

Autumn arts preview 2026



Art & design

The Bayeux tapestry

The most anticipated exhibition of the year centres on an embroidered epic of war, depicting the Norman invasion of Britain in 1066. Prepare to be fascinated by the artistry of the Anglo-Saxon women who used coloured wool to depict billowing sails, charging horses and King Harold's moustache. *British Museum, London, 10 September to 11 July*

Lady in Blue by Tschabalala Self

A joyously comic celebration of life on the streets - or the plinth. A young woman strides across the rectangular Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square. Her rollicking form is a surreal overstatement. An optimistic work of infectious self-confidence. *Fourth Plinth, Trafalgar Square, London, from 10 September*

Sunil Gupta: Life With a Camera, 1970-Now

Portraits of anonymous gay men in Delhi, queer couples in the UK and cruisers in New York combine the principle that all forms of love and community should be made visible with a classical eye for composition. *Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, 19 September to 31 January*

Turner prize

Kira Freije creates tragicomic tableaux of bodies from empty metal frames with faces cast from real people; Simeon Barclay tells stories of working-class northern life through performance and sculpture; Marguerite Humeau makes sculptures out of wasp venom; Tanoa Sasraku exhibits textiles and drawings. *MIMA, Middlesbrough, 26 September to 29 March*

Beverly Buchanan: Weathering

Beverly Buchanan's tumbledown "shack sculptures" celebrate the organic processes of decay and ruin. *Spike Island, Bristol, 26 September to 31 January*

PICKS: JONATHAN JONES, BEN EASTHAM AND CATHERINE SLESSOR

▲ *Posthumous ... Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Abu Dhabi*

▼ *Below, Simeon Barclay; (right) Crouching Aphrodite, from Aphrodite: The Making of a Goddess*



Painting the French Riviera

Artists didn't just paint the Riviera; they helped invent it. There was the savage embrace of raw sunlight by Monet and Cézanne. Matisse and the Fauves painted it in psychedelic colours. And Picasso saw beach life as erotic and shockingly modern. *Royal Academy, London, 2 October to 31 January*

Salman Toor: Someone Like You

Toor's paintings tell the imagined lives of young, queer south Asian men. He inserts fictionalised subjects into paintings in the traditions of the masters to tell enigmatic, evocative and gently subversive stories. *Courtauld, London, 2 October to 10 January*

Wakaliga Uganda

This film studio in Kampala makes action movies on budgets of a few hundred pounds, and shows them in makeshift cinemas to live commentaries by charismatic "video jokers". The challenge? How to reproduce that culture in a gallery. *Chisenhale Gallery, London, 2 October to 6 December*

Sophie Calle: Something Missing

She has followed a stranger to Venice to secretly photograph him, rifled through personal effects



of hotel guests, and written a newspaper column exposing the life of a man she had never met. In the fifth decade of her career, how will Calle's brand of mischief land in our increasingly puritanical culture? *Turner Contemporary, Margate, 3 October to 24 January*

Katherine Hubbard: The Great Room

During the pandemic, Hubbard's mother started to show the effects of a progressive brain disease. The artist's photographs, sculptural installations and writings reflect on how memory and identity is constructed, breaks down and might be rebuilt. *Studio Voltaire, London, 7 October to 10 January*

The 90s: Art and Fashion

Curator Edward Enninful, former editor-in-chief of Vogue, sets YBAs including Damien Hirst and Sarah Lucas alongside fashion icons such as Alexander McQueen and photographer Juergen Teller. *Tate Britain, London, 8 October to 14 February*

Robert Ryman: The Real Thing

Ryman's paintings rejected illusion: his white-on-white works cut art down to its fundamentals. Exquisite refinement or tiresome navel-gazing? Go make up your own mind. *Barbican, London, 8 October to 28 February*

Aphrodite: The Making of a Goddess

Botticelli's Venus is coming to Britain. Well, a similar Botticelli nude of the ancient deity of love and desire. This exhibition starts in ancient Greece with the cult of Aphrodite and follows her reincarnation as the Roman Venus into modern times. *Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 8 October to 11 April*

Willem de Kooning At Work

No one can match his range; from shockingly violent (as in the notorious Woman series) to heart-stoppingly pretty. The most

anticipated show of the season. *Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 9 October to 17 January*

Pope.L: Five Decades

Pope.L's business card introduced him as "The friendliest black artist in America". He became famous for crawling across New York to protest against the neglect of its poor. A fitting tribute to an artist who never looked away. *Modern Art, London, 13 October to 14 November*

Tarek Atoui: Hyundai Commission

Beirut-born, Paris-based Atoui is an artist of multisensory environments. He turns everyday stuff into musical instruments. It should be engaging and poetic, sending strong echoes of Lebanon's history through the space. *Tate Modern, London, 13 October to 11 April*

Constantinople to Istanbul: One City, Two Empires

Istanbul really was Constantinople once - the eastern capital of the Roman empire. When the Ottomans conquered it in 1453, they preserved the ancient domed church of Hagia Sophia and modelled mosques on it. This survey of art and design sounds stupendous. *V&A, London, 7 November to 9 May*



▲ *Savage ... Bathers by Paul Cézanne, 1890-92, from Painting the French Riviera*

▼ *Beverly Buchanan's House, c.1985; (below) Metalheadz at the Blue Note, from The 90s: Art & Fashion*



Van Eyck: The Portraits

This mesmerising painter turned a camera-like eye on the people of the early Northern Renaissance period. It was said he was an alchemist, which feels true when you contemplate the glassy perfection of his portraits. One of the greatest artists ever to have lived. *National Gallery, London, 21 November to 11 April*

Alfred Wallis: An Artists' Artist

Wallis was the fisherman turned painter whose discovery by Ben Nicholson gave British modernism its own "primitive" connection to the native landscape. Luminous pictures of boats on dreamlike seas - loaded with personal and collective memory - are more than a missing link in art history. *Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, 21 November to 2 May*

Nan Goldin: You Never Did Anything Wrong

No one rivals Goldin's raw truth-telling camera and the total conviction that, when you look at her photographs and films, you are seeing the way her world is. Sex and suffering, beauty and death ... it's all here. *Hayward Gallery, London, 24 November to 7 March*

Design and architecture

Es Devlin: Other Worlds

Currently plotting the staging for the Met's much anticipated Ring Cycle, artist and theatre designer Devlin has reframed the visual language of opera, theatre, music and fashion, from Shakespeare to Stormzy. This retrospective features immersive installations and a replica of her studio. *Design Museum, London, 2 October to 4 April*

Michael Landy: Future Ruins

Fantastical drawings of buildings in ruins, inspired by 18th-century draughtsman Joseph Gandy's romantic vision of a crumbling Bank of England. Less romantic subjects include Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago compound and Mussolini's fascist monument. *Sir John Soane's Museum, London, 14 October to 17 January*

James Stirling

For the 30th anniversary of architecture's Stirling prize, this show looks at his career through his links with Liverpool. Stirling was fascinated by the city's industrial past, which shaped his quixotic approach to design. *RIBA North, Liverpool, 23 October to 24 January*

The Nue Black Aesthetic

Valorising the work of contemporary Black designers across furniture, architecture, fashion and installation, this show looks at how design systems are being radically redefined by the nuances of the Black experience. *Design Museum, London, 2 November to 8 August*

Guggenheim Abu Dhabi

The American architect Frank Gehry didn't live to see his final magnum opus completed. This Guggenheim satellite bookends a career that took off in Bilbao with the first modern Guggenheim. *Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates, 11 December*