The New York Times

Art to See in London This Fall

During Frieze London, visitors can experience Marina Abramovic's performance art, discover El Anatsui's installations and view works by Daniel Richter.

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Marina Abramovic poses during the opening of her exhibit at the Royal Academy of Arts in London. The artwork is created from Selenite, a variety of gypsum with properties that conduct light and act as a natural optic fiber. A custom-made circuit of LED panels transmits light through the crystals, which are stacked on either side. Andy Rain/EPA, via Shutterstock

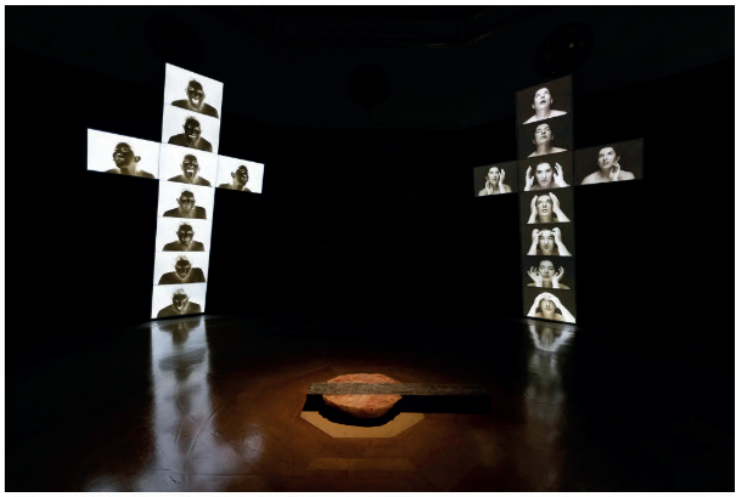
By Farah Nayeri
Reporting from London

Oct. 6, 2023

This month's Frieze fairs sit at the heart of one of the world's great cultural capitals: London, which is currently bursting with exhibitions to suit all tastes. Here's a selection.

Marina Abramovic

It took the Royal Academy of Arts two and a half centuries to give a woman a solo show in its main galleries. That woman is the performance artist Marina Abramovic. After a recent health scare, Ms. Abramovic is not performing herself; others will perform in her stead. Yet her presence is still strongly felt in the gripping exhibition (curated by Andrea Tarsia). Giant screens (with the volume turned up), photographs, props, archives and installations recreate many of her epic and often risky performances. So do other human beings. Look out for the remake of her 1977 work "Imponderabilia," in which Ms. Abramovic and her partner Ulay (Frank Uwe Laysiepen) both stood naked in a doorway that visitors had to pass through to enter a gallery. (The Royal Academy has added a separate unoccupied doorway as an alternative.) And between now and the show's Jan. 1 end, three successive artists will perform her 2002 work "The House With the Ocean View" — spending 12 days in the gallery with no food, only water, on a raised platform (equipped with a toilet, shower and sink), and in full view of visitors.



A view of the Marina Abramovic exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, showing "Four Crosses (detail)", 2019. Courtesy of the Marina Abramović Archives. Marina Abramovic Archives. Photo by David Parry/Royal Academy of Arts, London

If you're determined to see Abramovic in the flesh, you can: she'll be on stage at English National Opera (Nov. 3-11) re-enacting the life of a diva in her production "7 Deaths of Maria Callas."

Frans Hals

If you prefer to experience art of the Dutch Golden Age, head over to the National Gallery for its Frans Hals extravaganza. The fabulous portraitist comes alive through about 50 loans from collections all over the globe. One of those loans is particularly special: "The Laughing Cavalier" (1624) is leaving its nearby home, the Wallace Collection, for the first time in more than a century. Hals left no letters or diaries, only a reputation for excess. The exhibition is a chance to find out more about the man as well as the art.

El Anatsui

The Ghanaian artist, famous for his shimmering metallic installations made of thousands of discarded aluminum bottle caps, is taking over Tate Modern's vast Turbine Hall starting Tuesday as part of this year's Hyundai Commission. Unbeknown to many, he worked with wood in the earlier part of his career. His longtime gallerist, the October Gallery (which has played a pioneering role in presenting and promoting African contemporary art), is staging its own Anatsui exhibition starting Wednesday, and showing an example from that earlier period in its courtyard: "Monument" (1996), two halves of a tree trunk carved with African symbols.

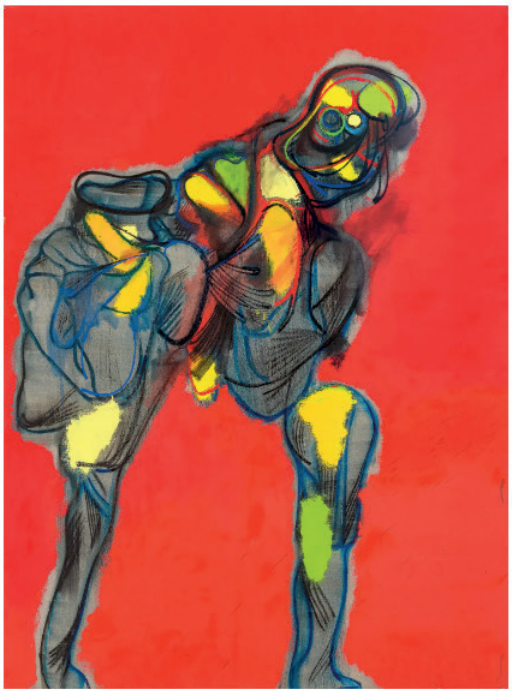
PAD London

If you prefer designer furniture, ceramics and jewelry, go for a spin at the PAD London fair, which for its 15th edition will welcome 62 exhibiting galleries to its tent in Mayfair. This year's highlights include a marble-and-bamboo table, sculptures made of fallen chestnut branches, and a ring by a Sicilian designer inspired by Mount Etna.

The Laughing Cavalier, 1624 Oil on canvas, 83 × 67.3 cm © The Wallace Collection, London The Wallace Collection, London, via the National Gallery

Bacon and Warhol

Francis Bacon and Andy Warhol were born a generation apart, lived on separate continents and led parallel lives. Yet the Ordovas gallery has seen fit to pair them up as artists who clung to figuration at a time when it had gone out of style, and who shared a love of photography and of serialized imagery. The show, "Endless Variations," is one in which all the works are on loan and not for sale. It includes Warhol's four-panel "Self-Portrait" (1963-64), and Bacon's "Four Studies for a Self-Portrait" (1967).



"Beruhige Dich", 2023 by Daniel Richter at Thaddaeus Ropac gallery via Thaddaeus Ropac gallery and Daniel Richter/VG Bildkunst, Bonn 2023. Photo by Eric Tschernow

Daniel Richter

He's one of the more compelling painters of our time, and you can see a range of new works at the Thaddaeus Ropac gallery in London. Oddly, they have a link to the McCarthy era. The paintings are inspired by the song "Nightmare," written in the 1940s by Hanns Eisler, a German émigré who became an Oscar-nominated writer of Hollywood film scores before being investigated (on suspicion of Communist leanings) by the House Un-American Activities Committee. One of the first artists to be blacklisted by Hollywood, Eisler left the United States for good in 1948.

Installation views of Remi Ajani's it's not what you look at...it's what you see" at Sid Motion Gallery. via the artist and Sid Motion Gallery. Photo by Tim Bowditch

Remi Ajani

Her works explore themes of identity in oil paint, pencil and charcoal, and they often spring from found imagery. The artist — who graduated last year from the Slade School of Fine Art in London — is getting her first-ever solo exhibition at the Sid Motion Gallery, a spacious showcase for up-and-coming talent in edgy South Bermondsey in southeast London.

Farah Nayeri writes on art and culture in Europe. She is the author of "Takedown: Art and Power in the Digital Age." More about Farah Nayeri

A version of this article appears in print on Oct. 7, 2023, Section S, Page 2 in The New York Times International Edition. Order Reprints | Today's Paper | Subscribe