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London Gallery Weekend 2023 // Preview

The hottest emerging shows to see during London Gallery Weekend

From digital avatar tapestries to an alpaca wool peephole, here is the best of the capital's cutting-edge art scene

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2 June 2023

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Spread (In a World of Fantasy) (2023) by Laila Majid and Louis Blue Newby, shown at The Shop, Sadie Coles HQ
Courtesy of the artists and Xxijra Hii

London may be battered by the effects of Brexit, Boris and buy-to-let landlords, but its emerging

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chosen four of the best exhibitions taking place during London Gallery Weekend that feature artists in the first stage of their careers. With a broad age range and working across a variety of mediums and styles, the only common factor between these artists is that none have had a major institutional solo show—yet.

Laila Majid + Louis Blue Newby: Pretty Girls on Top

Xxijra Hii at The Shop, Sadie Coles HQ, 2 June-1 July

The strange, often erotic images found in the wood-framed collage works of Laila Majid + Louis Blue Newby derive from an online archive shared between the artist duo. The pair print these images out and overlay them with text and line drawings on greased paper, before encasing them in clear resin casts of fur and leather. "We find these images on Reddit message boards, in wildlife encyclopaedias, in kink zines sold on eBay during house clear outs. So many cinemas in Soho are getting rid of their erotic magazine archives too," Newby says. "We're drawn to non-normative images, ones that don't do what they're supposed to," Majid adds.

Both artists share an interest in fetish and leather subcultures, and so consider how images shared among underground scenes help build communities and networks—in other words, they contend that people do not just form and circulate images, but are also formed and circulated by them. Two jesmonite floor sculptures, the colour of pale blushing skin, resemble sex pillows with nipples affixed to their sides, underscoring the artists' mutual interest in the erotic.

This exhibition at The Shop—a compact space run by Sadie Coles HQ, next door to its huge Soho headquarters—marks the first joint show of Majid and Newby since they secured commercial representation for their collaborative practice with the Deptford gallery Xxijra Hii, which co-presents the exhibition. This unusual signing is an example of the ever-evolving ways in which artists are interacting with dealers and shaping their careers. Both Majid and Newby, who graduated together from the Chelsea College of Art in 2019, each say they are in "no rush" to find solo representation.



Qualeasha Wood's *Accountability.readme* (2023)
Courtesy of the artist, Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London and Gallery Kendra Jayne Patrick © Qualeasha Wood, 2023.

Qualeasha Wood: TL;DR, **Pippy Houldsworth, 6 Heddon St W1B 4BT, until 4 June**

Brooklyn-based Qualeasha Wood's tapestries merge the IRL with the URL: iOS emojis and Microsoft Windows pop-ups are overlayed with self portraits, in a crowded and assemblage-like style, so as to resemble a Myspace profile. All this is rendered in the decidedly analogue and traditional technique of jacquard weaving.

Wood uses these works to articulate her experience as a Black woman of navigating the modern digital realm, where the hyper-consumption of Black culture circulates alongside the trauma porn of modern day lynchings. As she says: "Practicing safety online as a Black woman refers to the practice of protecting your time, your energy, your resources, your intellect and your image—the extension of your physical body—from racism, sexism, abuse, manipulation or theft."

By creating tapestries bearing her digital avatar, Wood reworks the online in to her own language and places it under her ownership. To do so, she says, is to turn "the gaze back to the voyeur" and create a space that "actively dismisses the white gaze/supremacy"—one in which "whiteness becomes an 'other'".



Amanda Moström, *itsanosofadog *It's an arse of a dog,* installation view, Rose Easton, London
Photo: Theo Christelis

Amanda Moström: 'itsanosofadog *It's an arse of a dog, Rose Easton, 223 Cambridge Heath Rd E2 0EL, until 10 June**

For her first show with Rose Easton gallery, Amanda Moström debuts a group of wall-hanging alpaca wool works which draw both conceptually and materially from her sister's farm in rural Sweden. The artist spent much of the pandemic on this farm with her family, living in "a little matriarchal commune with sweet animals," she says. Moström shapes the wool to form keyholes through which we see painted stills of a Labrador tending to her puppies, broaching themes of voyeurism, privacy and the status of non-humans. Another body of work on show presents photographs taken by the artist's grandmother, and links to Moström's longstanding, idiosyncratic attempts to connect familial themes to erotic ones.

Moström frames this impulse less as an incestuous one, but rather through her desire to uncouple eroticism from sex. "I'm interested in considering the erotic more as a way of being pushed and driven to do something—not necessarily about intercourse, but about energy," she says. "I think we can better understand various forms of desire by doing so." Moström credits her outlook to spending so much time around animals. "Farm life normalises a lot—sex, death, bodies. It's honest. Suddenly all these gruesome bits of the human and non-human experience don't make you feel as squeamish," she says.



Installation view of *The Artificial Silk Girl* at Brunette Coleman
Photo: Jack Elliot Edwards. Courtesy of the artists and Brunette Coleman, London

The Artificial Silk Girl

Brunette Coleman, 42 Theobalds Road WC1X 8 NW, until 1 July

This one is a bonus: the brand-new gallery Brunette Coleman is not *officially* part of the London Gallery Weekend programme, having only opened yesterday. Its inaugural exhibition—a group show of nine emerging women artists—is titled after a bestselling Weimar Republic-era novel that was later banned under Nazi rule; the gallery's name also comes from a pseudonym used by the poet Philip Larkin. Such associations chime with the gallery's location in Bloomsbury, the historic heart of London's literary scene (albeit something of a dead zone for commercial galleries, at least for now). Works on show include the Parisian artist Clémence de La Tour du Pin's wall-based parchment sculpture, on which she has incorporated umbrella ribs, coated with oil paint and pigment.

"We want the space to feel a bit like New York in London," says Ted Targett, who co-founded the gallery along with his partner Anna Eaves. Both Targett and Eaves cut their teeth in the London gallery scene, working for the likes of Union Pacific and Huxley Parlour. Their ambition for the new space is to combat the sense of "inwardness" they feel in the city's commercial art world, by providing a platform for international artists to stage their first UK exhibition. This includes the Dallas-based Michelle Rawlings, whose eerie painting of a ballerina features in the inaugural show. Targett says that the homogeneity he perceives within the London scene can be attributed, at least partly, to the "over-professionalisation" of the city's art schools. "Everyone has to market themselves early on", leading to "fewer open-ended conversations about what art can be".

• *The Art Newspaper is a media partner of London Gallery Weekend*

London Gallery Weekend 2023 Exhibitions Emerging artists London

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