

HAYWARD GALLERY

Press Release

Date: 5 August 2022

Contact: Press Office, press@southbankcentre.co.uk

Images: downloadable [HERE](#)

This press release is available in a variety of accessible formats. Please email press@southbankcentre.co.uk

Hayward Gallery's new outdoor sculpture by Monira Al Qadiri explores our dependence on fossil fuels



Image caption: Monira Al Qadiri, *Devonian* (2022) installation view at Southbank Centre © Monira Al Qadiri Photo Rob Harris

A new and striking commission from artist **Monira Al Qadiri** is unveiled on the Southbank Centre's iconic Riverside Terrace, launching the second year of a three-year commissioning partnership with the **Bagri Foundation**.

Monira's iridescent sculpture *Devonian*, which portrays the exploitation of nature and fragility of our reliance on fossil fuels, continues this year's programme of prominent outdoor installations at the Southbank Centre, providing free access to art for all.

Devonian, which borrows its name from the Devonian period in natural history, features the bodies of ancient sea creatures whose fossils are used for fuel and plastics via petroleum. The shimmering sculpture can be seen on the Riverside Terrace from 5 August to 6 November 2022.

The word Devonian comes from Devon, England, where the old red sandstone containing these fossils was first studied. Many of the oil deposits being extracted in the Northern Hemisphere were formed from

the remains of animals, plants and microorganisms that existed on Earth during this era, nearly 400 million years ago. This period is also referred to as 'The Age of Fish', which is renowned for the development of thousands of species of fish, crustaceans, shellfish and marine plants.

In Monira's colourful sculpture, the now extinct species are revived. These fantastical, almost alien-like creatures have been turned into a series of illustrative motifs on eight separate aluminium panels. Connected by a turquoise-coloured structure that evokes the idea of the sea, each panel is painted in a different shimmering hue that changes subtly over the course of a day.

Monira crystallises the moment oil was created by animating the bodies of its original creators using her signature iridescent colours that have an oil-like sheen. *Devonian* visually connects the past and present of these Devonian remains, questioning their place in our collective future.

Monira Al Qadiri, says: *"I'm honoured to have been selected for the Bagri commission. To be able to show my work at the Southbank Centre is such an important milestone for my artistic journey thus far. I hope that the public who pass by to see my work find the topic I am highlighting crucial to think about and consider during these shifting times that we live in."*

Ralph Rugoff, Director at the Hayward Gallery, says: *"For the Hayward Gallery's second Bagri Foundation commission, Monira Al Qadiri has produced a stunningly playful and very timely sculpture that will engage visitors of all ages. With its thought-provoking reference to the ancient geology of the UK and our destructive addiction to fossil fuels, Devonian is a vibrant and very relevant addition to the Southbank Centre's programme of outdoor art."*

Devonian is the second of three new annual commissions presented by the Hayward Gallery in partnership with the Bagri Foundation over three years (2021-2023). Aimed at providing artists from, or inspired by Asia and its diaspora with the opportunity to create a prominent public commission, this initiative adds to the programme of public outdoor art installations and exhibitions across the Southbank Centre's iconic site. From the Waterloo billboard to the Riverside Walk and Terrace, the buildings and outdoor spaces across the Southbank Centre have long been home to a diverse range of artistic works.

Based in Berlin, Monira Al Qadiri (b. 1983) is a Kuwaiti visual artist born in Senegal and educated in Japan. Monira's multifaceted practice spans sculpture, installation, film and performance and explores unconventional gender identities, petro-cultures and their possible futures.

ENDS

Link to *Devonian* webpage is available [HERE](#).

Listings Information:

Monira Al Qadiri: *Devonian*

5 August – 6 November 2022

Southbank Centre Riverside Terrace

Free

Join the conversation:

#DevonianHaywardGallery

@southbankcentre @hayward.gallery @moniraism

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the Southbank Centre

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre occupying a prominent riverside location that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. We exist to present great cultural experiences that bring people together and we achieve this by providing the space for artists to create and present their best work and by creating a place where as many people as possible can come together to experience bold, unusual and eye-opening work. We want to take people out of the everyday, every day. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. The Southbank Centre is made up of the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and Hayward Gallery as well as being home to the National Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. It is also home to six Resident Orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Philharmonia Orchestra).

About the Hayward Gallery

The Hayward Gallery, part of the Southbank Centre, has a long history of presenting work by the world's most adventurous and innovative artists including major solo shows by both emerging and established artists and dynamic group exhibitions. They include those by Bridget Riley, Bruce Nauman, Anish Kapoor, Lee Bul, Andreas Gursky, Tracey Emin, Jeremy Deller, Kader Attia and Matthew Barney, as well as influential group exhibitions such as *Africa Remix*, *Light Show*, *Psycho Buildings* and *Space Shifters*. Opened by Her Majesty, The Queen in July 1968, the gallery is one of the few remaining buildings of its style. The Brutalist building was designed by a group of young architects, including Dennis Crompton, Warren Chalk and Ron Herron and is named after Sir Isaac Hayward, a former leader of the London County Council.

About the Bagri Foundation

The Bagri Foundation is a UK registered charity whose main mission is to realise unique, unexpected ideas from and on Asia, weaving traditional culture with contemporary thinking. The Foundation provides support towards artistic and educational projects and establishes collaborative partnerships with institutions that range in scale—from small cultural organisations that share our ethos and mission to large national and international partners like the British Museum and Hayward Gallery in London, Artes Mundi Prize in Cardiff, The Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York, and La Biennale di Venezia. The Foundation's supported projects include film, visual arts, music, literature, courses and lectures, and each of them aims at giving artists and experts from across Asia and the diaspora, or those inspired by the continent, wider visibility on the global stage.

www.bagrifoundation.org

About Monira Al Qadiri

Based in Berlin, Monira Al Qadiri (b. 1983) is a Kuwaiti visual artist born in Senegal and educated in Japan. Spanning sculpture, installation, film and performance, Al Qadiri's multifaceted practice explores unconventional gender identities, petro-cultures and their possible futures, as well as the legacies of corruption. She has held solo exhibitions at Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (2022), Art Gallery of Burlington, Toronto (2021), Haus der Kunst, Munich (2020), Circl Pavilion, Amsterdam (2018) and Gasworks, London (2017). Her recent group exhibitions include Expo 2020, Dubai (2021), the 8th Asia Art Biennial, Taiwan (2021), Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin (2021), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2020), Migros Museum, Zurich (2020), MoMA PS1, New York (2019), and she is currently participating in the 59th Venice Biennale (2022).



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



SOUTHBANK CENTRE
