

SOUTHBANK CENTRE



Yoshitomo Nara, *Stop the Bombs*, 2019. Courtesy La Colección Jumex, Mexico. © Yoshitomo Nara, courtesy Yoshitomo Nara Foundation.

Yoshitomo Nara

PREPARATION STORY
TUE 10 JUN – SUN 31 AUG 2025

**HAYWARD
GALLERY**

Preparing for your visit

This information is for you to use as much or as little as you like, to help you to **prepare for your tour of the exhibition**. In this handout, you can find pictures of the route through the exhibition and information about what you will experience along the way.

For our ***Relaxed Hours* event on Tuesday 8 July 2025 (10am – 3pm)** we are making small changes to help our visitors who require a more relaxed environment, including turning up the lights where possible and reducing the number of visitors in the galleries for these hours.

There are **guided tours** with Hayward Gallery Tour Guides, **chill-out spaces**, and **free creative workshops and activities with artists**. We don't expect visitors to be quiet during these hours. **It is a time and space for you to be yourself.**

When you arrive at the Southbank Centre site, look for the building with the **pyramid shapes** on the roof, or **ask any staff inside the Royal Festival Hall for directions**.

Entrance to the exhibitions is via the **Hayward Gallery main entrance**. Please arrive as close to your time slot as possible.



External installations

As you approach the Hayward Gallery, there are **two installations** located around the outside of the building.

Thinking Fountains by Klaus Weber is an **outdoor sculpture featuring two water-spouting bronze figures** and a narrow waterfall cascading from an elevated concrete walkway. This installation is located near the entrance to the Hayward Gallery Foyer.



Their Jumpers is a **painting** by Nicola Tyson which shows **two figures standing** against a **yellow brick wall**. They appear to be engaging in a **dance** or **striking a pose** – or perhaps something more unsettling is taking place and their arms are raised in surrender. We are **never quite certain** of the narratives unfolding in Nicola Tyson's artworks. This artwork is located on the side of the Queen Elizabeth Hall and is opposite the Hayward Gallery Foyer.



Hayward Gallery facilities

Cloakroom

The cloakroom is open and there is a **charge of £2** per item to leave anything here. **Please note that we do not accept cash, and all payments are made by card.** You won't be able to bring any bags over 40 x 25 x 25cm (for example, a large backpack or luggage) into the exhibition, **so please leave large bags at home.**



You can request to **borrow a gallery stool** to use while you explore the exhibition. These stools are foldable and lightweight to carry. There are also **two wheelchairs available to borrow if needed.** We recommend pre-booking the wheelchairs where possible.

Sensory backpacks are available for children to borrow. They contain children-sized **ear defenders** and **fidget toys**.



Toilets

There are three **gender-inclusive toilets** (this means everyone can use them) located in the Hayward Gallery Foyer between the Hayward Gallery Shop and the cloakroom. **One of these toilets is an accessible toilet.**

There are **additional toilets within the galleries**, located halfway up the front staircase. These toilets are separated for women and men.



Foyer lift

The foyer lift goes to the following floors: Level 0 in the car park (**step-free access route from street level**), Level 2 (Hayward Gallery Foyer and Shop, toilets and HENI Project Space) and Level 3 (the cafe). This is a **small lift that can comfortably fit one wheelchair user and a companion**. There is a **mirrored wall** facing you as you enter the lift.



Gallery lift

The gallery lift is located on the right, just inside the entrance to the Lower Galleries. It takes you to the Upper Galleries and back down again. This is a **large lift, with silver-coloured walls and a black carpet**.



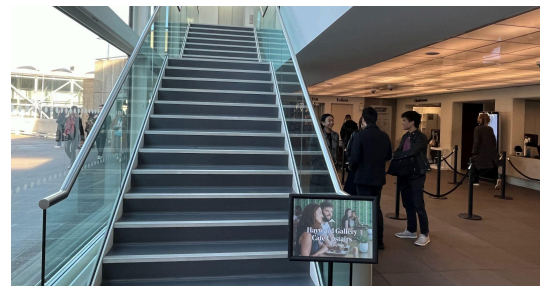
Seating

There are **benches, chairs and stools for visitors to sit on in some of the rooms**. These have been upholstered in brightly-coloured patterned materials. You can also borrow a foldable gallery stool from the cloakroom if you prefer. A Hayward Gallery Visitor Assistant will always be **happy to bring you a stool if you need one**. Just ask the nearest member of staff with a yellow lanyard.



Hayward Gallery Cafe and finding a quiet space

The **Hayward Gallery Cafe is located on Level 3** and can be accessed either by the staircase in the Hayward Gallery Foyer or by taking the lift in the foyer to Level 3.



The Hayward Gallery Cafe is open **Tuesday to Friday, and Sunday, from 10am to 6pm, and Saturday, from 10am to 8pm**. The cafe stops serving 30 minutes before closing.



You can buy **food and drink** from the cafe and use the **tables and chairs** in this area, or sit outside on the balcony. The **coffee machine** in the cafe is loud during the brewing process and the release of steam and compressed air.

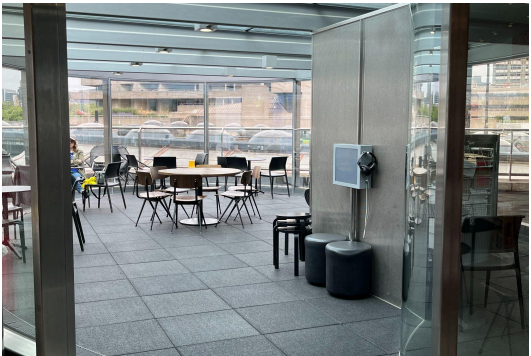
If you need a quiet space, please speak with a member of staff who will be happy to help.

Dan Graham Waterloo Sunset Pavilion




The Dan Graham Waterloo Sunset Pavilion is located **next to the Hayward Gallery Cafe**.

This is an **oval-shaped glass pavilion with views over Waterloo Bridge**.

You are welcome to sit in this room, the cafe or outside on the balcony, if the weather is fine.



Exhibition rules

	Please do not touch
	Photography is allowed with no flash
	No food or drink in the galleries

Barriers

To keep the artworks safe, many have **low barriers or floor tape** around them. This means that you shouldn't lean over or step into this area. Although you can look closely, **please do not touch the artworks.**



Hayward Gallery Visitor Assistants

All our Hayward Gallery Visitor Assistants wear **bright yellow lanyards and black Hayward Gallery T-shirts.**

Our Visitor Assistants' priority is to ensure you have a positive and safe experience at the Hayward Gallery. They are friendly, knowledgeable and passionate about visual art, **and if you need help or have a question about anything in the gallery, they'll be happy to assist.**



What happens when you arrive at the Hayward Gallery

There may be **short queues to enter the building** and the exhibition. If you are not able to queue or need further assistance, our staff are here to help you.



When you arrive at the Hayward Gallery entrance, the **Visitor Assistant at the entrance will ask to see your e-ticket and check the time you have booked for.** The Visitor Assistant will direct you to the **Ticket Office if you need to buy a ticket.**

You will be directed to the entrance to the exhibition by a Visitor Assistant, who will **scan your e-ticket and tell you about the rules** of the Hayward Gallery.



Bloomberg Connects app

The Southbank Centre has launched a **new, digital guide on Bloomberg Connects**, the **free app** that makes it easy to access and engage with arts and culture from mobile devices, anytime, anywhere.

It is available for download from Google Play or the App Store. Search for 'Hayward Gallery' and select the *Yoshitomo Nara* exhibition from the 'What's On' section.

The content of the app includes short audio recordings of the exhibition's Senior Curator Yung Ma discussing the various themes encountered in Nara's work. You can enjoy listening to this from home before or after your visit or use it on the day you come to the Hayward Gallery.

You can still enjoy the exhibition without using the app. There are **wall texts on the gallery walls** describing the artwork, or a **large-print handout** if you prefer.

You can collect a large-print handout from the foyer or take one from wall boxes within the galleries.



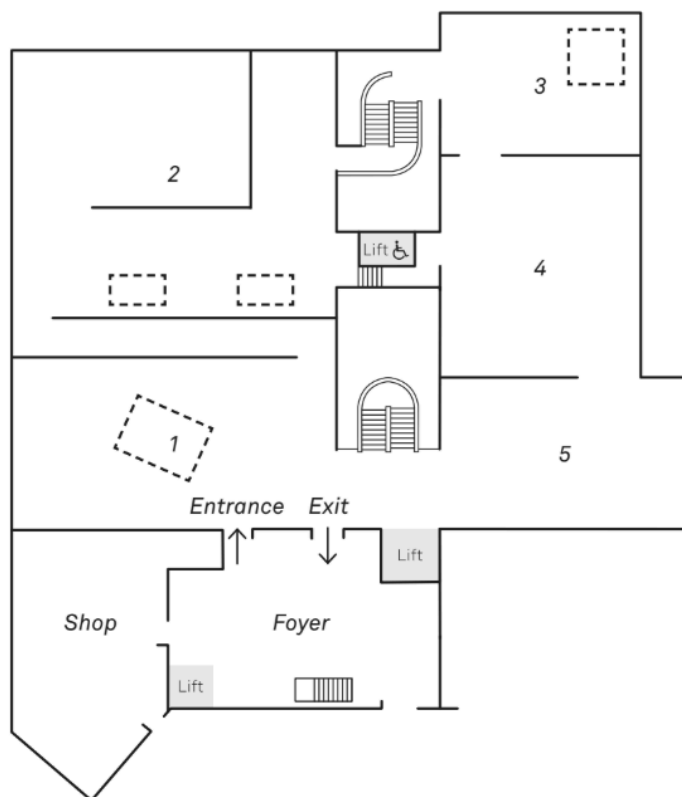
Touchable materials

We ask that visitors **do not touch any of the artworks in the exhibition**.

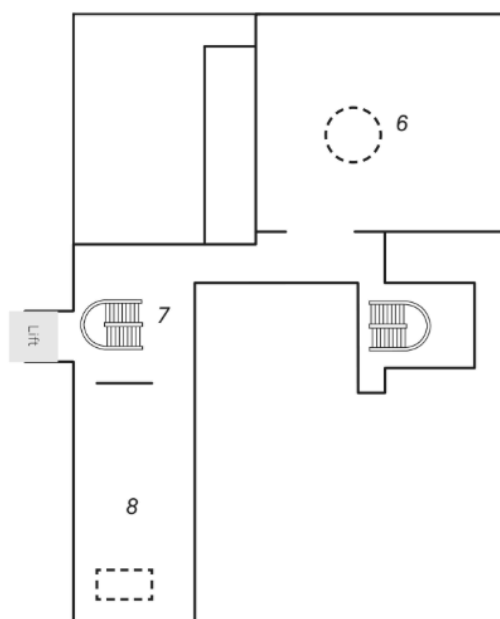
However, there are some **specific touchable materials** inside the galleries, and **you are welcome to touch these**.



Lower Galleries



Upper Galleries



Yoshitomo Nara

Dive into the captivating, creative world of Yoshitomo Nara in the largest European retrospective of one of Japan's most celebrated artists.

Celebrated across the globe for his powerful portraits with eyes that gaze back at the viewer, Nara's work explores themes of resistance, rebellion, isolation, freedom and spirituality.

This thematic exhibition, featuring more than 150 works in drawing, painting, sculpture, installation and ceramics, reveals enduring influences on the artist's work, particularly nature and its mythology, the peace movement, the significance of home, and his interest in punk and rock music and popular culture.

The **exhibition is located in the Lower and Upper Galleries**. There are **eight rooms** to explore.

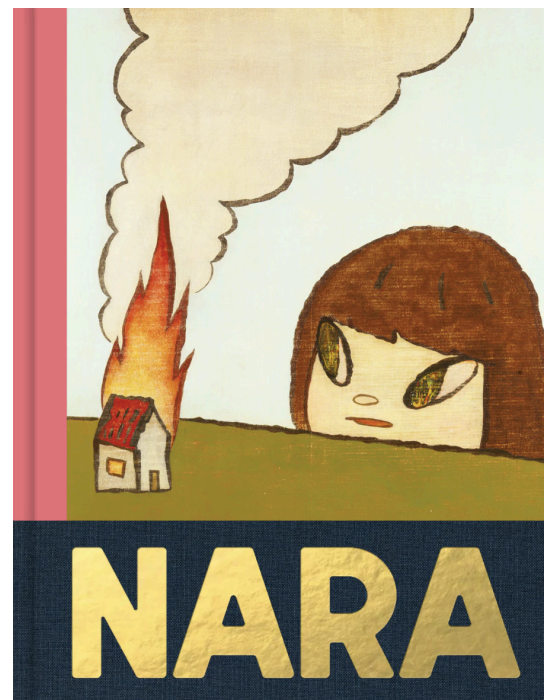
You can leave the exhibition at any time if you need to. You can go in again, as long as it is on the same day.

You **do not need to look at every artwork** and the **Visitor Assistants are happy to help** you if you wish to avoid certain areas.

Content warning

Yoshitomo Nara's work depicts **child-like characters that are likely to appeal to children**. However, some of these works include **written swear words** and **depictions of activities**, such as **smoking** and **holding guns** and **knives**.

There is **no age guidance** for this exhibition, but please be prepared to have age-appropriate conversations about the content of the work as needed. Our **staff are available to support you** if you would like any further information.



Room 1:

As you enter the Lower Galleries, you are now in Room 1. There is one **house-like installation** in the centre of the room and **large artworks** hanging on the walls.

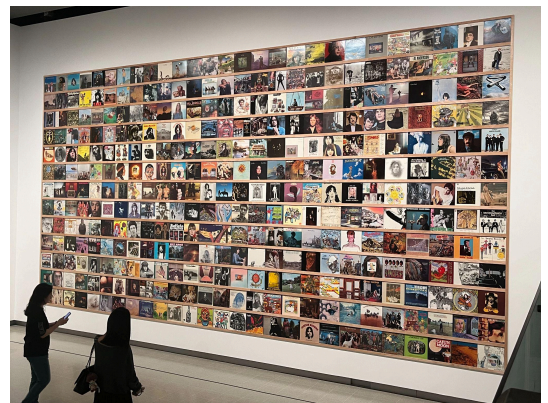
There are **spotlights** shining on the artwork, which cause **shadows** on the walls and **reflections** on the shiny tiled floor of the gallery. You can hear **soft music** playing. The songs are chosen from the vast record collection owned by Nara and the music is played on a loop.

There is **floor tape** around the works so please stay behind the lines and **do not touch**.

The exhibition delves into Nara's **childhood experiences**, touching upon **themes of loneliness, comfort in music and animals**, and the **blend of innocence, sadness, and rage** that can be found in childhood.

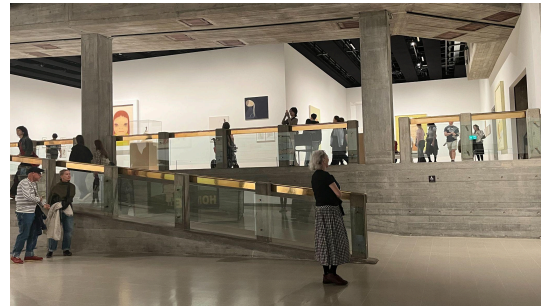
My Drawing Room 2008, Bedroom Included (2008) is a house-like structure containing arrangements of **small vintage toys** and other **items collected by Nara**. The lights are on, **music is playing** and **drawings** are **scattered** across the floor. The room resembles the **studio space** in which Nara works, but its small scale also gives it the appearance of a **child's playhouse**. Through the **windows** of the house we are offered **glimpses** into Nara's private world.

On one wall is a **selection of record sleeves** from Nara's personal collection that he finds particularly inspiring. **Music** has been a **passion for Nara** since he began to listen to **folk songs** at age nine. He used to **listen to the radio**, especially the **Far East Network** which was operated by the Military of the United States for the US forces serving in the Asia-Pacific. Music became an important part of his life even though he **did not understand the lyrics**. He used his **imagination** and would look at the **album cover art** to try to come up with his own narrative. His **vast record collection** includes folk, rock, blues, soul and punk albums.



The **introductory text** about the exhibition is located on the wall at the bottom of the ramp.

Go **up the ramp** when you are ready to move to the next room.



Room 2:

This is a **large room** which has been divided into **two sections** by an L-shaped freestanding wall. There are **ceramic sculptures** displayed on plinths and artworks on the walls. **There is floor tape in front of some of the artwork. Please stay behind the lines.**

The overhead spotlights cast shadows on the walls and reflections on the **shiny tiled floor of the gallery**.



This gallery contains some of Nara's **earliest works**. As a student, Nara studied at the academy of fine arts in **Düsseldorf, Germany**, under the influence of A.R. Penk, the **German neo-expressionist painter** who used a lot of **symbols and lines**. The painting *Make the Road, Follow the Road* (1990) shows this influence through **loose brushwork, drips of paint and bright colours**. You can see several **visual motifs** that recur in his later work, such as a **cat**, a **child holding a ball of flame**, and a **house with a pitched roof**.



Dead Flower 2020 Remastered (2020) is a **new version** of a painting he was unable to include in the exhibition, so he made another one! He calls it a **remaster**, which shows how he thinks of his work as being **like music**. With its coloured background, *Dead Flower* (1994) marked a turning point in Nara's stylistic development.



Nara grew up and still lives in **rural Japan** and feels very **connected to nature**. **Clay** is a medium that is closely associated with earth. During Nara's 2007 residency in Shigaraki, Japan, he began experimenting with clay. Some of Nara's ceramic works are displayed in this gallery.



Little Thinker in Silence (2016) is a **serene head** with a **child's face** and **closed eyes**, and appears **calm and introspective**. The hair reaches the ground like the low branches of a tree and the pointed bonnet resembles a mountain peak, emphasising the **connection with the natural world**.

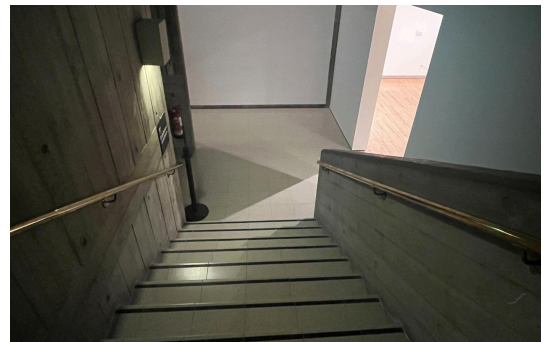


In 2011 an **earthquake** and **tsunami** damaged a **nuclear power plant** in Fukushima, causing the radioactive contamination of the surrounding area. Nara was deeply affected by these events and organised art workshops for some of the displaced children.



Under the Hazy Sky (2012) is a work made in the aftermath of the Fukushima nuclear disaster. The thick, yellowy white background seems to envelope the character in a **toxic fog**. The thin child holds **little seedlings**, a **symbol of hope**, in her hands.

There is a **bench** for you to sit on if you wish. When you are ready to move on, go through the open doorway and walk down the rear staircase.



You can also use the **platform lift** if you need **step-free access**. Please note that the lift door will open outwards, so leave plenty of space to allow this. **Push and hold the button when you are inside the lift**. This lift makes a **buzzing noise** as it moves up and down. Ask the Visitor Assistant if you would like any help.

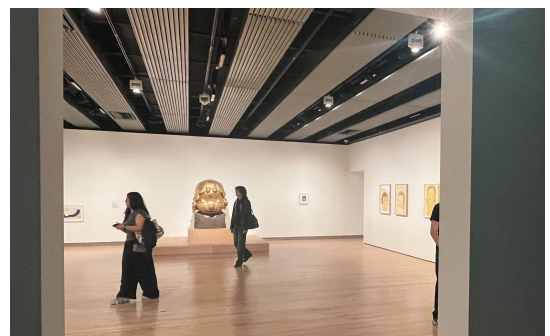


Room 3:

The **lighting levels** are a little **brighter** in this room. There are **spotlights** on the artwork, which cause **shadows on the walls** and **reflections** on the **wooden floor** of the gallery.

Nara first encountered the **anti-war movement** through the **protest songs** and **political folk music** that he listened to on the **radio** as a child, while he lived among the US military bases from which soldiers were dispatched to fight in Vietnam.

Stop the Bombs (2019) is an artwork which has **rough lines** painted directly onto an **unfinished**



wooden surface, reminding us of a **placard** at a political demonstration. There are several paintings and drawings by Nara that feature **slogans** inspired by the **countercultural movements** of the **1960s**, but which have relevance today.

This sculpture (2010) is the very first *Miss Forest* character Nara made out of clay. This character represents the Japanese word **moriko**, meaning ‘**forest child**’. She is **resting** with her **eyes closed**, her hair hanging like the branches of a fir tree and her **nose is dog-like**, suggesting a **close relationship** with the **natural world**. The artwork is coated in liquid platinum, gold and silver. The collar is made of silver and was shiny originally but it has become tarnished over time.

When you are ready to move on, go through either of the open doorways and enter Room 4.

Room 4:

This is a square-shaped room with artworks hanging on the walls and one free-standing sculpture.

Missing in Action (1999) is one of the first large paintings that Nara made showing a **child-like character** isolated in **blank space**. She is dressed in a **red dress** with a Peter Pan collar and has **green eyes** and an **angry stare**. Nara has made several other versions of this character.

Light My Fire (2001) is a **sculpture carved out of cedar wood**. The little girl has an ambiguous expression on her face, her arm is extended and she holds a **ball of flame** in her right hand. The title of the work is the **title of a song** by The Doors and this song is included in the artist’s music playlist in Room 1.

When you are ready to move on, go through either of the open doorways and enter Room 5.

Room 5:

This is a rectangular-shaped room with drawings, painting and two saucer-shaped artworks on the walls. There are **two benches** in the middle of the room and you are welcome to sit here and look at



the artworks for as long as you like.

The drawings include some of the **newer drawings** made last year which show Nara almost going back to his earlier style. **Drawing** has always been important for Nara as it is much more **spontaneous** and has a freedom to it.

Yamako (Mountain Sister / elder) and *Yamako (Mountain Sister / younger)* were painted on **corrugated cardboard**, reminding us of a **sign** or a **placard**. Nara carried one of these works with him as he travelled around Japan in 2019.

Yamako is a Japanese word meaning ‘**children who live in the mountains**’ and these works seem to represent the **calm serenity** of a **Japanese mountain**.

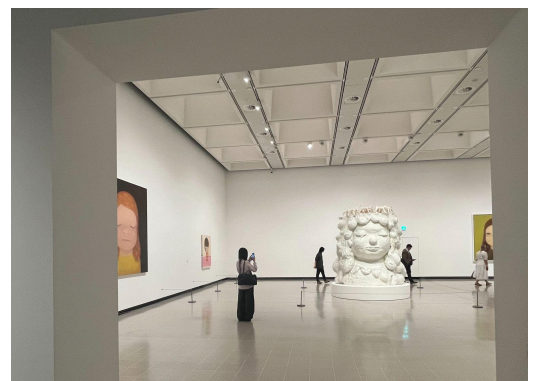
Too Young to Die (2001) features a **provocative portrayal** of a **childlike character** with pinkish eyes and a cigarette resting between her lips. The contrast of **adult attitudes** in an **innocent child** is **unsettling** and highlights the duality that exists within us all. The curved surface and edge focuses our attention on the girl at the centre of the painting.

When you are **ready to move on**, either **walk up the front staircase or take the lift up to the Upper Galleries**. Walk down the Connecting Corridor to Room 6.

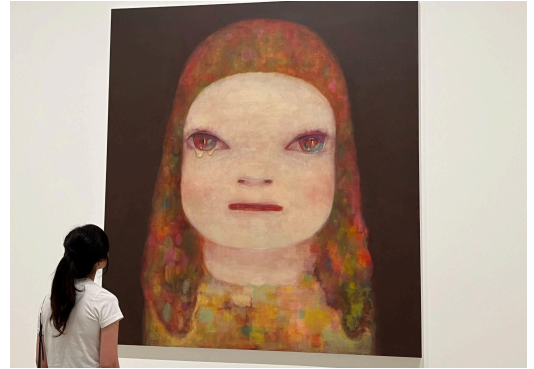
Room 6:

This is a large square-shaped room with one entrance and exit. There are **spotlights** shining on the artwork, which cause **reflections** on the shiny tiled floor of the gallery. This is a **calm** and **contemplative space** with a **bench** for you to sit on if you wish.

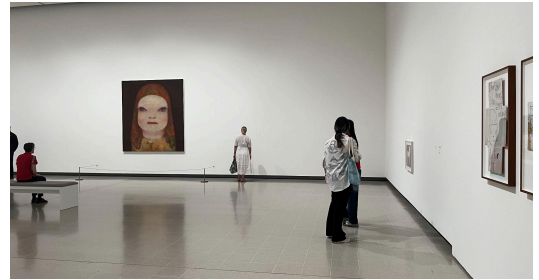
The **large sculpture** in the middle of the room is called *Miss Forest, a Pedestal* (2023). This is a work that was not included in the exhibition tour from Bilbao and Baden-Baden, and it is the first time it has been seen in Europe. This giant sculpture is a blown-up version of a smaller model Nara made out of clay. It is made of FRP (a fibre reinforced plastic).



Miss Forest is a character who represents the Japanese word *moriko*, meaning 'forest child'. Her hair resembles the **low branches of a pine tree** and her closed eyes suggest a **calm connection** with the **natural world**. On top of her head is a crown of **identical dogs**, which is a recurring motif for Nara and represents his **personal and artistic solitude**. On the walls you will see large paintings with intensely layered colours which are so different from the line drawings in Nara's earlier work.



The eyes of the child-like figure in *Midnight Tears* (2023) comprise so many layers of colours that they appear iridescent. Her eyes brim with tears as she stares into the surrounding darkness.



When you are ready to move on, retrace your steps and **head down the connecting corridor**.

Room 7: Connecting corridor

There are many small **drawings** lining both sides of the **corridor** and also two situated above the **rear staircase**.



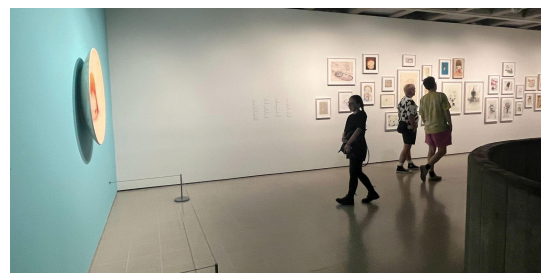
The artist wanted to create the feeling of walking down a **street** and encountering **different characters**. You will see many of his childlike characters displayed on the wall.

There are many artworks referencing the band **The Ramones**. See if you can find them! Some of the artworks have been **sketched** on the back of **envelopes**. Look closely and you will find them.



There is a **bench** near the front staircase and you are welcome to sit and look at the artworks for as long as you wish.

Shallow Puddles (2006) is the concave, dish-like artwork on the blue wall. Nara often depicts characters with partially submerged bodies or heads, and water is used to describe a kind of empathetic emotional connection. This painting echoes the shape of the shallow pool from which a child-like head emerges.



Room 8:

This room contains artwork on the walls and a **water fountain**. The **walls** of the gallery are **painted blue** and there is a clear **water theme** going on, with almost every picture depicting water. Puddles and water are **symbols** Nara uses to **represent isolation and connection**. The immersion in water represents being isolated; however water is fluid and connects us to other places.

After the **Fukushima disaster in 2011**, Nara developed a **more nuanced and painterly style**. *Blankey* (2012) is an example of the **layered use of colour** evident in the figure's **iridescent eyes** and the **patchwork tones** across their hair and shirt. The figure seems partially submerged and has tears in their eyes, conveying **deep emotion** and **vulnerability**.

The title refers to the **Japanese rock band** Blankey Jet City and the figure's **quiffed hairstyle** resembles that of the band's **lead singer** Kenichi Asai.

Fountain of Life (2001) is a **sculpture** of a **tea cup** with a stack of bubbly **little heads** inside. Look closely and you will see that these heads are **crying tears** that fall into the teacup below. The sculpture is displayed on a **white circular plinth**. Please **do not step** on this.

When you are **ready to leave** the *Yoshitomo Nara* exhibition, either **walk down the front staircase** or **take the lift down to the Lower Galleries**. Go through the exit door into the foyer.

HENI Project Space

The Project Space is an additional exhibition space where you can **experience art by both emerging and established artists**. It is located in the Hayward Gallery Foyer. **Pull the glass door to enter**.



Ghazaleh Avarzamani and Ali Ahadi: Freudian Typo

Explore a **multi-layered exhibition** of new work collectively created by two Iranian-Canadian artists, featuring **image-based works, sculpture, video** and **found objects**.

Punning and playful, *Freudian Typo* invites visitors to consider how the **English language**, entangled with the vocabulary of **corporate finance, debt and development**, underpins the globally precarious state of land, bodies and truth.

The exhibition draws on English nursery rhymes like 'The Old Woman and Her Pig' and 'This Is the House That Jack Built' – **narratives marked by monetary exchange, debt and catastrophe**. In these fables, the artists trace the roots of **ongoing cycles of dispossession, accumulation and re-possession**.

At the exhibition's centre, a hyper-realistic sculpture of **Palmerston**, the former resident **Chief Mouser cat** of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, regards an **electronic motorway sign** upon which is displayed the phrase '**Truth and Reconsolidation**'.

You are welcome to stay and explore the exhibition for as long as you like. Exit back through the glass door into the foyer when you are ready.

Exit through the **Hayward Gallery Shop** when you are ready to leave the Hayward Gallery.

After your visit

We hope you enjoyed our *Yoshitomo Nara* exhibition. **Thank you for visiting the Hayward Gallery**. We look forward to seeing you at our next exhibition.

We are committed to ensuring all visitors feel **welcome** and have an **enriching and positive experience** when they visit the Hayward Gallery. We are keen to hear about your experience and ways you feel we may be able to keep improving. Our staff in the gallery would like to hear what you



think – **speak to them directly or give feedback by completing one of our forms** in the Hayward Gallery Foyer.

To receive emails about *Relaxed Hours* at the Hayward Gallery, please email:
accesslist@southbankcentre.co.uk

More information about our Access Scheme can be found on our **[website](#)**. To stay up to date and receive information about our year-round programme of accessible events, please email:
artsandwellbeing@southbankcentre.co.uk



Upcoming events

Relaxed Hours: Yoshitomo Nara

Tuesday 8 July, 10am – 3pm

Come along for a **guided tour** of the exhibition. **Play, create and reflect** in our **Relaxed Hours Studio spaces** with **workshops and creative activities** engaging all the **senses**, with **artists** and the Arts & Wellbeing Team.

About Relaxed Hours at the Hayward Gallery

We welcome everyone to the gallery throughout our opening hours but we also recognise that some visitors may require a more **relaxed approach to noise and movement** in the space, or **additional support** to experience exhibitions fully.

We make **changes** to ensure the gallery is even more of a **welcoming environment**, where you can enter and exit more freely, and exhibition **capacity is reduced**. We don't expect visitors to be quiet. It is a time and space for you to **be yourself**. We have **tour guides** on hand and encourage you to prioritise your own needs when visiting. **Quiet, chill-out** spaces away from the exhibition and workshops are available.

These events are **open to all** and we particularly welcome those with **sensory processing differences, neurodivergent visitors** or those living with



Book online for *Relaxed Hours: Yoshitomo Nara* [here](#).

neurological conditions, as well as **early-year visitors, parents and carers**. If you have a particular **access requirement** or any questions ahead of your visit, do let us know – we will do all we can to accommodate any requests.

There are *Relaxed Hours* sessions for every exhibition at Hayward Gallery. Dates are shared on our website in advance. **Advance booking is essential** and you'll be asked to choose a time slot when you book. For this event your ticket allows you to arrive, leave and re-enter at any time during the *Relaxed Hours* event.

For more info and access to bursary places and travel support email:

haywardrelaxedhours@southbankcentre.co.uk or call the Arts &

Wellbeing team on:

07989 083109