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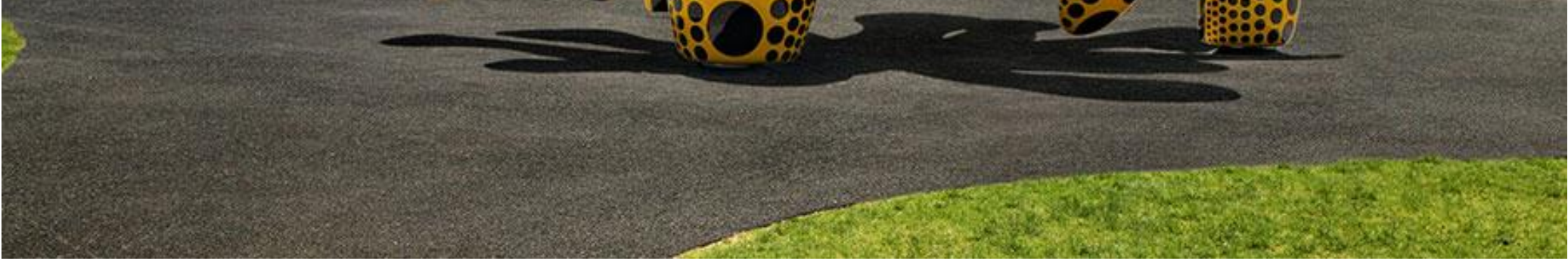
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The Best Public Art Shows to See this Year

From Yayoi Kusama's flora-inspired sculptures at the New York Botanical Garden to this year's Shanghai Urban Space Art Season, these are must-see public art shows across the globe

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Yayoi Kusama, *Dancing Pumpkin*, 2020. Courtesy: the artist Otis Fine Arts, Tokyo, David Zwirner, New York and the New York Botanical Garden

Yayoi Kusama: Cosmic Nature

New York Botanical Garden, USA

Yayoi Kusama’s monumental sculptures take over the grounds of the New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) in the Bronx. Inspired by time the artist spent on her family’s seed nursery as a child, ‘Cosmic Nature’ features her most iconic installations, including *Ascension of Polka Dots on the Trees* (2002/2021) and *Hymn of Life: Tulips* (2007) – her giant, undulating, coloured, polka-dot flowers. The exhibition will also showcase newly commissioned works, most notably Kusama’s *Infinity Mirrored Room: Illusion inside the Heart* (2020), a reflective cube that mirrors the changing landscape of the NYBG. ‘Cosmic Nature’ is part of a suite of shows this year celebrating the nonagenarian artist’s career, with additional surveys at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington D.C., the Gropius Bau in Berlin and Tate Modern in London.

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‘Kusama: Cosmic Nature’ is on view at the New York Botanical Garden, USA, through 31 October 2021.



Nairy Baghramian, *Knee and Elbow*, 2020, marble and stainless steel. Courtesy: artist, the Clark Institute, Williamstown, and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York; photography: Thomas Clark

Ground/work

Clark Institute, Williamstown, USA

Curated by Molly Epstein and Abigail Ross Goodman, 'Ground/work' brings together newly commissioned outdoor sculptures and installations from Kelly Akashi, Nairy Baghramian, Jennie C. Jones, Eva LeWitt, Analia Saban and Haegue Yang, with each artist invited to create work that speaks to the idyllic surroundings of the Clark Institute's 140-acre campus. One of the highlights is Jones's *These (Mournful) Shores* (2020) – a large wind instrument, based on the Aeolian harp, which extends out of architect Tadao Ando's granite wall structure outside the main plaza. The piece is inspired by Jones's experience of walking through the institute's grounds and observing works – specifically *Eastern Point and West Point, Prout's Neck* (both 1900) – by Winslow Homer in the Clark's collection. When the wind hits Jones's monumental instrument, a piercing hum fills the air.

'Ground/work' is on view at the Clark Institute, Williamstown, USA, through 17 October 2021.



Thomas J Price's example image used for Hackney council Windrush commission proposal, digital render. Courtesy: the artist
**Example images are of Price's previous works, to give a sense of scale and are not themselves the proposed sculptures*

Thomas J. Price and Veronica Ryan

Hackney Windrush Art Commission, London, UK

In east London, Hackney council, in partnership with Create London, has commissioned two new individual works by Thomas J. Price and Veronica Ryan to honour the significant contribution of the Windrush generation: the Caribbean immigrants who arrived in the UK between 1948 and 1971. Price's design is a critique of the idea of monumentalism itself: his three-metre bronze figures will draw from photography archives and 3D scans of Hackney residents but won't depict specific individuals. Ryan's oversized marble and bronze Caribbean fruits will reference migration and movement as well as her childhood memories of Dalston's Ridley Road Market. Both commissions will serve as a permanent reminder of the borough's relationship to Windrush and aim to give the area's Black community a sense of connectedness to, and ownership of, their histories.

Ryan's work will be unveiled on 1 October 2021 by Narrow Way near St. Augustine's Tower, London, UK. Price's sculptures will be installed in front of Hackney Town Hall for Windrush Day, 22 June 2022.



Rashid Johnson, *Stacked Heads*, 2020, installation view at Canning Dock Quayside; Courtesy: the artist and the Liverpool Biennial; photograph: Mark McNulty

Liverpool Biennial

Various venues, Liverpool, UK

The 2021 Liverpool Biennial – rescheduled from 2020 due to COVID-19 – brings together 50 international artists and two collectives to present works in various locations around the city. Larry Achiampong has installed eight Pan-African flags on buildings and streets across the city centre, referencing Liverpool's connection to the transatlantic slave trade while evoking a sense of solidarity and collective empathy. Yael Davids presents a new public performance, *Wingspan of the Captive* (2021), at Liverpool Central Library, responding to the naturalist illustrations of John James Audubon's *The Birds of America* (1827). Rashid Johnson's public sculpture *Stacked Heads* (2020) – a totem that uses resilient flora to speak to present-day racial discrimination – is presented at Canning Dock Quayside. And Luisa Ungar's interactive tours, taking place throughout the city, point to elements of medicine, stigmatization and otherness.

*The 11th edition of Liverpool Biennial, '**The Stomach and the Port**', is on view through 6 June 2021.*



Rendering of *Sex Work Is Honest Work*, 2021, an installation by Olu Oguibe commissioned by sonsbeek 20→24. Courtesy: the artist

sonsbeek 20→24

Various venues, the Netherlands

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In 1949, during the aftermath of World War II, Arnhem initiated the public art exhibition sonsbeek – named after the city’s park – to help redefine notions of both public place and modern art, which had seemed lost during the years of German occupation. This year’s edition, ‘Force Times Distance: On Labour and its Sonic Ecologies’, centres on the (in)visibility of labour and how issues of race, gender and class manifest themselves in public space. Taking place in various locations – such as churches and parks in Arnhem, as well as partner institutions in Amsterdam and Utrecht – the exhibition comprises works by more than 40 artists including Lawrence Abu Hamdan, stanley brouwn, Ellen Gallagher, Laure Prouvost and Willem de Rooij. A highlight will be Olu Oguibe’s installation *Sex Work Is Honest Work* (2021), which sheds light on the marginalization of and continued violence against sex workers.

‘Force Times Distance: On Labour and its Sonic Ecologies’ will open summer 2021.



The former General Blumenthal colliery in Recklinghausen.
Courtesy: Urbane Künste Ruhr; photograph: © Henrich Holtgreve

Ruhr Ding: Klima

Various venues, Germany

The Ruhr area of Germany is best known for driving the country's Wirtschaftswunder – or economic miracle – of the late 1950s. With its coal mines and other industrial sites no longer in use, however, the region now hosts various cultural institutions and festivals in these abandoned architectural settings. The annual public art exhibition 'Ruhr Ding' combines the industrial history of the area with lesser-known narratives to explore the region's cities via various themes. Comprising 21 projects in four cities, 'Ruhr Ding: Klima' examines issues of global warming and the political divisions that surround the topic. Ari Benjamin Meyers's sound and video installation *Forecast* (2021), for instance, will examine weather phenomena and the human desire to predict the future. In the former General Blumenthal colliery, Monira Al Qadiri's series of sculptures – whose forms resemble the drill bits used to mine coal and oil – reflect on links between regional wealth and extractivism.

'Ruhr Ding: Klima' will be on view 8 May – 27 June 2021.



Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran, *Double-sided Avatar with Blue Figure*, 2021.
Courtesy the artists and HOTA Gallery, Surfers Paradise

Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran and Judy Watson

HOTA Gallery, Surfers Paradise, Australia

In anticipation of its grand opening in Surfers Paradise, HOTA Gallery unveiled public sculptures by artist Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran and Judy Watson, installed just outside the gallery entrance. Born in Sri Lanka and based in Sydney, Nithiyendran creates new-age idols that explore the politics of the monument. His largest sculpture to date at six metres tall, Nithiyendran's work will welcome visitors to HOTA in the form of an effigy, cast in bronze, neon and fibreglass. Meanwhile, Waanyi artist Watson presents a multi-part installation, in which a map depicting the Nerang region prior to European settlement becomes the setting for a pathway of dilly bag and basket sculptures, local languages and motifs, culminating in a two-metre-tall feather canopy.

HOTA Gallery launches 8 May 2021.



Shanghai Urban Space Art Season (SUSAS), 2019. Courtesy: Alamy

Shanghai Urban Space Art Season

Various venues, Shanghai, China

For the 2021 edition of the Shanghai Urban Space Art Season, the biennial will, for the first time, invite its chief curators through an open call, by issuing a request to ‘build a 15-minute community-life circle’ in response to the concept of ‘a city built by the people, for the people’. This willingness for public participation is echoed by Fosun Foundation, whose two-city residency kicked off earlier in the spring. Artists were invited to produce public artworks in response to specific sites in Shanghai and, subsequently, Liajiang. In Shanghai, the focal points of these commissions were the Bund Finance Centre – which has dominated the Shanghai waterfront since 2013, with Fosun Foundation’s flashy museum as its centrepiece since 2017 – and the nearby Yu Garden, thought to be more than 300 years old.

Shanghai Urban Space Art Season launches September 2021.

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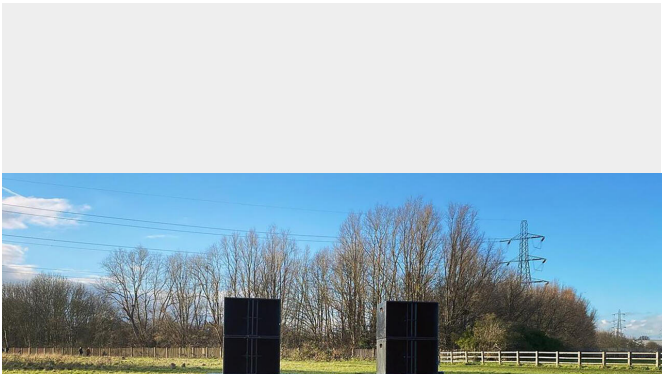
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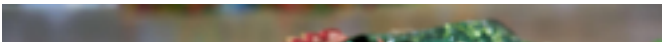
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