

# HAYWARD GALLERY

## TOURING

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### ***To Improvise a Mountain: Lynette Yiadom-Boakye Curates***

**Leeds Art Gallery, Leeds:** 16 May – 5 October 2025  
**MK Gallery, Milton Keynes:** 25 October 2025 – 8 February 2026  
**Nottingham Castle, Nottingham:** 20 March – 21 June 2026



IMAGE CREDITS IN NOTES TO EDITORS

*“The decisions are governed by something I can’t really put into words. I’ve selected things that I love by dint of their poetry, their beauty, their refusal, their internal logic and, above all, their power. Each artist here invents the language they need and there is magic in it.”*

— Lynette Yiadom-Boakye

**Hayward Gallery Touring** will present ***To Improvise a Mountain***, a group exhibition curated by **Lynette Yiadom-Boakye**, one of the most important figurative painters today. For this exhibition, Yiadom-Boakye selects works that have been critical to her way of seeing and thinking, inviting audiences around the UK on a deeply personal journey across different geographies and generations of artists.

First coming to prominence in the early 2010s, Yiadom-Boakye is both an artist and a writer who is renowned for her oil paintings of imagined subjects. Assertive presences who yet seem to exist

outside of any definable time or place, her figures are hailed for both their technical mastery and lingering, enigmatic quality.

Developed by the artist in collaboration with Hayward Gallery Touring, *To Improvise a Mountain* will bring Yiadom-Boakye's work into conversation with an eclectic range of historical and contemporary artists, illuminating her creative process. Featured artists will include: **Bas Jan Ader, Lisa Brice, Barbara Chase-Riboud, Samuel Fosso, Peter Hujar, Kahlil Joseph, Toyin Ojih Odutola, The Otolith Group, Jennifer Packer, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Walter Sickert, David Wojnarowicz** and more.

The exhibition's curatorial spirit stems from a fragment of poetry within Miles Davis's 'Inamorata' (1971), which asks: '*Who is this music that which description may never justify? / Can the ocean be described?*'. For Yiadom-Boakye, poetry's ability to translate the intangible into images the mind can hold, and to think through rhythm and feeling, is similar to the act of painting.

**Yiadom-Boakye expands:** "*My deployment of words in writing is not always so different to my use of brush marks in painting. The logic, patterns, relationships, repetitions and decisions are guided by intuition — the rightness and wrongness, the blatancies and subtleties — and that's how I want to approach this show.*"

*To Improvise a Mountain* will offer a deeply personal interweaving of artworks that create their own emotional landscapes of intensity, intimacy, refusal, activism, and wonder. Ranging from the visceral Post-Impressionism of painter Walter Sickert to the video essays of Otolith Group, for Yiadom-Boakye "*the governing principle, the dialogue between the works in the show, is that spirit of infinite knowledge and infinite knowing that poetry allows us.*"

**Brian Cass, Senior Curator of Hayward Gallery Touring,** says: "*Lynette Yiadom-Boakye brings us on an imaginative journey of encounters with artworks that - like her remarkable paintings - conjure different moods, personalities, colour and emotions. Her curation celebrates the imaginative spirit of the contributing artists, and the endless potential of art to bring new thinking and feeling into existence, continuing Hayward Gallery Touring's longstanding history of partnering with artists on ambitious exhibitions that invite audiences inside their worlds.*"

**Jane Bhojroo, Principal Keeper of Leeds Art Gallery,** says: "*Leeds Art Gallery is delighted to be collaborating with Hayward Gallery Touring and the remarkable artist Lynette Yiadom-Boakye to premiere this visionary exhibition in Leeds. It promises to be a wonderful opportunity to present artworks by internationally renowned artists from across the globe, from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, including celebrated paintings and drawings by Walter Sickert from the Leeds Museums and Galleries collection*".

*To Improvise a Mountain: Curated by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye* is a Hayward Gallery Touring exhibition curated by Lynette Yiadom-Boakye with Hayward Gallery Touring. The exhibition is developed in partnership with Leeds Art Gallery, MK Gallery, and Nottingham Castle, supporting the Southbank Centre's ongoing mission to create experiences for the nation's enjoyment.

**-ENDS-**

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **Image Credits (left to right)**

- Walter Sickert, *The Blackbird of Paradise*, c. 1896–98. Oil on canvas, 66 x 48 cm. © Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Art Gallery) / Bridgeman Images
- Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, *To Improvise a Mountain*, 2024. Charcoal and conte on paper, variable dimensions (unfinished). Courtesy the artist.

- Lisa Brice, *Untitled (After Vallothon)*, 2021. Ink synthetic tempera, gouache, neopastel, on canvas mounted on wooden panel, 200 x 82.6 x 2.5 cm. Copyright: Lisa Brice. Photo: Charles Duprat.

### **About Lynette Yiadom-Boakye**

Lynette Yiadom-Boakye was born in London, in 1977. Her recent solo museum exhibitions include *No Twilight Too Mighty* at Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, in 2023, and *Fly in League with the Night*, a mid-career survey organised by Tate Britain in London, and which travelled to the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, K20 in Düsseldorf and MUDAM in Luxembourg, in 2020–22. She was awarded the Carnegie Prize in 2018 and was the 2012 recipient of the Pinchuk Foundation Future Generation Prize. She was shortlisted for the Turner Prize in 2013. Yiadom-Boakye's exhibition with Hayward Gallery Touring continues the organisation's long history of partnering with artists on ambitious exhibitions that invite audiences inside their worlds.

### **About Hayward Gallery Touring**

Hayward Gallery Touring is the UK's largest contemporary art organisation producing touring exhibitions. Based at Southbank Centre, Hayward Gallery Touring works with a range of artists, curators, designers and writers to develop curatorial projects and ambitious exhibitions that are often beyond the scope of a single institution.

Hayward Gallery Touring's programme includes British Art Show—the largest and most significant exhibition of contemporary art produced in the UK—as well as thematic group shows and monographic exhibitions created for venues including museums, galleries, art centres, libraries, schools, hospitals and other unexpected partners and places.

Hayward Gallery Touring exhibitions are seen by up to half a million people in over 45 cities and towns each year.

### **About the Southbank Centre**

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying 11 acres along the river and its 4 venues anchor London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. We exist to present great cultural experiences that bring people together and we achieve this by providing the space for artists to create and present their best work and by creating a place where as many people as possible can come together to experience bold, unusual and eye-opening work. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. Southbank Centre is made up of the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and Hayward Gallery as well as being home to the National Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. It is also home to six Resident Orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Philharmonia Orchestra). [www.southbankcentre.co.uk/](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/)

Website: <https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk>

Facebook: Southbank Centre

Instagram: @southbankcentre

X (formally Twitter): @southbankcentre

### **About Leeds Art Gallery**

Founded in 1888 as a civic art gallery, Leeds Art Gallery has strong collections of 19th and 20th century British painting and sculpture, widely considered to be one of the best outside national collections. Alongside an extensive painting and sculpture collection, the gallery holds a significant collection of moving-image work. To accompany the collection Leeds Art Gallery presents a dynamic and diverse programme comprising exhibitions, commissions, acquisitions and projects by artists whose work is globally significant and locally relevant. In recent years, Leeds Art Gallery has

launched British Art Show 8, established Yorkshire Sculpture International, presented Sonia Boyce's award-winning Feeling Her Way from the Venice Biennale and has co-commissioned major moving-image works.

Website: [artgallery.leeds.gov.uk](http://artgallery.leeds.gov.uk)

Instagram: @leedsartgallery

Facebook: @leedsartgallery

### **About MK Gallery**

MK Gallery presents world-class exhibitions, events, pioneering learning and community programmes in Milton Keynes. Its award-winning expansion, opened in 2019, houses a café, shop and independent cinema overlooking Campbell Park.

Staging three exhibitions each year, MK Gallery works with partners locally, nationally and internationally to bring outstanding cultural activities to the region. MK Gallery is renowned for a diverse programme that includes in-depth solo exhibitions, and thematic group shows spanning both contemporary and historical art, including work by Larry Achiampong and Vanessa Bell.

With a prize-winning offer for families, MK Gallery is focussed on making art accessible to all. It hosts a programme of workshops, talks, conferences, tours and activities running all year round.

MK Gallery is part of the Arts Council's National Portfolio and a member of the Plus Tate network.

### **About Nottingham Castle Museum & Art Gallery**

Nottingham Castle is a Victorian-converted Stuart Restoration-era ducal mansion museum and art gallery, built on the site of a Norman castle dating back to 1068.

In 1878 and the Castle became the first municipal museum of art in the country. Opened under the stewardship of curator George Harry Wallis, the museum was designed to inspire the creative and curious imaginations of the people of Nottingham, which had become a world leader in the design and manufacture of lace. Its collection includes world-class examples of Nottingham alabaster, salt-glazed stoneware and Nottingham's world-famous lace. It also now showcases artworks by local and internationally renowned artists like Richard Parkes Bonington, Paul Sandby, Dame Laura and Harold Knight, Winifred Nicholson, Evelyn Gibbs, Magdalene Odundo, Zanele Muholi and Edmund de Waal.

In 2021, Nottingham Castle re-opened following an extensive £32 million NHLF upgrade. Since November 2022 the Castle has been operated by the Nottingham City Council's Museums Service. The exciting new facilities will help to spread and safeguard the stories of Nottingham, Robin Hood and the Castle for generations to come and will lead a programme of visual arts and contemporary exhibitions within the new state-of-the-art Temporary Exhibition Galleries. Notable recent exhibitions include: Andy Warhol; The Pre-Raphaelites; Thomas and Paul Sandby; STIM CINEMA; 10 Leonardo's; Jeremy Deller; Anish Kapoor; The British Art Show 6 & 7; Dame Laura Knight & Caroline Walker; Thomas Gainsborough & Project Art Works; Fiona Rae & Dan Perfect; Matthew Derbyshire; and Gordon Cheung.

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