

ART FOCUS

Joanna Allen at Bowman Sculpture

By Arts & Collections



Joanna Allen, The Hour, Courtesy Bowman Sculpture

Bowman Sculpture Gallery is pleased to announce *Subconscious Playground*, the inaugural solo exhibition by emerging British contemporary artist Joanna Allen. The exhibition will run from May 1st to May 30th, 2025, at the gallery's location at 6 Duke Street, St James's, London.

Subconscious Playground is an exploration of human psychology, offering an alternative reality that strips away the illusion of normalcy to reveal a more complex, sometimes dark, yet playful perspective on our subconscious. Allen's work moves seamlessly between figuration and abstraction, culminating in fully abstract pieces, reflecting the shifting boundaries between our conscious and unconscious minds. Through her sculptural practice, she examines the tension between intellectual aptitude and primal instinct, as well as the way personal and inherited experiences shape individual identity.



Joanna Allen, Shadow, Signed, Numbered, Bronze with charcoal patina Height: 17" (43.5cm) Edition of 9 + 2 EA

The exhibition includes works that visually dissect these themes. In some earlier pieces like *Shadow* and *Horizon*, she employs striking imagery, such as part of an adult skull posed as a child's helmet and an eye-level plane of solid bronze through a floating head. These works explore the intrinsic nature of our learned and inherited psychology. *Shadow*, in particular, is deeply personal, emerging from Allen's own childhood memories. The piece reflects her sense of feeling insubstantial both in the presence of adults and within herself. During these times, her imagination offered a refuge—an expansive, safe space for creativity and development. This is represented by the skull on the child's head, symbolising a psychological armour as well as the contrast between vulnerability and the mind's ability to construct an internal refuge.

Interplay

Pieces like *Monument* and *Diminishing Capacity* convey a similar theme by distorting figures in ways that suggest we are permanently and generationally shaped by our experiences. Her work exists somewhere between symbolism and surrealism, balancing deeply personal narratives with broader, universal themes of psychological introspection.

The exhibition catalogue will include a forward by Dr. Jon Wood, the art historian and curator who specialises in modern and contemporary sculpture. Formerly Head of Research at the Henry Moore Institute, Wood has written extensively on major sculptors, including Henry Moore, Tony Cragg, and Emily Young, and has curated significant exhibitions internationally. His insights will provide context to Allen's exploration of the psychological and sculptural interplay between form, abstraction, and meaning.



Joanna Allen, Monument, Signed, Numbered, Bronze, Height: 21.7" (55 cm), Edition of 9 + 2 EA

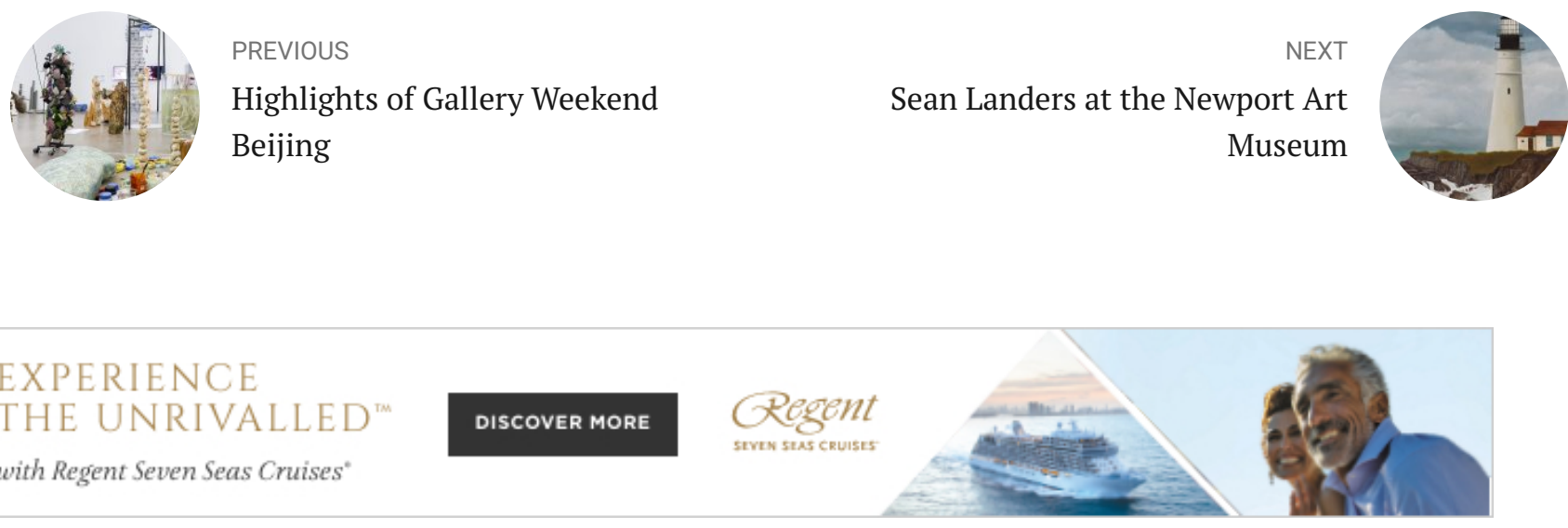
Mica Bowman, Director of Bowman Sculpture Gallery, remarks, "We are living in a time where the surreal is no longer confined to art—it is woven into our daily experience, shaping the way we perceive and engage with the world. Joanna Allen takes this concept further, not just reflecting the surrealist aesthetic that surrounds us, but pulling us deeper into the subconscious, where reality is deconstructed and reimagined. Her work does not just depict an alternative perspective; it forces us to question the layers of perception we take for granted."

Subconscious Playground will be open to the public from May 1st to May 30th, 2025, at Bowman SculptureGallery, 6 Duke Street, St James's, London. For further information, visit [bowmansculpture.com](https://www.bowmansculpture.com) or contact the gallery at +44 (0)20 7930 0277.

<https://www.joannamallen.com>

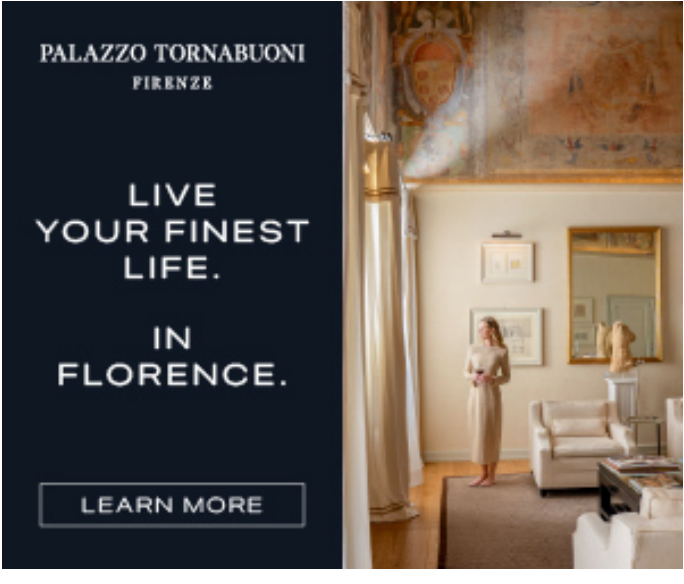
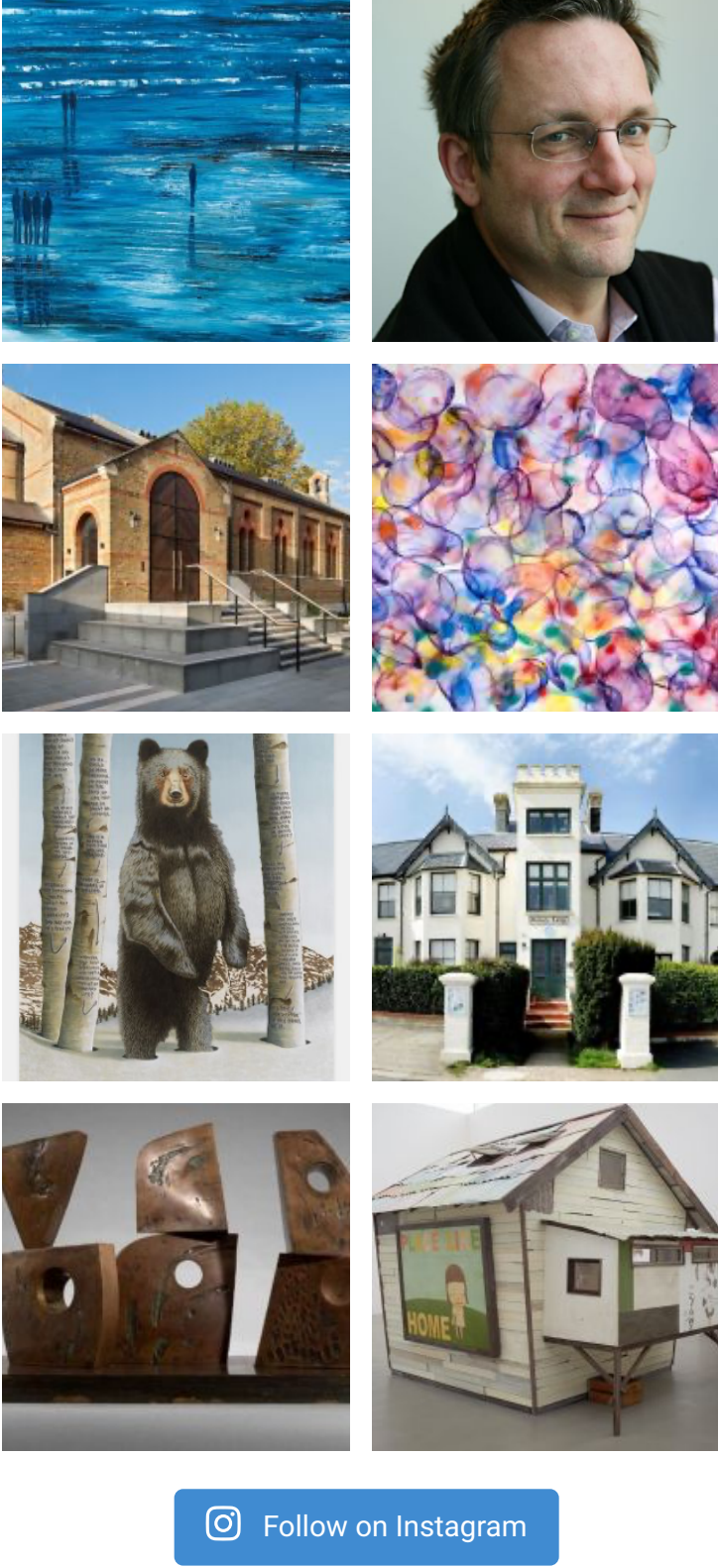


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