

# HAYWARD GALLERY

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## Press Release

**Date:** Wednesday 13 April 2022, 2pm

**Contact:** Filipa Mendes, [filipa.mendes@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:filipa.mendes@southbankcentre.co.uk)

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

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## Hayward Gallery appoints Rachel Thomas as Chief Curator



Photo credit: Ellius Grace

Rachel Thomas has been appointed Chief Curator of the Hayward Gallery at the Southbank Centre. Rachel joins the gallery on 28 April 2022 from the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA), where she was Head of Exhibitions and Senior Curator since 2002.

Rachel will report to Hayward Gallery Director Ralph Rugoff and will work alongside Curator Yung Ma and the rest of the Hayward Gallery's expert team of Assistant Curators and Curatorial Assistants to support the gallery's dynamic programme, which showcases some of the world's most adventurous and innovative artists. Rachel will work closely with Ralph in planning the future exhibition schedule, supervising the project teams from each exhibition's conception through to completion. She will be responsible for establishing and maintaining creative and supportive relationships with artists, funders, and other institutions and for negotiating international tours of Hayward Gallery exhibitions.

Rachel's curatorial practice specifically focuses on feminism, post-colonialism and on broadening the representation of LGBTQ+ BIPOC artists. While at IMMA, she was responsible for ambitious group

shows including: *As Above, So Below, portals, visions, spirits & mystics* (2017) and most recently *DESIRE - A Revision from the 20th Century to the Digital Age* (2019). She has also organised many critically-acclaimed solo surveys of artists including Etel Adnan, Eleanor Antin, Frank Bowling, Sophie Calle, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, Nan Goldin, Bharti Kher, Hélio Oiticica, Elizabeth Peyton and Doris Salcedo. Rachel has introduced a new strand to IMMA's programme of new projects and commissions by international artists such as Franz Ackermann, Pierre Huyghe and Thomas Demand. She also spearheaded the recent ground-breaking virtual retrospective of artist Jorge Pardo.

Among her many accolades, Rachel has organised prestigious projects at international biennales including the curation of the ninth Lyon Biennale with Hans Ulrich Obrist.

Rachel is a respected scholar who is a fellow at Trinity College Dublin and a contributor to its MA/MFA Art in the Contemporary World programme. She was awarded a Museum Association Millennium Fellowship and is pursuing research into mental health within contemporary art, the revisionist art history of female abstraction and spirituality. She is interested in indigenous artists, nature and the environment. Rachel is a prolific writer, having published widely in journals, exhibition catalogues and art history books.

**Ralph Rugoff, Director of the Hayward Gallery, says:** *"Rachel Thomas has curated some of the most inventive, adventurous and engaging exhibitions in Europe over the past two decades, and I'm delighted that she will be bringing her distinctive vision and leadership to the Hayward Gallery."*

**On joining the Hayward Gallery team, Rachel Thomas, added:** *"I am excited to be joining Ralph Rugoff and the curatorial team to help shape the future of the Hayward Gallery. The inspiring architecture and its radical vision; one that is democratic, adventurous, connected to the outside world, is one that I appreciate and respect. It's an honour to be returning home; to listen closely to communities, and to welcoming artists and audiences. I look forward to being part of the ever-vibrant, inclusive and pioneering values of the Hayward Gallery and the Southbank Centre."*

# ENDS #

**For further press information:**

Filipa Mendes, [filipa.mendes@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:filipa.mendes@southbankcentre.co.uk)

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### **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, Bruce Nauman, Anish Kapoor, Lee Bul, Andreas Gursky, Tracey Emin, Jeremy Deller, Kader Attia and Matthew Barney, 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 six Resident Orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Philharmonia Orchestra).



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