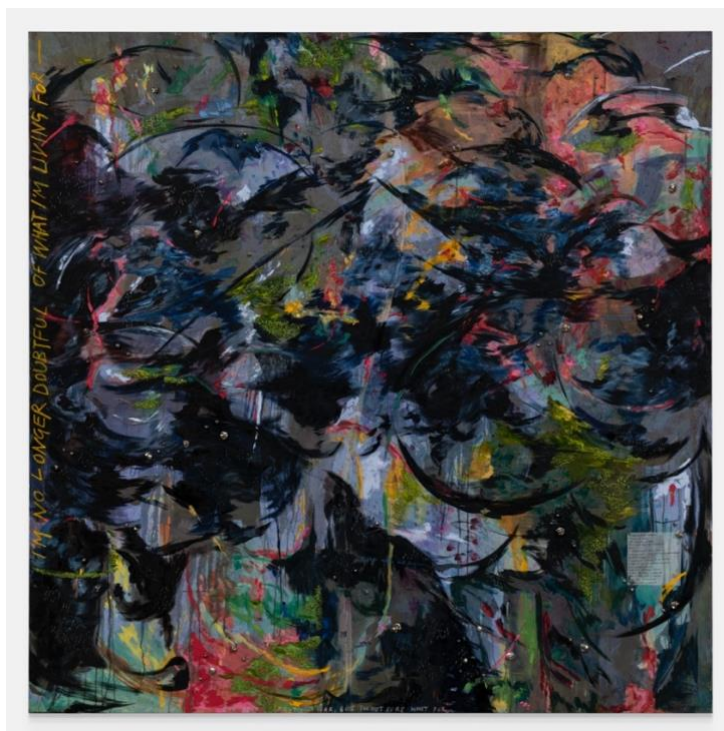


Supported Artist Development Opportunities inspired by Michaela Yearwood-Dan: *The Practice of Liberation* at the Whitworth



Michaela Yearwood-Dan, *Take the weight off my shoulders* (2026) © Michaela Yearwood-Dan. Courtesy the artist, Hauser & Wirth and Marianne Boesky Gallery. Photographer: Deniz Guzel

Call out for artists aged 21-30 based in North West England

Artist Development Opportunity for two artists

These artist opportunities draw inspiration from Michaela Yearwood-Dan's exhibition at the Whitworth. Acclaimed contemporary artist Michaela Yearwood-Dan (b.1994) endeavours to build spaces of community, abundance, and joy, through a multifaceted practice encompassing large scale paintings, works on paper, ceramics, and site-specific mural and sound installations.

Michaela Yearwood-Dan: *The Practice of Liberation* at the Whitworth is her first solo museum exhibition in the UK. She presents a major new commission that transforms the gallery into a layered installation shaped by painting, ceramics and sound. The exhibition is organised in collaboration with Towner Eastbourne and Arnolfini in Bristol, who will present the exhibition following its premiere at the Whitworth.

The exhibition, formed entirely of new work, centres on a series of 14 paintings and six ceramic vessels presented within a multidimensional installation designed by the artist and accompanied by a bespoke musical score by composer Alex Gruz.

Drawing on the aesthetics and symbolism of the Catholic church, Yearwood-Dan creates a powerfully resonant space to examine the intersection of the histories of colonialism and institutional religion through the lens of her own memory and experience - reflecting on the ongoing process of personal and collective liberation.

Using the language of abstraction, Yearwood-Dan's paintings incorporate fragments of her own diaristic writing alongside adapted and borrowed texts and lyrics. These words move between the intimate and the political, appearing at varying scales across the canvases. References to writers such as civil rights activist James Baldwin sit alongside the artist's own reflections, inviting the viewer to consider how the personal and the political intersect in new ways.

The exhibition's title references the writings of bell hooks, whose work explores how education, culture, love, and art can become tools for social and personal freedom.

Visual and symbolic references to Catholicism appear both directly and indirectly, alongside the artist's reflections on love, colonialism, patriarchal structures and class systems that have shaped her experience. Rather than presenting liberation as a fixed state, *The Practice of Liberation* explores it as ongoing — grounded in care, introspection and new ways of communing. At the heart of the exhibition, the 14 paintings echo the motif of the Stations of the Cross – a sequence of devotional images central to Catholicism. Yearwood-Dan adopts this structure as a compositional reference point, with visual motifs throughout the works echoing the religious architecture and symbolism, including fallen crosses and diptych compositions reminiscent of stained-glass windows. The six ceramic vessels reference both Jesus' first miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana, and the malleable shapes of Ghanaian bolga baskets, evoking domestic comfort and ritual.

The titles of Yearwood-Dan's work convey additional layers of meaning. Within this body of work, the painting *Passio* takes its title from the Latin term meaning suffering and endurance – a spiritual concept historically embedded within Catholic narratives of devotion.

Known for her vibrant and expansive canvases, in this body of work Yearwood-Dan introduces a palette that moves between bold colours and softer, subdued tones. Evoking both faded colours of historic religious paintings, and sun-bleached hues of the Caribbean, the surfaces of her paintings reflect the personal and cultural histories that underpin her practice.

The exhibition embodies the Whitworth's mission to create an open, inspiring and safe space for all, foregrounding community, inclusion and shared experience. Central to the public engagement programme are two artist development opportunities for young artists in the North West, responding to the key themes within Yearwood-Dan's exhibition, building on your artist practice and connecting to our *Whitworth Young Contemporaries* programmes.

The exhibition [Michaela Yearwood-Dan: The Practice of Liberation](#) opens on 17 April 2026 and runs until 18 October 2026.

Am I eligible?

We are looking for an artist who:

- Is aged between 21-30
- Has a background in visual arts, with a minimum of 2 years of practice as an artist
- Is based in the North West, and can easily get to and from the Whitworth
- An interest in and can show some experience of working creatively with young people or community groups

- Can demonstrate a connection to Michaela Yearwood-Dan's practice, whether through reflections on the relationship between the personal and the political, a focus on self-discovery and healing, passion for abstract painting or other personal links

What are the Whitworth's expectations for the Artist Development Opportunity?

- This is a supported opportunity including contact time with Whitworth staff, spanning April-June 2026. We are seeking to recruit in April 2026.
- The opportunities provide paid time to develop workshops, including a workshop plan and delivery of the workshops for young people aged 16-30 years as part of the *Whitworth Young Contemporaries* programme.
- Workshop delivery to take place on 2nd Saturday of the month, 1-3pm in the Clore Garden Studio.

How to apply for the commission?

- An outline of why you would like this opportunity including impact it would have on your practice and what can you bring to the Whitworth? (Maximum 500 words or 3-minute max video/audio recording)
- 3-5 examples of your practice
- Web & Social media links

What is the fee?

£1000 per Artist Development Opportunity

The £1,000 fee provides paid time to plan and deliver 2 workshops for young people aged 18-30 years. It provides time to meet Whitworth staff to research exhibitions, to gain facilitation skills and to build on social media skills, as well as gain an understanding of working in a gallery.

8 x ½ day work @ £119.15 per half day	£953.20
Resources such as bus fare, materials, lunch at gallery, etc	£46.80
TOTAL	£1,000.00

*Fee based on Artist Union England early career artists rates

**Deadline for applying for the Artist Development Opportunity:
Monday 27 April 2026 9am**

Send applications via email to: denise.bowler@manchester.ac.uk

If you have any questions prior to the deadline please get in touch with Denise via the email above.