



Press Release 1 May 2026

The Roof Gardens and Royal Society of Sculptors Announce Inaugural Exhibition

*Opening 21 May 2026, **Sculpture Above Ground** brings together nine contemporary sculptors 100 feet above the streets of Kensington, on view until October 2026.*

The Roof Gardens and the Royal Society of Sculptors announce a new partnership, launching with ***Sculpture Above Ground***, an inaugural exhibition of contemporary sculpture co-curated by Aurore Ankarcona Hennessey and Nick Hornby.

Bringing together artists from the Royal Society of Sculptors, the exhibition unfolds across two distinct London sites: the Woodland Gardens at The Roof Gardens, and the terrace at Dora House, the Royal Society of Sculptors' historic home in South Kensington. Installed across contrasting architectural and social settings, the exhibition considers how sculpture is encountered differently in spaces of leisure, display, and contemplation.

At The Roof Gardens, works exist on a fictional ground: a constructed landscape of soil and planting suspended above the city, where even mature trees take root. This condition reframes sculpture's traditional relationship to gravity and site. At Dora House, a single work is positioned at ground level on the terrace, rooted in public space while its mirror-polished surface reflects the sky. Together, the two settings establish a dialogue between the constructed and the grounded.

The curatorial premise arises from a line in Joseph Stein's *The Fiddler on the Roof*: "A bird may love a fish, but where would they live?" A question of coexistence across difference, it frames the exhibition's exploration of figuration and abstraction as two enduring sculptural languages. Through a range of contemporary approaches, the exhibition invites audiences to consider how form can be recognisable or elusive, direct or ambiguous, and how sculpture can shape our experience of space.

Highlights of the exhibition include large-scale works by Richard Hudson and Emily Young, a major display of portrait busts by Nicole Farhi, and a restaging of a significant work by Michael Petry, originally conceived for the Palm Springs Art Museum. Additional artists include Laura Ford, President of the Royal Society of Sculptors, alongside Sarah Pager, Andrew Sabin, and Richard Stone, with William Braithwaite, recently included in the 2026 New Contemporaries. Several works will be presented publicly for the first time and all works will be available for sale.

At The Roof Gardens, works are situated among pathways, planting, and water, creating a journey through the space for members and guests. At Dora House, the presentation extends the exhibition's themes into a second setting open to the public. Together, the two venues establish a dialogue between site and sculpture across London.

A programme of talks and events with participating artists will accompany the exhibition throughout the summer.

Marking the beginning of an ongoing collaboration between The Roof Gardens and the Royal Society of Sculptors, *Sculpture Above Ground* establishes a new platform for contemporary sculpture in one of London's most distinctive settings.

- Ends -

Exhibition Dates: 22 May – 18 October 2026

Opening Event: Thursday 21 May 2026

Location: The Roof Gardens, Kensington High Street, London

Access via private members' club; entry subject to venue access policies.

Sales Enquiries

All artworks in the exhibition are available for purchase.

The Roof Gardens exhibition: aurore.hennessey@theroofgardens.com

Dora House Sculpture Terrace: awards@sculptors.org.uk

Notes to Editors

The Roof Gardens: The Roof Gardens is a social members' club set across an acre of private gardens 100 feet above the streets of Kensington, London. Built around the values of kindness, curiosity and optimism, the community is defined by shared ideals rather than status. The club's event programme, spans film, conversations, wellbeing, and music-led moments. Bringing members together through experiences.

www.theroofgardens.com | [@theroofgardens](https://www.instagram.com/theroofgardens)

Royal Society of Sculptors: Founded over a century ago, the Royal Society of Sculptors champions contemporary sculpture and supports artists at all stages of their careers. An artist-led organisation, it fosters dialogue, connection, and public engagement through exhibitions and events.

www.sculptors.org.uk | [@royal_sculptors](https://www.instagram.com/royal_sculptors) | +44 (0)207 373 8615

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Artists

William Braithwaite MRSS is a British sculptor based in the UK (b.1995). His work explores the relationship between sculpture and architecture through repeated geometric forms, often working in concrete. He studied at The Glasgow School of Art. He was awarded the Royal Society of Sculptors Gilbert Bayes Award and included in the 2026 New Contemporaries.

Nicole Farhi CBE MRSS is a French-born British sculptor based in London (b.1946). She is known for her portrait heads, working primarily in clay and bronze. After an international career in fashion, she trained in sculpture with sculptor Jean Gibson. Eduardo Paolozzi became her mentor. She has exhibited widely in the UK and internationally, including a solo show in 2025 at The Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery.

Laura Ford PRSS is a British artist based in West Sussex (b.1961). She is known for figurative sculpture exploring identity, power and narrative. She studied at Bath Academy of Art and Chelsea School of Art. Her work is held in major collections, and she exhibits both nationally and internationally, she is the President of the Royal Society of Sculptors.

Richard Hudson MRSS is a British sculptor based in the UK (b.1954). He is known for monumental, highly polished abstract sculptures in stainless steel and bronze and marble. His work is held in major collections, and he has completed large-scale public commissions across Europe, Asia and the United States.

Sarah Pager MRSS is a British artist based in East Sussex (b. 1962). Her work draws on still life, integrating casting within sculptural forms, where material appetites, trace, and transformation unfold. She studied at Chelsea College of Art and Goldsmiths, University of London, and is currently undertaking a practice-based PhD at Chelsea College of Arts, UAL.

Michael Petry FRSS is an American-born artist based in London (B 1960). His multidisciplinary practice spans sculpture, installation and photography, often incorporating glass and found materials. He studied at the Royal College of Art, where he also taught, was curator at the Royal Academy of Schools. He is Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art London and has exhibited internationally. He has six books published by Thames & Hudson.

Andrew Sabin FRSS is a British sculptor based in West Sussex (b.1958). He studied at Chelsea College of Art (1979–83), later teaching there as Senior Lecturer from 1997 to 2006. His practice spans installation, sculpture and major public works, including *The Coldstones Cut* in Yorkshire, which won the Marsh Award for Public Sculpture in 2011. He has exhibited widely since the 1980s, including at the Henry Moore Institute, and lives and works with the sculptor Laura Ford, with whom he runs Matt Black Barn.

Richard Stone FRSS is a British artist based in the UK (b. 1974). He integrates traditional carving and casting techniques with contemporary thinking, exploring how ancient methods meet present-day sculptural expression. He studied at Saint Martin's School of Art. He has exhibited widely in the UK.

Emily Young FRSS Emily Young is a British sculptor based in Italy (b.1951). She is known for carved stone heads working with and guided by materials such as marble, onyx and alabaster. She studied at Chelsea School of Art and Saint Martin's School of Art. Her work is held in major collections and she has exhibited internationally, including significant public commissions.