

TABLE MANNERS

A group exhibition celebrating five years of The Artist Roundtable, an initiative created by Pia Sophie Ottes

There is something quietly powerful about sitting down together. **Table Manners** invites you into a shared space formed of rituals of learning, conversations and creative exchange amongst fifty artists. This group exhibition marks five years of *The Artist Roundtable*, a project born during a time of isolation, distance and uncertainty, which has since blossomed into a vibrant community of emerging voices. What began as weekly conversations at a virtual **table**, has turned into a supportive and evolving network, a fertile ground to ask hard questions, to listen, to share the weight of navigating the often-unspoken etiquette of the art world. Here, **manners** do not mean restraint; they signify care. They speak to how we meet each other, how we learn, and how we rise—together.

The exhibition unfolds in thematic rooms like courses in a long, unruly meal—each revealing the flavours, tensions, and textures of creative life. Here, practice is dialogue. Process is transparency. Each work is a gesture of openness—tracing a journey through challenge and curiosity, practice and play. Through it all, the spirit of mentorship, mutual support, and shared experience lingers—reminding us that in art, as in life, we grow best when we grow together.

So take your seat. Lean in. There's room for all of us.

The Table as Threshold – On the Urgency of Coming Together in Art

In a world increasingly defined by accelerated productivity, digital dispersion, and competitive individualism, *Table Manners* proposes a counterpoint: the quiet urgency of gathering.

The table, at the heart of this exhibition, becomes more than a structure—it is a threshold. It holds the transition between solitude and solidarity, between private thought and public voice. Here, in the intimacy of shared space, fifty artists come forward not to perform certainty, but to sit with questions. In that act, they honour the threshold's power: to open, to connect, to begin.

Learning to sit at the table is no small thing. For many emerging artists, the art world can feel like a closed room, where rules are unspoken and seats are already claimed. *The Artist Roundtable*, initiated by Pia Sophie Ottes, disrupts this logic. It reimagines the table as an open circle—where listening is an equal art to speaking, and collaboration is not optional, but foundational. The work of learning how to take a seat becomes an act of self-claiming and community-building, carried out with intention, humility, and grace.

However, gathering is not always comfortable. The proximity of difference—the friction of many voices, many paths—can unsettle. Yet it is precisely in that discomfort that the *Roundtable* has flourished. It is in the willingness to remain present through complexity that real transformation emerges. This echoes the 61st Venice Biennale's ethos of *In Minor Keys*, where curator Koyo Kouoh invites us to listen to “the lower frequencies... the whispers... the portals.” Like the creole garden, the Roundtable has become an ecology of difference, where mutual protection and growth are rooted in respectful co-existence. As *In Minor Keys* calls for “a polyphonous assembly... beaming across the void of alienation,” *Table Manners* responds with its own chorus—soft-spoken but resolute. These are artists who do not seek the loudest voice, but the truest one. Their works hum with the frequencies of care, curiosity, and collectivity. They speak not only to what art can say, but what art can *hold*.

In sitting down together, we do more than share space—we share the conditions of change.