

# The beer mat show

**Tegestologists can admire coasters by Ben Eine, Bob and Roberta Smith, Sarah Baker and Gavin Turk**

**By Matilda Battersby**

Most curators would shriek in horror if people started putting their drinks down on the artwork. But that's just what Cedar Lewisohn is inviting people do at his latest exhibition at the Bun House in London which features work by Ben Eine, Bob and Roberta Smith, Sarah Baker and Gavin Turk.

This is because the artworks on display at the gallery, which is above a pub, are also beer mats. They have been commissioned in order to highlight the decline of industries associated with pubs, as well as the drinking venues themselves.

"As pubs up and down the country close, we don't only lose hubs of the community, but the many traditions associated with them," Lewisohn explains.

"It's not only tegestologists [beer mat collectors] who should be worried, the decline of the beer mat would mean more than the loss of a convenient bit of paper to put a phone number on at the end of the night if you get lucky."

Lewisohn sees the humble coaster as representative of the British pub culture because they are both under threat of extinction. As ubiquitous as bar stools, peanut bowls and hanging baskets, he's decided that these disposable cardboard circles and squares have plenty to say for themselves.

"I love the idea of artists designing beer mats that will actually be used in the pub. I really hope people put their pints on them and that they are the starting point for many debates and conversations. Not just about art, but everything people talk about in pubs. Life, death, politics, football and this very galaxy we call home," he said.

*The Beer Mat Show is at The Bun House, 96 Peckham High Street, London from 29 July to 29 August, [www.bunhouse.com](http://www.bunhouse.com)*