

**Press Release**  
**19 November 2025**

**New Contemporaries announces 26 artists**  
**in its annual exhibition, held in 2026 at the South London Gallery and MIMA, Middlesbrough**



Ali Cook, *'I Believe in Something Better'*, 2025, Acrylic and pen on canvas © the artist  
River Yuhao Cao, *'The Glass Essays'*, 2024, Moving image still © the artist

### **Exhibition Dates**

South London Gallery: 30 January – 12 April 2026  
MIMA, Middlesbrough: 8 May – 16 August 2026

### **Press Previews**

South London Gallery: 29 January 2026  
MIMA: 14 May 2026

New Contemporaries, the leading organisation supporting early career and emerging artists, has announced details of its annual exhibition, taking place in 2026 at the South London Gallery (SLG) and MIMA, Middlesbrough. 26 emerging and early career artists from across the UK have been selected to take part in the prestigious touring exhibition by artists Pio Abad, Louise Giovanelli and Grace Ndiritu.

Founded in 1949 by artists for artists, New Contemporaries has always been a barometer of contemporary practice, spotlighting early-career artists who go on to define generations, including David Hockney, Paula Rego, Mona Hatoum, Chris Ofili, Tacita Dean, Mark Leckey, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Michaela Yearwood-Dan and Jake Grewal.

The 2026 exhibition showcases 26 emerging and early-career artists from across the UK: **Viviana Almas, Kat Anderson, Hadas Auerbach, Timon Benson, Lakshya Bhargava, William Braithwaite, River Yuhao Cao, Ali Cook, Shaun Doyle, Ally Fallon, Samantha Fellows, Alia Gargum, Oliver Getley, Makiko Harris, Manuel Alejandro Hernandez Rivera, Deborah Lerner, Gregor Petrikovič, Will Pham, Isobel Shore, Maya Silverberg, Aaron Alexander Smyth, Christopher Steenson, Varvara Uhlik, Eliza Wagener, Benjamin Waters, and Yimin Xiang.**

Works in the exhibition span painting, sculpture, installation, photography and moving image, illustrating the full breadth of artistic practice across the UK. Presented thematically in both the SLG and MIMA exhibitions, they engage with speculations on dystopian futures; critical responses to the climate crisis, industrialisation, gentrification and displacement; and critical approaches to systems of power. The exhibition also examines our inherent entanglement with digital technologies and our evolving desire to understand realities beyond human perception through other species.

Additionally, themes of mourning, remembrance and loss are explored through a range of collective and personal experiences. Some artists merge figuration with abstraction to investigate intersecting identities, cultural heritage and a desire for connection, while others draw on the familiar and the fantastical - from both urban environments to intimate domestic interiors- as constructions of selfhood and place.

Artist selector Grace Ndiritu said: “I am really excited by our selection for New Contemporaries. We have chosen a diverse range of artists from all over the UK, with a variety of mediums and points of view, that are both visually arresting and can help bring a little bit of joy and beauty into an increasingly difficult world.”

Building on over 75 years of championing new art and ideas, New Contemporaries is reimagining what artist support can be through a new, responsive and evolving model that shifts with the needs, urgencies and ambitions of artists across the UK. In response to the growing precarity faced by early-career artists, New Contemporaries is expanding its work beyond exhibitions to include advice, opportunities, community building and mentoring.

As part of its new forward-thinking direction, the organisation has expanded its UK wide reach ensuring that at least half of participating artists are based outside London and that its programmes represent the full breadth of today’s contemporary art practice. Through partnerships with organisations such as the South London Gallery, MIMA Middlesbrough, Forma, and Hospitalfield, New Contemporaries’ new programme will now include annual residencies, studio bursaries and an artist development programme that offer participants space, time, and sustained support.

“Artists renew society,” says Director Kiera Blakey. “They are everywhere, in every part of the UK, in every circumstance but they can’t do it alone. Our job is to make sure their voices are heard and supported. We’re leading the way for artists, and we won’t stop advocating for them.”

Margot Heller, Director of South London Gallery, said: “We are delighted to welcome New Contemporaries back to the South London Gallery. Our long-standing partnership reflects our shared commitment to supporting artists at pivotal, often early stages in their careers. We’re excited to see the 2026 exhibition come together which will offer an insight into the quality and breadth of contemporary arts practice by emerging artists across the UK.”

Laura Sillars, Director of MIMA, said “At MIMA, we are passionate about nurturing early career and emerging artists. We give them space and encouragement to take the risks they need to take. We are proud to be part of New Contemporaries, championing new artists and building the creativity that will shape the future of contemporary practice.”

The New Contemporaries annual exhibition in 2026, in partnership with the SLG and MIMA, reaffirms the organisation's role as a catalyst for new voices and as a platform that moves, grows, and transforms alongside the artists it exists to support.

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to editors**

For further information, interviews and images please contact:  
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### **Exhibition Dates**

South London Gallery: 30 January – 12 April 2026, Preview 29 January 2026

Opening hours: Wednesday: 12 – 9pm / Thursday – Sunday 12 – 6pm

Admission is free

MIMA: 8 May – 16 August 2026, Preview 14 May 2025

Opening hours: Tuesday – Thursday 4 – 9pm, Friday – Sunday 12 – 9pm

Admission is free

### **About New Contemporaries**

Artists renew society. There will always be artists and new artists are everywhere. We have over 75 years' experience of helping artists through the new. We do this with advice, introductions, opportunities, exhibitions, mentoring. We partner with major institutions such as the Institute of Contemporary Arts, MIMA Middlesbrough and the South London Gallery. Every year we organise a public exhibition, with work from new artists who have been selected by internationally renowned artists. Internationally renowned artists who once were also new.

[newcontemporaries.org.uk](http://newcontemporaries.org.uk) | @New\_Contemporaries

### **About the South London Gallery**

The South London Gallery (SLG) has an international reputation for its contemporary art exhibitions by established, mid-career and younger artists and programme of film and performance events. Its highly regarded, free Communities & Learning programme includes a peer-led young people's collective; family workshops; artist-led projects on local housing estates; and a programme for looked after children.

The SLG was founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by philanthropist William Rossiter to 'bring art to the people of south London'. Today the gallery comprises its original site at 65 Peckham Road; the Fire Station, which opened to the public in 2018; Art Block, a space for local children and families on Sceaux Gardens Estate and an artist-designed garden.

The SLG is a registered charity, which raises more than half of its income from trusts and foundations, sponsors and fundraising events.

[www.southlondongallery.org](http://www.southlondongallery.org)

### **About MIMA**

MIMA, which turns 20 in 2027, is known for its collaborative work with communities and recent examples include award winning projects such as Sonia Boyce's *In the Castle of My Skin* (2021), *Chemical City* (2022) and *People Powered: Stories of the River Tees* (2023). Boyce's Golden Lion winning Venice Biennale (2022) *Feeling Her Way* built upon her work at MIMA.

The Erick van Egeraat building includes large art galleries for temporary exhibitions, collection galleries, an AHRC funded open access ceramic collection and study centre, learning spaces, a café, garden and roof terrace. The Middlesbrough Collection, created when MIMA was founded from three prior collections, comprises more than 2,400 artworks. This summer, MIMA will launch a new garden pavilion for artist residencies, community workshops and public events, through a capital programme funded through DCMS and Arts Council England's Cultural Development Fund. Recent exhibitions include major solo shows with Otobong Nkanga (2020), Sonia Boyce (2021), Lubna Chowdhary (2022), Lucie Rie (2022) and Jaqueline Poncelet (2024).

As part of Teesside University, MIMA also nurtures curatorial researchers to develop groundbreaking projects that could not happen without serious long-term investment in research. Recent examples include Towards New Worlds (2024), curated by Future Curators fellow and PhD scholar Aidan Moesby, which was the UK's largest exhibition platforming the work of D/deaf, neurodivergent and disabled artists. MIMA's current exhibition, The Secret Lives of Bottle of Notes: Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen draws together loans from major collections and was supported by Professor Simon McKeown and Teesside University PhD scholar Karis Richardson, who undertook first-hand interviews and archival research to uncover the impact of legacy of public art commissioning in the late twentieth century.

### **Supporters**

The New Contemporaries Programme is generously supported by Arts Council England, Art Fund, the Emerging Artist Circle, Fenton Arts Trust, Henry Moore Foundation, TFA London and OMNI. Our 75th Anniversary Fundraiser, held in partnership with Christie's, was made possible by the generous contributions of contemporary artists and led by our Development Committee.