

Art Icon Auction

Phillips | 12 – 19 March 2024

Bidding opens today for the 2024 Art Icon Auction, with a stellar line-up of works from leading contemporary artists in support of Whitechapel Gallery's Education and Public Programmes

Whitechapel Gallery is delighted to announce the donation of 17 exceptional artworks for auction by artists **Campbell Addy** (b.1993, UK), **Shadi Al-Attallah** (b.1994, Saudi Arabia), **Jyll Bradley** (b.1966, UK), **Miranda Forrester** (b. UK), **Kate Groobey** (b.1977, UK), **Jerome** (b.1991, UK), **Chantal Joffe** (b.1969, USA), **Isaac Julien RA KBE** (b.1960, UK), **Rene Matic** b.1997, UK), **Anya Paintsil** (b.1993, Wales), **Katarzyna Perlak** (b. 1979, Poland), **Clifford Prince King** (b.1993, USA), **Gaby Sahhar** (b.1992, UK), **Hannah Tilson** (b.1995, UK), **Charmaine Watkiss** (b.1964, UK), **Gray Wielebinski** (b.1991, USA), **Caroline Wong** (b.1986, Malaysia).

The online charity auction will be hosted by Phillips on www.phillips.com, with bidding open from 12pm GMT on 12 March 2024, through to 2pm GMT on 19 March 2024. Registration to bid is open throughout the auction's duration via the link [here](#).

All donated artworks will be auctioned in support of Whitechapel Gallery's Education and Public Programmes, with a particular focus on activities designed to increase access to and engagement with creative learning for children and young people.

Art Icon is an annual initiative that celebrates the work of an artist who has made a profound contribution to the artistic landscape and influenced a generation of artists. The 2024 Art Icon Award will be presented to **Isaac Julien RA** by award-winning broadcaster and journalist, **Zeinab Badawi** at a **gala celebration** held at Whitechapel Gallery on **18 March 2024**. The evening will also feature a special guest performance from the legendary soul, R&B and Jazz singer, **Mica Paris MBE**.

Ticket Enquiries: articonaward@whitechapelgallery.org

Isaac Julien (b.1960, London) is celebrated for his impressionistic, sensual films and ground-breaking video installations which move fluently between artistic disciplines. He came to wide, critical and cult attention for his 1989 film, *Looking for Langston*, a poetic exploration of the private world of author, poet and playwright, Langston Hughes (1901-1967), who, alongside, his fellow Black artists and writers formed the Harlem Renaissance during the 1920s. His debut feature film, *Young Souls Rebels* (1991) won the *Semaine de la Critique* prize at the Cannes Film Festival and his most recent work, *Once Again . . . (Statues Never Die)* (2022) premiered at Julien's major retrospective, *What Freedom Means To Me*, at Tate Britain, in 2023. Julien received a knighthood in 2022.

The Art Icon event committee for 2024 comprised Dorota Audemars, Erin Bell, Émilie de Pauw, Charlotte Gibbs, Dame Vivian Hunt, Nicholas Basden, Victoria Miro, Bimpe Nkontchou, Ebele Okobi, Gemma Rolls-Bentley and Darren Walker.

Cheyenne Westphal, Global Chairwoman, Phillips, said: "Phillips takes great pride in supporting Whitechapel Gallery for the eleventh annual Art Icon Gala which, this year, pays tribute to the lifetime achievements of Isaac Julien. It is a privilege for us to be involved in the distinguished Art Icon Award and we are thrilled to act as auction partner to host the Art Icon online auction on Phillips.com, the proceeds from which will contribute to Whitechapel Gallery's pioneering education and community programmes. Phillips' global Arts Partnerships program is devoted to promoting, supporting, and championing contemporary art and culture at both local and global levels. Our longstanding collaboration with Whitechapel Gallery highlights Phillips' unwavering commitment to this mission."

List of auctioned artworks:

1. In a scene both intimate and epic, Campbell Addy's diptych *Am I painting you?* (2022) presents Black figures entwined in an orgiastic scene; an exploration of sexual freedom and its limitations.
2. Evoking Mesopotamian or Greek depictions of wrestling, Shadi Al-Attallah's painting *They were right* (2024) addresses our shared concerns about apocalyptic destruction while expressing a yearning for tenderness and vulnerability.
3. Jyll Bradley's *Self-Portrait 1987–2023* (2024) brings to light a hitherto unseen self-portrait taken by the artist in the late 1980s. This highly personal image speaks to Bradley's 'desire then as a young queer woman to be seen and understood, but also hide away and be private'. Here, Bradley reframes the image with 'fluorescent, celebratory material' from her life.
4. Domestic intimacy and the anticipation and experience of new motherhood are the focus of Miranda Forrester's *How does it feel?* (2023). With familiar hip-crabbing and a mother's fixed attention, the painting is a tender depiction of Queer motherhood.
5. Kate Groobey's pastel-hued paintings articulate the experience of strong, Queer womanhood at a time of heartbreak. *Higher //* (2023) features two of her regular protagonists: Jina Khayyer, a writer of Iranian descent and Groobey's wife, and the Female Stallion, Groobey's equine avatar. A giant rose accompanies the two as a 'symbolic boost'.
6. Jerome's *People who believe* (2024) draws from 'Action Black', the artist's method of collaborative painting, which explores how living moments are captured and expressed in abstract painting. Glossy black paint is applied to vinyl floorboards. These floorboards, in turn, are exposed to different experiences: fashion shows, performances, or protests. Finally, the paint is stripped from the floorboards and used as a medium in the compositions, of which *People Who Believe*, 2024, is a striking example.
7. *A Sunday Afternoon in Whitechapel V* (2017) is a major public artwork by Chantal Joffe, which spans the platforms of the Elizabeth line station at Whitechapel station. Citing the influence of Matisse and Picasso, Joffe made the work as an evocation of Sunday afternoons spent in the area. Here, East London is portrayed through a series of portraits of passers-by on Whitechapel High Street.

8. Rene Matić's *Pink Shoes at a Party* (2023) is an end-of-the-night image of spilt drinks and sore feet. This is an image of exhausted glamour, of Barbie-pink stilettos kicked to the edge of the dancefloor.
9. *You're my brother, you're my keeper, I need you to keep an eye on me* (2023) is a portrait of Anya Paintsil's younger half-brother. The artist describes her focus as an attempt to capture her brother's 'goofiness, and how young he is for his seventeen years, along with his extreme capacity for kindness, in a time where young black men are so often demonised'.
10. For the collage *Uprooted* (2023), Katarzyna Perlak depicts an Eastern European folk costume claimed from its ethnographic context through the artist's application of embroidered, beaded and curious elements, such as crosses, a head-dress of glossy lips and a nocturnal urban fox. The artist describes their unlikely combination as an invitation to 'consider and experience history as an overlay of multiple, overlapping and contesting narratives rather than as a single, fixed entity'.
11. Clifford Prince King documents intimate relationships in domestic and everyday settings, reflecting on his experiences as a Queer Black man and discovering a space of affirmation and visibility. In the photograph *Sonny and David* (2019), two men lie in bed, their backs taking up almost the entire frame, turning bodies into landscape.
12. Gaby Sahhar describes *Memory of a Journey* (2024) as a self-portrait. The fragmented, disembodied head points to the artist's interest in the psychological forces that work in the mind when one identifies differently, outside a dominant patriarchal, heterosexual or Western matrix.
13. The term 'pattern-scape' is used by Hannah Tilson to describe the rhythmic geometry of her work. With luminous works that blur figure and foreground, body and enveloping fabric, *The City Speaks to Her* (2023) is, in the artist's words, 'simultaneously body, pattern and architectural form'.
14. Charmaine Watkiss's series of 'Plant Warrior' women was inspired by a book of botanical medicine, which suggested herbs have spirits. *Guardian of the four directions* (2023) presents the Indigo plant warrior, a dye with an epic history that, during the transatlantic enslavement period, was more valuable than gold.
15. Through iconography drawn from medieval implements of shame and torture, Gray Wielebinski's *All The Wounds You Could Get* (2022) presents masculinity in dialogue with animality and punishment with submission.
16. *Party Scene* (2023) is Caroline Wong's painterly ode to female friendship and 'the pleasures of alcohol and cigarettes'. With an interest in the elevation of ordinary, fleeting moments, Wong uses a visual language of lurid colours, iridescent hues and clashing patterns to mimic the buzzy energy and effervescent chaos of a party's intoxication and escapism.

Press Information

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Notes for Editors

- Whitechapel Gallery was founded in 1901 with the aim to bring great art to the people of East London. From the outset, the Gallery has pushed forward a bold programme of exhibitions and educational activities, driven by the desire to enrich the cultural offer for local communities and provide new opportunities for extraordinary artists from across the globe, to showcase their works to UK audiences, often for the first time.
From ground-breaking solo shows from artists as diverse as **Barbara Hepworth** (1954), **Jackson Pollock** (1958), **Helio Oiticica** (1969), **Gilbert & George** (1971), **Eva Hesse** (1979), **Frida Kahlo** (1982), **Sonia Boyce** (1988), **Sophie Calle** (2010), **Zarina Bhimji** (2012), **Emily Jacir** (2015), **William Kentridge** (2016), **Theaster Gates** (2021) and **Nicole Eisenman** (2023) to thought-provoking exhibitions that reflect key artistic and cultural concerns, the Gallery's focus on bringing artists, ideas, and audiences together, remains as important today as it did over a century ago and has helped to cement the East End, as one of the world's most exciting and diverse cultural quarters.
We are proud to be a Gallery that is locally embedded and globally connected. Its vision, under the new Directorship of Gilane Tawadros, is to ensure Whitechapel Gallery claims a distinctive and radical position in the social and cultural landscape, building on its pioneering history as a place for invigorated and inclusive engagement with contemporary art.
- The Whitechapel Gallery Art Icon Award was established in 2014 and celebrates the work of an artist who has made a profound contribution to a particular medium, influencing their own and subsequent generations of artists.
- Previous recipients of the Whitechapel Gallery Art Icon Award are **Sir Howard Hodgkin** (2014), **Richard Long** (2015) **Joan Jonas** (2016), **Peter Doig** (2017), **Mona Hatoum** (2018), **Rachel Whiteread** (2019), **Francis Alÿs** (2020), **Yinka Shonibare CBE RA** (2021), **Tracey Emin** (2022), and **Jenny Holzer** (2023).