HAUSER & WIRTH

Press Release

Lorna Simpson. Previous & Ongoing

Hauser & Wirth London
13 October – 23 December 2026

Lorna Simpson returns to the UK for the first time in eight years with an exhibition of new works that reveal the symbiotic relationship between her paintings, collages and wider oeuvre. Coming to prominence in the 1990s for her pioneering approach to conceptual photography, Simpson's masterful paintings have become a defining facet of her creative output following her turn to the medium in 2014. From multi-panel compositions and largescale paintings to sculpture, the works on view are anchored by the artist's sustained engagement with defunct news photography. Treating these fragments of the past as carriers of memory, she sources, reconfigures and reproduces archival material to both reveal how histories persist and accrue new meaning over time.

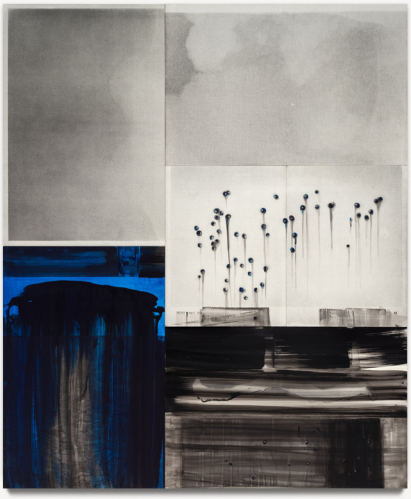
Simpson's first survey dedicated to her painting practice was displayed in a major solo exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York NY in 2025, followed by a solo show at Punta della Dogana (Pinault Collection) in Venice, Italy, the most significant presentation of her work in Europe in over a decade, currently on view until 22 November 2026.

About the exhibition
Drawn to images with an inherent 'matter-of-fact absurdity,' Lorna Simpson mines and selects photographs from vintage Jet and Ebony magazines and the archives of the Library of Congress, Reuters and Associated Press. The artist uses these source materials to structure her paintings, beginning each work with silkscreened archival photographs and layering them with acrylics to produce painterly collages. In doing so, she transforms them into layered compositions that blur the boundary between past and present, documentation and fabrication, reality and imagination.

Simpson repeatedly returns to visual records from the past that have resonance in the present day, speaking to the persistence of societal issues such as racial violence and police brutality. Lending its name to the exhibition title, 'Previous & Ongoing' (2026) is rooted in documentary photographs that once bore witness to real-life events, which the artist amplifies and reconfigures to draw attention to their jarring, unsettling nature. In 'Yesterday/Today' (2026), engulfing smoke plumes are juxtaposed with an inverted volcano, motifs that both invite associations of upheaval and destruction, while the multi-panel work 'Wounded' (2026) assimilates drips of acrylic to blood from a gunshot wound. Across these paintings, the images could easily be mistaken for the present moment were it not for giveaways from the pixelated archival material.

Visible within the composition of ‘Strata’ (2026) is the folio line for Ebony magazine. This remnant of the past reminds viewers of the source material, which was founded in 1945 to chronicle African American lives and issues under-represented elsewhere, and is harnessed by Simpson to interrogate the representation of American communities today. Binding together countless stories and records from the magazine, the cylindrical sculpture ‘Well Rounded’ (2026) is formed of compressed copies of Ebony, resulting in a monument that attests to the archive as a repository of memory.

Throughout her varied subjects, blue is a powerful carrier of meaning for the artist, who uses the color to allude to the nighttime sky, the name ‘blue marble’ for the Earth, the emotional connotations, the history of indigo cultivation and ‘blue black’ culture. The significance of the color is not only conveyed through pigments but occasionally through the titles of Simpson’s paintings, such as ‘Builder Black Blue’ (2026). Adapted from the earlier monochrome collage ‘Los Angeles’ (2019), the triptych ‘Nightfall’ (2026) depicts two singers layered on top of a Prussian blue vista spanning six meters, offering a monumental tribute to the musical blues through both the subject and the artist’s use of color. This work reveals a linear relationship between Simpson’s collage and painting, whereby she translates the dreamlike essence of her works on paper into vibrant acrylics.



Since the beginning of her practice Simpson has spliced together images to create new narratives that emerge from unexpected elements. In the painting ‘Constellation’ (2026), the artist overlays a found group portrait with a star chart rendered in ultramarine, transforming it into an otherworldly configuration. The surreal scene in ‘Tiger with star spots’ (2025) existed as a picture in its own right, which the artist first employed in the collage ‘Beach Walk’ (2023). Depicting a person wearing a tiger mascot head walking down a beach, the artist

morphs the figure with a celestial map to amplify its incongruity. ‘Altered & Unaltered’ (2026), the only collage on view, is made up of found images of cats that are combined with female protagonists to create fantastical scenarios while simultaneously imbuing a distinct sense of ambiguity. Together, these mismatched figures reflect Simpson’s assertion that ‘we’re fragmented not only in terms of how society regulates our bodies but in the way we think about ourselves.’ Across painting, collage and sculpture, Simpson takes these relics of the past and reshapes them for the present, dissolving the distinction between that which was previous and that which is ongoing.

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Gallery hours:
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10 am – 6 pm

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Caption and courtesy:

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Photo: James Wang

Lorna Simpson
Nightfall
2026
Acrylic and screenprint on gessoed fiberglass, 3 panels, overall: 243.8 x 647.7 x 3.8 cm / 96 x 255 x 1 1/2 in

Lorna Simpson
Previous & Ongoing
2026
Acrylic and screenprint on claybord
14 panels, overall: 182.9 x 304.8 x 3.8 cm / 72 x 120 x 1 1/2 in

Lorna Simpson
Yesterday/Today
2026
Acrylic and screenprint on claybord
7 panels, overall: 182.9 x 182.9 x 3.8 cm / 72 x 72 x 1 1/2 in

Lorna Simpson
Wounded
2026
Acrylic and screenprint on claybord
7 panels, overall: 182.9 x 182.9 x 3.8 cm / 72 x 72 x 1 1/2 in

Lorna Simpson
Strata
2026
Acrylic and screenprint on claybord
6 panels, overall: 182.9 x 152.4 x 3.8 cm / 72 x 60 x 1 1/2 in

Lorna Simpson
Constellation
2026
Acrylic and screenprint on gessoed fiberglass
191.8 x 149.9 x 3.8 cm / 75 1/2 x 59 x 1 1/2 in

Lorna Simpson
Tiger with star spots
2025
Acrylic and screenprint on gessoed fiberglass
191.8 x 149.9 x 3.5 cm / 75 1/2 x 59 x 1 3/8 in