Art Focus

West African Art at Bowman Sculpture

By Chris Jenkins



Indigenous Logics of the Fractured Self at Bowman Sculpture

For more than thirty years, Bowman Sculpture has been known internationally for European sculpture, from the great masters of 19th-century sculpture to Modern British, and particularly for its expertise in the work of Auguste Rodin. Now, under director Mica Bowman, the London gallery is entering a new chapter.

Since joining the family gallery in 2019, she has gradually expanded its contemporary programme. Her longer-term ambition is broader still: to establish Bowman Sculpture as a destination in Europe for exceptional sculpture from across the world, bringing different sculptural traditions, cultures and generations into conversation within the gallery.

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Amanda Offor – Grandma

Indigenous Logics of the Fractured Self, opening this October in collaboration with ADA Contemporary, represents an important step in that evolution. Bringing together six West African artists, the exhibition moves beyond the predominantly European focus that has historically defined Bowman Sculpture and introduces a field that Bowman herself has long admired but does not claim as her own area of expertise.
That distinction is important to her.

"I think there is a tendency in the art world to feel that you need to know everything and, of course, none of us can. For me, recognising the limits of your own knowledge and knowing when to work with someone who knows more than you do is a strength."

Expertise

For this exhibition, that person is Adora Mba, founder of ADA Contemporary. Bowman and Mba first met socially and became friends through the art world. Their collaboration grew from a mutual respect for one another's very different areas of expertise. "Adora knows these artists, their histories and the wider context in a way that I simply don't. I know sculpture and I know my clients. Bringing those perspectives together has been incredibly exciting."

Rather than abandoning the gallery's history, Bowman sees its expansion as a continuation of it. Rodin, 19th-century sculpture and Modern British sculpture will remain fundamental to the programme, alongside the gallery's growing roster of contemporary artists. What is changing is the geography of the conversation.

Bowman hopes this will lead to further collaborations internationally, including with galleries and artists in Southeast Asia, and to a programme that gives London audiences access to sculptural practices they might not otherwise encounter in St James's. At a challenging moment for the British art market, that international outlook is also deliberate.

"I want to do everything I can to bring energy back into London. For me, that means being curious, looking outwards and giving collectors a reason to keep discovering things here. I don't want Bowman Sculpture to become less of what it has always been. I want it to become much more."

Indigenous Logics of the Fractured Self runs 2nd October – 14th November 2026 at Bowman Sculpture Gallery.



Adora Mba, founder of ADA Contemporary

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