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Future Now Symposium 2024

Our two-day event brings together key institutions, galleries, publications and artists for in-person and live-streamed discussions surrounding pressing issues from the creative industries.

[Read the Programme](#)

Future Now Symposium 2024 15-16 February | Yorkshire Museum

Debate | Discuss | Connect
#FutureNow2024

The Future Now Symposium brings together award-winning artists who engage with themes from our changing world, such as: the ethics of representation, curation, AI and new technologies, diaspora and threats posed by the climate emergency.

This two-day event connects key institutions, galleries and artists to energise our minds and invite dialogue around the most pressing topics from the creative sector. Some sessions include: *Curation in the 21st Century: How to Make an Exhibition?*, *Photography in Focus* and *Creativity in a Digital World: The Impact of New Technologies*. Featured speakers include Hannah Lim, Heather Phillipson, Julianknxx, Marcus Lyon, Margaret Salmon and Steve Messam, as well as representatives from Baltic, Barbican, LCC, Harewood House, Tate, Turner Contemporary, the V&A and more. Future Now is a platform for idea generation and a key event in the UK arts calendar. The 2024 edition asks: what does the future of curation look like? How do I develop my career as an artist? Where is photography headed? Is AI really a threat to creativity? What does it mean to make art that is caught between multiple places, times and genres? What is the intersection of science, anthropology and photography?

Alongside thought-provoking debates and panel discussions, we are also offering portfolio reviews by our experienced practitioners. We are also inviting you to the Aesthetica Art Prize Private View and the Artists Drinks' Reception on Friday 16 February. This is an amazing opportunity to meet artists, collectors and gallerists at an event that surveys today's art world.

Navigate the Programme

Sessions by Day

[View Thursday](#)

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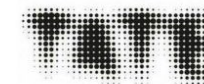
Future Now Passes



York Museums Trust



barbican



Thursday Pass | £50

- Attend a full day of in person talks in York
- Complimentary lunch
- 1 x Portfolio Review included
- Valid 15 February 2024

Friday Pass | £50

- Attend a full day of in person talks in York
- Complimentary lunch
- 1 x Portfolio Review included
- Valid 16 February 2024

Two Day Pass | £75

- Attend two full days of in person talks in York
- Complimentary lunch
- 1 x Portfolio Review included
- Valid 15-16 February 2024

**Peckham
Platform**

Turner
Contemporary

BALTIC

SERPENTINE

Additional Portfolio Review | £25

- 1-1 in person sessions suitable for all artists
- Discuss your portfolio with industry experts
- Receive essential guidance
- First review free w/ one or two day pass
- Additional in person sessions bookable for £25

Submit to the Aesthetica Art Prize

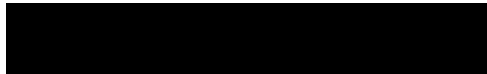
- Future Now is connected to the Aesthetica Art Prize, championing artists across all media
- Win £10,000, publication and exhibition
- Showcase your work to curators and galleries
- Deadline: 31 August 2024

Future Now Tote Bag

- Show your love for art and culture with our exclusive Future Now tote
- Support independent print and celebrate 20 years of Aesthetica
- Reduce your plastic waste

IKON

[Find Out More](#)



Day One | Thursday 15 February 2024

The Art House



**MARSHMALLOW
LASER FEAST**



ual: london college
of communication

Welcome Address

Cherie Federico

09:30-09:40 (Doors 09:00)

Society is ever-evolving. New technologies have accelerated this change, and with that there comes a dichotomy. We can start to look at notions of progress and unpick what that really means. In this information age, we have seen a radical shift in the way that news is produced and consumed. We can see that truth can be manipulated to change ways of thinking. Some call for a return to darker days, but through art we can spark conversations that unite rather than pull us apart. Art and culture help us make sense of our world and remember that humanity binds us together. In this welcome address, Cherie Federico, Director of Aesthetica, offers an overview of the 2024 Symposium.

Image Credit

15 Minutes with

Aesthetica Art Prize Finalists

09:40-09:55

Join us to hear from four Aesthetica Art Prize finalists, who take to the stage to share their practice for four minutes each. They will give insights into how they made their shortlisted works. These represent the breadth of creativity, spanning photography, film, installation, sculpture, digital art and more. This is an opportunity to see behind the scenes of the Aesthetica Art Prize Exhibition 2024, and to find out more about the creative minds and processes that brought these works to life. This is an inspiring quick-fire session that promises to be full of ideas, spotlighting new talents making waves in the art world today. The perfect session to attend ahead of the evening's private view at York Art Gallery.

Image Credit

The Business of Art:

How to Build Your Brand

10:00-11:00

The UK has been living in and out of austerity for over a decade. Public funding has been cut, and university arts departments are being dismantled. It's easy to feel disheartened in the current landscape. But the truth is, art is everywhere – and so are opportunities. This session asks: how can we, as creatives, develop a new business model and diversify our income streams? There are so many ways to build a brand: collaborations, commercial partnerships, sales, marketing strategies. But where to start? This session will demystify the process, empowering you to achieve milestones like gallery representation or getting into corporate collections. This is the business of working as an artist.

Image Credit

Curation in the 21st Century:
How to Make an Exhibition?
11:15-12:15

How do curators make decisions? How does an idea develop into a fully realised exhibition? How can you ensure it is a success? In a world where attention spans have reduced to three seconds, and AI generators make us look twice, how do you captivate audiences and ensure that public engagement is high? What opportunities are there for emerging practitioners in an age defined by footfall and what is "Instagrammable"? Who and what is being exhibited, how and why? This session discusses the role of the curator in all its many forms in the 21st century. The panelists are from some of the UK's most prestigious galleries, including Turner Contemporary, The Art House, Tate, Harewood House and BALTIC.

♥ Image Credit

Multimedia Systems:
Heather Phillipson in Conversation
13:30-14:30

London-based Heather Phillipson is a Turner-prize nominee whose multimedia projects include video, sculpture, installation, music, poetry and digital art. She describes her works – including *RUPTURE NO 1: blowtorching the bitten peach* at Tate Britain, London, and her Fourth Plinth commission, *THE END*. – as "quantum thought experiments." They unfold as absurd and complex systems in which wildly different images and materials collide. The artist explains that her works suggest "received ideas, images and the systems that underpin them may be on the verge of collapse." Phillipson will discuss her career to date, including the recent *Dream Land*, which recasts archival BBC wildlife footage as a hallucination.

♥ Image Credit

The Relationship
Between Humans and AI
14:45-15:45

AI, particularly generative AI, raises questions about both the history and future of culture and creativity. Some of this plays out in the creative industries but it also has an impact on the role of museums. What would a museum be, born first in the era of AI, without historic baggage, aged ideas of philanthropy, legacy, and human-only perspective? How can AI help museums decentre narratives and expand their relevance? Dr Suzanne Livingston co-curated the exhibition *AI: more than Human* at the Barbican Centre, which navigated the history and evolution of AI with work from Es Devlin, TeamLab and MIT. It has been on global tour since its launch in 2019, and is currently on show at CCCB Barcelona.

♥ Image Credit

Hannah Lim: Art at the
Intersection of Cultures
16:00-17:00

Hannah Lim is a London-based artist whose practice is rooted in her mixed Singaporean and British heritage. Across ornamental sculptures and wall-based works, her work is an exploration into the historical intersections of these cultures, particularly as reflected in furniture, objects and architectural designs. Chinese and Medieval bestiaries, 18th century Chinoiserie and the feminist theories of Anne Anlin Cheng are central to Lim's vibrant and whimsical sculptures. Underneath the vibrant motifs is a deep-rooted exploration of identity: pushing against fixed, post-colonial notions of race that are often a point of confusion and struggle for those from mixed cultural backgrounds.

♥ Image Credit

Marcus Lyon:
A Human Atlas
17:15-18:15

Marcus Lyon is a British artist whose socially charged works on globalisation can be found in the collections of Smithsonian, Art Institute of Chicago and Arts Council. His ambitious project, *Human Atlas*, celebrates individuals from around the world who are driving social change. The most recent collaboration with Getty focuses on Los Angeles. Each person, nominated by their community, is documented through photographic portraits, oral interviews and DNA maps, resulting in a chronicle of remarkable public servants, activists and scientists. Here, Lyon will speak about what it means to make research-based art, tapping into the intersections of science, anthropology and photography.

Aesthetica Art Prize Exhibition:
Private View & Awards, York Art Gallery (Y01 7EW)
18:15-20:00

Visitors have the chance to see the 2024 Aesthetica Art Prize ahead of the crowds at this private view. You can join delegates, curators and guests from the art world, alongside the Aesthetica team, for a special evening of networking. After a day of captivating talks and panel discussions, enjoy the Awards Ceremony – all from the heart of York Art Gallery. The exhibition features 20 shortlisted artists who invite you to explore, discover and engage with themes from our changing world, including: the ethics of representation, future of curation, AI and new technologies, diaspora and the continuing threats posed by the climate emergency. There is limited availability, so please pre-register.

Portfolio Reviews
Hosted by Industry Professionals
Daily

These 1-1 sessions, hosted at York Theatre Royal, are for practitioners working across all genres, including painting, photography, digital media, sculpture, video and more. Our industry experts provide essential guidance on how to develop ideas and further artists' careers, as well as providing insights on funding opportunities and exhibition. Each session lasts 20 minutes. This is an opportunity to get key advice on any number of topics: how to accelerate your practice through digital platforms, how to approach curators and galleries, or simply to discuss a particular portion of your portfolio in real time. Booking essential. Click here to find out more.

♥ Image Credit

Day Two | Friday 16 February 2024

Welcome Address
Cherie Federico
09:30-09:40 (Doors 09:00)

Future Now is a meeting point for ideas, debate and discussion. In celebration of this year's Aesthetica Art Prize artists and winners, Cherie Federico, Director of Aesthetica, will discuss the themes of the Prize and the Symposium at-large. How does art help us to navigate societal shifts? How does it help us to make sense of the world and act as a conduit for connecting communities? The rate of change is exponential, and the definition of what it means to be an artist is constantly shifting. How can we harness a thriving sector? How can we support each other better? Are we at a new frontier for visual culture? Start your day with these big questions, and get set up for the array of inspiring talks to come.

15 Minutes with
Aesthetica Art Prize Finalists
09:40-09:55

Join us to hear from four Aesthetica Art Prize finalists, who take to the stage to share their practice for four minutes each. They will give insights into how they made their shortlisted works. These represent the breadth of creativity, spanning photography, film, installation, sculpture, digital art and more. This is an opportunity to see behind the scenes of the Aesthetica Art Prize Exhibition 2024, and to find out more about the creative minds and processes that brought these works to life. This is an inspiring quick-fire session that promises to be full of ideas, spotlighting new talents making waves in the art world today. The perfect session to attend ahead of the evening's private view at York Art Gallery.

▼ Image Credit

What Does It Mean
To Be An Artist Today?
10:00-11:00

The art world is always changing. In the last decade, we've seen the rise and fall of NFTs as well as controversies around AI. Institutions have been reassessing their collections in the wake of important social movements like #MeToo and Black Lives Matter, whilst books such as *The History of Art Without Men* and *The New Black Vanguard* have put representation front and centre. Creatives continue to respond to pressing socio-political and ecological issues. In this panel, Chair Alexandra Woodall, and artists Hope Strickland, Sadie Clayton, Ori Gersht and Yuri Suzuki discuss: what is it like to make work right now? How do you stay resilient with funding cuts? And what is going to happen next?

▼ Image Credit

Beyond Realism:

The Films of Margaret Salmon

11:15-12:15

Glasgow-based Margaret Salmon is known for creating award-winning filmic portraits that weave together poetry and ethnography. She focuses on family, friends and local subjects, chronicling everyday activities and meaningful connections. Here, Salmon will talk about how she adapts techniques from various cinematic movements, including Cinema Vérité, the European Avant Garde and Italian Neo-Realism, whilst taking an intuitive – and often improvised – approach to both camera and sound. Salmon won the first Max Mara Art Prize for Women and has since been shortlisted for the Jarman Award. She has exhibited at Venice Biennale, Whitechapel Gallery and ICA, amongst others.

▼ Image Credit

Photography

in Focus

13:30-14:30

The past 12 months have been filled with discussions surrounding the definition of photography. When Boris Eldagsen's now-infamous AI-generated piece, *The Electrician*, won a Sony World Photography Award in 2023, it sparked a serious discussion around our trust in images. In this panel, five lens-based artists and curators, Hannah Starkey, Kavi Pujara, Mary Phan, Tom Hunter and Edgar Martins, speak with chair Dr Ope Lori about their work. They'll answer questions like: What are the ethics of documentary in 2024? How do you construct a "good" shot? What does the ever-increasing capability of smartphones mean for the future? What are the emerging trends in photography?

▼ Image Credit

Creativity in a Digital World:

The Impact of New Technologies

14:45-15:45

In 2023, Photoshop launched AI generative fill, making it possible to transform pictures with just a text prompt. In this session, we ask: what do advancements like this mean for the future of human imagination? What are the pitfalls of AI in the creative industries? Conversely, what can these technologies do for good? Art collective Marshmallow Laser Feast; Ana-Despina Tudor from LCC; Jenna Ng from University of York and Barbican's Acting Co-Head Patrick Moran will talk about a fast-developing field. They'll also speak about immersive installations and XR, showing us what we can achieve by breaking the boundaries between art, technology, gaming and new media.

▼ Image Credit

Site-Specific Installation:
Disrupting the Everyday
16:00-17:00

How can temporary artworks transform our perceptions of a place? Steve Messam creates outdoor installations that are “bigger than a house.” The environmental artist uncovers hidden stories in rural and built landscapes. Bright colours and geometric shapes are hallmarks of his style, encouraging us to perceive familiar places in new ways. He’s worked on major projects with Aesthetica, the National Railway Museum and National Trust, and exhibited at Milan Design Week and Venice Biennale. Messam will share how he transforms 22,000 paper sheets, 100 cubic metres of air and five kilometres of fabric into art. He’ll speak about the value of resilience in creating a sustainable practice.

▼ Image Credit

The Power of In-Between:
Julianknxx
17:15-18:15

“You are not one, you are multiple, and you are yourself.” Philosopher Édouard Glissant’s words are at the heart of interdisciplinary works by Julianknxx. Right now, the Sierra Leonian poet, artist and filmmaker is showing *Chorus in Rememory of Flight* at the Barbican Centre – an immersive commission that explores themes of inheritance, loss and belonging. The piece blends the written word, music and art to deconstruct dominant perspectives on African history and culture. Julianknxx’s conveys the Black experience of defining and redefining the self. He speaks with curator and programmer Nephertiti Oboshie Schandorf about music as resistance and making art from multiple places, times and genres.

▼ Image Credit

Drinks Reception
Yorkshire Museum, YO1 7FR
18:30-20:30

Celebrate with us and meet artists from both the short and longlists of the 2024 Aesthetica Art Prize as we close of the Future Now Symposium 2024. This drinks reception, taking place in the Medieval Gallery at Yorkshire Museum, is a fantastic opportunity to unwind after a busy day of sessions, portfolio reviews and networking. Catch up with participants and delegates. Make new connections. Discuss themes from the sessions you’ve attended. This casual social is a great way to finish off the Symposium. It’s a destination for meeting attendees over a complimentary drink, served on a first-come, first-served basis. All pass- holders welcome. We look forward to seeing you there to round off the event!

▼ Image Credit

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