk from Tate Britain.

## Serpentine

1982

Acrylic paint, acrylic gel, acrylic foam and other materials on canvas

This painting is testament to the major changes Bowling made to his work around 1982. He began to create heavily encrusted surfaces using acrylic paint and gel, as well as incorporating acrylic foam. The foam, originally used as a packing material, was enclosed in acrylic gel to try to hold it in place. In this painting most of the material slipped away, with only some sticking to the surface. Yet Bowling considered the painting complete, exemplifying the way in which he allowed chance into the development of his work.

Private collection, London, courtesy of Jessica McCormack  
X72896



## **Moby Dick**

1981

Acrylic paint on canvas

Private collection

X72889

## **Ah Susan Woosh**

1981

Acrylic paint on canvas

Bowling allowed chemical transformations to take place in this work by adding water, ammonia and turpentine to acrylic paint. He poured colours directly onto the canvas and manipulated the paint with a squeegee. This technique required Bowling to make quick decisions about the relationships between form and colour. The interaction of warm and cool hues and use of different tones gives the painting a sense of glowing luminosity.

Private collection, London

X72894

**Vitacress**

1981

Acrylic paint on canvas

Private collection, London

X72895



ROOM 6

## MORE LAND THAN LANDSCAPE

In the 1980s, Bowling continued to explore the colour and structure of his compositions, but now added his latest experiments building up textures on the surface.

Bowling began mixing acrylic paint with acrylic gel. This material is similar to acrylic paint, but without the colour pigment. Bowling used acrylic gel to extend the volume of paint, create greater texture, and add transparency. Additionally, he used acrylic foam. He cut the material into thin strips, to create linear accents and suggest loosely geometric shapes. He also started to use a range of other materials and objects in his work. He applied metallic pigments, fluorescent chalk, beeswax and glitter to his densely textured surfaces. In several works, found objects such as plastic toys, packing material, the cap of a film canister and oyster shells are embedded within the paint. These items are rarely fully visible but add to the complexity and mysterious quality of his works.

The diverse materials and objects in these paintings invite us to pay attention to their materiality. The works extend towards the viewer, prompting a more physical engagement. While it has often been said that these paintings suggest landscapes and seascapes, the painter Dennis de Caires stated that they are 'more land than

landscape' and 'portray the marriage of man to the physical world' (1986).





## Anticlockwise from wall text

### **Towards Crab Island**

1983

Acrylic paint, acrylic gel, acrylic foam and other materials on canvas

In **Towards Crab Island** the action of gravity has played a part in the accidental arrangement of the strips of foam that form its composition. The heavy mixture of paint and gel that was poured over the foam pulled it downwards. Bright and dark colours are juxtaposed to create a strong contrast and a sense of shimmering luminosity. The title refers to the name of an area located on the bank of the Berbice River, Guyana. Its mangrove forest is still thick, although threatened by plans to create an onshore oil base or deep-water port.

Sheldon Inwentash and Lynn Factor, Toronto

X72897

## **Flambouriarischoice**

1983

Acrylic paint, acrylic gel and acrylic foam on canvas

Collection of Stephen & Yana Peel

X73010

## **Jetty II**

1988

Acrylic paint, acrylic gel, acrylic foam and other materials on canvas

Private collection

X73011

## **Philoctetes Bow**

1987

Acrylic paint, acrylic gel, acrylic foam and other materials  
on canvas

Courtesy of Frank Bowling and Hales Gallery

X72886

## **Silver Birch (No Man, No Vote)**

1985

Acrylic paint, acrylic gel, acrylic foam and other materials on canvas

The title refers both to the silver birch tree, and to Bowling's support of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. The African National Congress (ANC) and Nelson Mandela's call for 'One man, one vote' had become central to the collapse of the apartheid system of racial segregation. In 1994 democratic rule was established, giving everyone the right to vote. Alongside **Towards Crab Island** and **Wintergreens**, this was one of the paintings included in Bowling's exhibition in one of the three rooms at the Serpentine Gallery, London, in 1986.

Collection of Miles Gerstein and Susan Davis

X75063

## Wintergreens

1986

Acrylic paint, acrylic gel, acrylic foam and other materials on canvas

In 1984, a summer residency at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, in rural Maine, US led Bowling to create paintings inspired by the lush landscape of forests. In **Wintergreens**, he attached strips of acrylic foam to the canvas to create a grid-like structure. He then applied thick layers of paint and acrylic gel which weighed down the foam, pulling it into new shapes as he moved the canvas from the floor to the wall. Objects such as the cap of a film canister and a plastic toy owl are nestled into the surface.

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London

X72832

## Spreadout Ron Kitaj

1984–6

Acrylic paint, oil paint, acrylic gel, damar, beeswax, chalk, metallic pigments, acrylic foam, shells and plastic toys on canvas

The title of this work pays homage to the artist R.B. Kitaj, Bowling's fellow student at the RCA. Kitaj had seen Bowling's exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery, London in 1986 and had written to express his admiration, reconnecting after many years. Bowling described the strips of acrylic foam he used in paintings like this as 'the ribs of the geometry from which I worked'. The surface of **Spreadout Ron Kitaj** also houses shredded plastic packing material, plastic jewellery, toys and oyster shells.

Purchased 1987

T04889



ROOM 7

## WATER AND LIGHT

This room brings together four paintings completed in 1989. They demonstrate Bowling's engagement with both the gestural handling and expanses of colour of abstract expressionism and with his interest in English landscape painting.

Two of the paintings belong to the series **Great Thames**, made in Bowling's studio in east London, close to the River Thames. These paintings capture the play of light on the water, changing with the time of the day and the seasons. They are some of Bowling's most poetic paintings and hint at the work of the English landscape artists he deeply admires, particularly Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788), J.M.W. Turner (1775–1851) and John Constable (1776–1837).

When Bowling travelled back to New Amsterdam in 1989, he recognised the particular light of Guyana had also been key to his painting. He stated: 'When I looked at the landscape in Guyana, I understood the light in my pictures is a very different light. I saw a crystalline haze, maybe an East wind and water rising up into the sky. It occurred to me for the first time, in my fifties, that the light is about Guyana. It is a constant in my efforts' (1992).





## Clockwise from wall text

### Great Thames II

1989

Acrylic paint, acrylic gel, acrylic foam and other materials on canvas

This work is part of Bowling's **Great Thames** series. When Bowling made these paintings he was spending more time in London and living in Pimlico, near Tate Britain (then Tate Gallery). Bowling spent time re-engaging with English landscape painting, which he had known well since his student days. He was particularly interested in J.M.W. Turner, whose work is shown at Tate. Bowling stated 'it's exciting and challenging to work in London, Turner's town, and the pressures of the weight of British tradition is exhilarating'.

Private collection

X72953



## **Fishes, Wishes and Uncle Jack**

1989

Acrylic paint and other materials on canvas

There is a sense of depth in this painting and shimmering colour shines through. Discussing paintings from this period, Bowling likened the quality of the light to the seascape of Guyana: 'There's a feel of silver light – you see it in the alluvial silty mud by the sea.' Bowling's handling of his medium can be likened to John Constable's sweeping brushstrokes and smatterings of white paint that suggest flickering light. The title of this work refers to Jack O'Connell, who was landlord of the Finches pub in Fulham, London, and was a father figure to Bowling.

Private collection

X75068

## **Great Thames IV**

1988–9

Acrylic paint, acrylic gel, acrylic foam and other materials  
on canvas

Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London

X72685

## Sacha Jason Guyana Dreams

1989

Acrylic paint and resin on canvas

The surface of this work is richly textured. Bowling applied acrylic paint mixed with gel on to the canvas using a spatula. This created a rippling effect, which evokes the shifting patterns made by sunlight on water. Earlier in 1989 Bowling had travelled to New Amsterdam with his son Sacha. He was deeply affected by the quality of light. The bright sunlight coupled with the heat haze caused by evaporated water makes it hard to perceive depth. Bowling titled **Sacha Jason Guyana Dreams** after this moment when he realised how important the light of Guyana is to his painterly exploration.

Tate. Purchased 2006

T12134



ROOM 8

## LAYERING AND STITCHING

In the 1990s, Bowling continued to work with acrylic paint and gel, incorporating different materials and objects into his paintings. His interest in the painting as an object prompted him to stitch canvases together. He started to attach his main canvas to brightly-coloured strips of secondary canvas, which created a border.

Bowling also began working on smaller paintings. For decades he had mostly worked on a large-scale, so these smaller format works offered a new challenge. He could experiment with the treatment of the support and use sections of the same canvas in different works. Bowling began to work on more than one painting simultaneously. Sections of earlier cut-out canvases, with different paint applications and colours, would be stapled and glued together. The staples, which fix the different sections of the cloth together before the glue binds them, are records of the artist's process. This technique enhances the materiality of the works, while also conveying a sense of ephemerality.



## Anticlockwise from wall text

### **Girls in the City**

1991

Acrylic paint and acrylic gel on canvas  
(seven panels)

By the early 1990s, Bowling had stopped using acrylic foam. He continued using acrylic gel, but now applied it less thickly, with a spatula. He also experimented with new ways of creating texture on the flat surface of the canvas. In **Girls in the City** he did this by joining together seven individually stretched canvases. Describing works produced in this period, Bowling said that they were 'organised in the way people structure themselves, in the way we are, we live in buildings and express life in opposition to minimalism, enclosure and death'.

Courtesy Frank Bowling

X72884



**Traingone (Mahaicony Abary)**

1996

Acrylic paint on canvas

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry. Purchased with assistance of MGC/V&A Purchase Grant Fund

X72901

**From V2-RS1**

2005

Acrylic paint and other materials on canvas

Private collection

X75666



## Haze

2005

Acrylic paint on canvas

Private collection

X75665

Bowling had painted on unstretched canvases since the mid-1960s. In 2001, after the sudden death of his oldest son Dan, he was gifted two small stretched canvases by his son's friend. Over the next few years, Bowling purchased a few more stretched canvases and produced what have become known as the 'white paintings'. In these works he adopted an unusually subtle palette of light tints. **From V2-RSI**, named after Dan (baptised Richard Sheridan), has acupuncture needles embedded within the paintwork. The artist treated his back-pain with acupuncture.

## Sam'Sentinal

1999

Acrylic paint on canvas

In the mid-1990s, Bowling began experimenting with making works on a small scale. He stitched and glued together different sections of coloured canvas, orchestrating colours and forms into new compositions. Discussing his practice in 1992 he said: 'It is clear to me that making things is influenced by my mother. She made things and was a dress maker, hat maker, maker of everything in the line of sewing [...]. She had magic fingers, whatever she touched... marvellous magic.'

Private collection, UK

X76800

## **Benjamin's Mess (Hot Hands)**

2006

Acrylic paint, acrylic gel and other materials on canvas

Private collection, London, courtesy of Jessica McCormack

X75067



## **Orange Balloon (4 Paul Adams)**

1996

Acrylic paint on canvas

Bowling's explosive use of dripped and splotted paint gives this work an extraordinary energy. However, the painting also follows a loosely geometric composition. The title refers to a small drip of paint that resembles a collapsing balloon. You can see it in the lower half of the painting, towards the left. Bowling played cricket as a young man and has remained passionate about the sport throughout his life. The painting is dedicated to the spin bowler, Paul Adams. At the time Adams was the youngest player in the South African cricket team, and the first player of colour. He made his debut against England at Port Elizabeth, South Africa in 1995.

Courtesy of Frank Bowling and Hales Gallery

X72885

ROOM 9

## EXPLOSIVE EXPERIMENTATION

Currently, at the age of 85, Bowling still works in his studio every day. This final section is dedicated to paintings made over the last decade. Despite working almost exclusively from a seated position, Bowling's persistent need to reinvent painting carries on.

Bowling continues to experiment with techniques adopted over many decades, combining them into an infinite number of variations. We can see washes of thin paint, poured paint, blotched paint, stencilled applications, use of acrylic gels, insertion of found objects, and stitching of different sections of canvas. Bowling also continues to explore the two conflicting ideas of geometry and fluidity that have occupied him throughout his career. His compositions are based on overarching structures and loosely geometrical arrangements. At the same time, paint is mixed with a wide range of materials and objects and allowed to flow and spread across the canvas.

The paintings in this final room seem to have a particularly open-ended quality. Bowling's technical mastery, gives way to a remarkable confidence to improvise.

He continues to establish, and systematically break, an ever-changing set of self-imposed rules.



## Clockwise from wall text

### Remember Thine Eyes

2014

Acrylic paint on canvas

As his mobility has decreased over the last ten years, Bowling has conceived different ways to work from a seated position. He has turned his physical limitations into productive constraints. The structure of this painting, comprising four horizontal bands of colour, derives from a narrow table he used at this time. The round elements were produced by buckets left on the wet surface of the painting, an effect he has used since 1981. These two circular marks suggest the poetic title: a line borrowed from Shakespeare's **King Lear**.

Courtesy of Frank Bowling and Hales Gallery

X75670



## **Benjamin's Mess**

2013

Acrylic paint and other materials on canvas

In this work, Bowling collaged together different sizes and colours of pre-painted sections of canvas, creating an unstructured mass. He also created a border using darker strips of canvas. The title of the work – **Benjamin's Mess** – refers to the name of one of Bowling's sons. It also alludes to the Bible story in which Benjamin, son of Jacob, was given the largest portion of food while dining at the table of his long-lost brother Joseph. This reference seems to echo the layered, richly textured nature of the painting.

Collection of Miles Gerstein and Susan Davis

X75066



## Ashton'splunge

2011

Acrylic paint, acrylic gel and other materials on canvas

In this painting, Bowling combined pouring, spilling, throwing, brushing and dripping paint pre-mixed with gel, water and pearlescence. The titles of Bowling's paintings frequently name friends and relatives. **Ashton'splunge** refers to the middle name of Bowling's long-time friend and assistant, Spencer A. Richards. Alongside the artist's wife Rachel Scott, Richards has assisted Bowling since 2009. Richards, who was not trained as a painter, used to be afraid of making mistakes. Yet, he recently remarked that he quickly discovered that Bowling 'would use whatever I did, even if it was a mistake, as a starting point for a painting'.

Courtesy of Frank Bowling and Hales Gallery

X75669



**Iona Miriam's Christmas Visit To & From Brighton**  
2017

Acrylic paint and plastic objects on canvas

Private collection, UK  
X75671

**A Boy**  
2015

Acrylic paint on canvas

Courtesy of Frank Bowling and Hales Gallery  
X76240

## Wafting

2018

Acrylic paint and fabric on canvas

The polka-dot scraps of fabric in this work are among the latest ready-made elements Bowling has adopted in his paintings. The fabric was manufactured in China and brought back from a trip to Zambia by Bowling's grandson Samson. In late 2017, Bowling freed space in the studio. This enabled him to go back to laying large canvases on the floor and – their corners tucked – use water copiously, creating pools of colour and letting them dry. This beloved technique generated the atmospheric effects visible in the background of **Wafting** and has inspired works that thematically relate to water and sailing.

Courtesy of Frank Bowling and Hales Gallery  
X76241



# CONCOURSE

## **Vitrine**

### **Left to Right**

## **STUDIO**

The material in this vitrine documents some of the many studios in which Frank Bowling has worked over the last 60 years, in both London and New York. At times he has combined the space where he lives and works. Bowling's studios have ranged from a tiny basement flat to a huge loft space. These studios are always a hub of daily activity and a space for experimentation. As Bowling said: 'My intentions are never fixed. I'm hoping to find new things in the work.' Now 85, he still goes to the studio every day.

**Frank Bowling in the life room at the Royal College of Arts,  
London**

c.1960

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive

Z74854

Bowling occupied various studios in London between 1960 and 1966. From 1960, while studying at the RCA in London, he lived and worked at 28 Cedars Road, Clapham. After graduating in 1962, he took on three spaces: one in the basement of a house in Ennismore Gardens, Knightsbridge (just behind the RCA); a larger space previously occupied by American painter Leon Golub in Lavender Walk, Battersea; and a small studio at 3 Claverton Street, Pimlico, which he kept as a base in London until 1979.

**Frank Bowling working on Swan II in his London studio**  
1964

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive  
Z74855

**Frank Bowling with Michelle Delderfield, a receptionist for  
Vidal Sassoon, in his London studio**  
c.1966

Contact sheet

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive. Photo: Chris Morgan Davis  
Z74846

**Paint and other materials in Frank Bowling's  
New York studio**  
1971, printed 2019

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive  
Z74917

After moving to New York in 1966, Bowling's primary studio was a loft in SoHo, New York, where he principally lived and worked until 1975. The size of this studio enabled him to make the large 'map paintings', usually painted on the floor.

**Frank Bowling's studio at 535 Broadway, SoHo, New York**  
1971, printed 2019

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive  
Z74915

**Frank Bowling's studio at 535 Broadway, SoHo, New York**  
1971, printed 2019

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive  
Z74916



**Frank Bowling with work in progress in his small studio at 19 Maclise House, Marsham street, Pimlico (behind Tate Britain)**

1984

Bowling relocated back to London in 1975, working first from a studio in Kennington and then occupying this small domestic room in Pimlico (behind Tate Britain). Bowling worked in this studio until 1984, squeezing ambitiously large-scale canvases inside the tiny space. In 1984 he moved to a bigger space in Elephant and Castle.

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive

Z74857

**Crisscrossing the Atlantic: 1990–2008**

For almost two decades, Bowling maintained a studio in both London and New York. During this time the artist split his time almost equally between the two cities: spending autumn and spring in New York, and summer and winter in London.

**Frank Bowling outside his loft studio in Dumbo, Brooklyn**  
c.1997

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive. Photo: Spencer A. Richards  
Z74858

## **New York**

In 1990, Bowling moved to a loft studio in Dumbo, Brooklyn. He lived and worked there regularly each autumn and spring until 2008 when, for health reasons, he decided to work mainly in London.

**View of New York skyline from Frank Bowling's loft studio  
in Dumbo, Brooklyn**  
2016, printed 2019

Photo: Arlington Weithers  
Z74920

**Painted window frames in Frank Bowling's loft studio in  
Dumbo, Brooklyn**  
2016, printed 2019

Photo: Spencer A. Richards  
Z74919

**Frank Bowling working on the floor of his loft studio in  
Dumbo, Brooklyn**  
2000

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive. Photo: Spencer A. Richards  
Z74860

**Frank Bowling's loft studio in Dumbo, Brooklyn**  
1999

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive. Photo: Spencer A. Richards  
Z74859

## **London**

In 1984, Bowling took his first studio in Elephant and Castle, south London. Since then, he has occupied various studios in the same complex, until the present day. Over the past ten years, Bowling's mobility has decreased, and he increasingly invites friends and family to assist him in the studio.

### **Frank Bowling outside his London studio**

1997

Courtesy Frank Bowling Archive. Photo: Adger Cowans  
Z74861

### **Frank Bowling assisted by his studio manager**

**Spencer A. Richards in his London studio**

2015, printed 2019

Courtesy the artist and Hales Gallery

Photo: Charlie Littlewood

Z74918

**Frank Bowling assisted by his wife Rachel Scott in his  
London studio**

2017, printed 2019

Photo: Spencer A. Richards

Z74921

## WRITING

### Formalism

A major aspect of Frank Bowling's artistic practice is his theoretical thinking on art and formalism. Whether scrawled on the studio walls or published in journals such as **Arts Magazine**, Bowling's writing constantly explored critical ideas about the limits and possibilities of painting.

He exchanged ideas with many artists and writers, including the US art critic Clement Greenberg (1909–1994). The pair shared a long friendship and correspondence, the topic of their numerous letters ranging from art-world gossip to racial politics. In 1976, Bowling wrote: 'Clem was able to make me see that modernism belonged to me also.'

**Frank Bowling, 'Revisions, Color and Recent Paintings',  
Arts Magazine, vol.46, no.4,  
February 1972**

Courtesy of Frank Bowling Archive  
Z74847

**Frank Bowling in his London studio  
1962, printed 2019**

Photo: Tony Evans/Getty Images  
Z74922

**Letter from Clement Greenberg to Frank Bowling,  
14 November 1976**

Sarah Greenberg Morse for the Estate of Clement Greenberg  
and Frank Bowling Archive  
Z74849

**Letter from Clement Greenberg to Frank Bowling,  
26 October 1977**

Letter, facsimile

Sarah Greenberg Morse for the Estate of Clement Greenberg  
and Frank Bowling Archive

Z74850

**Frank Bowling's annotated copy of 'Formalism: A Selective  
View', Cover, no. 6, Winter 1981-82**

Bowling's thought process was dynamic and ever-changing. At times he would reassess earlier views, as seen by the annotations on his own published work.

Courtesy of Frank Bowling Archive

Z74848



## 'BLACK ART'

'My art is Formalist and my experience that of a black artist.'

Frank Bowling, 1988

Frank Bowling does not consider himself a 'Black artist' – simply an 'artist' – yet the topic of 'Black Art' has been a constant theme of his writing. In his student days at the RCA he was one of very few artists of colour in a white-dominated art scene. Since then he has grappled with other people's perceptions about how his lived experience as a Black person impacts on the art he makes. Bowling moved to New York at the height of the American Civil Rights Movement in 1966. As contributing editor for **Arts Magazine**, from 1969–72, he played an active role in debates around 'Black Art'. Although he felt a personal connection to such issues, Bowling was aware of his position as an outsider to the African-American context. This is seen in the title of **5+1**, an exhibition Bowling curated of five leading African-American abstract artists plus himself.

**Frank Bowling, unsent letter to  
John Berger, 29 March 1958**

Courtesy of Frank Bowling Archive  
Z74851

**Extract from letter to John Berger**

'The thing is I've got little or no idea why I want to paint or for that matter where my painting is going to lead. All I know is I want to paint my people: that is black people, as opposed to white people. I know I have to watch the way their faces turn. I get terribly excited over the fact that very often I can't find a stopping or starting point; everything seems to get lost in swift turnings off. The way we slouch, smile, grin, get depressed, suspicious, wild eyed with fear... I think perhaps I have a longing to bridge the gap between the white world and the black.'

**Frank Bowling, 5+1, exhibition catalogue, State University  
of New York at Stony Brook, New York  
1969**

Tate Library and Archive  
Z74835

**Frank Bowling, 'The Rupture: Ancestor Worship, Revival,  
Confusion, or Disguise', Arts Magazine, vol.44, no.8,  
Summer 1970  
1970**

Courtesy of Frank Bowling Archive  
Z74852

**Frank Bowling, 'Discussion on Black Art', Arts Magazine,  
vol.43, no.6, April 1969  
1969**

Courtesy of Frank Bowling Archive  
Z74897

# ACTIVITIES

Frank Bowling said, 'I am very open to accidents, I know they will happen so I try to go along with them and see where they lead'. As you walk through the exhibition, look for details in the artwork that might have developed by chance. What materials have been used and what might have happened?

Bowling waits until he finishes his paintings before he gives them titles. These titles are often inspired by the places he's been and the people he knows. How do these titles change how you think about the artworks? Choose a painting and think about what you would name it.

Imagine the sound of Bowling making artwork in his studio. Can you hear the swishes, splashes, drips and drops of his paint? What would one of Bowling's artworks sound like to you if you could hear it?

Find more ideas inspired by the exhibition in the new children's book **Frank Bowling: An Art Activity Book**, available in the exhibition shop.

Visit Tate Kids to discover more about Frank Bowling including activities inspired by his work.  
[tate.org.uk/kids](http://tate.org.uk/kids)

Drop in to **Blast Off Stories!**. This storytelling oasis celebrates voices of colour. You can explore books, drop in to storytelling sessions and dress up as your favourite characters.

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**FILM:**

**SCENES FROM FRANK BOWLING'S LIFE**

Friday 31 May 2019, 18.30–20.00

Clore Auditorium

£10, Concessions £7

**MY GUYANA TO GREAT THAMES:**

**FRANK BOWLING IN CONTEXT**

Saturday 1 June 2019, 14.00–18.00

Clore Auditorium

£18, Concessions £12

**DRIP, SPRAY, POUR:**

**A CLOSE LOOK AT FRANK BOWLING**

Friday 14 June 2019, 18.15–20.45

Talk and private view

In the exhibition

£21, Concessions £16



## **LETTERS TO FRANK BOWLING**

Wednesday 26 June 2019, 18.30–20.00

Clore Auditorium

Talk only: £12, Concessions £8

With exhibition: £21, Concessions £16

Contemporary artists and writers discuss the ways Bowling's work has inspired them.

## **CURATOR'S TALK**

Thursday 18 July 2019, 18.30–19.30.

Private view: 19.30–20.30

Clore Auditorium, plus exhibition

Talk only: £10, Concessions £7

With private view: £20, Concessions £15

## **AUDIO DESCRIPTION TOUR**

Monday 15 July 2019, 10.30–12.00

In the exhibition

## **PODCAST**

Bowling's paintings embrace chance and accident.

How do other artists use improvisation in their work?

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31 May – 26 August 2019

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Let us know what you think #FrankBowling