

PRESS RELEASE

Released: 4 December 2025

'Arnolfini announce major exhibitions for 2026'

Arnolfini, Bristol's international centre for contemporary arts, is excited to announce an ambitious programme of exhibitions for 2026, featuring internationally renowned contemporary artists: Lebanese artist **Mounira Al Solh**, British artist **Jonathan Baldock**, documentary photographer **Polly Braden**, a host of new filmmaking talent supported by the **Film and Video Umbrella**, and Freelands Award winner **Joy Gregory**.



Exhibition view *Mounira Al Solh: A land as big as her skin*, installation *A Dance with her Myth*, Bonnefanten, 2025. Photo Gert Jan van Rooij

With collaboration at its core, our 2026 programme will be delivered in partnership with international museums, galleries, festivals and commissioning partners, including Bonnefanten, Maastricht, NL; Film and Video Umbrella, UK; Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK; and Bristol Photo Festival, Bristol, UK.

Addressing contemporary themes spanning migration, conflict, gender rights, body politics, the climate crisis, queer trauma, spirituality, coastal poverty, youth deprivation, diasporic stories and colonial histories, Arnolfini's 2026 programme asks its audiences to engage with the complex questions facing humanity, asking what it is to be in the world today.

Mounira Al Solh: A land as big as her skin

28 February - 24 May 2026

Our 2026 programme opens with a major new solo exhibition from *Mounira Al Solh: A land as big as her skin* currently showing at Bonnefanten, Netherlands. This multidisciplinary exhibition includes her critically acclaimed Venice Biennale pavilion installation *A Dance with her Myth* from 2024, taking visitors on a journey through Middle Eastern mythology to

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contemporary times. Comprising of a life-size boat skeleton, film, paintings, drawings and masks that together retell the story of Phoenician Princess Europa and king of the Greek god's Zeus, this subversive installation will be shown alongside new works *Elissa's Room* and *Europa's Bedroom*, exploring the fortunes of Queen Elissa and Europa through a modern lens and building upon Al Solh's growing interest in folklore and mythology.

Lebanese artist Al Solh (b. Beirut 1978), now lives and works between the Netherlands and Lebanon, poignantly and playfully navigating a multitude of complex themes such as identity, migration, trauma, inequality and gender, through her deep love of craftsmanship and materials. A collector of stories, Al Solh's work moves between small, personal memories and collective, political moments, imbuing each with her recognisable joy and humour – a light-heartedness she sees as a right and form of resistance. Combining traditions from the Middle East and the Netherlands *A land as big as her skin* embodies Al Solh's deeply personal and collaborative approach and practice: 'rhythmical, whirling and melodious. It makes you want to dance and to cry, just like the most beautiful love songs.'

This exhibition is organised in collaboration with Bonnefanten (Maastricht, The Netherlands). This exhibition is made possible by The Mondriaan Fund and Ammodo Art. The exhibition will be on view at Sharjah Art Foundation in 2027.

FVU New Takes

28 February - 4 October 2026

Running throughout spring and summer Arnolfini will be celebrating ambitious new talent in moving image, partnering with Film and Video Umbrella to present *FVU New takes*. Presented in our Dark Studio, each month, New Takes will showcase a newly commissioned work by one of six early-career artists working in moving image. The featured artists – Mahdy Abo Bahat, Anna Engelhardt, Hantao Li, Morisha Moodley, Jameisha Prescod and Lucy Rose Shaftain-Fenner – offer bold and inventive approaches to storytelling and form, addressing a plethora of contemporary themes including 'the global climate crisis, crip filmmaking, body politics, state violence, archival memory, and contemporary trans+ and British culture'. Employing diverse practical techniques, from analogue film to 3D animation, these works highlight the breadth and ambition of the UK's emerging moving-image landscape.

FVU New Takes is a Film and Video Umbrella initiative supported by Jerwood Foundation. FVU is supported using public funding by Arts Council England. Exhibition Partner: Arnolfini, Bristol.

Jonathan Baldock

27 June - 27 September 2026

For summer, British artist Jonathan Baldock (b.1980) takes over our first-floor galleries with a new commission, channelling his long-held interest in myth and folklore. The new installation takes inspiration from Michel Pastoureau's historical study *The Bear: History of a Fallen King*, exploring the symbolic life of the bear from ancient forest deity to children's bedtime companion. Deeply rooted in traditional craft techniques, Baldock's practice often works with natural materials such as clay and textiles, imbuing the work with a tactile familiarity.



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Saturated with humour and wit, Baldock works across multiple platforms including sculpture, installation and performance, with work often taking on a biographical form, addressing the trauma, stress, sensuality, mortality, and spirituality around our relationship to the body and the space it inhabits. Working in a performative manner, his exhibition at Arnolfini builds upon recent projects at Jupiter Artland and Yorkshire Sculpture Park, encompassing multiple senses, from sight, touch, sound and scent.

Jonathan Baldock is represented by Stephen Friedman Gallery, London and Nicelle Beauchene, New York.



Portrait of Jonathan Baldock. © Jonathan Baldock. Courtesy the artist and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London. Photo by Jason Alden.

Against the Tide, Polly Braden

27 June - 27 September 2026

Documentary photographer Polly Braden (b.1974) explores the effects of coastal poverty in a collaboration with young people from some of the most deprived and often forgotten places across England and Wales. Telling the stories of a group of diverse 16-25-year-olds, Braden places their stories at the heart of her project, narrated by journalist Lisa Bachelor as part of The Guardian's wider *Seascape* series. Navigating the faded coastal towns of Whitehaven, Tendring, Blackpool, and Weston Super Mare, *Against the Tide* shares stories of fragile seasonal employment, ageing populations, and what often comes across as love-hate relationships with the towns they call home. Including film and photography Braden works closely alongside her Gen Z collaborators, gently teasing out their personal tales against a backdrop of hard-hitting research, that shows that 'life chances are drastically reduced if you grow up on the coast.'

A prior winner of the *Jerwood Photography Prize*, 2003 and *The Guardian Young Photographer of the Year*, 2002, Braden is known for her long-term, research driven

collaborations, Braden's portraits create ongoing conversations between 'the people she photographs and the environments in which they find themselves'.

Against the Tide will tour to First Site, Colchester, and is supported by Arts Council England and The Guardian.

Joy Gregory: *Catching Flies with Honey*

17 October 2026 - 7 February 2027

Our Autumn exhibition for 2026 brings Joy Gregory's first major survey show to Arnolfini. Spanning four decades, this landmark exhibition brings together over 250 works encompassing photography, film, installation and textiles, all of which showcase and celebrate Gregory's inventive, culturally resonant and materially rich practice. Since the early 1980s Gregory (b.1959, UK), winner of the eighth annual Freelands Award and one of the UK's most innovative artists working with photography today, has been a pioneering force in contemporary photography, playing a critical role in its development nationally and internationally.



Stockwell Siren from the series 'Celebrity Blonde', 2003, performance, Joy Gregory © Joy Gregory

Gregory's work explores identity, history, race, gender and societal ideals of beauty, while expanding photography's aesthetic and material possibilities, encompassing Victorian photographic techniques such as cyanotypes and kallitypes, as well as digital media and performance, inviting important reflections on power structures, representation and cultural memory. *Catching Flies with Honey* includes pivotal self-portrait series' such as *Autoportrait* (1990), alongside explorations of beauty and gender in *The Handbag Project* (1998–present) and *Girl Thing* (2002–2004); works originating from Gregory's many journeys across Sri Lanka, the Caribbean and Europe; her playful and piercing meditation on racialised standards of beauty in *The Blonde* (1997–2010); the expansive multimedia work *Memory*

and Skin (1998) – which Gregory has described as a ‘story-telling space for the past, present and future; the personal and political’ – and her newly commissioned film, shot in the Kalahari Desert, South Africa (part of a 20 year-long collaboration with the indigenous community whose ancestors spoke the now-moribund language of N|uu).

The exhibition is organised by Whitechapel Gallery, London, with Arnolfini, Bristol. Joy Gregory: Catching Flies with Honey has been generously supported by Freeland's Foundation. The exhibition is part of Bristol Photo Festival 2026.

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Arnolfini's main exhibition programme is accompanied by a series of community-led exhibitions on our second floor focusing upon long-term city partners, highlighting the work of our creatives in residence [Diverse Artists Network](#) and local partnerships with [Super Culture](#), based in Weston Super Mare. In June, Arnolfini is also host to the University of West of England's annual Degree Show, featuring work from creative courses based in Bush House alongside Arnolfini.

All exhibitions are brought to life through an accompanying programme of workshops, live events, family activities, community gatherings and tours for visually impaired audiences, delivered in collaboration with Arnolfini's creatives in residence and community partners. To find out more visit our [website](#) throughout the year.

Entry to all exhibitions remains free, with donations welcomed. Arnolfini is open Tuesday to Sunday, 11am to 6pm.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

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Artist Biographies

Mounira Al Solh

Mounira Al Solh (b. 1978, Lebanon; lives and works between Beirut and Amsterdam) is a visual artist whose practice spans installation, painting, sculpture, video, drawing, text, embroidery, and performative gestures. Through micro-history and mythological storytelling, her work engages with equality and bears witness to the impact of conflict and displacement. Al Solh's work is socially engaged while being political and poetically escapist simultaneously. Her practice utilizes oral documentation, multidisciplinary collaboration, and wordplay to explore themes of memory and loss. Motivated by acts of sharing and storytelling, change, and resistance, Al Solh strives to craft a sensory language that transcends nationality and creed.

Al Solh has had exhibitions at Bonnefanten, Maastricht, The Netherlands (2025); Serralves Museum, Porto, Portugal (2025), Museumsquartier Osnabrück, Germany (2022); BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK (2022); Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2020); Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai (2018); Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha (2018); and The Art Institute Chicago (2018). She has also participated in group exhibitions including at Centre Pompidou Metz, France (2025), Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, the Netherlands (2024); Sharjah Biennial (2023); Museum Het Valkhof, Nijmegen, the Netherlands (2022); Busan Biennale (2022); Musée National de Pablo Picasso—La Guerre et la Paix, Vallauris, France (2020); Palais De Tokyo, Paris (2020); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2020); Carré d'Art Musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes (2018), Documenta 14, Kassel and Athens (2017); Venice Biennale (2015); New Museum Triennial, New York (2012); Sharjah Biennial 9 (2009); and 11th International Istanbul Biennial (2009), among others. Al Solh is represented by Sfeir-Semler Gallery.

<https://mouniraalsolh.com> and [Sfeir-Semler Gallery](#)

Film and Video Umbrella and New Takes

FVU New Takes is a new commissioning initiative from Film and Video Umbrella, developed in response to the growing need for meaningful mentorship, commissioning and exhibition opportunities within the moving image field. The programme supports emerging UK based artists at a pivotal stage in their careers, developing their practice and strengthening the visibility and impact of a new generation of moving image practitioners.

Each selected artist received a £5,000 budget, alongside tailored mentorship and production support, to develop ambitious new works for both online presentation and in-person exhibition at Arnolfini, Bristol. Awardees were chosen from a UK-wide Call for Entries by a panel that included previous FVU-commissioned artists Rene Matić (2025 Turner Prize nominee) and Maryam Tafakory (2024 Jarman Award winner).

[Film and Video Umbrella](#) and [New Takes](#)

Jonathan Baldock

Jonathan Baldock works across multiple platforms including sculpture, installation and performance. With work often taking on a biographical form, he addresses the trauma, stress, sensuality, mortality and spirituality around our relationship to the body and the space it inhabits. Baldock was born in 1980 in Kent, UK. He lives and works in London. He graduated from Winchester School of Art with a BA in Painting (2000-2003), followed by the Royal College of Art, London with an MA in Painting (2003-2005).

Saturated with humour and wit, as well as an uncanny, macabre quality that channels his longstanding interest in myth and folklore, Baldock has an ongoing focus on the contrast between the material qualities of ceramic and fabric in his work. Concerned with removing the functional aspects of the materials he uses, the artist instead works in a performative way through his sculptural assemblages, bringing the viewer, the object and the space they simultaneously occupy into question as a theatrical or ritualistic act.

Baldock's solo exhibition 'WYRD' opened at Jupiter Artland, Edinburgh, in May 2025. Other recent solo exhibitions include '0.1%', London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE, UK (2025); 'Touch Wood', Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, UK (2023); 'through the joy of the senses', Charleston Lewes, Sussex, UK (2023); 'Unearthed', Kunstverein Göttingen, Germany (2023); 'we are flowers of one garden', Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, UK (2023); 'I'm Still Learning', La Casa Encendida, Madrid, Spain (2021); 'Warm Inside', Accelerator, Stockholm, Sweden (2021); and 'Me, Myself and I', Kunsthall Stavanger, Norway (2020). In the spring of 2019, Baldock's solo exhibition 'Facecrime' opened at Camden Arts Centre, London following a Freelands Lomax Ceramics Fellowship. The exhibition travelled to Tramway, Glasgow in August 2019 and Bluecoat, Liverpool in March 2020. Baldock is represented by Stephen Friedman Gallery, London and Nicelle Beauchene, New York.

<https://jonathan-baldock.com> and [Stephen Friedman Gallery](#) and [Nicelle Beauchene](#)

Polly Braden

Polly Braden is a documentary photographer based in London, known for her intimate, long-term collaborations. Her work focuses on overlooked communities and social issues, including learning disabilities, single parenthood, and displacement. Braden's distinctive style combines quiet observation with deep empathy, often developed over years of sustained engagement.

Her books include *China Between* (2010), *Great Interactions* (2016), *Out of the Shadows* (2018), *London's Square Mile: A Secret City* (2019), *A Place for Me: 50 Stories of Finding Home* (2021) and *Holding the Baby* (2022). Major exhibitions include *Holding the Baby* in London, Liverpool, and Bristol, and *Leaving Ukraine* (2023), a multimedia project tracing the journeys of women displaced by war, presented at the Foundling Museum. She is an associate lecturer at London College of Communication.

www.pollybraden.com and [Against the Tide, The Guardian](#)

Joy Gregory

Joy Gregory is a graduate of Manchester Polytechnic and the Royal College of Art. She has developed a practice which is concerned with social and political issues with reference to history and cultural differences in contemporary society.

As a photographer she makes full use of the media from video, digital and analogue photography to Victorian print processes. In 2002, Gregory received the NESTA Fellowship, which enabled her the time and the freedom to research for a major piece around language endangerment. The first of this series was the video piece *Gomera*, which premiered at the Sydney Biennale in May 2010.

She is the recipient of numerous awards and has exhibited all over the world showing in many festivals and biennales. Her work included in many collections including the UK Arts Council Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia, and Yale British Art Collection. She currently lives and works in London.

www.joygregory.co.uk and [Whitechapel Gallery](#)

Bristol Photo Festival

Bristol Photo Festival is an international biennial of contemporary photography. We organise a programme of exhibitions, talks and workshops, bringing together leading photographic voices from across the world. Alongside this work, we develop long-term projects in collaboration with local communities. Our mission is to present nuanced and unexpected stories that foster greater understanding of shared pasts, presents and futures. Our work is internationally focussed yet locally grounded, built from the urgencies of our city and its inhabitants. As a platform, we support artists to experiment, creating work that breaks with convention, exploring the possibilities of photography as a political tool today.

Our second edition (2024) drew over 115,000 visitors, with 14 exhibitions staged across the city's museums, galleries and independent spaces. The third edition (Opening Week 14-18 October 2026) will be titled TIME MACHINE, showcasing photographic works that help us to experience the present as a place where past and future collide, shaping how we understand and interpret the world around us.

Bristol Photo Festival is managed, curated and produced by IC Visual Lab (ICVL), an independent visual arts organisation based in Bristol (UK).

[Bristol Photo Festival](#)

About Arnolfini

Woven into the fabric of Bristol since 1961, Arnolfini is an international centre of interdisciplinary contemporary arts, presenting an ambitious and wide-ranging programme of visual art, performance, dance, film, and music.

Housed in Bush House, a prominent 19th century former warehouse on the city's harbourside, Arnolfini is a pioneering, inspiring public space for arts and learning, offering an innovative, inclusive and engaging experience for all.

Arnolfini has welcomed artists from around world throughout its history – sharing works by Paula Rego, Jannis Kounellis, John Akomfrah, Grayson Perry, Rachel Whiteread, Peter Doig, Richard Long, Veronica Ryan, Chantal Joffe, Sonia Boyce, Alice Kettle and Frank Bowling, to name just a few - as well as supporting talent from in and around Bristol.

Alongside its main programme, Arnolfini is a centre of everyday creativity and learning, working with a wide range of community and artistic partners, while continuing to explore and develop new collaborations across the city and beyond. Spaces are used regularly by families, schools and colleges, health and wellbeing groups. Through sharing a 64+ year archive of exhibition slides, publications and an extensive artist book collection, Arnolfini celebrates its heritage and the wide-reaching impact the organisation has had since its foundation.

The team at Arnolfini strive to honour founder Jeremy Rees' principle to 'Enjoy Yourself', welcoming everyone into the accessible space, and inviting engagement, in any number of ways. Arnolfini has a close strategic partnership with the **University of the West of England** and is part of its City Campus. An independent charity (CIO), Arnolfini is supported by **Arts Council England** and the **Ashley Clinton Barker-Mills Trust**.

www.arnolfini.org.uk



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