

The Showroom Mural Commission
Bahar Noorizadeh: *In Mortua Manu* / *In A Dead Hand*
25 September 2026 – 14 August 2027

A saturated red plain unfolds pixel by pixel, expanding into the abyss under a purple sky. They meet at a neon green glowing horizon, a vanishing point imploding this surreal atmosphere into real and imagined dimensions. This landscape is punctuated by scenes familiar to our neighbours: the Church Street Market sign; the painted Marylebone Flyover mural, *Forest Under the Flyover* created by artist Manou Bendon; the statue of Sarah Siddons in Paddington Green; the Joel & Son Fabrics shop which has been a staple of Church Street since 1979; the model shark inside Alfie's Antique Market; the hoarding surrounding the new Trillium luxury residential development; and The Showroom itself, captured with Mandy El-Sayegh's 2025-26 mural commission. This is Church Street – dismembered, remembered, celebrated, confronted, and rearticulated by artist Bahar Noorizadeh.

Noorizadeh approaches the facade of The Showroom as a portal into her new detective mystery video game. The skin around building captures the landscape of this game, playable via a console that will tour the neighbourhood over the coming year. The world Noorizadeh invites us to enter recreates the polyphonic histories of Church Street and its surrounding area through psycho-urban spaces with architecture drifting aloft, subterranean police stations, buried subways, and fractured streetscapes. This game world is informed by oral histories and memories shared with the artist by local residents, along with research from the Showroom's archive and library, 3D scans and audio recordings from walks in the neighbourhood, and 3D models constructed from images of sites and architecture that are long demolished yet still live on in the virtual memory of Church Street. Noorizadeh role-plays as a sleuth, noting her observations and clues to a talismanic murder in a pocket notebook while pacing the neighbourhood, asking how and where things go wrong when the injustices endured by the dispossessed are intractable, protracted, anonymous, and omnipotent. By interlacing memory, interpretation and speculation, the video game renders what exists, what has been erased and might be remembered, and what remains plausible.

In Mortua Manu / *In A Dead Hand* is structured as an evolving conspiracy, animated by a preoccupation with gamification as a mechanism of control, information as an urban medium, sacrifice as the social form of finance, and conspiracy as a mode of navigating this terrain. The late Marxist thinker Michael Parenti argued that systemic analysis and conspiracy are not mutually exclusive. We can upgrade his thesis at a time when the gamification of everyday life (under the banner of "participation") and the saturation of the infosphere with AI slop flatten the social into a set of patterns, primed for conspiratorial narration.

Conspiracy becomes a desperate appeal for sense-making, under conditions in which sense is codified in the interest of asset price inflation and wealth accumulation. The conspiracy indeed is Capitalism. But Capitalism is not the name of the old game in which money is born from money, the autopoiesis of wealth: the debt regime predates capital by centuries.

The artwork title recalls the Latin legal phrase 'In Mortua Manu', meaning 'In a Dead Hand', that is, property held as if by an immortal entity, such as a corporation or religious institution, making the said property in the perpetual, inalienable ownership of that entity. With this in mind, the work traces the ongoing development, re-zoning, and gentrification of The Showroom's surrounding area. It questions the notion of the public under conditions of rapid financialisation in the UK, in which land can change function from police station to luxury real-estate – in the case of Paddington Green police station, now Trillium development – as if gripped by a dead hand. The game's modular structure remains open-ended and additive, with new chapters and puzzles to be folded into the plot in the future. Noorizadeh's diagrammatic practice in this way imbues the game with the potential of expanding beyond Church Street and London as the imperial metropole into different global geographies, histories, futures and systems.

With thanks to local residents Sue Davies, Richard Fentiman, Denis Kane, Sam Curtis, Roya Lacey and Glenys Arthur for their time and energy given to this process. Live-rendered sketches of some of these conversations were captured by illustration artist Amrit Ruprai. The video game was developed and produced in collaboration with game developer Alexandre Pina and game programming assistant Ralph McCoy, with music created by the artist using Pure Data, an open source programming language, as well as free license music under GOSUB10 netlabel. Fragments of text cite the work of artist Can Altay's project The Church Street Partners' Gazette at The Showroom, published between 2010-2013. The artist would also like to thank Lucas Lugarinho, Max Haiven, Antonio Vega Macotela, Metahaven, Isabelle Cornaro and Iman Ganji for their invaluable insights during the process.

About the Artist

Bahar Noorizadeh, born in 1988 in Iran, examines the relationship between art and capitalism and their entangled moral, social and organisational technologies. In her practice as an artist, theorist and filmmaker, she investigates the histories and the futures of economics, from ancient monetary systems to cybernetic socialism and neoliberal finance, and the techno-fictions underpinning geopolitical relations and logistical infrastructures. Noorizadeh is the founder and organiser of Weird Economies, a multi-authored platform dedicated to radical economic imaginaries. Her work has appeared at the Guggenheim Museum NYC (2024), Taipei Biennial (2023), Venice Architecture Biennial (2021), Transmediale Festival (2020, 2022), Tate Modern Artists' Cinema Programme (2018) and Geneva Biennale of Moving Images (2018) among others. She is the co-editor of the e-flux special issue on Iran (May 2024) and has contributed essays to n+1, e-flux Architecture, Journal of Visual Culture, and Sternberg Press; and anthologies by Duke University Press and MIT Press. Noorizadeh completed a PhD in Art at Goldsmiths, University of London. She is currently teaching in MA Geo-Design at the Design Academy Eindhoven and is a resident artist at the Rijksakademie (2026-2027).
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About the Mural Commission

The Showroom Mural Commission is a unique opportunity for artists to activate the building's emblematic facade. Once a year, an artist is invited to work in collaboration with members of communities from the Church Street Ward to create artwork for the mural, complemented by public programming including a series of events and workshops. Our approach is unique in how we foster strong, long-term relationships and consider everyone involved as collaborators. Trust and mindful consideration of the project's impact are central to our way of working. Our programme emphasises collaborative and process-driven approaches to production, encompassing artwork, exhibitions, events, discussions, publications, knowledge sharing, and relationships. We work closely with groups and individuals in our local community who we bring together to work in partnership with artists on specific projects and commissions that contribute to the programme.

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