

HAYWARD GALLERY

Press Release

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Images: downloadable [HERE](#)

Igshaan Adams: Kicking Dust

19 May – 25 July 2021



(Image captions: 1. Igshaan Adams, *Oor die Drimpel*, 2020. Photo: Mario Todeschini; © Igshaan Adams. Courtesy of the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York. /2. Igshaan Adams in his studio in Cape Town. Photo credit: Mario Todeschini © Igshaan Adams. Courtesy of Igshaan Adams and Mario Todeschini. /3. Igshaan Adams, *Blou Verligt (Blue illuminated)*, 2020. Photo: Mario Todeschini © Igshaan Adams. Courtesy the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York)

In May 2021, the Hayward Gallery presents the first solo exhibition in the UK of South African artist Igshaan Adams (b. 1982). The 2018 winner of the prestigious Standard Bank Young Artist Award, Igshaan Adams lives and works in Cape Town. The artist's cross-disciplinary practice combines aspects of weaving, sculpture and installation whilst exploring concerns related to race, religion and sexuality.

His intricate textile works are made with an array of both natural and synthetic materials including rope, twine, copper wire, silk, wood, bone, glass and plastic beading. Adams is influenced by the teachings of Sufism, namely the idea of looking inwards to define oneself. Through his artistic practice, he is able to navigate the complex relationship between his faith and his sexuality by drawing on the material and formal iconographies of Islam, as well as the socio-political histories of creole communities in Cape Town. His extraordinary hybrid constructions evidence inner states of being, and possibilities of arriving at a sense of peace with the contradictory weave of daily life.

The exhibition consists largely of new work produced during an artist residency Adams undertook at the A4 Arts Foundation in Cape Town and on the occasion of the show. Presented as a single immersive environment with suspended sculptures, large-scale floor-based weavings and tapestries hung on the wall, the installation responds to the Hayward Gallery's iconic Brutalist gallery space. Each work, and the exhibition as a whole, is composed of multiple patterns that explore the potential of woven material to reflect not only the multiplicities of Adams' own identity but of broader cultural interchange.

The title *Kicking Dust* references the 'Indigenous Riel' dance of the Northern Cape which Adams witnessed as a child. Described as 'dancing in the dust', the riel is thought to be one of the oldest indigenous dancing styles in southern Africa. Throughout the exhibition, cloud-like sculptures made of spiralled wire and beads are suspended from the gallery's ceiling resonating with the image of dust erupting from the earth as dancers kick the ground.

Building on this sense of movement and of journeying, visitors will encounter pathways through the gallery created by the placement of weavings on the floor. Resembling tectonic forms like the nature of the weave itself, the pathways evoke 'desire lines,' paths that pedestrians take intuitively rather than set routes.

Adams has been mapping 'desire lines' in parks and outside areas of a neighbourhood he grew up in called Bonteheuwel, as well as in surrounding areas in the south-east of Cape Town. In the 1960s, these neighbourhoods, deemed as barren and undesirable by the apartheid government, were where many Coloured and Black communities were forcibly moved. To this day these areas retain a majority of a particular racial demographic, with Bonteheuwel home largely to a Coloured community, and the neighbouring area, Langa, housing Black South Africans. The central axis of the installation are pathways that appear to cross over one another. These are mapped by the artist from actual 'desire lines' that residents have walked over repeatedly on the border of these two areas, despite a preconceived history of racial and religious hostility between the different communities.

For the tapestries hung on the gallery walls, Adams draws inspiration from the format of the prayer rug and transcribes pathways traced from the inside of people's homes in Bonteheuwel into the weave, treating the differently coloured and textured rope, metal and beading in a painterly fashion. Included in each composition are abstract motifs traced from linoleum flooring found in these homes. These have been collected by the artist over a number of years and feature in a number of his earlier large scale installations. The artist calls these tracings and remnants 'documents': personal maps that are inscribed upon an environment through wear and presence.

For Adams, these chosen paths, both in the domestic space and in the surrounding landscape, lend themselves to an archiving of lived experiences and the preservation of memory. The connection to the residents of Bonteheuwel emphasise that these 'desire lines' represent both freedom and transgression. This sense of 'desire' comes across strongly in Adams' practice as he seeks to liberate himself from homogenous constructs of identity.

When creating his work, Adams often collaborates with women who have settled in the Cape Town area and have had traditional textile skills passed down through generations. This process of collaboration is integral to his practice. The oral histories, folklore and personal

stories that his collaborators share in the studio as they work often end up informing the artworks themselves.

Ralph Rugoff, Director of the Hayward Gallery says: *"We are thrilled to be able to present a major new installation by Igshaan Adams, one of the most innovative young artists working today. Adams' intricately woven sculptures and tapestries, fashioned from an expansive and exhilarating range of materials, reflect on the complex interconnections that contribute to contemporary identities. His Hayward Gallery installation invites us to reimagine how we navigate complex social landscapes defined by an ever-evolving weave of differences and desires."*

Igshaan Adams: Kicking Dust is curated by Hayward Gallery Assistant Curator Tarini Malik and Curatorial Assistant Marie-Charlotte Carrier.

The public programme includes a live virtual studio visit with Igshaan Adams in Cape Town, and a panel discussion with South African writers, curators and academics Dr. Ala Alhourani, Ashraf Jamal, Josh Ginsburg and Dr. Portia Malatajie. More information can be found on the Southbank Centre website.

The exhibition is supported by Wendy Fisher & A4 Foundation, LOEWE FOUNDATION and The African Arts Trust.

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Listings information:

Igshaan Adams: Kicking Dust

19 May – 25 July 2021

Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XX

Prices: from £12 (also includes entry to *Matthew Barney: Redoubt*)

Concessions available & Southbank Centre Members go free.

Link to *Igshaan Adams: Kicking Dust* web page [HERE](#)

The Hayward Gallery new opening times:

11am – 7pm, Wednesday - Saturday

10am – 6pm, Sunday

Closed Monday and Tuesday

Further information:

www.southbankcentre.co.uk / customer@southbankcentre.co.uk

Online pre-booking is essential for everyone, including Southbank Centre Members and members of the press. ID may be requested on arrival for discounted tickets.

Twitter: [@haywardgallery](https://twitter.com/haywardgallery)

Instagram: [@Hayward_Gallery](https://www.instagram.com/Hayward_Gallery)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/haywardgallery/

In The Green Room: Igshaan Adams in conversation with Tarini Malik

[Southbank Centre's Youtube Channel](#)

Free

Ahead of *Kicking Dust*'s opening, Igshaan Adams met the exhibition's curator Tarini Malik to discuss his inspirations as an artist. The talk was recorded live.

Virtual studio visit with Igshaan Adams

25th May 2021, 4pm

Hayward Gallery's Instagram: [@Hayward.Gallery](#)

Free

Hayward Gallery curator Marie-Charlotte Carrier and Igshaan Adams meet for an informal conversation and an exclusive tour of the artist's studio in Cape Town.

***Kicking Dust* panel discussion**

16th June 2021, 6.30pm

Zoom

Free for members and students but booking essential

A panel discussion exploring Igshaan Adams' approach to materiality, and how it lends itself to an exploration of identity, specifically race, religion and sexuality. The Cape Town-based panellists include scholar Dr Ala Alhourani, curator Josh Ginsburg and academic and curator Dr Portia Malatjie, led by writer and cultural theorist Ashraj Jamal.

The event is held on the National Youth Day in South Africa: a day commemorating the youth from the Soweto Uprising of 1976. Tickets will be free of charge to all students of any age, level and locality.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Complimentary press tickets:

Journalists planning to cover the exhibition will need to contact the Southbank Centre press office to arrange a ticket in advance.

For further press information please contact:

press@southbankcentre.co.uk

Join the Conversation:

@southbankcentre

Southbank Centre Re-opening

Hayward Gallery: 18 May 2021

Royal Festival Hall: 28 May 2021

National Poetry Library: 28 May 2021

Queen Elizabeth Hall: Summer 2021

Purcell Room: September 2021

About Igshaan Adams

Igshaan Adams, b. 1982, lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa.

Adams has held solo exhibitions at Akershus Kunstsenter (Oslo), blank projects (Cape Town), A Tale of a Tub (Rotterdam), Rongwrong Gallery (Amsterdam), AVA Gallery (Cape Town). Group exhibitions include the Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden (Marrakech, 2019), Seattle Art Museum (2018), Galerie des Galeries (Paris, 2017) Grazer Kunstverein (Graz, 2015), and the Wanås Foundation (Knislinge, 2015). Adams has been selected for a number of artist residencies, among them the A4 Arts Foundation in Cape Town, Sommerakademie im Zentrum Paul Klee in Bern, Switzerland and the IAAB / Pro Helvetia residency, Basel. In 2018, Adams was awarded the Standard

Bank Young Artist Award for Visual Art. Presented annually, the prestigious award culminates in a solo presentation of the recipient's work, conducting a nationwide tour of museums and institutions.

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 and one of the UK's top five visitor attractions, 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).

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

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Supported using public funding by
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