

# The Ultimate Guide To Frieze Week 2025

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Photography Linda Nyland. Image courtesy of Frieze

There really is no rest for the wicked – the wicked being us, of course, the British *Vogue* staff. Just as we began to catch our breath after the biggest fashion month in living memory, Frieze week is here, bringing with it a litany of OTT exhibition openings, late-night festivities and, yes, a bit of art. Will we ever get a break?!

Of course, our whining is in jest – Frieze is without a doubt one of the most exciting times of year to be in the British capital, “bringing people together from around the world to celebrate London’s dynamism and creativity, and to support its position as a global centre for culture,” according to Eva Langret, director of Frieze EMEA. “The world’s leading collectors, London’s museums, artists, and creatives – it’s a moment when the city feels alive in every sense.”

Both within and beyond Regent’s Park (which houses both Frieze London, the fair where you’ll find a bounty of cutting-edge contemporary art, and Frieze Masters, where you can see everything from a solo booth of Peter Hujar portraits to Flemish Old Masters paintings and a Ptolemaic quartzite relief), there’s a palpable sense of the city’s world-beating cultural prowess – a cause for optimism at a time when it couldn’t be more needed.

All this said, there’s a *lot* to take in, and it’s easy to get lost in the fray without ample planning - which is, of course, where we come in. Below, you’ll find our key highlights, both at the fairs and beyond them - oh, and some welcome tips on where to recuperate at the end of the long days ahead. Godspeed!



Alex Margo Arden at Ginny on Frederick. Photography by Choreo. Courtesy of the artist and Ginny on Frederick. Alex Margo Arden at Ginny on Frederick. Photography by Choreo. Courtesy of the artist and Ginny on Frederick.

## The fairs

Though the blur of functions around the fairs may sometimes distract from them, Frieze London and Frieze Masters are at the heart of why we're all here. As mentioned above, the former is where you'll find cutting-edge contemporary work, featuring booths by everyone from plucky, risk-taking indie galleries to titanic blue chips, like Gagosian and Hauser & Wirth.

This being London – a city renowned as a global hub of independent talent – the former end is arguably the most exciting to check out. That's especially true right now; there's a consensus that, despite the adversity experienced across the global art market, London's emerging gallery scene is the most exciting it's been in generations.

That's duly recognised in Frieze London's layout, with Focus – the Stone Island-sponsored section dedicated to platforming a global array of independent galleries – repositioned at the very front of the tent during last year's redesign, and remaining there this year. Among the must-see moments are Ginny on Frederick's solo booth by Alex Margo Arden, the recent Royal Academy Schools graduate, who'll be presenting one of her signature, wryly off-kilter sculptural installations, in keeping with the deliciously wacky work she showed at her graduation show this year. Nicoletti will be presenting a solo booth by Texas-born, London-based artist Gray Wielebinski, comprising new works that explore the aestheticisation of violence through resin sculptures cast from gun grips and mosaic works made from

ballistic armour tiles, while Rose Easton will present a series of subtly subversive mixed-media drawings by LA-based artist Jan Gatewood.



Michelle Uckotter at Kings Leap. Photography Charles Benton. Image courtesy of Frieze



Ebun Sodipo at Soft Opening. Image courtesy of Frieze,

There are also some noteworthy first-time appearances in the section, like a.Squire – one of the buzziest names to emerge on the London scene in recent years – who will show a series of chicly spare abstract sculptures by Bogdan Ablozhnyy, while Gathering goes all-in on Christelle Oyiri’s immersive, acid-green installation exploring the impact of chlordecone, a toxic insecticide, on the ecosystems of Martinique and Guadeloupe. It’s the latest offering in what has been a major few months in town for the artist and DJ (who goes by the name of Crystallmess behind the decks) – the summer brought a video and sculptural installation to Tate Modern’s tanks, and she’s just opened another solo show at the Bloomsbury outpost of Champ Lacombe.

Beyond the Focus section, other highlights by cutting-edge contemporary names include Soft Opening’s presentation of collages by Ebun Sodipo, who pushes her textured exploration and evocation of the Black transfeminine experience to ambitious new extents. And, of course, Sophia Al-Maria’s daily comedy club, which will see the interdisciplinary artist and writer give a daily stand-up routine – trust us when we say that this one isn’t to be missed.



Sophia Al-Maria. Image courtesy of Frieze.

The fair's Artist-to-Artist section – which hosts solo projects by emerging artists nominated by established artists – is also well worth a look. Now in its third year, 2025's iteration is its most ambitious in scope yet, thanks to a newly-minted partnership with Tiffany & Co., and features presentations by Katherine Hubbard, nominated by Nicole Eisenman, and Neal Tait, nominated by Chris Ofili. Echoes From The Present – a new section exploring connections between artists from Brazil, Africa and their diasporas curated by Dr Jareh Das – brings works by the likes of emerging Black non-binary Brazilian painter Diambe and Nigerian mixed-media artist Bunmi Agosto into a rich dialogue with one another.

There's plenty to get excited about among the fair's more established names, too. Gagosian's booth houses a series of new works by LA-based Lauren Halsey, whose Serpentine show earlier this year was one of the most spellbinding the institution has brought to town, while Lehmann Maupin will show existing works by Korean Do Ho Suh, whose solo show of domestic "thread drawings" at Tate Modern closes at the end of this month.



Do Ho Suh at Lehmann Maupin. Image courtesy of Frieze.

Over at Frieze Masters, a unanimously tipped highlight is Pace's presentation of Peter Hujar's portraits of New York's theatre and drag scenes in the '70s, just ahead of their ravaging by the AIDS epidemic the following decade (fans of the artist should also note the screening of *Peter Hujar's Day* taking place at the ICA on 17 October as part of the official Frieze X ICA film programme).

While there isn't a dinosaur fossil or an ancient sarcophagus on show (as there have been in recent years!), this year's fair isn't short of headline-grabbing moments. Over at the booth of Geneva-based dealer Salomon Lilian, you'll find a *Hercules as a Gladiator*, a significant painting by Flemish Old Master Peter Paul Rubens, while Chelsea's ArtAncient ticks this year's outré antiquity box with a quartzite relief of a Ptolemaic deity. A nice one to pop above the fireplace, we think.

## Beyond the main tents

### The other fairs

When you've hit your quota of minor celebrity spotting and dodging dishevelled interns in Regent's Park, don't panic – the city is your oyster, and there's plenty to see beyond the main tents. From Somerset House to Soho, Mayfair to Marylebone, London's satellite fairs are the antidote to Frieze fatigue.

Promising a serene afternoon among Somerset House's neoclassical architecture, the 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair is returning for its 13th edition, bringing together over 100 artists from the African diaspora, this year with a particular spotlight on Nigerian and South African art. Alongside returning names like Rele and Affinity, 14 galleries are making their London debut, including Lagos's O'DA Art, Cairo's TINTERA and Nassau's TERN Gallery with works on show from Hassan Hajjaj, Lakwena Maciver and Seydou Keita, alongside emerging talents like Afeez Onakoya and Joël Bigaignon.

Also at Somerset House: photographer Jennie Baptiste presents her first major solo show, capturing the evolution of Black British youth culture since the '90s and *How We Build a Home* at Wellington Arch – an exhibition by Lakwena, who collaborated with The Dior Lady Art project earlier this year.

For those with a taste for surreal and vaguely spooky taxidermy, The Mandrake Hotel is once again playing host to Minor Attractions, featuring five days of film, sound, and performance art from 70 international galleries. Highlights include live Soho Radio sessions, screenings by Barbadian-British director Myah Asha Jeffers, and Iranian-born artist Somayeh, plus sonic performances and late-night parties courtesy of Argos Centre for Audio Visual Art. For a break from the art, London's literary scene is putting up a good front, with the much-written-about Soho Reading Series hosting the Geoff Dyer Gala on Wednesday night, attendance at which practically guarantees a mention in a Substack scene report. If you prefer your exhibitions with better lighting and fewer dark corners, nearby gallerist India Rose James launches a new boutique fair spotlighting women-led galleries – with exhibitors including Gillian Jason Gallery, LAMB, House of Bandits and Liminal Gallery, and highlights like a chapel installation by Alicja Biala for Berntson Bhattacharjee.

## Must-see exhibitions

In Mayfair, must-sees include Kaari Upson's flesh-hued sculptures at Sprüth Magers as well Nicolas Party's rainbow-hued cartoonish landscape paintings at Hauser & Wirth. Sadie Coles's programme is also a notable highlight. Alongside a knockout Arthur Jafa show at the London stalwart's Soho space (and a bijou presentation by Irish-Australian jeweller and artist Leo Costelloe in the shop space downstairs) and a series of wall-based works by Helen Marten at its Bury Street outpost, the gallery will also open the doors to its hotly anticipated new space on Savile Row, christening the six-storey townhouse with an exhibition of paintings by South African painter Lisa Brice.

Coles isn't the only one in town toasting an expansion. St James's Ben Hunter has also moved into airy new digs, opening a group show featuring the likes of Clementine Keith-Roach and Nicole Coson, while Maureen Paley has opened a third space in Wolfgang Tillmans's former Bethnal Green studio with a multi-location presentation of the German photographer's work.



Grant Mooney at Chisenhale Gallery. Image courtesy of Chisenhale Gallery.



Whitechapel Gallery, Joy Gregory: *Catching Flies with Honey*, 2025. Photography Matt Greenwood. Image courtesy of Whitechapel Gallery

While you're out east, make sure to check out some of the city's most directional institutional shows. At Chisenhale Gallery, American artist Grant Mooney presents "sphere moon", a show of abstract sculpture and austere chic found object assemblage, while at Whitechapel Gallery, you'll find a landmark survey of the works of pioneering British fine art photographer Joy Gregory, as well as an immersive, labyrinthine exhibition by Candice Lin. At Raven Row in Spitalfields, Cosima von Bonin stages her very first London show, with the renegade Cologne scene protagonist presenting off-kilter, humorous textile sculptures.

Highlights to be found in the north of town include Karimah Ashadu's video show at Camden Art Centre, with the Venice Biennale Silver Lion-winning artist presenting a new piece of work offering a raw portrait of the lives of a group of bodybuilders striving towards an image of hyper-masculine perfection in Lagos slums. On Caledonian Road, you'll find one of the scener moments of the week comes in the form of *Clarissa*, a group show convened by buzzy art publication *émergent*, featuring an incredible roster of emerging and established names, like Alexandra Bircken, Eric N. Mack, Jasmine Gregory, Kembra Pfahler and Hamish Pearch.

Other notable standalones include *A Good Shelf* by Tom Sachs at Thaddaeus Ropac. Comprised of a collection of 30 charming hand-formed ceramics, the exhibition explores rituals and process, with a Mezcaleria – a working coffee and mezcal bar – to keep spirits up throughout the week.





The Wars Inside My Head Don't Define Me, 2025, Mays Al Moosawi. Image courtesy of Thames Carpets.

Heading over to Marylebone, CMJZ Arts comes together with Tobias Ross-Southall and Thames Carpets for *Post Human VII* at the new Cramer St Gallery. Nine artists – including Helen Beard, Hayden Kays and Sola Olulode – have translated their visual worlds into handwoven carpets in collaboration with Thames Carpets, creating tactile, collectable works that blur the line between object, art and interiors. In keeping with the boundary-blurring approach, the Art in Mayfair festival is pairing fashion, food and art with a literary twist – the perfect place to nab a few limited edition Fitzcarraldos for the hard-to-buy-for recipients in your life.

Prada Mode is also returning to London, with its take on an immersive art club for three days of screenings, talks and DJ sets exploring “spectatorship”, complete with Elmgreen & Dragset’s looping film installation *The Audience*. Additionally, Ibraaz – the newly opened six-storey cultural space founded by Lina Lazaar – is making waves as the new hub for Middle Eastern and North African art. Reimagined by Sumayya Alsayid, Ibraaz is a list of building houses on everything from the latest Paris Fashion Week trend to Arab communal typologies. If all this isn’t enough to be getting on with, seek refuge in the Turbine Hall, where Máret Anne Sara is exploring the practice of preserving Sámi ancestral knowledge, with her evocative reindeer skin installation. Alternatively, Completedworks and Doyenne are offering a serene way to round off the week, with an intimate piano performance by Lisa Lerkenfeldt at the Royal Academy of Music – perfect for those aching heads.