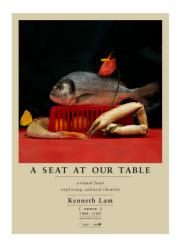## KENNETH LAM, *A seat at our table*

7 Mar 2024 – 12 Oct 2024
SPACE Ilford,
10 Oakfield Rd, IG1 1ZJ

"Food has always been a love of mine; coming from a family of chefs and restaurant owners, like many other immigrants we sold food as a way to survive and eventually thrive in London. It's amazing to think that my grandmother was a rice picker, my father cooked rice for British customers in a British Chinese restaurant and now his son is photographing this food and presenting it in an art gallery."

KENNETH LAM

Kenneth Lam's first solo exhibition, *A seat at our table*, invited audiences to explore the dishes, meals and memories of our own cultural identities. A contemporary take on classical still life, the photographs explored heritage, diaspora, and food as a common language between our neighbours in Redbridge.

Local residents supported Kenneth Lam by sharing their stories and allowing him to explore their identity through portraits and still life, using personal artefacts, food and pastimes which resonate with their sense of self.

Through the exhibition, Kenneth recreated this sense of heritage using the table as a powerful symbol of home – it is somewhere where we connect and reflect, it is a place of celebration and ceremony. Ultimately, it is not bricks and mortar which defines home or who we are as individuals. Our identities are forged from our memories and experiences and reflected in how we craft a place of belonging.

FOR TEACHERS

MATERIALS AND PROCESSES

Kenneth is a photographer who uses a digital camera to make his images. His artworks are much more than taking a photograph of something that is already set up and involve a lot of planning. Kenneth sets a scene for the photograph, like a theatre designer would. It begins with him meeting the people he is going to photograph and speaking to them about their background and their relationship to food and their culture. Each one brought with them food and items that were important to them. Ken's interest is in connection. He tells stories through photography.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT
- How to break down a story
- Food and how it relates to the stories of our lives
- What does it mean to tell someone else's story?

SUGGESTIONS:
Table setting
- In art history, still lives would often have secret meanings or messages within them.
- Imagine how you would tell a story just through a table setting. What would be on the table?

Ingredients
- Are there any stories that you think would be interesting to hear from a relative or the older generation? How would you tell their story?
- If you were telling a story of what is important to you, what objects would you use to describe it? What are your ingredients?
- Take a photograph of ingredients that make up a meal. Print out to make a collage or draw these "ingredients".

This is an imagined meal, so your ingredients don't have to be food.

IMMIGRATION

Think of all the types of food that are available to us in London. Where do the recipes and foods come from? How did they get here? How do recipes and stories adapt and change? How can you celebrate food and culture in your school?

To look at:
- **History of still life**
- **Sustainable food and the impact on the climate... where does our food come from?**
- **Where is the artist's voice?**
- **How does an artist talk about their work?**
- **How do YOU make an artwork?**
- **What is important to how you express yourself?**

A selection of still-life photographs and portraits of Redbridge residents from Kenneth Lam's exhibition *A seat at our table* which was in the gallery at SPACE from March to October 2024.

Photography

Subject (the person or thing being photographed)

Diaspora

**Generations
Heritage
Identity
Immigration**

BACKDROP

Fashion photography
Still life
Table setting
Theatre design
Theatre set

**Second
generation**

TAKE AWAY

**Ingredients
Photography
Storytelling**