

# HAYWARD GALLERY

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## Press Release

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**Images:** downloadable [HERE](#)

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## Hayward Gallery unveils gigantic tea-inspired sculpture from art collective Slavs and Tatars as part of a series of new outdoor art commissions



Slavs and Tatars, *Samovar*, 2021 © Slavs and Tatars. Installation view at Hayward Gallery. Photo: Rob Harris

- A brand-new installation from art collective **Slavs and Tatars** will be unveiled against the iconic backdrop of the Hayward Gallery, inaugurating a new three-year commissioning partnership with the **Bagri Foundation**
- The work takes the form of a gigantic tea brewer also known as a Samovar and reflects on the multicultural and colonial histories of tea

- The sculpture launches a series of upcoming outdoor art commissions including a new work for September by German artist **Klaus Weber**

A 14-metre sculpture from Berlin-based art collective Slavs and Tatars will be unveiled this week against the iconic backdrop of the Hayward Gallery. The new work, titled *Samovar* (2021), is the Hayward Gallery's inaugural Bagri Foundation Commission and invites visitors to the Southbank Centre to question the role of the popular drink tea in the UK and its ties - historical, traditional and cultural - to Central Asia.

Taking the form of an oversized inflatable water boiler, teapot and serving tray, the artwork is titled after the eponymous tea brewer commonly found across Central Asia. A Russian invention of the mid-18th century, today Samovars are used across Eastern Europe, the Middle East and some parts of Asia, in both domestic and communal settings.

Drawing on their practice of addressing complex and overlooked cultural histories spanning Europe and Asia, Slavs and Tatars' large-scale installation uses the Samovar as an emblem to question the status of tea as a symbol of pride and nationalism in the United Kingdom. Through a mix of humour and wit, the commission encourages visitors to the Southbank Centre to consider the ways in which the history of tea and its popularity is intertwined with cross-cultural exchange and colonialism. The monumental work is also accompanied by a series of recordings from the artists as well as historians, chefs and poets who were invited to respond to the commission and its theme, including chef and journalist Caroline Eden, food historian Seren Charrington-Hollins and Anuar Duisenbinov, a poet from Kazakhstan.

**Slavs and Tatars, the art collective behind *Samovar*, say:** *"Like the British, we're serious about tea - as well as self-deprecating humour - and can't imagine a better way to tease tea-baggers than a giant Samovar right outside the Hayward Gallery at the Southbank Centre, with its historical mission to present an international face to the public."*

Feeding into a growing programme of outdoor commissions and installations across the Southbank Centre, *Samovar* inaugurates a series of artworks which will transform the area in front of the Hayward Gallery and nearby spaces into a lively sculpture park. To coincide with its launch, the Hayward Gallery is pleased to reveal details of its next outdoor installation which opens later in September with a major work from German artist Klaus Weber.

Generously supported by Art Fund, HENI and the Hayward Gallery Commissioning Committee, with additional support from the Rothschild Foundation, Klaus Weber's *Thinking Fountains* will feature two larger-than-life bronze figures that spout water and a waterfall cascading down from a concrete walkway. Partly inspired by the portal sculptures of Gothic cathedrals, Weber's *Thinking Fountains* aims to welcome both passersby and Hayward Gallery visitors with an allegory on the inspiration provided by encounters with art.

Together, these commissions will offer visitors to the Southbank Centre an unexpected and free opportunity to engage with new art and artistic talent. The Bagri Foundation Commission, following *Samovar*, will take place every summer until 2023 to provide artists from or inspired by Asia and its diaspora the opportunity to create a prominent public commission. Alongside these, an exciting series of installations funded by the Hayward

Gallery Commissioning Committee will round out the seasonal programme, presenting new works by established contemporary artists.

**Ralph Rugoff, Director at the Hayward Gallery, says:** *“From our iconic Waterloo Billboard to our Riverside Walk, the buildings and outdoor spaces across the Southbank Centre have long been home to a diverse range of artistic works. The Hayward Gallery’s inaugural Bagri Foundation Commission from Slavs and Tatars and our upcoming installation by Klaus Weber are the latest additions to our cultural playground that is accessible to all.”*

*Samovar*, the Hayward Gallery’s Bagri Foundation Commission from Slavs and Tatars, is on display now.

# ENDS #

**Link to Slavs and Tatars: Samovar web page** [HERE](#)

**Link to Klaus Weber: Thinking Fountains web page** [HERE](#)

## NOTES TO EDITORS

**For further press information, images and interview requests please contact:**

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### **About the Hayward Gallery**

The Hayward Gallery, part of the Southbank Centre, has a long history of presenting work by the world’s most adventurous and innovative artists including major solo shows by both emerging and established artists and dynamic group exhibitions. They include those by Bridget Riley, Martin Creed, Antony Gormley, Tracey Emin, Andy Warhol, Ed Ruscha, Jeremy Deller, Anish Kapoor, René Magritte, Francis Bacon and David Shrigley, as well as influential group exhibitions such as Africa Remix, Light Show, Psycho Buildings and Space Shifters. Opened by Her Majesty, The Queen in July 1968, the gallery is one of the few remaining buildings of its style. The Brutalist building was designed by a group of young architects, including Dennis Crompton, Warren Chalk and Ron Herron and is named after Sir Isaac Hayward, a former leader of the London County Council.

### **About the Southbank Centre**

The Southbank Centre is the UK’s largest arts centre occupying a prominent riverside location that sits in the midst of 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. We want to take people out of the everyday, every day.

The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. The 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 four Resident Orchestras (London Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, London Sinfonietta and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment) and four Associate Orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra and National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain).



### **About the Bagri Foundation**

The Bagri Foundation is a UK registered charity, inspired by unique and unexpected ideas that weave the traditional and the contemporary of Asian culture. The Foundation, with its roots in education, is driven by curiosity and a desire to learn, and aims for each project to challenge, engage and inspire. Through a diverse programme of film, visual arts, music, dance, literature and talks, the Bagri Foundation gives artists and experts from across Asia and the diaspora, wider visibility on the global stage. Recent projects include [Tantra: enlightenment to revolution](#) at the British Museum; [Anicka Yi at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia](#); [Asia Forum for the Contemporary Art of Global Asias](#) and [Nikhil Chopra](#) at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. [www.bagrifoundation.org](http://www.bagrifoundation.org)

### **About Slavs and Tatars**

Slavs and Tatars is an internationally renowned art collective devoted to an area East of the former Berlin Wall and West of the Great Wall of China known as Eurasia. Since its inception in 2006, the collective has combined popular culture, spiritual and esoteric traditions, oral histories, modern myths and scholarly research to explore polemical issues in society and clear new paths for contemporary discourse. Imbued with humour and a generosity of spirit, the collective's practice, which spans installations, sculptures, lectures, and printed matter, questions one-dimensional ways of seeing relationships between science, religion, power and identity. Their work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, NY; Salt, Istanbul; Vienna Secession, Kunsthalle Zurich and Albertinum, Dresden, among others. Slavs and Tatars has published more than ten books to date, including *Whipped Scripped* on language politics; as well as a translation of the legendary Azerbaijani satirical periodical *Molla Nasreddin*. In addition to launching a residency and mentorship program for young professionals from their region, Slavs and Tatars recently opened Pickle Bar, a slavic aperitivo bar-cum-project space a few doors down from their studio in Berlin.

## Art Fund\_

### **About Art Fund**

Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art. It provides millions of pounds every year to help museums to acquire and share works of art across the UK, further the professional development of their curators, and inspire more people to visit and enjoy their public programmes. In response to Covid-19 Art Fund has made £3.6 million in urgent funding available to support museums through reopening and beyond, including Respond and Reimagine grants to help meet immediate need and reimagine future ways of working. Art Fund is independently funded, supported by the 131,000 members who buy the National Art Pass, who enjoy free entry to over 240 museums, galleries and historic places, 50% off major exhibitions, and receive Art Quarterly magazine. Art Fund also supports museums through its annual prize, Art Fund Museum of the Year. The shortlisted museums for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2021 are: Centre for Contemporary Art Derry~Londonderry; Experience Barnsley; Firstsite in Colchester; Thackray Museum of Medicine in Leeds; and Timespan in Helmsdale

### **About Klaus Weber**

Klaus Weber, lives and works in Berlin. He conceives works across a variety of media which are often based on multifaceted technological interconnections. By manipulating everyday structures, and exploring the impossible, Weber's projects undermine the power of functionalist rationality. Weber repetitively uses images of nature, and explores the untamable in a humorous and anarchic manner. Weber has had solo exhibitions at Collective, Edinburgh, UK (2018), Nottingham Contemporary, UK (2011), Fondazione Mora Grecco, Naples, Italy (2013), the Secession, Vienna, Austria (2008), Kunstverein Hamburg, Germany (2005) as well as international group exhibitions and biennials, including Lyon Biennale, France (2015) Manifesta 7, Italy (2007). Public commissions include Frieze Projects, London (2003) and Frieze Projects East, commissioned by Create London (2012). In 2007, Weber's sculptural installation The Big Giving, was commissioned for the Hayward Gallery. Weber's work is part of private and public collections such as The Federal Collection of Contemporary Art, Germany, Phil Aarons Collection, USA, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, (TBA-21) Austria, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Italy. Since 2017 he has been professor for sculpture at University of the Arts in Münster.



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