

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

Wednesday 21 January 2026, 1030 EST / 1530 GMT

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Sally Tallant appointed Director of the Hayward Gallery and Visual Arts at the Southbank Centre



Photo: Thierry Bal

LONDON, 21 January 2026 - The Southbank Centre today announces that Sally Tallant has been appointed Director of the Hayward Gallery and Visual Arts.

Sally will take up the role from July 2026 and will lead a programme of work that includes directing and curating exhibitions at the Hayward Gallery, the Southbank Centre's contemporary art space. Sally will also organise visual arts installations across the whole Southbank Centre site and will oversee a national programme of work through Hayward Gallery Touring which reaches hundreds of thousands of people across the UK every year.

Sally Tallant, says: *"I am delighted to be returning to London as Director of the Hayward Gallery and Visual Arts, Southbank Centre. It is an honour to join Mark Ball and Elaine Bedell, and to build on the outstanding legacy of Ralph Rugoff, shaping the next chapter of this vital cultural destination and civic institution."*

Sally is currently Director of the Queens Museum in New York, where she has overseen over 30 major exhibitions, including Fia Backstrom, A Billion Dollar Dream, Suzanne Lacy, Tracey Rose, Christine Sun Kim, Aliza Nisenbaum, Aki Sasamoto, Lyle Ashton Harris, Stephanie Dinkins, Charisse Pearlina Weston, Emilie Gossiaux, Caroline Kent, Pia Camil and Mierle Laderman Ukeles as well as wide-reaching education, public programmes and community events in one of the most diverse communities in the US.

In her role as Director of the Queens Museum, she has also commissioned six permanent public artworks for Delta Airlines Terminal B at LaGuardia Airport by Rashid Johnson, Fred Wilson, Ronny Quevedo, Aliza Nisenbaum, Mariam Ghani and Virginia Overton.

Under her leadership, the Queens Museum received the prestigious CIMAM Outstanding Museum Practice Award in 2021 for *Cultural Food Pantry* and *Year of Uncertainty*, highlighting the institution's radical recalibration of its mission during the Covid pandemic.

Formerly Artistic Director and CEO of the Liverpool Biennial, from 2011–2019, Sally directed the UK's largest international festival of contemporary art, commissioning over 120 artists across four Biennial editions and pioneering a biennial model grounded in research, education, partnership and civic engagement.

During her time at the Liverpool Biennial, Sally commissioned large-scale exhibitions and public art projects by artists including Ugo Rondinone, Peter Blake, Lara Favaretto, Betty Woodman, Tobias Rehberger, Carlos Cruz Diez, Rita McBride, Dan Graham and Koo Jeong A. She also commissioned large-scale performance and music events including Meredith Monk, Rhys Chatham and Michael Nyman and organised seven touring exhibitions across the North of England.

Prior to that, Sally was Head of Programmes at the Serpentine Gallery from 2001–2011, where she was responsible for the development and delivery of an integrated programme of exhibitions, architecture, education and public programmes.

Sally was an Assistant Curator early in her career at the Hayward Gallery in 2001.

Elaine Bedell OBE, CEO of the Southbank Centre, says: *"It is a pleasure to welcome Sally Tallant as Director of the Hayward Gallery and Visual Arts at the Southbank Centre. Joining our leadership team at a pivotal moment, Sally takes the helm of a gallery that has defined global contemporary art for sixty years. As we look toward our 75th anniversary, I am confident Sally will ensure the legacy of the Festival of Britain propels the Southbank Centre into a new era of civic impact, strengthening our commitment to artists and audiences alike for the next 75 years."*

Mark Ball, Artistic Director of the Southbank Centre, says: *"I am thrilled to have Sally Tallant join us. She is a visionary leader and curator whose work – from the*

Queens Museum to the Liverpool Biennial – perfectly mirrors our own ambitions to be innovative and interdisciplinary. Sally understands how to create world-class encounters that bridge the gap between art and community. As she joins us in this landmark year, I look forward to seeing her bring the Hayward Gallery into the future with a spirit of openness, energy, and radical accessibility."

Misan Harriman, Chair of the Southbank Centre, says: *"The appointment of Sally Tallant marks an inspiring new chapter for the Southbank Centre. As we reflect on our 75-year history, it is essential that we reflect the courage and creativity of the world we live in today. On behalf of the Board, I am delighted to welcome her; her vision will be instrumental in ensuring the Hayward Gallery remains a beacon of cultural excellence and a home for the most vital voices in contemporary art."*

Sally takes over from Ralph Rugoff OBE, who will step down in Spring 2026 after 20 years in the post. Beyond the end of his Director role, Ralph Rugoff will provide curatorial oversight for a major retrospective of Anish Kapoor, opening on 16 June 2026 as part of the Southbank Centre's 75th Anniversary celebrations.

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Press images can be downloaded [here](#)

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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). www.southbankcentre.co.uk/

About the Hayward Gallery

The Southbank Centre's Hayward Gallery is a world-renowned contemporary art gallery and Brutalist landmark. Since its 1968 opening by Queen Elizabeth II, the Gallery has built a legacy of showcasing the world's most daring and innovative artists, including Anish Kapoor, Bridget Riley, Mike Nelson, Linder, Lee Bul, Tracey Emin and Yoshitomo Nara. Known for its career-defining solo shows and dial-shifting group exhibitions, such as *Dear Earth*, *In The Black Fantastic*, *The Other Story* and *Psycho Buildings*, the Hayward remains a vital platform for established and emerging voices. Designed by a team of young architects including Dennis Crompton, Warren Chalk, and Ron Herron, and named after Sir Isaac Hayward, the gallery invites audiences to experience art in one of the UK's most unique architectural settings.

About Sally Tallant

Sally Tallant is a curator and educator with more than twenty years of leadership across major arts institutions in the UK and the United States. She is internationally recognised for ambitious curatorial practice, civic engagement, and strategic institutional leadership, with expertise in public art commissioning, fundraising, and organisational transformation.

From 2019 to 2026, she serves as President and Executive Director of the Queens Museum, where she is leading a \$65 million comprehensive capital campaign to renovate and operate the museum and develop the **Suna Children's Museum**, opening in 2028. She has overseen a globally recognised programme of more than 30 exhibitions featuring artists including **Suzanne Lacy, Tracey Rose, Christine Sun Kim, Aliza Nisenbaum, Aki Sasamoto, Lyle Ashton Harris, Stephanie Dinkins, Charisse Pearlina Weston, Emilie Gossiaux, Caroline Kent and Pia Camil**. She also commissioned six permanent public artworks for LaGuardia Airport by artists including **Rashid Johnson, Fred Wilson, Ronny Quevedo, Mariam Ghani, Virginia Overton, and Aliza Nisenbaum**. In 2021 the Queens Museum was awarded the CIMAM Outstanding Museum Practice Award for its **Year of Uncertainty** and **Cultural Food Pantry** initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Previously, Sally was Artistic Director and CEO of Liverpool Biennial (2011–2019), where she transformed the UK's largest contemporary art festival into a leading model of civic research and education. Across four biennials, she commissioned more than 120 artists, including **Ugo Rondinone, John Akomfrah, Peter Blake, Lara Favaretto, Betty Woodman, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Rita McBride, Dan Graham, and Koo Jeong A**, alongside major performance and music projects with artists such as **Meredith Monk, Rhys Chatham, and Michael Nyman**.

She was Head of Programmes at Serpentine Gallery, London (2001–2011) where she led an integrated programme of exhibitions, education, and public programmes including the **Edgware Road Project, Skills Exchange, Disassembly and founded the Park Nights Programme**. She was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 2018 for services to the arts.



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