

A Plethora Of Public Sculpture Pops Up Across UK, Spain And Monaco

Exploring iconic public sculptures across the UK and Europe. Highlights include; Teresa Solar Abboud at Hayward Gallery; Manolo Valdés in Monaco and Santander; Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva in Brighton; Saad Qureshi and Osman Yousefzada in Bradford; Claye Bowler at Yorkshire Sculpture Park; and Bushra Fakhoury in Cambridge.

By [Lee Sharrock](#), Former Contributor. © My mission is to spotlight great art and culture globally.

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Portrait of Teresa Solar Abboud. Courtesy of the artist, Travesía Cuatro (Madrid/Guadalajara/Ciudad de México) and Lehmann Maupin (New York, Seoul, and London)

PHOTO BY PABLO ALZAGA.

As the traditional gallery-based art world—dominated by blue-chip names and male-centric rosters—continues to shift, a new wave of public sculpture is redefining how we

experience art. This evolving landscape is more community-driven, multi-cultural and inclusive. Artists today are increasingly turning toward outdoor public art to explore urgent themes such as climate change, gender politics, and cultural identity. From Bradford to London, and as far as Santander and Monaco, a dynamic new era of public art is unfolding.

Below are some standout public sculpture commissions from the UK and Europe that exemplify this exciting development in the arts. These highlights include; a commission by Hayward Gallery of Spanish sculptor Teresa Solar Abboud; Macedonian artist Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva's *Gilded Elm* sculpture in Brighton; sculptures created by British-Pakistani artists Saad Qureshi and Osman Yousefzada in Bradford; Claye Bowler at Yorkshire Sculpture Park; Lebanese artist Bushra Fakhoury's monumental sculptures in Cambridge; and further afield—in Monaco and Santander—public sculptures by Spanish artist Manolo Valdes.

Saad Qureshi's *Tower of Now* in Bradford

Pakistani-British artist Saad Qureshi has unveiled *Tower of Now* (2025), a flagship sculpture commissioned for Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture. The towering installation explores themes of memory, migration, and multicultural identity, drawing inspiration from architectural elements across global traditions such as Gothic, Roman, Chinese, Islamic, and more.

Qureshi, who moved to Bradford at age eight, reflects on the ways in which built environments encode identity and cultural memory. *Tower of Now* acts as a visual lexicon of architectural motifs, inviting viewers to find both familiarity and otherness. The sculpture stands as a powerful symbol of Bradford's rich cultural heritage and a bold vision for the city's future.



Saad Qureshi 'Tower of Now'
SAAD QURESHI 'TOWER OF NOW'

Teresa Solar Abboud's *Mother Tongue* at Hayward Gallery

Spanish artist [Teresa Solar Abboud](#) brings a bold splash of color and symbolism to [Hayward Gallery](#) with her outdoor commission *Mother Tongue*. Launching on 16th October, 2025, the bubblegum pink sculpture features two entwined tongues, forming a surreal, dancing figure at the entrance of the iconic Brutalist gallery. Abboud works with bronze for the first time for this sculptural commission.

Abboud returns to the Hayward Gallery for the first time since her participation in group show *When Forms Come Alive* in 2024. Through her practice, she explores the complexities of communication, translation, and cultural hybridity. With Egyptian and Spanish heritage, her work reflects personal experiences of navigating multilingual, multicultural environments. *Mother Tongue* also reflects on motherhood, transformation, and embodied experience. This is the artist's first major public sculpture commission in the UK.



Portrait of Teresa Solar Abboud. Courtesy of the artist and Travesía Cuatro (Madrid_Guadalajara_Ciudad de México)
PHOTO BY PABLO ALZAGA.

Osman Yousefzada's *Possession I* at Cartwright Hall, Bradford

Osman Yousefzada's striking sculptural work *Possession I* is positioned magnificently outside Cartwright Hall in Bradford, the venue of the 2025 [Turner Prize](#) exhibition. Commissioned for Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture, the visceral sculpture temporarily wraps the existing *Diana and the Stag* statue—a bronze replica of a marble statue depicting Diana of Versailles by Pierre Louis Rouillard at the Louvre Museum in Paris—with fabric bundles reminiscent of those used by the artist's mother.

This bold gesture is both an act of resistance to patriarchy and cultural reclamation. Yousefzada reinterprets traditional statuary through the lens of personal memory, migration, and patriarchy. The wrapping ritual echoes South Asian customs while questioning who controls public space and cultural narratives.



'Possession I' by Osman Yousefzada
OSMAN YOUSEFZADA

Claye Bowler's *Dig Me a Grave* at Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Claye Bowler's solo exhibition *Dig Me a Grave* (from 4th October until 2nd November, 2025) at [Yorkshire Sculpture Park](#) delves into themes of trans-ness, queerness, disability, and mortality. Housed in a historic chapel, the sculptures invite reflection on waiting—for identity, healthcare and dignity.

Working with materials such as latex, metal, and plaster, Bowler creates a deeply personal and interactive installation. Visitors are encouraged to engage with the works physically and emotionally, fostering empathy and recognition of shared human fragility. It's a powerful reminder that public art can be both a sanctuary and a space of activism.



Claye Bowler, Dig Me a Grave, installation view.
PHOTO © HENRI T

Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva's *The Gilded Elm* in Brighton

Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva's *The Gilded Elm* is a deeply moving public artwork installed in Preston Park, Brighton. The sculpture is created from the remains of one of England's oldest elm trees, which died from Dutch Elm disease. Instead of allowing the tree to decay or be destroyed, Hadzi-Vasileva transformed it into a gilded memorial, preserving its history and symbolism.

Using gold leaf to line the tree's interior, she highlights the environmental, historical, and communal significance of the elm. The project also raises awareness about Brighton's leadership in elm conservation and serves as a reminder of the fragility of our natural world.



Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva 'The Gilded Elm'
ELPIDA HADZI-VASILEVA 'THE GILDED ELM'

Bushra Fakhoury's Monumental Sculptures in Cambridge

[Bushra Fakhoury](#) –the first British Lebanese woman artist to exhibit permanent public sculpture in Cambridge–is transforming the city's landscape with her monumental bronzes *Dunamis* and *Danse Gwenedour*. Standing 9 metres tall, *Dunamis* evokes transformation and upward motion, while *Danse Gwenedour* celebrates myth, movement, and cultural fluidity.

Both works are on permanent display outside the AstraZeneca Academy House building in Cambridge, making them accessible to thousands of passers by. Fakhoury's expressive, human-centered forms are rich in symbolism and narrative. She continues to expand her influence with [TRANSMUTE](#), a new exhibition at Mall Galleries, London, from October 7–11, 2025, where her son Mal Fostock will also present his exhibition **INCLUSION**.



Manolo Valdés' Outdoor Sculptures in Monaco and Santander

Internationally acclaimed Spanish artist [Manolo Valdés](#) is currently exhibiting large-scale outdoor sculptures in Monaco and Santander, Spain. Known for blending art history with contemporary abstraction, Valdés' works feature striking motifs such as butterflies, geometric headdresses, and reinterpretations of classic female forms.

In Santander, his works are displayed in the grounds of the Palace of La Magdalena through July 2026. Four of Valdés's majestic *Reina Mariana* figures can be found in the historic Pier Calderón, and *Clio White*, *Blue Circles* and *Mariposas* are displayed in the Palace of La Magdalena gardens. His Larvotto Beach installation in Monaco runs until December 2025. A parallel solo show, [Valdés in Monaco](#), is on view at Opera Gallery Monaco from September 20 to October 24, 2025. These exhibitions solidify his role as a leading figure in European public art.



(L-R) Manolo Valdés, *Clio White*, 2020 installed in Santander; Manolo Valdés, *Infanta Margarita*, 2025 installed at Larvotto Beach in Monaco.

MANOLO VALDÉS



By [Lee Sharrock](#). I'm a Brighton-based writer and curator who loves to travel and am the founder and editor of Culturalee <https://culturalee.art>, an arts platform celebrating the rich global tapestry of culture. I contribute to several arts publications including Artlyst, Artplugged and FAD...

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