

OPEN CALL: THE SHANE AKEROYD ASSOCIATE CURATOR OF THE BRITISH PAVILION

**THE BRITISH COUNCIL COMMISSION
AT THE 61st INTERNATIONAL ART
EXHIBITION – LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA**

1. About the British Council

The British Council has been responsible for the British Pavilion at the International Art and Architecture Exhibitions of La Biennale di Venezia since 1937, showcasing the best of the UK's artists, architects, designers and curators. These exhibitions, and the British Council's Venice Fellowships initiative introduced in 2014, help make the British Pavilion a major platform for discussion about contemporary art and architecture.

The British Council supports peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide. Through our work in Arts and Culture, we find new ways of connecting with and understanding each other, building creative and collaborative global communities that inspire innovation, inclusion and enterprise.

For more information, please see the British Council Arts Strategy here:

www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/bc013_arts_strategy_1.pdf

2. The Invitation

The British Council is delighted to announce the opportunity for an early career curator to work on the British Pavilion Commission for the [61st International Art Exhibition](#), La Biennale di Venezia, opening in Venice in May 2026. Lubaina Himid CBE RA will represent the UK with a solo exhibition at the British Pavilion.

The Shane Akeroyd Associate Curator will be given the opportunity to work alongside the Commissioner and the British Council team to gain insight into the delivery of and history of the British Pavilion Commission, engage with our Venice Fellowship programme by providing Fellows with insight into Himid's exhibition and practice at certain key moments, and assist in creating links and networks between the British Pavilion and other national pavilions including Scotland + Venice and Wales in Venice, and other UK artists and organisations exhibiting in Venice during the Biennale.

We particularly welcome and encourage applications from candidates who are under-represented in the Visual Arts sector. Candidates must be available for online interview on 22 July 2025 but will be given a choice of slots on the day.

Application Timeline

16 June 2025	Role advertised
13 July 2025 23:59	Deadline for applications (using online link in Section 8 below)
18 July 2025	Shortlisted candidates contacted with interview slots for 22 July
22 July 2025	Shortlisted candidates interviewed
08 August 2025	Shortlisted candidates contacted with outcome
08-12 September 2025	Press release announcing appointment
08 September 2025	Associate Curator start date
15-17 September 2025	Venice recce with British Council and artist

3. About the artist

In December 2024 Lubaina Himid CBE RA was selected to represent Great Britain at the 61st International Art Exhibition by the British Pavilion Artist Advisory Panel comprising:

Ben Crothers, Curator, The Naughton Gallery, Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland

Claire Jackson, Senior Curator, Tramway, Glasgow

Madeleine Kennedy, Curator, Wellcome Collection, London

Marguerite K Nugent, Cultural Director CV Life, Coventry

Nigel Prince, Director, Artes Mundi, Cardiff

Ian Sergeant, Senior Curator Global Majority Collection, Birmingham Museum Trust

Zoé Whitley PhD, Director, Chisenhale Gallery, London

Nicole Yip, Director, Spike Island, Bristol

Emma Dexter, Director Visual Arts and the British Council Collection and Commissioner of the British Pavilion said:

“Himid pushes the boundaries of painting practice through sound and sculptural installation, incorporating new materials, textures, narratives and formats in her work. Combining a radical optimism with social critique, she will transform the Pavilion with her vibrant, articulate and spatially dynamic artworks. Himid’s exhibitions take the visitor on an exploratory journey, which is why it’s so exciting to imagine how she will use the enfilade of six spaces in the British Pavilion. We are truly delighted to be working with Lubaina Himid on the British Council commission for 2026”.

Lubaina Himid RA, CBE (b. 1954, Zanzibar) is a world-renowned British artist, known for her pioneering practice which addresses themes of race, history, feminism, cultural memory and identity. She frequently employs storytelling and historical research to challenge dominant Eurocentric narratives and highlight the overlooked contributions of Black figures in Western history. Himid lives and works in Preston, UK and is Emeritus Professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Central Lancashire. One of the pioneers of the Black British Art Movement, Himid curated several significant exhibitions in the 1980s and 1990s, such as *Five Black Women* (1983) at the Africa Centre, London and *The Thin Black Line* (1985) at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), London, both of which showcased the work of Black female artists in response to their exclusion from mainstream galleries. In 2017, Himid was awarded the Turner Prize and in 2018 she received the honorary title of CBE for her contributions to the arts.

See Appendix B for artist biography.

On accepting the British Council commission, Himid said:

“I laughed out loud with both disbelief and pleasure when I found out about this wonderful invitation to represent Britain at the Venice Biennale in 2026. It is such a great honour and at the same time a brilliant and exciting opportunity to make something particularly special, which resonates with multiple audiences, communicates with complex histories and looks to a more collaborative future.”

4. Working with the British Council

The British Council's Venice project team provides support for marketing, PR, project management, programming, production and logistics.

The Director of Visual Arts and the Director of the Architecture, Design, Fashion team are the British Pavilion Commissioners for the art and architecture Venice Biennale respectively. The Senior Project Manager has responsibility for delivering the British Pavilion programme and exhibitions and the Director of Festivals and Seasons is the Senior Responsible Owner. The Commissioner will have responsibility for final sign-off for all the Associate Curator's deliverables (see section 5).

The British Council's marketing team commissions an agency to produce digital content as well as installation photography as part of a marketing campaign for the British Pavilion. The British Council holds all editorial responsibility and sign-off for the campaign materials and manages all content on British Council social media platforms about the exhibition.

The British Council's communications teams runs a focused and dedicated integrated campaign to publicise the project to a wide range of media, including national outlets from the UK and the international arts media. You will be supported by the British Council staff at all points to prepare for media interviews, sponsorship and patron cultivation events and any public programme events. The British Council will deal with all media enquiries.

You should be comfortable with being around the political sphere; representatives of the UK Government are invited to preside over the opening ceremony and opening events, and you will be required to attend many events and meetings alongside Government Ministers as well as a wide array of British Pavilion and British Council donors, sponsors and other stakeholders.

We ask that you work consistently with the British Council's vision of a more peaceful and prosperous world built on trust. As a cultural relations organisation, we are dedicated to building and maintaining relationships between the UK and countries around the world. We operate in over 200 countries and have colleagues on the ground in more than 100 countries, including in parts of the world currently in conflict. We are guided by our core purpose of building trust and understanding between people in the UK and countries worldwide and this requires us to be apolitical as an organisation.

We ask that, should you be successful in this application, that you do not publicise your involvement with the British Pavilion until the official press announcement on your appointment. This announcement will be led by the British Council Communications team.

5. Deliverables

The Associate Curator role will work closely with teams across the British Council including those in the Venice, Visual Arts, Marketing, Communications and Development teams. This role includes travel to Venice for the opening events of the Biennale in May 2026 and the option to join an earlier recce trip in September 2025 as well as visits to the artist's studio.

This role is not a full-time appointment, and we anticipate that it will require an overall commitment of approximately 75 days starting in September 2025 and ending in November 2026 when the exhibition closes in Venice. The Associate Curator will be required to manage their time accordingly and will have regular check-ins with the Commissioner and Senior Project Manager to plan and prioritise workstreams.

Your responsibilities and the timing of your deliverables will be approximately but not limited to the following:

Period	Responsibilities / Deliverables	Days
09/2025	Artist recce: Attending recce visit with artist and Commissioner in September 2025	3
09/2025 – 05/2026	Supporting the Commissioner as required including but not limited to: Researching and filing reading materials and creating briefing notes on the artist and their work, preparing PowerPoint presentations about the British Pavilion commission for internal meetings. Learning about the British Council Visual Arts team and its programme.	8
09/2025 – 11/2026	Engagement with other national pavilions: In agreement with the Commissioner, build relationships across the Biennale with National Pavilions and collateral events such as Scotland + Venice and Wales in Venice to develop mutual exchanges of VIP tours and visits during pre-opening week. Map participating National Pavilion plans for audience engagement events such as “Midissage” in September and “Finissage” in November. See Fellowships Programme below for more information. ‘UK in Venice’: Research and map the breadth of UK artists exhibiting in and around the Venice Biennale. In concert with the Commissioner, build relationships with these and the host organisations or venues, and exchange information to organise potential VIP and curatorial tours. Work with UK Visual Arts network organisations to understand their pre-opening week programmes and priorities and act as an interface between these and the British Council Venice team.	10
09/2025 – 11/2026	Fundraising: Assisting with/attending Development events outside of pre-opening week: Speaking about the show at events if artist/Commissioner not available.	3
09/2025 – 11/2026	Fellowships Programme: Provide the Fellows with informative material about the British Council Commission ahead of their	10

	<p>Venice months and engage with them online and/or in the UK during the run of the Biennale di Venezia 2026:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support Fellowships Manager to design and deliver a visitor engagement toolkit with information on the exhibition - Lead a dedicated online Induction session focused on the content of the exhibition, using photography/videography, to offer a detailed briefing for each room - During the exhibition run, link Fellows up with other institutions and national pavilions - Act as a channel between the Fellows and artist – find additional opportunities to build this relationship - Attend a tour with the artist for Group 1 Fellows in Pre-Opening Week - Support Fellowships Manager to develop and deliver an in-person engagement opportunity in the UK for the Fellows with the artist and associate curator in May/June. This could either be designed as a standalone event or attached to a public programme event (as designed with Head of VA Programme) - Host an additional 2 x online Q&A sessions with Fellows 	
12/2025 – 10/2026	Public Programme: Supports Head of VA Programme to design and deliver specific events to increase insight into British Pavilion and engage audiences in the UK and internationally. Events should also engage Venice Fellows and 'UK in Venice'.	10
2025/26	Studio visits: Attend two visits to the artist's studio to gain insights into the new work being presented at the British Pavilion	2
03/2026	Installation: Attend installation for a period of four days in March 2026 to document the installation informally in order to be able to brief fellows and supporters about the installation process (see above)	4
05/2026	Pre-opening week: During pre-opening week, support the Commissioner and wider British Council team by leading tours of the British Pavilion exhibition, other pavilions and the curated exhibition for audiences including British Council donors, British Council VIPs and other stakeholders, when required. Delivers intros to the British Council commission and Lubaina Himid's practice as required when the artist/Commissioner are not available.	7
09/2025 – 10/2026	Role management: Personal admin / meetings with Commissioner and Project Team / public speaking training. The Associate Curator will need excellent time management and organisational skills with the ability to prioritise and to manage and meet deadlines.	18
	TOTAL	75

Outcomes

As a result of this opportunity, you will have:

- gained insights into and knowledge of the practice of Lubaina Himid CBE RA
- learnt about the Venice Biennale and its history, the history of the British Pavilion and the wider cultural ecology of Venice
- provided information and insights to benefit the British Pavilion Fellows and help them prepare for their stays in Venice
- participated in a high-pressure media and stakeholder environment during opening week
- developed new public speaking, media skills and confidence, taking part in our programme of tours both in the British Pavilion but also across the wider Biennale
- made contact with other National Pavilions at the Art Biennale, and with other collateral events and exhibitions in Venice during the Art Biennale, with a special emphasis on UK artists and organisations in order to foster new networks, dialogues and collaborations
- learnt more about the interplay of contemporary culture and national identity at the core of the Venice Biennale
- gained an insight into the wider international cultural relations work of the British Council through the lens of the work of the Visual Arts Programme

6. Payment

The successful applicant will be expected to sign a contract with the British Council and will receive a Fee of £22,500.

Travel expenses, including flights, hotels and subsistence, will be organised and paid for by the British Council.

7. Application process and submission requirements

The open call application is a two-stage process.

Stage 1: Applications submitted via open call by 23:59 UK time 13 July 2025

Stage 2: Shortlisted candidates interviewed online by a selection panel on 22 July 2025

Please ensure you are available for online interview on 22 July. Shortlisted candidates will be contacted on 18 July by 18:00 UK time with an interview slot.

Please use the online form at <https://airtable.com/appd1MVTjYXnl7m0t/shrewLiOLMrkSTAWT> to submit your application. Please follow the instruction on the online application form.

Eligibility

We welcome applications from curators both employed by organisations and those working independently.

You must meet all three of the following criteria to be considered for this position.

- You must have the legal right to work in United Kingdom at the time of application, but you do not need to have been born in the UK
- You must be able to take time away from other commitments to fulfil the work of the Associate Curator, which will start in early September 2025 and continue to November 2026. As part of the application, you will need to confirm how you plan to manage this opportunity with other work commitments. If you are invited to interview, you should provide a letter of support from your current employer(s) if applicable, confirming you will be given appropriate time off work for this position.
- You should not work for any other National Participations in the Venice Biennale's 61st edition or the wider collateral exhibitions programme surrounding the Art Biennale in Venice during 2026.

Selection Criteria

The shortlisting process which will determine who will be called to interview will be based on the scoring criteria below and carried out by the British Council. Due to the volume of submissions, we will be unable to give feedback to applicants.

If your application is eligible, your online application, including your CV and three examples of written work, will be awarded points against the following criteria:

Selection Criteria	Points	Evaluation
CV and examples of written work to be uploaded (50 points)		
Some direct curatorial experience and an excellent knowledge of contemporary British art.	15	CV
Experience of organising public facing programmes or interpretive materials regarding contemporary art. For example, organising talks, tours, events, panels, workshops, exhibition guides.	15	CV

Some experience of public speaking such as teaching, leading exhibition tours for stakeholders or taking part in panel discussions.	10	CV
Three examples of your writing about art (ideally that has been published on public platforms or in print), demonstrating an ability to write about and speak about contemporary art accessibly for a wide range of audiences	10	Uploads
Online Application Questions (50 points)		
Could you describe the times you have engaged with Lubaina Himid's work and how this has informed your interest in the artist's practice?	10	Online application
Please give three examples of where you have demonstrated excellent time management and organisational skills with the ability to prioritise and to manage and meet deadlines.	10	Online application
How will this opportunity support the development of your career, what do you want to learn and/or gain from the experience?	10	Online application
How will you engage with the Venice Fellows and support them to enrich and activate our exhibition programme in their role as representatives of the exhibition?	10	Online application
How will you ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are promoted through the British Pavilion in accordance with the Purpose and Values of the British Council?	10	Online application
TOTAL	100	

8. Background

The British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale is a flagship cultural relations platform for British Council to build connections, understanding and trust for the UK around the world. The UK is represented by the British Pavilion exhibitions at both the Art and Architecture Biennale in Venice.

The Venice Biennale (La Biennale di Venezia) which was first started in 1895 is one of the longest-running and most prestigious cultural festivals in the world. The British Council has been responsible for the British Pavilion exhibitions at La Biennale di Venezia since 1937, showcasing the best of the UK's visual arts and architecture sectors. The exhibitions, fellowships, and subsequent exhibition tours ensure the British Pavilion is a major global cultural relations asset showcasing the UK's creativity, innovation and values. The British Council organises the annual Pavilion exhibition, oversees the selection process of artists and architects, and preserves the historic building itself. The British Pavilion hosts the Art and Architecture exhibitions at the Venice Biennale on alternating years.

The Central Pavilion and the Arsenale are the locations for the ambitious thematic exhibitions commissioned by the Biennale from some of the world's most celebrated curators, which can sometimes be considered highly provocative or groundbreaking. That exhibition combined with the national pavilion exhibitions, forms the main component of the official Biennale, which attracts significant critical attention from arts professionals, the media and visitors. The Venice Biennale is renowned for setting new global trends and launching the international careers of many pioneering artists and architects, and the British Pavilion is no exception. In 1968, Bridget Riley won the International Prize for Painting for her exhibition in the British Pavilion. This was a significant achievement, as she was the first British artist and first woman to win this particular prize. In 2022, the British Pavilion commission "Sonia Boyce: Feeling Her Way" was awarded the coveted Golden Lion for best National Participation. Being selected to represent the UK at the Venice Biennale offers an artist the opportunity to display their work on this hugely prestigious platform alongside other national representations from across the globe.

Find out more about the British Pavilion and our previous exhibitions:

www.britishcouncil.org/venicebiennale

For more information about La Biennale di Venezia, visit: www.labiennale.org/en

9. Venice Fellowships

The British Council is proud of our Venice Fellowships Programme, a scheme which activates and enriches our world-renowned exhibitions at the Venice Biennale. The Fellowships Programme is a key part of the British Council's presence in Venice, supporting the exhibition programme as well as being a platform for the development of new creative careers and future leaders. The Fellowship offers a unique opportunity for emerging creatives to represent the UK on an international level whilst broadening their perspective, making connections and developing their creative practice.

The Fellowships Programme enables creative students and professionals to spend a month in Venice during the world's most important art and architecture biennials. As exhibition ambassadors at the British Pavilion, the Fellows enrich and activate our exhibition programme. They engage visiting members of the public and expand the impact of the show. Alongside this practical residency, Fellows have the opportunity to develop their own research or practical creative projects and use the Biennale as a platform for artistic and professional development. Through these contributions, Fellows elevate the Pavilion to an important reference point for universities and creative organisations around the world.

The Venice Fellows are supervised by experienced stewarding managers and provided with comprehensive induction and training. The Venice Fellowships Partnerships and Programme Manager is first point of contact for any queries regarding the Fellows.

The Associate Curator will support the Venice Fellowships Partnerships and Programme Manager on design and content of specific events including the 2026 Venice Fellowships Programme online induction, adding value where possible. They will deliver talks to Fellows, design the visitor engagement toolkit for Fellows' to follow (such as a tour template, exhibition summary, reading and listening lists), engage with each Fellowships travel group and expand the focus of engagement to cover history of the Pavilion and British Council involvement.

In 2025, the Venice Fellowships Programme was lauded in the Architecture Jury's Special Mention for the UK Pavilion "Geology of Britannic Repair."

For more information about the Venice Fellowships Programme, please visit:

venicebiennale.britishcouncil.org/fellowship

10. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The British Council has a strong commitment to equality, inclusion and diversity. We are a disability confident employer and aim to create opportunities and reduce barriers for everyone, particularly under-represented groups. The Associate Curator will support the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion are promoted through the British Pavilion.

Accessibility

The British Pavilion is accessible to wheelchairs and mobility scooter users via an internal lift.

Guide dogs and hearing dogs are welcome at the Pavilion. Large-print exhibition guides in English and Italian are available at the Pavilion, and online. An audio descriptive guide is produced in English for all exhibitions and available on the British Pavilion website. All films produced by the British Council for La Biennale are captioned.

The exhibition galleries are on the first floor. The basement (ground floor) is not open to the public. There are several spaces on this floor that can be used by British Pavilion staff and contractors. There is a kitchen with a fridge and kettle. British Pavilion staff and contractors are welcome to store their lunch/snacks and prepare hot drinks in this space. There are toilets onsite for staff use only. Visitors to the Pavilion can be directed to the public facilities in the Giardini. For security reasons, British Pavilion staff and contractors can only access the basement during the Pavilion Opening Hours, when the areas are monitored by the M+B Studio Steward Coordinators. During the Pre-Opening week in May, and on other specific occasions, the use of the basement and its facilities will be limited to hosting the Pavilion's opening activities or special events.

Venice is a lagoon city in north-eastern Italy and the capital of Veneto. It is an island with unusual characteristics. It is surrounded and criss-crossed by water canals and can be explored on foot or by boat (called vaporetto in Italian). Wheeled vehicles (car, bicycle, motorbike, etc.) are not permitted. Venice's main thoroughfare flows along the Grand Canal, which winds its way through the city's historic centre.

The historic centre of Venice is divided into SESTIERI, which determine the main 'districts' of the city and their street addresses: Santa Croce; Dorsoduro; Cannaregio; San Polo; San Marco; Castello (where the Giardini della Biennale is located). Apart from the main island of Venice there are many other smaller islands, the main ones are: Giudecca Island; Island of San Giorgio Maggiore; Venice Lido; Murano; Burano; and Torcello

The island of Venice is connected to the mainland by the Calatrava Bridge (reference: Piazzale Roma, bus station) and the Venice-Santa Lucia Railway Station (train station).

Venice is a small city, which you can cross in a few hours and is characterised by small, narrow streets (in Italian: calle) and bridges, the main ones being: Calatrava Bridge (Piazzale Roma); Ponte degli Scalzi (in front of the train station); Accademia Bridge (in front of the Accademia Galleries); Rialto Bridge (tourist destination, near the fish market).

TIP: choose landmarks to remember as your reference points in case you need to ask Venetians for information.

The city was built long before equal access became part of the architect's vocabulary, and the city is dotted with hundreds (approx. 465) of bridges that require climbing and descending steps. Currently, 50% of the city is accessible. Therefore, visiting Venice by wheelchair is not

easy as the pavement is often in "pavé" style, the sidewalks are narrow, there are hundreds of bridges and only main streets have slipways. We recommend that wheelchair users have a non-disabled companion carer with them during their stay in Venice. For people with visual impairments, some crossings in central locations are equipped with acoustic signals.

Further information can be found at the [Official City of Venice Tourist and Travel Information](#) (Accessible Venice) website.

11. Clarification Questions

Should you have any clarification questions about the nomination process and the Commission, please contact us at british.pavilion@britishcouncil.org. All enquiries should be made by **09 July 2025**. The British Council will aim to respond to questions that are made before this deadline, within 2 working days.

12. Resources

For more information about the British Pavilion's previous exhibitions and Venice Fellowships initiative, visit: www.britishcouncil.org/venicebiennale

For more information about the Venice Biennale, visit: www.labiennale.org/en

ENDS

Appendix A

British Pavilion Draft Schedule - 2026

Activity Description	Date due
First recce to British Pavilion with Commissioner and Artist team	17-18 Feb 2025
Associate Curator appointed	08 August 2025
Second artist recce to British Pavilion with Commissioner, Artist team and Associate Curator	15 September 2025
Artist consultation and engagement on Public Programme for exhibition	12 December 2025
Texts agreed by Artist for exhibition text, guide and digital content	05 February 2026
British Council press release with pre-embargo content only, giving more details of the Commission	TBC February 2026
Associate Curator to deliver visitor engagement toolkit as part of Venice Fellowship Programme Online Induction School	08 April 2026
Delivery of exhibition content to the British Pavilion - Artist Studio/Gallery to sign condition report	26 February 2026
Exhibition installation period ("Installation period") - Artist to attend part/all of installation	02 - 27 March 2026
Installation photography and potentially filming at British Pavilion for digital campaign and content	30 March - 01 April 2026
Fellowships Briefing at the British Pavilion. Artist to give tour to the Fellows and British Council team	04 May 2026
2026 Art Biennale Press Preview	05 May 2026
2026 Art Biennale Pre-opening days	06,07,08 May 2026
Promotional films and digital content released by British Council from embargo	09 May 2026
International Jury / Golden Lion Award Ceremony hosted by la Biennale di Venezia	09 May 2026
The Work on display to the public at the British Pavilion	09 May to 22 November 2026
Audio descriptive guide delivered as audio files to download on exhibition website	TBC June 2026
Exhibition Content de-installation at the Venue ("De-installation Period")	End Nov to Dec 2026
Exhibition Content collection from the British Pavilion	TBC December 2026

Appendix B – Artist Biography

Lubaina Himid CBE RA (b. 1954, Zanzibar) lives and works in Preston, UK and is Emeritus Professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Central Lancashire. She is the winner of the 2017 Turner Prize, the 2023 Maria Lassnig Prize and the 2024 Suzanne Deal Booth | Flag Art Foundation Prize. She has exhibited extensively in the UK and internationally and is represented by Hollybush Gardens, London and Greene Naftali, New York.

One of the pioneers of the Black British Art Movement, Himid curated several significant exhibitions in the 1980s and 1990s, such as *Five Black Women* (1983) at the Africa Centre, London and *The Thin Black Line* (1985) at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), London, both of which showcased the work of Black female artists in response to their exclusion from mainstream galleries. In 2025 Himid will reimagine this iconic exhibition at the ICA to expand contemporary interpretations and conversations around art making.

Himid has a profound interest in the materiality and performativity of painting, shaped by her degree in Theatre Design obtained from Wimbledon College of Art. This approach can be seen in her cut-outs, figurative paintings created on freestanding shaped board which allow viewers to walk among them. *A Fashionable Marriage* (1986) is an early installation that critiques race, gender and class, drawing inspiration from William Hogarth's satirical paintings. Other notable works include *Naming the Money* (2004), consisting of 100 life-size cut-outs which reimagines the lives of enslaved and forgotten Black figures in European history and *Swallow Hard: The Lancaster Dinner Service* (2007), a collection of overpainted ceramic pieces which addresses Britain's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade. Her skilful overpainting allows her to overlay new and old histories on the surfaces of everyday objects and furniture.

Himid frequently employs storytelling and historical research, notably in the *Le Rodeur* series of paintings (2016–17), named after a 19th-century French slave ship infamous for a horrific event in 1819 in which captured Africans, many of whom had contracted an infectious eye disease during the voyage, were thrown overboard by the crew. The figures Himid paints in various scenarios are not obviously set in one period of time, they remind us of the past and its impact on the present. By re-examining and re-contextualizing historical narratives, Himid challenges contemporary audiences to critically engage with collective perceptions of racial and cultural identity, amplifying marginalised voices and overlooked histories.

Himid's ongoing series *Men in Drawers* (2017–) sees painted portraits on the interiors of found wooden drawers which transform everyday objects into vessels of historical reflection. Drawers represent concealed spaces within domestic settings; by placing Black figures inside these compartments Himid invites viewers to engage in a process of discovery. Himid created the *Aunties* (2023-4) a series of 64 individually painted and collaged narrow planks representing the 'auntie' - an interstitial role which honours the women in our lives who expand our understanding of kinship and family.

In the *Strategy Paintings* (2023) Himid delves into the complexities of problem-solving and decision-making by depicting groups of people gathered around tables discussing an issue, question or problem with symbolic objects such as lemons, teeth and gondolas.

Forthcoming solo exhibitions include *Kettles Yard, Cambridge* with Magda Stawarska (2025). Significant solo exhibitions include *MUDAM Luxembourg* (2025); *UCCA, Beijing* (2025); *Make* www.britishcouncil.org

Do and Mend, The Contemporary Austin, Texas and The FLAG Art Foundation, New York; *Barricades*, Hollybush Gardens, London; *Street Sellers*, Greene Naftali, New York (all 2024); *Plaited Time/Deep Water*, Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE; and *What Does Love Sound Like?*, Glyndebourne, Lewes (both 2023); *So Many Dreams*, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne; *Water Has a Perfect Memory*, Hollybush Gardens, London (both 2022); Lubaina Himid, Tate Modern, London (2021); *Spotlights*, Tate Britain, London; *The Grab Test*, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem; Lubaina Himid, CAPC Bordeaux; *Work From Underneath*, New Museum, New York (all 2019); *Gifts to Kings*, MRAC Languedoc Roussillon Midi-Pyrénées, Sérignan; *Our Kisses are Petals*, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (all 2018); *The Truth Is Never Watertight*, Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe; *Navigation Charts*, Spike Island, Bristol; and *Invisible Strategies*, Modern Art Oxford (all 2017).

Her work is held in various museum and public collections, including Tate, London; British Council Collection; Arts Council Collection; UK Government Art Collection; Victoria & Albert Museum, London; National Museums Liverpool; Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester; The Women's Art Collection, University of Cambridge, Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne; Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; CAPC Musée d'art Contemporain de Bordeaux, Bordeaux; Guggenheim, New York; Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, UAE; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland; Rhode Island School of Design, Providence and Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE.

Selection panel comments:

Zoé Whitley PhD, previously Director, Chisenhale Gallery, London: "Lubaina Himid constantly redefines painting—its surface, its audience, even its rhythm and cadence. From her training in theatre design to her tireless support of fellow artists and curators, she makes contemporary art consistently witty and purposeful. Having paved the way for so many, she never fails to experiment formally and aesthetically with text, found objects and patterning while remaining socially relevant."

Ian Sergeant, Senior Curator Global Majority Collection, Birmingham Museum Trust: "Himid is renowned for her unique artistic approach, where she draws from a colourful palette, often incorporating a playful aesthetic. Himid's art upends notions of representation and visibility and can be seen as a unique critique of the Western art historical canon."

Ben Crothers, Curator, The Naughton Gallery, Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland: "Her work, which seamlessly weaves storytelling, activism, and striking visual forms, challenges perceptions of identity, history, and culture, and I eagerly anticipate the exhibition that she will bring to this international stage. This moment in her remarkable career felt undeniably fitting for such an opportunity."

Nicole Yip, Director, Spike Island, Bristol: "Lubaina Himid is one of the defining artists of her generation. Differences in power have historically manifested in asymmetrical access to the international stage. It is heartening to see this historical imbalance beginning to be addressed."