

TEMPLON



CHIHARU SHIOTA

FORBES, February 17, 2026

3 Must-See Art Exhibitions In London—Winter 2026

London's art scene is flourishing with a trio of unmissable exhibitions from the drawings of Lucian Freud to the cinematic world of Isaac Julien and the thread woven installations of Chiharu Shiota.



Installation view of Chiharu Shiota, *Threads of Life. Letters of Thanks* (2026) at the Hayward Gallery.
MARK BLOWER

It's a great time for art lovers to visit London. The UK capital's art scene is flourishing this winter with a trio of unmissable exhibitions. From the intimate studies and bold paintings of Lucian Freud to the immersive cinematic world of Isaac Julien and the haunting, thread-woven environments of Chiharu Shiota — each exhibition is a must-see for art lovers and curious visitors alike.

1. Chiharu Shiota, *Threads of Life*, Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre until 3 May 2026



Installation view of Chiharu Shiota, *Threads of Life*. *Threads of Life* (2026) at the Hayward Gallery
MARK BLOWER

The Southbank Centre has had a great start to their 75th anniversary year. After 35 years of campaigning, the arts centre has finally been granted Grade II listed status, protecting the Brutalist buildings and recognising them as a nationally significant architectural and cultural site. The Centre has also just announced pop icon [Harry Styles](#) as curator of the popular annual music festival, [Meltdown](#). But there are plenty of reasons to visit the riverside venue before the pop star's arrival this summer, including a brilliant immersive exhibition, *Threads of Life* by Japanese contemporary artist [Chiharu Shiota](#) at the [Hayward Gallery](#). The show marks the Berlin-based artist's first major solo exhibition in a London public gallery, transforming the Hayward Gallery's top floor with her signature floor-to-ceiling, immersive thread installations, following a series of critically acclaimed exhibitions in Beijing, Osaka, Tokyo, and Paris. Chiharu Shiota is best known for her large-scale installations that envelop everyday objects—shoes, keys, beds, chairs, and dresses—within intricate webs of woolen thread. Her work examines the body, memory, consciousness, and the fragility of existence, often using red, black, or white threads to make visible the invisible connections of life. Deeply immersive and emotionally charged, her pieces draw on personal experiences that resonate with universal themes such as life, death and human relationships. This exhibition includes new interpretations of some of Shiota's landmark installations, including *The Locked Room* (2016) and *During Sleep* (2002).