

Press release

Date: Thursday 30 November

2024 Exhibition Highlights

The Whitworth is proud to announce its exhibition highlights for 2024, spanning survey exhibitions of **John Lyons** and Turner Prize nominee **Barbara Walker**, as well as a new moving image acquisition by **Ayo Akingbade** and a collection display of post-war textiles by **Shirley Craven**.

John Lyons

10 May – 25 August 2024



The spring begins with the first major retrospective exhibition of Caribbean British artist and poet John Lyons.

Spanning six decades, the exhibition will survey his contribution to British art, literature and art education, centred on his exploration of Trinidadian folklore and mythology through painting and poetry. The show will include paintings, drawings and woodcuts, with selected small sculptures and sketchbooks. It will include Lyons' poetry via text and sound, and importantly, explore the links between his visual and literary practices. An archival element will consider Lyons' long career in art education and the arts ecosystem in Manchester, West Yorkshire, and nationally. The exhibition and accompanying illustrated catalogue will bring greater visibility and recognition at a timely moment in his long career.

Barbara Walker

4 October 2024– 26 January 2025



Our autumn programme will lead with the first ever survey exhibition and new commission by Turner Prize nominee Barbara Walker.

Growing up in Birmingham, Walker's personal experiences with issues of class, race, power and belonging have shaped her practice. She makes work that ranges from small, embossed works on paper, to large-scale wall drawings. Intensely observed and empathetic, her work gives powerful presence to Black communities and culture in art history.

Centred on concepts of visibility and erasure, the exhibition will bring together paintings, prints and drawings from across Walker's career, including her most recent Turner Prize nominated series *Burden of Proof* (2022-23), co-commissioned by Sharjah Art Foundation with support from the Whitworth. The exhibition will include a commission focusing on the Windrush generation and in response to the Whitworth's collection of historic drawings and wallpaper.

Ayo Akingbade: Show Me The World Mister
3 May – 20 October 2024



Show Me The World Mister is a solo exhibition by Ayo Akingbade comprising of two new film commissions. Shot on location in Nigeria, *The Fist* and *Faluyi* are Akingbade's most ambitious productions to date, building upon her continued interest in history, place-making, legacy and power.

The Fist is a portrait of the Guinness brewery in Lagos, where histories of industrialisation and labour collide; while *Faluyi* follows protagonist Ife on a journey tracing familial legacy and mysticism in ancestral lands. Both films have been acquired by the Whitworth and will be shown together in a bespoke installation designed by the artist.

Shirley Craven

April 2024 – April 2025



An exhibition of vivid, colour-filled textiles by post-war designer Shirley Craven. Born in Hull in 1934 and evacuated during the second world war, Craven cites the rural Yorkshire landscape and her post-war education at Hull College of Art and the Royal College of Art (1955-8) as a launchpad to a hugely successful career at printing firm Hull Traders. Aged 29, Craven became Chief Designer and Director of this small and visionary firm whose artist-designers also included Althea McNish and Eduardo Paolozzi. The Whitworth is home to over 80 of Craven's bold abstract textiles, displayed together for the first time in over 60 years alongside newly acquired unique works from her days as a Student at the RCA.

Alongside exhibitions, the Whitworth offers a broad programme of civic engagement and education activities, events and workshops that are informed by and support our communities. In 2024, we will launch *Everyday Art School*, a new suite of civic engagement and collections spaces that provides new experiences in our richly diverse and accessible constituent-led programme.

-ENDS-

For all PRESS information, images and interview requests please contact:

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Images in order of appearance

John Lyons, *Mama Look a Mas Passin* (1990). Oil on canvas, 1270 x 1020mm. Courtesy the artist © John Lyons. Photo: Anne-Katrin Purkiss

Barbara Walker working on her wall-drawing *Vanishing Point* at Cristea Roberts Gallery, 2022. Image courtesy Cristea Roberts Gallery. Photo: Helen Waters

Ayo Akingbade, *The Fist* (2022). Film still. Courtesy the artist

Shirley Craven for Hull Traders, *Five* (detail), 1966-67. Screen-printed furnishing textile. The Whitworth, The University of Manchester (T.12298.2). Photo: Michael Pollard

Acknowledgements

Show Me The World Mister by Ayo Akingbade is produced by Chisenhale Gallery, London and Spike Island, Bristol. Commissioned by Chisenhale Gallery, London; Spike Island, Bristol; the Whitworth, The University of Manchester; BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead; and John Hansard Gallery, Southampton. The commission and its acquisition by the Whitworth, The University of Manchester collection, are made possible with Art Fund support. With additional support from the Chisenhale Gallery Commissions Fund and WEVAA (West of England Visual Arts Alliance).

About the Whitworth

The Whitworth is proudly part of The University of Manchester, operating as a convening space between the University and the people of the city. It was founded in 1889 as The Whitworth Institute and Park in memory of the industrialist Sir Joseph Whitworth for “the perpetual gratification of the people of Manchester” and continues this mission today in new contexts. The gallery is home to the collection of over 60,000 works of art, textiles, and wallpaper and is driven by a mission to work with communities to use art for positive social change, and actively address what matters most in people’s lives. This vision has been developed as part of an international dialogue about how to evolve and adapt museums to a constantly changing world.

www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth

Gallery opening times:

Tuesday to Sunday 10am-5pm, Thursday late opening until 9pm.