

HAYWARD GALLERY

TOURING

Press Release

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Acts of Creation: On Art and Motherhood

Arnolfini, Bristol: 9 March - 26 May 2024

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham: 22 June - 29 September 2024

Millennium Gallery, Sheffield: 24 October 2024 - 19 January 2025

Dundee Contemporary Arts: February - June 2025 (exact dates TBC)



IMAGE CREDITS IN NOTES TO EDITORS

Launched at Arnolfini, Bristol, **Hayward Gallery Touring's** major group exhibition ***Acts of Creation: On Art and Motherhood*** plunges into the joys and heartaches, mess, myths and mishaps of motherhood through over 100 artworks, from the feminist avant-garde to the present day.

While the Madonna and Child is one of the great subjects of European art, we rarely see art about motherhood as a lived experience, in all its complexity. *Acts of Creation: On Art and*

Motherhood addresses this blind spot in art history, asserting the artist mother as an important – if rarely visible – cultural figure.

Featuring the work of more than sixty modern and contemporary artists, this exhibition approaches motherhood as a creative enterprise, albeit one at times tempered by ambivalence, exhaustion or grief. *Acts of Creation* explores the lived experience of motherhood, offering a complex account that engages with contemporary concerns about gender, caregiving and reproductive rights.

The exhibition addresses diverse experiences of motherhood across three themes: Creation, which looks at conception, pregnancy, birth and nursing; Maintenance, which explores motherhood and caregiving in the day-to-day; and Loss, which touches on miscarriage and involuntary childlessness, as well as reproductive rights. The heart of the exhibition is a series of revelatory self-portraits – a celebration of the artist as mother.

Featuring painting, photography, sculpture, sound and film, artists presenting work across the exhibition's tour include:

Felicity Allen, Janine Antoni, Cassie Arnold, Bobby Baker, Elina Brotherus, Liesel Burisch, Cathy Cade, Lea Cetera, Jai Chuhan, Eileen Cooper, Renee Cox, Dorothy Cross, Rineke Dijkstra, Natalie Djurberg and Hans Berg, Leni Dothan, Marlene Dumas, Catherine Elwes, Tracey Emin, Jessa Fairbrother, Rachel Fallon, Feministo, Fenix, Maeve Gilmore, Anna Grevenitis, Camille Henrot, Susan Hiller, Ghislaine Howard, Elsa James, Chantal Joffe, Claudette Johnson, Mary Kelly, Liss LaFleur, Tala Madani, Sally Mann, MATERNAL FANTASIES, Lindsey Mendick, Mother Art, Wangechi Mutu, Ishbel Myerscough, Everlynn Nicodemus, Catherine Opie, Fani Parali, Celia Paul, Cathie Pilkington, Polvo de Gallina Negra, Laure Prouvost, Paula Rego, Su Richardson, Sister Seven, Monica Sjöö, Annegret Soltau, Tabitha Soren, Heather Spears, Nancy Spero, Hannah Starkey, Emma Talbot, The Hackney Flashers, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Valie Export, Christine Voge, Del la Grace Volcano, Barbara Walker, Caroline Walker, Carrie Mae Weems, Nancy Willis, Hermione Wiltshire, Hermione Wiltshire and Clare Bottomley, Carmen Winant, Daphne Wright, and Billie Zangewa.

Hettie Judah, Curator of *Acts of Creation*, says: *“Acts of Creation: On Art and Motherhood is a true passion project: the fruit of long gestation and many years' labour. I am profoundly grateful to Hayward Gallery Touring and our four exhibition partners for sharing my belief that the lived experience of motherhood is an important subject, and one that we might explore with great affection and humour while not shying away from pain and struggle. From the start, it has been my hope that Acts of Creation would be an engaging show with a lively public programme, and I am excited to see how this will evolve with each venue along its tour.”*

Brian Cass, Senior Curator, Hayward Gallery Touring, says: *“This expansive exhibition, curated with great love, insight and imagination by Hettie Judah, could not be more relevant. Celebrating diverse experiences of motherhood, and the artist mother as a creative force, Acts of Creation: On Art and Motherhood continues Hayward Gallery Touring's commitment to developing exhibitions that address important subjects and explore new artistic narratives. We're delighted and privileged to be working with our exhibition partners on this ambitious*

project and we hope it will start wide-reaching conversations about our understanding of art and parenthood.”

Gemma Brace, Head of Exhibitions at Arnolfini, says: *“We are excited to be working with Hettie and the team at Hayward Gallery Touring on such a timely exhibition addressing themes that have held growing importance to our programme and audiences over the last three years; from exhibitions with Jo Spence, Chantal Joffe, Polly Braden and Paula Rego to the growing diversity of the community partners we work with. With its focus upon lived experiences, we hope in turn it will open up new conversations that resonate for the future.”*

Deborah Kermode, CEO and Artistic Director at Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), says: *“We are delighted to be working with Hettie Judah and Hayward Gallery Touring to present Acts of Creation at MAC in Birmingham; a major touring exhibition that examines the realities, complexities, and diverse experiences of motherhood. Alongside the exhibition, we are pleased to be programming a dedicated season of community events - from 'Bad Mothers' in cinema, to celebration feasts, and live comedy.”*

Kirstie Hamilton, Director of Programmes at the Millennium Gallery, Sheffield, says: *“It’s really wonderful to be continuing our relationship with Hayward Gallery Touring. The breadth of work Hettie has brought together offers a compelling reflection on motherhood in many forms and we’re very much looking forward to welcoming the exhibition to Sheffield in autumn 2024.”*

Beth Bate, Director at Dundee Contemporary Arts, says: *“We're thrilled to be bringing Acts of Creation to audiences in Scotland in partnership with Hayward Gallery Touring. Motherhood is an incredibly rich theme, and one we can't wait to explore through an exciting and thought-provoking selection of work curated by Hettie Judah.”*

Acts of Creation is accompanied by a lively programme of public events. Additionally, in conjunction with the exhibition is *Acts of Creation: On Art and Motherhood*, a new book by Hettie Judah that will be published in July 2024 by Thames and Hudson. The book explores art and motherhood over the last 500 years, looking at both motherhood as the subject of art and the circumstance of its creation.

Acts of Creation: On Art and Motherhood is curated by Hettie Judah with Hayward Gallery Touring.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Image Credits (left to right)

- All images: Installation view of *Acts of Creation: On Art and Motherhood* at Arnolfini, Bristol. Photo: Lisa Whiting. Courtesy Arnolfini and Hayward Gallery Touring.

About Hayward Gallery Touring

Hayward Gallery Touring is the UK’s largest contemporary art organisation producing touring exhibitions. Funded by Arts Council England and 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 the 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.

About the Southbank Centre

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest multi-arts centre and engages the most diverse audiences of any performing arts organisation in the UK. Our biggest venue, the Royal Festival Hall (2,700 seats) is the lasting legacy of the 1951 Festival of Britain and the ambition and values of that project – that arts, ideas, innovation and culture can heal communities and should be available and accessible to everyone – are still our guiding principles today.

The Southbank Centre is uniquely able to offer a wide-ranging, inclusive and world-class artistic programme spanning contemporary visual arts, music, dance, performance, literature, comedy and spoken word across the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, the Hayward Gallery and our free spaces. We are also home to the National Poetry Library, the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) and 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

About Arnolfini

Woven into the fabric of Bristol since 1961, Arnolfini is an international centre of interdisciplinary contemporary arts, presenting an ambitious and wide-ranging programme of visual art, performance, dance, film, and music. Housed in Bush House, a prominent 19th century former warehouse on the city's harbourside, Arnolfini is a pioneering, inspiring public space for arts and learning, offering an innovative, inclusive and engaging experience for all. Arnolfini has welcomed artists from around world throughout its history – sharing works by Paula Rego, Jannis Kounellis, John Akomfrah, Grayson Perry, Rachel Whiteread, Peter Doig, Richard Long, Veronica Ryan, Chantal Joffe, Sonia Boyce, Alice Kettle and Frank Bowling, to name just a few - as well as supporting talent from in and around Bristol.

Alongside its main programme, Arnolfini is a centre of everyday creativity and learning, working with a wide range of community and artistic partners, while continuing to explore and develop new collaborations across the city and beyond. Spaces are used regularly by families, schools and colleges, health and wellbeing groups.

Through sharing a 62+ year archive of exhibition slides, publications and an extensive artist book collection, Arnolfini celebrates its heritage and the wide-reaching impact the organisation has had since its foundation. From 2019, Director Gary Topp and team have sought to honour Arnolfini's founder Jeremy Rees' principle to 'Enjoy Yourself', welcoming everyone into the accessible space, and inviting engagement, in any number of ways.

Arnolfini is part of the University of the West of England and a key element of their City Campus.

About Midlands Arts Centre (MAC)

Midlands Arts Centre is a contemporary, independent arts charity set in the magnificent surroundings of Cannon Hill Park in Birmingham. MAC is a space of social cohesion, and connects people through creativity. We present a dynamic programme of visual arts, cinema, theatre, practical courses, and community outreach events - working extensively to support international and local artists. In 2022, MAC was voted the most visited free attraction in the West Midlands by VisitEngland. We are supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery through the Postcode Culture Trust, Arts Council England, and Birmingham City Council.

www.macbirmingham.co.uk

About the Millennium Gallery, Sheffield

One of six sites operated by Sheffield Museums, the Millennium Gallery brings the best in art and design to the city. The gallery's vibrant temporary exhibition programme showcases the best in national and international art and design alongside the region's remarkable creative talents. It's also home to two dedicated collection displays linked to Sheffield's rich history of making. The Guild of St George's remarkable collection of art and artefacts was originally brought to the city by the Victorian artist and writer, John Ruskin to inspire the city's skilled workforce – now, highlights from the collection form the centrepiece of regularly changing displays which look at Ruskin's ideas and their contemporary legacy. Visitors can also explore the Sykes Gallery Metalwork Collection, a celebration of both the decorative metalworking prowess which earned Sheffield an international reputation for excellence and the talented makers currently working in the city today.

www.sheffieldmuseums.org.uk

About Dundee Contemporary Arts

Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA) is an internationally renowned centre for contemporary art that enables audiences, artists and participants to see, experience and create. With two beautiful large-scale gallery spaces, two thriving cinema screens, a busy print studio, an award-winning learning programme, and a packed programme of events, workshops, classes and activities aimed at all ages and abilities, DCA is one of the most successful arts organisations in the UK.

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DCA
Dundee Contemporary Arts



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