

Gallery hosts supper-clubs to launch new exhibition

A specialist ceramics gallery in Highgate is about to host its second run of supper-clubs where everything on the table is custom-made for the occasion.

Thrown, which is located on the High Street, is partnering with the *Fabulous 698b* pop-up restaurant for four nights in September, where diners will tuck in to a six-course feast of seasonal British produce – each dished up in bowls, plates and wine glasses especially created by the experts from *The Leach Pottery*.

This three-way collaboration between Thrown, *Fabulous698b* and Leach Pottery follows the success of the gallery's first supper-club events in July.

The dates have been pencilled in to coincide with the launch of Thrown's latest exhibition, *The Leach Pottery: Living the Legacy*, which will showcase both individual and collective works from the pottery first set up in St Ives almost 100 years ago.

Dan Splarn speaks to Claire Pearce, director at Thrown, about a batch of supper-clubs where all of the table settings will be especially crafted

Claire Pearce, Thrown's Director, said: "The response (to our supper-clubs) has just been incredible.

"It's been such a joy to see people enjoying every inch of their plate.

The synergy between our ceramicists' collections, made especially for the dinners, and the menu put together in response by *Fabulous 698b* was absolutely amazing, better than I could ever have imagined.



Thrown collaborate with Leach Pottery and Fabulous 698b for these intimate supper club events

"I allowed myself time to stand back and enjoy little moments like people's responses as the dishes were placed in front of them – picking them up to get a closer look and, as many of the collections were made up of unique pieces, showing each other around the table.

"Our guests have ranged from other ceramicists to those who just thought it was an interesting event with no prior knowledge of ceramics – but who left with a real excitement about it.

"After the very first evening of our first four events, we were already planning more."

Thrown opened in March this year aiming to provide a platform to ceramics within the contemporary art scene.

Given the success of their first supper-club events and the fact that there's just 16 spaces at the table, it's little surprise that tomorrow's opening event – which will see members of the Leach Pottery team join the other revellers – is sold out.

However, there are still spaces available for the remaining three nights – on September 20, 21 and 22 – where a £60 ticket will get you six courses and a complimentary cocktail; served in a specially-made Leach Pottery ceramic, *naturally*.

Supper-club nights at Thrown will run on September 7, 20, 21 and 22 from 7pm. Tickets are £60. More details at throwncontemporary.co.uk

Theatre Review

DANCE NATION

ALMEIDA THEATRE

★★★★☆

Clare Barron's electrifying play is a funny, poignant and wild portrait of coming-of-age that is defiantly and candidly female.

It follows a preteen competitive dance troupe in small-town Ohio, teasing genre tropes (echoes of *A Chorus Line* and *Strictly Ballroom*), but is ultimately more raw and adventurous.

At its heart is the fraught friendship between Amina and Zuzu – the latter never quite as good a dancer, despite relentless maternal pressure.

Karla Crome is superb as Amina, realising the challenges of owning her talent and will to win, while Ria Zmitrowicz's Zuzu is heartbreaking, literally spilling blood.

Barron's piece is also hilarious, particularly via 'Dance Teacher Pat'. Brendan Cowell nails the self-seriousness, talking of events like the Boogie Down Grand Prix with religious awe, and



The cast of Dance Nation.

announcing that he's "making the future" via his acro-lyrical tribute

to, er, Ghandi. But Barron never mocks the girls'

investment in dance, nor the belief in their ability to change the world.

Picture: MARC BRENNER

And yet, via the all-ages casting, we glimpse their older versions, tragically devoid of fearlessness.

Kayla Meikle delivers a storming monologue as Ashlee, the girl who knows she's beautiful, brilliant, could do anything, and yet already understanding that – as a woman – she can't own that confidence out loud.

There's also lovely work from Sarah Hadland's know-it-all Sofia, Irfan Shamji's halting Luke, and Nancy Crane's sweet, dreamy Maeve.

Bijan Sheibani nicely handles the tonal variety, including several primal fantasy sequences and – via Samal Blak's revolving mirrors – delivers some surprising, striking images. Aline David's organic movement is wonderfully expressive.

Most refreshingly, there's no shame in this portrait of female physicality. Menstrual blood is war paint, and there's a bold curiosity that feels all the more precious for its fragility – soon lost to social pressure and adolescence.

Thrilling and necessary theatre. Marianka Swain