

# THE ART OF COLLECTING

## A fall filled with sculpture

LONDON

Three-dimensional art is all over London. Here's where to see some of it.

BY SUSANNE FOWLER

Fans of outdoor sculpture are spoiled for choice here this season. Three organizations — Frieze Sculpture, Sculpture in the City and the Mayor of London's Fourth Plinth Commission — have joined forces to promote free open-air exhibitions in sites as (literally) monumental as Trafalgar Square and Regent's Park.

But despite all their groundwork, there was a hitch.

The citywide celebration of three-dimensional art was coordinated under the umbrella title Sculpture Week London, long planned for Sept. 12-19 to draw viewers to locations across the capital to see the works in situ. But no amount of planning could have foreseen those dates as becoming part of Britain's official mourning period for Queen Elizabeth II.

Out of respect, events and activities were delayed or canceled, and the Sculpture Week label was dismantled. Still, the installations remain available for viewing over the coming months and, in some cases, years.

Here is a look at the three programs.

### FRIEZE SCULPTURE

When choosing which 19 pieces to display through Nov. 13 in the 11th edition of Frieze Sculpture, the curator Clare Lilley aimed for a diverse mix, with pieces by male, female and nonbinary artists from Argentina, Australia, Britain, India, Israel, Italy, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates and the United States.

Another goal was to show visitors "a snapshot of the fantastic imagination of artists and the variety of sculpture being made today," Ms. Lilley, the program director at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park near Wakefield, England, said by email. Ms. Lilley said.

On a recent sunny weekday afternoon in Regent's Park, the sculpture trail had attracted people from different generations and cultures, some even sitting on pieces like the American Beverly Pepper's steel "Curvae in Curvae" to pose for the inevitable Instagram shots.

"At a time when many people are still wary about being in a gallery with crowds of people, these projects offer healthy, safe and stimulating encounters," Ms. Lilley said.

The written word is a thread that runs through many of the pieces in this year's selection. The bold red and blue of "Imperial LOVE" by Robert Indiana stands out against the parkland, while visitors may not realize at first that "10 signs for a park" is a work by the British artists Paul Harrison and John Wood. Their signs say things like "Some thing to look at" or "Arrow," with one drawn underneath, or "Sorry for any inconvenience caused," but written upside down.

"Their work is very gently subversive and affable — perhaps all are British qualities," Ms. Lilley said. "Paul and John are pushing sculpture to its limit while questioning the rules that other people decide are necessary to regulate our behavior, as well as the incredible abundance of signs that inhibit our world — forms of direction or control

that can be really irritating — but their response is both rebellious and amusing."

Another piece, "Sim and the Yellow Glass Birds" by the Nigerian writer Peju Alatise, uses a series of four squares to depict the life of a 9-year-old domestic servant in Lagos and how, in her dreams, she can fly. Ms. Alatise tells Sim's story in with what seem like chapters etched onto the sides of the steel squares.

### SCULPTURE IN THE CITY

Described by organizers as the urban counterpart to Frieze Sculpture, the 11th edition of Sculpture in the City is on view through April, clustered around London's Square Mile, an area more commonly known as London's financial district or the City of London. (A map and booklet for a self-guided tour have been developed.)

The grouping changes every year, but the circuit currently includes newly displayed pieces by 11 artists, including Emma Louise Moore, Sarah Lucas, Victor Seaward and Shezad Dawood, along with six pieces held over from the previous edition of Sculpture in the City.

There are also two works commissioned for earlier exhibitions that have become permanent: "The Garden of Floating Words" by Elisa Artesero was acquired by the owner of the building where it is displayed, while the City of London now owns Oliver Bragg's "In Loving Memory." (Past artists have included Marina Abramovic, Tracey Emin, Antony Gormley, Damien Hirst, Yayoi Kusama, Ai Weiwei and Richard Wentworth.)

The positioning of the artworks, amid some of London's most striking architecture, adds to the appeal, as well as to the contrast with Frieze Sculpture.

"Traditionally sculpture parks are found within green landscape," said Stella Ioannou, a trained architect who, as the artistic director of Sculpture in the City, liaised with artists and galleries for the project.

"Sculpture in the City lives in the most urban of spaces," she said, noting that

the pieces are in a zone crowded with skyscrapers with nicknames like the Gherkin and the Cheesegrater: "This is supersize architecture at its very best, made out of steel and glass, which can be sterile and feel inhuman. Sculpture in the City injects color and interest."

And unlike venturing into a museum, "there is no threshold to negotiate," she said. "The experience is direct and a lot less controlled. The mediation between the artwork and the viewer is reduced to

a bare minimum."

In describing the importance of the surroundings, Ms. Ioannou cited examples such as "Habitat" by the Angolan-born Portuguese artist Pedro Pires, "a piece which speaks to the relationship between humans and nature."

"It is a piece that needs to be read in the round, as two sides are the outline of a tree, and the other two sides the outline of a person," she said. "Habitat" sits calmly and quietly among the trees in Mitre Square, a pocket park between a tall building and the Aldgate School. The space itself is quiet and calm, similar to the artwork, which sits on the grass waiting for the viewer to discover the visual trick and then be pleasantly surprised and delighted."

Another example is "Summer Moon" by Ugo Rondinone, a Swiss-born artist. The six-meter-tall (nearly 20-foot) cast of an ancient olive tree is positioned next to the centuries-old St. Helen's Church.

"I love the synergy between the old church, which witnessed so much over the centuries, and the wise old olive tree, which also symbolizes the passing of time," Ms. Ioannou said.

### THE FOURTH PLINTH

The newest installation sits atop the Fourth Plinth, a pedestal originally meant to support a likeness of King William IV on a horse in historic Trafalgar Square that remained empty (the statue was never installed). Instead, the pedestal has been home to different contemporary pieces since 1998, after a campaign led by Prue Leith, who was chair of the Royal Society of Arts long before she became a judge on "The Great British Bake Off."

"Antelope," by the Malawi-born British multimedia artist Samson Kambalu, is a bronze depicting two men. It will be on display for two years. Looming largest is the figure of John Chilembwe, a Black African Baptist preacher turned civil rights hero, alongside the smaller figure of his friend, the white British missionary John Chorley.

Inspired by a photograph from 1914, Chilembwe is shown wearing a hat in defiance of a colonial prohibition against Black Africans wearing them in the presence of white people.

"Who gets to wear a hat," Mr. Kambalu said in a recent interview, "is still a question that concerns us now."



LINDA WYLLIE/FRIZE

**Storytelling**  
"Sim and the Yellow Glass Birds" (2022) by Peju Alatise, part of Frieze Sculpture in the Regent's Park. Its squares depict the life of a 9-year-old domestic servant in Lagos, Nigeria, and how, in her dreams, she can fly.



LINDA WYLLIE/FRIZE

**Advice**  
One of the "10 signs for a park" (2022) by Paul Harrison and John Wood, also part of Frieze Sculpture.

**New this year**  
From left, "Habitat" (2021) by Pedro Pires and "Sandwich" (2011-20) by Sarah Lucas, both part of the latest edition of the Sculpture in the City circuit, described by organizers as the urban counterpart to Frieze Sculpture.



THE ARTIST PHOTO BY NICK TURPIN



THE ARTIST AND SARAH LUCAS (IN LONDON) PHOTO BY NICK TURPIN

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