

ANGELA FLOWERS 1932 - 2023

Saturday 12th August, 2023

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It is with great sadness that we announce that British gallerist Angela Flowers died on 11th August 2023, at the age of 90.

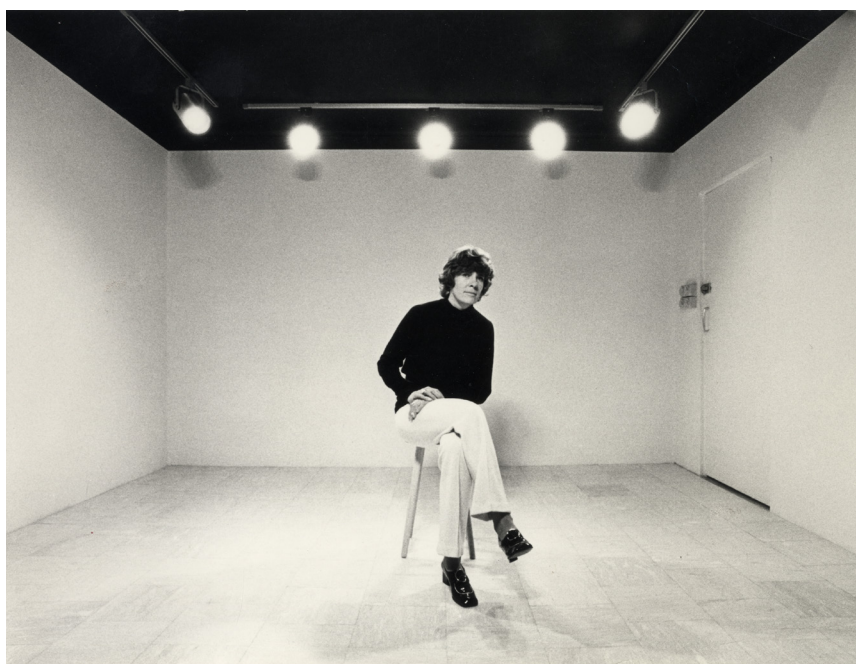
Angela Flowers, founder of Flowers Gallery, was a staunch supporter of contemporary art and artists, who pioneered an original and distinctive path through the British art scene for more than five decades.

On February 10, 1970 Angela Flowers opened her first eponymous gallery space in London on Lisle Street, above the Artists International Association (AIA), a cooperative of artists who offered the space rent-free in exchange for commission. From the beginning, Angela was dedicated to presenting the work

of younger British artists, which she considered to be under-represented in the commercial galleries of the 1970s. Derek Hirst, Jeff Nuttall, Penelope Slinger, Ian Breakwell, Jeanne Masoero and Nancy Fouts were among the first artists shown in the space; and she presented the first solo exhibition by Tom Phillips in the initial year. Several artists whose work was featured at this time, including duo Boyd & Evans, David Hephher, and John Loker remain represented by the gallery today. The initial exhibitions also included *Postcard Show*, for which Angela commissioned original works of art to be made into postcards by artists including Joseph Beuys, David Hockney, Richard Hamilton and Peter Blake.

The gallery moved to Portland Mews, Soho in 1971, then to Tottenham Mews in 1978, where it remained for ten years. Angela Flowers continued her pioneering approach to championing under-acknowledged artists through initiatives such as the still-running programme *Artist of the Day*, in which participants are selected for a series of one-day exhibitions by a renowned contemporary artist. In 1988 the gallery added an east end venue, Flowers East in Hackney, which was at the time the largest commercial gallery space in London, expanding further in 1991, with two vast exhibition spaces to put on a programme of acclaimed thematic shows, such as *The Thatcher Years*, and *Contemporary Portraits*, in which Angela placed work by well-known and celebrated artists alongside emerging names. By 1989, her son Matthew Flowers, who had worked at the gallery since 1975 became Managing Director, working closely together. The east end space subsequently moved to Shoreditch in the 2000s alongside the opening of the current west end space on Cork Street, Mayfair.

From 1998 Flowers Gallery expanded internationally, opening in Los Angeles at Santa Monica's Bergamot Station Arts Center. Its US operations moved to New York in 2003, initially uptown on Madison Avenue, and then in 2009 to Chelsea where it remained for 10 years. In 2020, a new space was opened in central Hong Kong to coincide with the 50 year anniversary of the gallery. During this half-century milestone, two



Angela Flowers at the Lisle Street gallery, 1970,
photograph © Adrian Flowers Archive

London exhibitions (*50 x 50* and *Fifty Years*) celebrated the gallery history of more than 900 exhibitions, and representation of more than 50 international artists and artist's estates.

Alongside the galleries, Angela began staging seasonal exhibitions out of her longtime, beloved home in Rosscarbery, West Cork, Ireland in 1985, with an inaugural exhibition by William Crozier and subsequent shows by artists including Nicola Hicks. The summer programme at Rosscarbery ran nearly every summer for 15 years, with occasional exhibitions produced until recent years.

Angela Mary Flowers (née Holland) was born in Croydon, UK in December 1932. She attended the Webber Douglas School of Singing and Dramatic Art in London, and was an accomplished musician, with initial plans for a career as a singer. She married her first husband, the late portrait and advertising photographer Adrian Flowers in 1952, with whom she had four children Adam, Matthew, Daniel and Francesca; and subsequently married the late journalist Robert Heller in 2003, proposing to both Adrian and Bob on leap years. Angela and Bob had one daughter, Rachel Heller, who was born with Down's syndrome in 1973. Angela devoted herself to Rachel, who is recognized as a talented artist in her own right, and they became life-long companions.

Angela was introduced to art collecting by her parents, who encouraged a visit to the studios of the artists of St. Ives in the 1950s. This ignited her passion for the work of living artists, and was the catalyst for a burgeoning collection of emerging art. Throughout her lifetime, she remained an avid supporter of artists, accumulating an extensive personal collection which filled the walls of every home she lived in. She was a fellow of the Royal College of Art, and a member of numerous exhibition juries and committees, including the executive committee of the Society of London Art Dealers, and the John Kobal foundation.

Angela Flowers is survived by her five children, thirteen grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

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