

**Press Release**  
**4 April 2025**

## **SEA INSIDE**

**The Sainsbury Centre presents the third of three exhibitions in a programme centred around the fundamental question *Can the Seas Survive Us?***



Hiroshi Sugimoto, *Devonian Period*, 1992. Copyright: Hiroshi Sugimoto, courtesy of Lisson Gallery

**7 June – 26 October 2025**  
**Sainsbury Centre, Norwich**

**The Sainsbury Centre presents *Sea Inside*, an exhibition exploring humanity's interconnections, interrelationships, and immersion in oceans. The exhibition features contemporary artworks across a range of media by renowned international artists including Shuvinai Ashoona, Marcus Coates, Evan Ifekoya, Laure Prouvost and Hiroshi Sugimoto, and includes new work by Tyler Eash, Chioma Ebinama and Harun Morrison, as well as a new commission by Gabriella Hirst.**

Curated by Dr Sarah Wade and Dr Pandora Syperek, *Sea Inside* turns our gaze from the vast expanse of the open sea towards its more intimate spaces – whether physical, psychological or imaginary – and dives into shared watery origins, Indigenous ways of life, and the items we remove from the sea to display on land.

Artworks in *Sea Inside* showcase a range of contemporary artistic approaches, and traverse personal and cultural histories. A large-scale watercolour by Chioma Ebinama and a sound work by Harun Morrison constitute new works being made for the show, while Tyler Eash's *Sátoyom* (2024), featuring an inherited abalone shell, is on display for the first time. *Ambergris* (2025), a new sculptural commission by Gabriella Hirst, emerges from her ongoing artistic research into stories of men being swallowed by whales, referencing industrialisation and the extensive uses of whale bodies in the nineteenth century. A drawing by Shuvina Ashoona, newly acquired for the Sainsbury Centre collection, draws on Inuit mythology to disrupt gender binaries as well as the division between sea and land.

The exhibition's immersive focus brings to light many human-ocean connections, developing a set of ambitious, central themes. Expressions of marine interiority are explored and critiqued in installations, sculpture, video, sound and works on paper. What surfaces is a relational oceanic model, suggesting a necessary ethos for times of planetary crisis.

**Jago Cooper, Director of the Sainsbury Centre**, said: "If the seas can't be saved neither can we...we literally are water. Our lived experiences from womb to watery horizon are explored in this utterly extraordinary exhibition overflowing with hope and imagination."

Emerging from Dr Sarah Wade and Dr Pandora Syperek's ongoing collaborative research project [Curating the Sea](#), the exhibition reflects on humanity's intimate relationships with the oceans, and how these have been processed intellectually, emotionally, and creatively. While some humans have pursued life on or under water – through seafaring, research, fishing or diving – others have, and still are, subjected to the horrors of forced or desperate maritime crossings. Yet, the sea has often been viewed as a mysterious 'other,' with its expansive surface and seemingly infinite depths dominating marine imagery in the history of Western art. Conversely, artworks in this exhibition explore the ways the oceans have been domesticated, reimagined on a bodily scale, and brought inside to be tamed, contained, or better understood.

**Pandora Syperek and Sarah Wade, Curators of *Sea Inside***, said: "*Sea Inside* brings together a fantastic group of artists navigating their relationships to the awe-inspiring character of the oceans. Collectively, they redefine our oceanic vision from one that is vast and unknowable to something familiar, familial and even inhabitable, lending a new perspective on an ocean in crisis."

*Sea Inside* is the third of three concurrent exhibitions – *A World of Water*, *Darwin in Paradise Camp: Yuki Kihara* and *Sea Inside* – in a programme centred around the fundamental question *Can the Seas Survive Us?*, which brings together works and objects whose lives span great distances, both chronologically and geographically, to address critical contemporary issues around our connection to our planet, our seas, and each other.

*Can the Seas Survive Us?* is the latest in an innovative series of investigative exhibitions by the Sainsbury Centre following its radical relaunch in 2023, when it became the first museum in the world to formally recognise the living lifeforce of art, enabling people to build relationships with living art across its dynamic museum landscape.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

**For more information, interviews and images:**

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[IMAGES CAN BE FOUND IN THIS LINK.](#)

### **Exhibition details**

*Sea Inside*

7 June – 26 October 2025

Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia,  
Norfolk Road,  
Norwich NR4 7TJ

**The Sainsbury Centre continues its innovative series of investigative exhibitions in 2025 with a new programme that charts a course through the story of the world's oceans and the precarious future they may be heading towards.**

Three concurrent exhibitions explore *Can the Seas Survive Us?*, examining the choices shaping our future due to climate change, while emphasising the vital importance of the oceans and the life beneath the waves for the viability of our shared future.

Featured exhibitions:

- ***A World of Water***, 15 March – 3 August 2025
- ***Darwin in Paradise Camp: Yuki Kihara***, 15 March– 3 August 2025
- ***Sea Inside***, 7 June – 26 October 2025

### **Opening times**

Tuesday – Friday 9am-6pm (exhibitions open 9.30am)

Saturday – Sunday 10am-5pm

Closed Mondays, including bank holidays

### **Entry**

Tickets operate on a 'Pay Only If and What You Want' basis, so you can choose the price from free through to full membership. A Universal Ticket grants access to the permanent collection, Lower and Mezzanine Galleries, and Sculpture Park.

**The Sainsbury Centre** is a world-class art museum with a unique perspective on how art can foster cultural dialogue and exchange. Following a radical relaunch in 2023 the Sainsbury Centre is the first museum in the world to formally recognise the living lifeforce of art, enabling people to build relationships across an arts landscape.

The art of the Sainsbury Centre can help reframe and answer the most important questions people have in their lives. It is not a museum to only learn more about artists, cultures or movements like Francis Bacon, the Tang Dynasty or Modernism, it is a place of experience, where collections are animate, and visitors are emotionally connected.

One of the first museums in the world to display art from all around the globe and from all time periods equally and collectively, Sir Robert and Lady Lisa Sainsbury created one of the most sought after yet non-conformist art collections. In 1973 they donated their collection, which transcended traditional barriers between art, architecture, archaeology and anthropology, to the UEA, and created an entirely new type of museum. Housed in Sir Norman Foster's revolutionary first ever public building, the space aimed for an interactive relationship between people, object and landscape, where art was placed within an open yet intimate 'living area'.

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