

Curator Spotlight: Tamla Pearce

Who are you?

I'm Tamla Pearce, a multidisciplinary artist and independent curator. My practice explores visual culture, immersive environments and playful aesthetics, with a focus on audience experience, storytelling and community-led creative work.

The Kawaii Art & Culture Exhibition is an independently led project that I have developed, curated and produced. It brings together artists, installations, workshops and events to create an accessible, immersive space celebrating contemporary kawaii culture.

How did you first get into making art?

My journey into art began through making and experimenting with 3D materials. I studied glass blowing and ceramics, which gave me a strong foundation in working with my hands, understanding materials and thinking about objects in a three-dimensional way.

Learning these processes has influenced how I approach my own practice today, particularly my interest in physical objects, display, texture and creating experiences that people can engage with.

Where did your love of kawaii begin?

My introduction to kawaii began in childhood through FRUiTS Magazine, which introduced me to Harajuku street fashion and the idea of self-expression through colour, styling and visual identity. It was the first time I saw "cute" as more than just an aesthetic, it could be a way of expressing individuality and belonging within a wider subculture.

This developed into a long-term interest in Japanese pop culture and the relationship between visual culture, design and self-expression, which continue to influence my creative practice today.

How do your interests influence your practice?

My practice is shaped by everyday visual culture, nostalgia and collecting. I'm drawn to designer toys, dolls and pop culture objects, particularly how they sit between art, product and memory. These inform my thinking around character, repetition, display and emotional attachment.

Food imagery, especially sweets and desserts, also runs through my work. I'm interested in how sweetness communicates comfort, joy and excess, while connecting to childhood memory, consumption and emotional experience.

What does your creative practice focus on?

My practice focuses on world-building, sensory experience and emotional engagement. I create immersive environments that encourage play, escapism and reflection, particularly for audiences who may not always feel represented in traditional gallery spaces.

I work across installation, sculpture, object-making and participatory formats, with a focus on how audiences move through and experience space.

What does it mean to you to curate this exhibition?

Curating this exhibition has allowed me to bring together my interests as an artist while creating a space that reflects the visual culture I have been passionate about for many years. It has also given me the opportunity to support and showcase artists working across playful, experimental and visually driven practices. The exhibition has been independently developed and led by me, from the initial concept through to artist selection, programming and production. I see curation as more than presenting work, it is about building connections, creating opportunities and bringing people together through shared experiences.

Why is highlighting other artists important to you?

I approach curation as a collaborative practice. My role is to support and amplify artists by creating opportunities for their work to be seen and experienced by new audiences.

This exhibition is also about community-building, creating a shared space for exchange, connection and future opportunities beyond the exhibition itself.

Why is kawaii important to you?

Kawaii is a serious visual language within my practice, despite often being dismissed as purely decorative. I'm interested in how it operates across culture, identity and emotion—holding space for softness and joy while engaging with broader conversations around global visual culture and consumption.

Why is this exhibition important to Wolverhampton?

This exhibition contributes to Wolverhampton's cultural landscape by introducing an independent, artist-led and immersive project that brings together local and wider creative communities.

It supports artists working across disciplines, expands access to contemporary cultural experiences and engages audiences who may not usually enter gallery spaces.

It also demonstrates the value of independent curatorial practice within the city, showing how artist-led initiatives can strengthen cultural development and local creative networks.

Support from Wolverhampton Arts Centre has been essential to the project. Their commitment to independent, artist-led work and community-focused programming has enabled this vision to take shape in a meaningful way.

What do you hope people take away from your work?

I hope audiences leave with a sense of joy, curiosity and openness, and an understanding that playful aesthetics can hold depth. Softness, colour and cuteness can be powerful ways of communicating complex ideas.