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DECORATION

The best exhibitions in London for July 2025

Radical Reimaginings of Sculpture, a Soaring Spectacle that marries Horror with the Sublime, and drawings by His Majesty The King – our pick of the best art shows to see in London this month

By Fiona McKenzie Johnston

2 July 2025

The best exhibitions in London: Once Upon A Time in London at Saatchi Yates is one of our top picks for July © 2017 Mark Woods . Photo Credit: Mark Woods . Contact: Woods@Post.harvard.edu ; 646-402-5964. Photograph By Mark Woods. Photos May Not Be Reproduced, Distributed, Or Publicly Displayed Without Photo Credit To Mark Woods. Photos Are Provided To Client As Documentation Only, And May Not Be Sold Or Used As The Basis For Derivative Works Without The Prior Express Written Authorization From The Copyright Owner.

As the mercury rises, it's worth keeping in mind the air-conditioned comfort of many of our galleries and museums, and there's lots that warrants spending time in them. Art mirrors life - and so it can offer perspectives that, even if not contemporary, resonate, or at least have the ability to reframe our view.

The focus on female artists remains strong. Tate Modern is hosting the largest ever presentation devoted to the renowned Aboriginal Australian artist Emily Kam Kngwarray. A founding member of the Utopia Women's Batik Group, it features her vibrant textiles as well as vast paintings that reflect her ancestral heritage. At the Courtauld Gallery, Abstract Erotic looks back to the radical 1960s reimagining of what sculpture could be, reuniting work by Louise Bourgeois, Eva Hesse, and Alice Adams from a seminal New York show. And ongoing are solo shows of work by

by Jenny Saville at the National Portrait Gallery, Rachel Jones at Dulwich Picture Gallery, and Nancy Cadogan at the Garden Museum.

Beauty can come with a subtext. The Royal Academy of Arts is pairing the German artist Anselm Keifer with Vincent Van Gogh, offering a soaring spectacle in which an undercurrent of horror meets the sublime. Chaim Soutine's exquisite paintings, once collected by the great Parisian decorator Madeleine Castaing, were influenced by the turmoil of the inter-war period in Europe, and his status as a Jewish immigrant; at Piano Nobile, a small but exquisite exhibition is examining his influence on British artists including Frank Auerbach, Lucian Freud, and Leon Kossoff.

But there's more straightforward beauty, too and even some playful frivolity. The Royal Drawing School is celebrating its quarter century with an exhibition that includes work by His Majesty The King, as well as Tim Burton, David Hockney, and Grayson Perry. Speaking of Hockney, his early works, on view at Hazlitt Holland Hibbert, are a joy to discover. Finally – had you considered tea towels as a vehicle for art? Well, Tracey Emin has, and they're on sale at the National Portrait Gallery. Meanwhile Nicky Haslam has turned his attention to what he thinks is common in art for another of his hit iterations of the same, and that's for sale with Saatchi Yates. There's value in exiting through the giftshop, for everyone.

The best exhibitions in London for July 2025

1/33

In the Mood for Love: Hockney in London, 1960 – 1963 at Hazlitt Holland Hibbert

Hazlitt Holland Hibbert, SW1, is presenting a remarkable selection of David Hockney's early paintings, drawings, and prints, many of which have not been seen since the 1960s. It was a crucial period in Hockney's career, during which his creativity flourished, influenced by European and American art, from Picasso to Jackson Pollock, as well as literary sources - the poets Constantine Cavafy and Walt Whitman. And he began to introduce figures into his paintings – friends, and lovers. The show is curated by Louis Kasmin, grandson of legendary dealer John Kasmin, who represented Hockney from 1962, when he left the Royal College of Art, through to the early 1990s.

May 21 – July 18; *hh-h.com*

Pictured: *David Hockney, Two Friends (in a Cul-de-sac), 1963 © David Hockney*

2/33

Keifer / Van Gogh at the Royal Academy

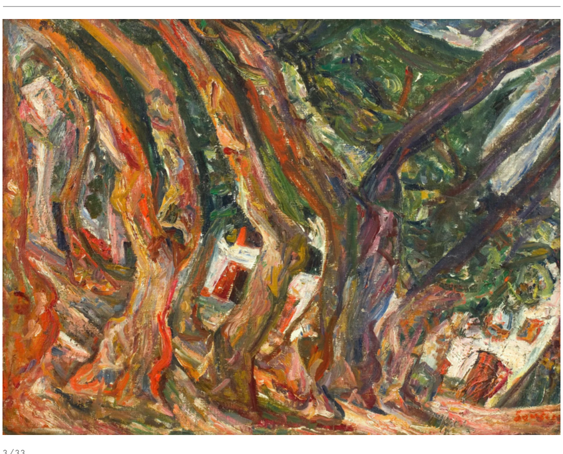
The German artist Anselm Keifer, whose monumental paintings have been exhibited in palaces, castles and galleries across the world, has long cited Post-Impressionist pioneer Vincent Van Gogh as a major influence. This summer the Royal Academy, W1, is showing their work side by side. While Keifer's work dominates the space through its size, the parallels in their interest in texture are easy to discern, as is their subject matter. Van Gogh's fields of wheat are depictions of intense emotion; for Keifer, landscape is a silent witness to human history. There's euphoria and horror in both.

Until October 26; *royalacademy.org.uk*

Pictured: *Anselm Kiefer, Nevermore, 2014. Emulsion, oil, acrylic, shellac, gold leaf and sediment of electrolysis on canvas. Eschaton Kunststiftung. Photo: Charles Duprat. © Anselm Kiefer*

WATCH

Inside Veere Grenney's 18th-century Palladian folly



3/33

Soutine and British Painting at Piano Nobile

Chaim Soutine was a leading contributor to the expressionist movement, a key figure of the School of Paris during the interwar years – and was legendary Parisian decorator Madeleine Castaing's favourite artist. In fact, we've got him to thank for her becoming an interior designer; she opened her shop, during World War II, partly to fund the purchase of more paintings by him. Soutine's landscapes, portraits and still-lifes, which under his brush became roiling, turbulent images, also influenced several British artists. This exhibition at Piano Nobile, W11, uses comparison and juxtaposition to reflect on his impact on Frank Auerbach, Lucian Freud, Leon Kossoff, David Bomberg, Paula Rego, and others.

Until August 1; *piano-nobile.com*

Pictured: *Chaim Soutine Les Platanes à Céret, courtesy Piano Nobile*

4/33

Emily Kam Kngwarray

Tate Modern, SE1, is holding the largest ever presentation devoted to the renowned Aboriginal Australian artist Emily Kam Kngwarray. A founding member of the Utopia Women's Batik Group, the show features her vibrant textiles as well as vast paintings that reflect her ancestral heritage.

July 10 – January 11; *tate.org.uk*

Pictured: *Emily Kam Kngwarray, Ntang Dreaming 1989. NGA, Canberra © Emily Kam Kngwarry Copyright Agency. Licensed by DACS 2025 copy*

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5/33

The Barber in London: Highlights from a Remarkable Collection at The Courtauld Gallery

Birmingham's loss is our gain – as exceptional paintings from the Barber Institute of Fine Arts go on display at The Courtauld Gallery, WC2. The two institutions were founded at the same time; both were intended to encourage the study and public appreciation of art, and both are home to two of the finest collections of European art in this country. Among the highlights are paintings by Frans Hals, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, James Abbott McNeil Whistler, and Edgar Degas.

Until February 22, 2026; *courtauld.ac.uk*

Pictured: *Claude Monet, The Church at Varengeville, The Henry Barber Trust, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham*

6/33

Abstract Erotic at the Courtauld

There's more to see at the same gallery. In 1966, a young American critic and creator named Lucy Lippard brought together three female artists - Louise Bourgeois, Eva Hesse, Alice Adams - as part of a larger show in a gallery in New York that offered a reimagining of what sculpture could be. Sixty years later, their works have been reunited. It's not a complete restaging, although many of the sculptures, reliefs, and drawings being shown were in the original show. Then, the unconventional materials – rubber, latex, rubber tubing – marked a radical shift in practice. They're still as exciting today.

Until September 14; *courtauld.ac.uk*

Pictured: *Installation shot of Eccentric Abstraction, 1966, including Alice Adams's Big Aluminum 1 (1965, cat. 19). Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C*

Mike Bruce

7/33

Jenny Saville: The Anatomy of Painting at the National Portrait Gallery

For 30-plus years, Jenny Saville, who came to prominence in the 1990s as one of the YBAs, has been playing a leading role in the reinvigoration of figurative painting. Drawing inspiration from Rembrandt, Lucian Freud, and Francis Bacon, she creates visceral portraits from thick layers of paint that question the historical notion of female beauty. The National Portrait Gallery is hosting her largest institutional show in this country to date, bringing together works from public and private collections across the world. Oh – and don't miss the shop, which has a new collection of merchandise from Jenny's fellow YBA Tracey Emin, including eminently affordable tea towels, which sit alongside her equally democratically-priced range of ceramics.

June 20 – September 7; *npg.org.uk*

Pictured: *Compass, 2013 by Jenny Saville, Private collection © Jenny Saville, Courtesy Gagosian*

David Parry

8/33

The Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition

The RA's Summer Exhibition has taken place every year since 1769. Once upon a time it was where Gainsborough, Turner, Constable and Reynolds vied for recognition and column inches. Now, it's where you can see works by today's Royal Academicians – many of whom House & Garden have visited in their studio, including Grayson Perry, Jock McFadyen, Rose Wylie, Antony Gormley, Maggi Hambling, Sean Scully, Eileen Cooper – alongside a famously varied cornucopia of paintings, prints and sculptures by other artists, at all points of their career. It's also a shopping opportunity: prices start at as little as £100, and 30% of each sale goes to fund the RA schools and future exhibition programming. If you are in the acquisitions market, know that RA members benefit from early access both to the show, and buying.

June 17 – August 17; *royalacademy.org.uk*

Pictured: *Installation view of the Summer Exhibition 2024 at the Royal Academy of Arts in London. Photo © Royal Academy of Arts, London / David Parry*

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9/33

The Power of Drawing at The Royal Drawing School

Twenty-five years ago, His Majesty King Charles III founded the Royal Drawing School with the artist Catherine Goodman. Their aim was the promotion of drawing as an essential skill for artists, and to make it accessible to all, regardless of background or circumstance – to which end, the School offers numerous scholarships. This show, taking place at the School in Shoreditch, EC2, celebrates the quarter century by bringing together a broad range of drawings by artists including Grayson Perry, Es Devlin, Tim Burton, David Hockney, Tracey Emin – and HM The King himself. There are also various events, including drawing classes.

July 1 – 26; *royaldrawingschool.org*

Pictured: *Somaya Critchlow, Study for Black Venus, 2024 © Somaya Critchlow*

10/33

Rachel Jones: Gated Canyons at Dulwich Picture Gallery

Rachel Jones is renowned for her vibrant use of colour, and her combing of both abstract and figurative

main exhibition space - features a new body of work that responds to the gallery's permanent collection of masterpieces by artists including Rembrandt, Poussin, Rubens, Canaletto, Gainsborough, and Veronese.

June 10 – October 19; *dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk*

Pictured: *Rachel Jones, Gated Canyons, 2024, courtesy the artist. Photography by Eva Herzog*

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11/33

Once Upon A Time in London at Saatchi Yates

Saatchi Yates, SW1, is giving us a summer show that is a cross-generational love letter to the city's creative soul. Combining museum loans and new commissions, it brings together works by artists including Francis Bacon, Frank Auerbach, Leon Kossoff, Tracey Emin, Peter Doig, Jade Fadojutimi, Alvaro Barrington – and Nicky Haslam, in that he has designed a new tea towel. 'Art Things Nicky Haslam Finds Common' is as gloriously irreverent as ever: Banksy, Giverny, the Mona Lisa, and the colour white are all on the interior designer's hit list.

Until August 17; *saatchiyates.com*

Pictured: *Peter Doig, Junior Lion, 2017, oil and distemper on linen © Peter Doig*

12/33

Megan Rooney: Yellow Yellow Blue at Thaddaeus Ropac

South African-born Megan Rooney's paintings are an instance of form led by colour, and this exhibition of new work at Thaddaeus Ropac, W1, is a continuation of her ongoing investigation into abstraction as a means of storytelling. Using a range of materials including oil pastels, the canvases are alternately built up and sanded back, creating an extraordinary sense of depth, while the textures, if you look up close, seem to run from velvet to silk.

June 12 – August 2; *ropac.net*

Pictured: *Megan Rooney, Old Rome, 2025, All images © Megan Rooney. Photo- Eva Herzog. Courtesy Thaddaeus Ropac gallery, London · Paris · Salzburg · Milan · Seoul.*

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13/33

Ugo Rondinone: The Rainbow Body at Sadie Coles HQ

There's another celebration of colour at Sadie Coles HQ, courtesy of Ugo Rondinone and his figurative sculptures, that have been placed within a fluorescent environment, with the walls, floors and ceiling of the gallery finished in rainbow shades that mirror the vibrant hues of the works. The sculptures have their origins in Rondinone's 2010 *nude* series – but while they were bound to earth, these rainbow figures are in a state of transfiguration, their physical bodies dissolving into light.

Until August 2; *sadiecoles.com*

Pictured: *Installation view, Ugo Rondinone, the rainbow body, Sadie Coles HQ, Kingly Street, 22 May – 02 August 2025 © Ugo Rondinone. Courtesy the Artist and Sadie Coles HQ, London. Photo: Katie Morrison*

Lucy Dawkins

14/33

Softer Concrete: David Batchelor, José Pedro Costigliolo, Judith Lauand at Cecilia Brunson Projects

And there's more colour at Cecilia Brunson Projects, SE1. London-based artist David Batchelor is also a colour theorist and author of the cult text *Chromophobia*. He draws inspiration from urban environments, the shapes and forms, planes and edges – and the colours. *Concretos* is an ongoing sculptural series, which nods to the same traditions of Latin American modernism. This exhibition features new work and has at its centre a tapestry that Batchelor produced with the Taller Mexicano de Gobelinos in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Until July 25; *ceciliabrunsonprojects.com*

Pictured: *David Batchelor, CV Tapestry 02, 2024, wool tapestry, produced with Taller Mexicano de Gobelinos, Guadalajara Photography by Lucy Dawkins, courtesy of the artist and Cecilia Brunson Projects*

Derek Jarman, Heart's Ease, 1984, Courtesy Of Amanda Wilkinson Gallery

15/33

Derek Jarman A Chronology: The Black Paintings Part I at Amanda Wilkinson Gallery

Artist, plantsman, filmmaker and gay rights activist Derek Jarman's house and garden in Dungeness have become a place of pilgrimage for his admirers – but it's less easy for those same admirers to see art works by him. Happily, Amanda Wilkinson Gallery, EC1, is mounting a chronological show of his 1986-1991 series *The Black Paintings*. There is a new publication being launched alongside by Pilot Press: *The Assassination of P.P.P. in the Garden of Earthly Delights* is a previously unpublished film treatment concerning the murder of Pier Paulo Pasolini during the making of his film, *Saló*. Jarman's script takes inspiration from a triptych by the Dutch painter Hieronymous Bosch that depicts both the joys and perils of temptation.

June 6 to July 12; *amandawilkinsongallery.com*

Pictured: *one of Derek Jarman's works from his Black Paintings series, courtesy of Amanda Wilkinson Gallery*

Royal Collection Trust

16/33

The Edwardians: Age of Elegance at The King's Gallery, Buckingham Palace

The Edwardian period – the years between 1910 and the 1914 when the Great War began - often gets overlooked. But, in terms of both art and design, it was age of opulence and glamour, and the beginning of what we think of as the modern era. This exhibition at The King's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, gives us opportunity to discover the lives and tastes of two of Britain's most fashionable royal couples, King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, and King George V and Queen Mary. More than 300 objects from the Royal Collection will be on display, many of them for the first time, among them works by the most renowned artists of the day, including Carl Fabergé, John Singer Sargent, Frederic Leighton, Edward Burne-Jones, and William Morris.

April 11 – November 23; *rct.uk*

Pictured: Charles Baugniet, *After the Ball- a Lady in a Ballgown Asleep on a Sofa*, c.1860–67 © Royal Collection Enterprises Limited 2024 | Royal Collection Trust

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Steve Studios

17/33

A Summer of British Impressionism at David Messum Fine Art

Impressionism arrived in Britain in the second half of the 19th century, via English artists who had studied in Paris. Influenced by the artistic developments of those French artists who were orchestrating a radical break with the traditions of academic pictorial representation, they developed an English movement. The summer exhibition at David Messum Fine Art presents paintings that demonstrate the diversity and influence of English Impressionism, from the 1860s to the present day.

Until July 31; *messums.com*

Pictured: *'Sunshine and Showers' by Harold Harvey, 1903, courtesy David Messum Fine Art*

18/33

Paul Nash: The Spirit of the Place at Daniel Katz Gallery

There's opportunity for a closer study of Paul Nash's work at Daniel Katz Gallery, W1. Renowned for having served as a war artist in both world wars, experiences that left an irrevocable mark on both the man and his art, he was a key figure in the British surrealist movement. This exhibition brings together work from across Nash's career, from early landscapes to surrealist masterpieces, and considers his enduring legacy.

June 19 – July 31; *katz.art*

Pictured: *Paul Nash, Trees (drawing), courtesy Daniel Katz Gallery*

19/33

Cecil Beaton's Garden Party at the Garden Museum

This title of this exhibition at the Garden Museum, SE1, is not misleading: it really is a (floral) riot. Artist, photographer, designer and Bright Young Thing Cecil Beaton had a passion for gardens and everything that grew in them. Indeed, they were a thread that linked his various pursuits, from society portraiture to interior decoration and set and costume design for such visually decadent films as *My Fair Lady*. The show – designed by Luke Edward Hall - follows Beaton's horticultural development through his gardens at Ashcombe House and Reddish House, drawing on photography, paintings, costumes, and personal diaries. It looks at his collaborations with Constance Spry, his pioneering use of painted and fresh flowers as backdrops for fashion photography, and at the lavish arrangements he created for parties using flowers he had grown himself (which might provide inspiration: *do* try this at home!)

May 14 – September 21; *gardenmuseum.org.uk*

Pictured: *Royal Portrait of Princess Elizabeth (later Queen Elizabeth II), Buckingham Palace, Cecil Beaton, 1945 © Cecil Beaton; Victoria & Albert Museum*

Justin_Piperger

20/33

Nancy Cadogan: The Lost Trees at The Garden Museum

Also taking place at The Garden Museum, SE1, an exhibition of works by Nancy Cadogan is a beautifully painted requiem to lost trees. Initially sparked by the felling of trees near the artist's house for the HS2 project, the series expanded to take in further instances, to record the human stories and ecological truths that surround trees, and to celebrate their might, majesty, and wondrousness.

June 10 – July 20; *gardenmuseum.org.uk*

Pictured: *Nancy Cadogan, Cubbington Pear Tree, Oil on Canvas, Study, 2024, courtesy of the artist*

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21/33

In and Out of the Garden at the Thackeray Gallery

This exhibition at the Thackeray Gallery, W8, is a celebration of gardens captured in all their ephemeral loveliness – and among them are some familiar favourites: Charleston in East Sussex, Tom and Sue Stuart-Smith's Serge Hill (where the artist, Anne-Marie Butlin, will be teaching a painting workshop next spring), Sarah Raven's Perch Hill, and the Chelsea Physic Garden.

Until July 18; *thackeraygallery.com*

Pictured: *Anne-Marie Butlin, Charleston © Anne-Marie Butlin*

22/33

Feast, Melody, and Adornment at the Mall Galleries

The Mall Galleries, W1, is hosting the first major exhibition of Indian Pichvai art in London. A meticulously detailed, hand-painted textile that is traditionally hung behind the idol of Shrinathji, a cherubic incarnation of the Indian deity Lord Krishna, Pichvais have long been made both for use in temples and sold to pilgrims as sacred mementos. The exhibition has been put together by curator and philanthropist Pooja Singhal, who has founded an atelier in Udaipur to preserve this tradition, which is at risk from industrialisation, and, with over 500 works, offers the opportunity to explore the significance of this 400-year-old art form.

July 2 – 6; *mallgalleries.org.uk*

Pictured: *Cows with lotus backdrop, Courtesy of Atelier Pichvai Tradition & Beyond*

Bridgeman Images

23/33

Turner's Kingdom: Beauty, Birds, and Beasts at Turner's House

This year would have been Joseph Mallord William Turner's 250th birthday. It's worth scheduling some time at the Clore Gallery at Tate Britain, which, thanks to his bequest to the nation, is the world's largest collection of his works. It's also worth making a trip to Twickenham, and Sandycombe Lodge. Built in 1813 to his designs to provide a quiet retreat away from the pressures of the London art world, it's currently holding an exhibition of the artist's rarely seen bird studies, alongside fish and other animals.

Until October 26; *turnershouse.org*

Pictured: *JMW Turner, Head of a Heron with a Fish, 1815 © Leeds Museums and Galleries, UK*

24/33

Heiress: Sargent's American Portraits at Kenwood House

Just as Twickenham wasn't part of London when Turner built his house, nor was Hampstead when the magnificent Palladian-style villa that is Kenwood House was erected on the northern edge of the Heath. It was remodelled in the 18th century by the great Robert Adam, and the library, with its neoclassical form, decorative frieze, and ceiling paintings by Antonio Zucchi, is widely considered one of the greatest surviving examples of his work anywhere in Britain – and there's more by him there, too. Increasing the importance of scheduling a visit (or revisit) is a temporary exhibition of eighteen exquisite paintings by John Singer Sargent, portraits of the women once labelled 'dollar princesses'.

May 16 – October 5; *english-heritage.org.uk*

Pictured: *John Singer Sargent, Mrs. Wilton Phipps (Jessie Wilton Phipps), c. 1884 © Steven De Witt Lowy*

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25/33

Do Ho Suh: Walk The House at Tate Modern

There's quite a different sort of interior at Tate Modern, SE1, courtesy of the Korean-born, London-based artist Do Ho Suh. The galleries have been filled with his delicate brand of architecture that recreate his past homes in Seoul, New York, and London. Visitors can walk through his rooms and corridors rendered in multi-hued sheer fabric, adorned with meticulously detailed light switches, plug sockets, and door handles (we've long talked of the importance of prettifying such things.) But beside being genuine interiors inspiration, they're installations that ask: Is home a place, a feeling, or an idea? There are also sculptures, videos and drawings, for this is a major survey that looks back at three decades of a unique practice.

Until October 19; *tate.org.uk*

Pictured: *Do Ho Suh, Nests, 2024. (detail) Courtesy the Artist and Lehmann Maupin New York, Seoul and London and Victoria Miro. Photography by Jeon Taeg Su © Do Ho Suh*

José María Velasco

26/33

José Maria Velasco: A View of Mexico at the National Gallery

The 19th century José Maria Velasco is little known in this country, but he is one of Mexico's most loved artists. Another exhibition at the National Gallery, W1, shows us why, via his sweeping landscapes of the Valley of Mexico, that, in their detail, allude both to the country's historic past and its rapid industrialisation. The show makes links to works by his European contemporaries that are also in the gallery's collection, notably Edouard Manet's *The Execution of Emperor Maximilian.*

Until August 17; *nationalgallery.org.uk*

Pictured: *José María Velasco Lago de Chalco, 1885 oil on canvas National Gallery of Prague copywrite National Gallery of Prague photo Andrea Rýyová*

27/33

Lina Lapelyté at The Cosmic House

On the subject of house museums, there are few more extraordinary than The Cosmic House, which is on Lansdowne Road, W11. For years it was the family home of famed architect and landscape designer Charles Jenks, his wife, the writer and designer Maggie Keswick, and their children. (You might have seen Charles's *Landform* in front of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh, or his *Cells of Life* at Jupiter Artland.) A leading proponent of Post-Modernism, the London house became an opportunity to create a 'cosmic house' that explores the meaning of time, the seasons, and the galaxies. The staircase are 'solar stairs', with a step for each week of the year, and they're lit by the silvery light of the 'moonwell' above. There's a spring room, and a winter room, and a non-working jacuzzi by fellow PoMo architect Piers Gough based on an upturned version of Borromi's Renaissance dome. Increasing the allure is a new, site-specific exhibition by Lina Lapelytė, who was part of the creative team responsible for the indoor beach and opera installation that won a Golden Lion at the 2019 Venice Biennale. Now, she's collaborated with a group of performers to explore the themes of the house via performative and musical video work.

Until December 19; *jencksfoundation.org*

Pictured: *In the Dark, We Play, 2025, video still by Martynas Norvaišas, commissioned by the Jencks Foundation at The Cosmic House*

Jack Hems

28/33

Grayson Perry: Delusions of Grandeur at the Wallace Collection

Whether you appreciate the Wallace Collection depends largely on whether you like the elaborate ornamentation of Rococo and 18th century French paintings, furniture, and porcelain. Grayson Perry - whose art explores ideas about social identity, class, and gender - isn't keen. This proved an issue when he was invited to prepare this exhibition, which is the largest contemporary exhibition the museum has ever hosted. His solution was to find another alter ego. Her name is Shirley Smith, and she is obsessed with the collection – and believes herself to be its rightful heir. The result is 40 new works by Grayson, including ceramics, tapestries and collage, displayed alongside pieces from the museum, that look at the nature of craft and collecting, as well as addressing the idea of 'outsider' art.

Until October 26; *wallacecollection.org*

Pictured: *Grayson Perry, I Know Who I Am, 2024 © Grayson Perry. Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro*

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Bridgeman Images

29/33

Leigh Bowery! at Tate Modern

Australian born, Leigh Bowery arrived in London in 1980, and swiftly became renown as an artist, performer, fashion designer, musician, and muse – or, according to his friend and collaborator Boy George, "modern art on legs." Outrageously flamboyant, he reimagined clothing and make-up as sculpture and paint, challenged aesthetics and taste, and founded the decadently anarchic Taboo nightclub where the door policy was "dress as though your life depends on it, or don't bother." It was where Leigh was introduced to Lucian Freud, who had seen Leigh perform at Anthony d'Offay Gallery. Freud painted Leigh multiple times, altering Leigh's relationship with his body, and in turn his use of it in his performances, which continued into late 1994. He died of AIDS on New Year's Eve that year, aged 33; "Tell them I've gone to Papua New Guinea," he suggested be said, while he was in hospital. This show at Tate Modern combines Leigh's dazzling costumes with paintings, photographs and videos, to offer a portrait of the artist, and explore his lasting impact. Two books are a worthy accompaniment. The first is Sue Tilley's biography, *Leigh Bowery: The Life and Times of an Icon*, which offers an evocative and intimate account by someone who was one of his best friends, and also modelled for Freud. The second is Charlie Porter's *Nova Scotia House: A Novel*, a work of fiction inspired by the creative scene of that time – and a beautifully written exploration of experimentation, freedom set against the loss and grief wrought by AIDS.

Until August 31; *tate.org.uk*

Pictured: *Lucian Freud, Leigh Bowery, 1991 (c) The Lucian Freud Archive, All Rights Reserved 2024*

30/33

Arpita Singh: Remembering at Serpentine North

Arpita Singh was among the contemporary Indian artists who featured in the brilliant *The Imaginary Institution of India* show at the Barbican last year – and now the Serpentine North, W2, is presenting the first UK solo show of her work, exploring the full breadth of her practice. This runs from intimate watercolours and ink drawings to large scale paintings, which take from the tradition of Indian miniatures and their narratives, interweaving her own experience of social upheaval and humanitarian crises.

March 20 – July 27; *serpentinegalleries.org*

Pictured: *Arpita Singh, My Lollipop City Gemini Rising, 2005, copyright Vadehra Art Gallery*

31/32

Yoshitomo Nara at the Hayward Gallery

Do you like the art of Yoshitomo Nara? Do you find it captivating, and agree that he delivers "punk rock for your inner child"? I can guarantee that countering the 'er, no's will be an equal number of enthusiastic 'yes!'s. Whatever your feelings, we're being given opportunity to see a wide variety of the Japanese artist's work, featuring his pop culture and manga-influenced non-conformist figures at the Hayward Gallery, SE1, this summer.

Until August 31; southbankcentre.co.uk

Pictured: *Yoshitomo Nara, Fire, 2009. Courtesy of the artist and Yoichi Kawasaki Collection*

Wooden Funerary Boat, Courtesy Of Chiddingstone Castle

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Making Egypt at the Young V&A

This child-centred exhibition at the Young V&A, E2, centres on creativity in Ancient Egypt. Cleverly, there's something for everyone, with works drawn from the V&A's own extensive collection, including the extraordinary fully painted inner sarcophagus of Princess Sopdet-em-haawt, as well as contemporary comics, games and films. There are also contemporary design responses to ancient Egyptian creativity, such as the Great Pyramid of Giza, in Lego.

February 15 – November 2; vam.ac.uk

ISABEL INFANTES

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Glassed in Dreams at 100 Bishopsgate

While you're in the Square Mile, do drop into 100 Bishopsgate, where the light-filled atrium has been filled with striking glass sculptures, bestowing a corporate environment with a fragile beauty. Created by the conceptual artist Gabriele Beveridge, it's a boundary-blurring female-led initiative inspired by George Oppen's poem *Of Being Numerous*, which has also given the show its title.

Until March 31, 2026; brookfieldproperties.com

Pictured: NEST (II) by Gabriele Beveridge

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Fiona McKenzie Johnston has been contributing to *House & Garden* since 2017. She writes the art pages as well as decorating columns for the website, having started her career with the magazine's sister publications *AD* and *Vogue*. She has an MA in History of Art from the University of St. Andrew's, ...
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