



## TOGETHER Angeli Sowani

15 – 30 September 2022

Grosvenor Gallery  
35 Bury Street  
London SW1Y 6AU

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We are delighted to announce our upcoming exhibition by Angeli Sowani. *Together*, is Angeli's fourth solo-exhibition at the gallery which runs from Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> September till Friday, 30th September 2022. There will be an opening reception on Wednesday, 14 September from 6 – 8 pm.

For this exhibition Angeli extensively researched and has painted portraits of near-forgotten women and men from the Commonwealth countries, who served in various roles during the First and Second World Wars.

One of the fascinating women Angeli depicts is the British spy Noor Inayat Khan: *“Sitting in the National Archives at Kew on a steel shelf alongside countless other files I found a grey box with the number HS 9 836/5... in it are the details of a brave young woman called Noor Inayat Khan. Born in Moscow in 1914, her mother an American, her father a Sufi Muslim from India. She was the great, great, great granddaughter of the Indian Prince Tipu Sultan”*

Joining as a recruit for the Woman's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) and the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY) Noor went on to become a British secret agent for the Special Operations Executive (SOE). The

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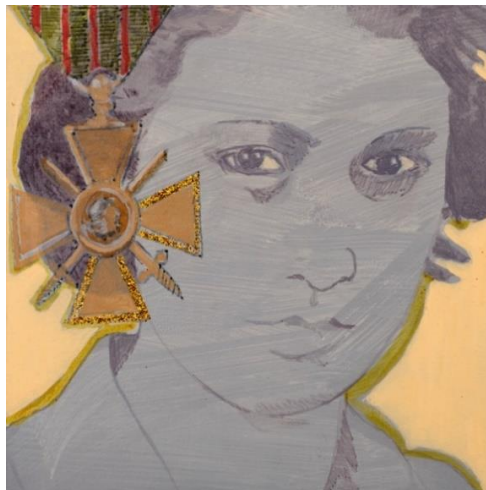
typical life expectancy for an SOE agent was six weeks. She was arrested by the Gestapo in 1943, kept in solitary confinement with her hands and feet chained and finally executed at Dachau concentration camp on September 1944, with a single bullet to the back of the neck. She was only thirty years old. Three other women, Yolande Beckmann, Madeline Damerment and Eliane Plewman were executed along with her. Their bodies were put through the fire and all traces disappeared.

*“I felt I had to put their faces down in my paintings; to remember and pay my respects to these young women who were so brave and put their life at risk in a war not of their choosing. This was the first half of the 20th century and some of these women were Asian, Indigenous Australian, Indigenous Canadian and West Indian. They faced biases not just of gender but also of colour, religion and ethnicity.”*

Another portrait is of Leonard Victor Waters, the only Indigenous Australian to serve as a fighter pilot in the Royal Australian Air Force. There are many such stories, but photographs are hard to come by, so Angeli has incorporated silhouettes into her works to depict these forgotten heroes.

*“The material I chose to work with and the method I have used were driven by what I noticed in my research. Race, Colour, Gender and Religion all seem designed to put people in boxes. So, I decided to paint the portraits on regimented 20cm x 20cm boxes...”*

Angeli's 2019 exhibition *Medals & Bullets* told the story of the Indian soldiers who fought and often died in foreign lands far from home. She included letters sent home to their families in India, often dictated to another person as most of them could not write. The raw feelings and description of war in their own words are truly moving. *Together* is a continuation of that story...



Left: *Danise Bloch*, 2022, acrylic on gesso board, 20 x 20 cm

Right: *Noor-in-Nisa-Inayat Khan*, 2022, acrylic on gesso board, 20 x 20 cm

[Click for high resolution images](#)

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## Press enquiries:

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## Regular opening times:

Weekdays: 10am – 5.30pm

Saturday: 12 – 4pm (By appointment)

Sunday: Closed

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