

SLG

Press Release Leonardo Drew

Dates: 30 May – 7 September 2025
South London Gallery, Main Gallery

Leonardo Drew to unveil a new immersive sculptural installation in the South London Gallery's main exhibition space.

This summer, the South London Gallery (SLG) will present a new site-specific sculpture by American artist Leonardo Drew (b. 1961). Known for his explosive sculptural works, this will be Drew's first solo exhibition in a London institution.

Drew was born in 1961 in Tallahassee, Florida, and grew up in Bridgeport, Connecticut. He first exhibited his work at the age of thirteen, which brought his illustrations to the attention of executives at both DC and Marvel comics in the 1970s. He graduated from Cooper Union College, New York, in 1985, where he found inspiration and support from an older generation of African American artists working with Abstraction including Jack Whitten, Joe Overstreet, and Melvin Edwards.

Drew is drawn to the term entropy to describe the sense of disorder that can be found in all parts of life. His abstract sculptures, comprised of natural materials, are visual representations of entropy and the cyclical nature of life and decay. His work also explores the erosion of time and the tension between order and chaos.

Drew's working process is meditative, involving repetitive labour to create the large-scale installations he has become known for. His hands-on approach meticulously transforms the materials he works with. He says: *"My work and my life are not separate. They are the same thing"*. Today, Drew's investigation and exploration of materials continues to evolve. *"I don't work with found objects because there is already a history embedded in that material,"* he explains. *"For me, I need to go through the rigors of touching it, living it, ... become the weather."*

At the SLG, Drew will present a new site-specific work. This immense sculpture will cover the walls and floor of the exhibition space with fragments of wood recalling the formation of extreme weather events, natural disasters or, in Drew's words, *"acts of God"*. The installation will take the form of the crest of a wave on each side of the gallery, towering over visitors who are invited to walk through the work. It is the first time that Drew has created a work in a double wave formation, which also directly responds to the height and architecture of the SLG's Main Gallery. Drew refrains from attaching specific meaning to his work, preferring to title each piece numerically so the viewer can engage directly and intimately with the work and discover a multitude of experiences within.

Ends

For further press information, images and interviews please contact
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NOTES TO EDITORS

Address and Opening Hours

South London Gallery, Main Building: 65–67 Peckham Road, London, SE5 8UH
South London Gallery, Fire Station: 82 Peckham Road, London, SE15 5LQ

The gallery is open Wednesday – Sunday.

southlondongallery.org

Social Media

Instagram: @southlondongallery

Facebook: South London Gallery

TikTok: @southlondongallery_

About Leonardo Drew

Leonardo Drew's works have been shown nationally and internationally and are included in numerous public and private collections. Public institutions include the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC; and Tate, London, among others as well as collaborating with Merce Cunningham on the production of "Ground Level Overlay." New York Times art critic Roberta Smith describes his large reliefs as "*pocked, splintered, seemingly burned here, bristling there, unexpectedly delicate elsewhere. An endless catastrophe seen from above. The energies intimated in these works are beyond human control, bigger than all of us*". He currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York and San Antonio, Texas.

About the South London Gallery

The South London Gallery (SLG) was founded in the 19th century by philanthropist William Rossiter to 'bring art to the people of south London'. Today the gallery comprises its original site at 65 Peckham Road; the Fire Station which opened to the public in 2018; Art Block, a space for local children and families on Sceaux Gardens Estate, and two permanent gardens.

The SLG has an international reputation for its contemporary art exhibitions by established, mid-career and younger artists and programme of film and performance events. Its highly regarded, free education programme includes a peer-led young people's forum; family workshops; artist-led projects and commissions on local housing estates; and a programme for looked after children.

Leonardo Drew Exhibition

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