

**Exhibition Period:**

2025.01.18 – 2025.4.27

**Location:**

UCCA Beijing New, Central, West  
Galleries

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**Lubaina Himid**

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**UCCA Center for Contemporary Art presents “Lubaina Himid” between January 18, 2025, and April 27, 2025, the first solo exhibition of the British artist in China. The survey exhibition offers an overview of Himid’s remarkable career and her distinctively powerful artistic approach to historical narratives, reconstructing and reimagining Black experiences, the African diaspora, and her personal life through various mediums.**

BEIJING, China—From January 18, 2025, to April 27, 2025, UCCA Center for Contemporary Art presents “Lubaina Himid,” the first solo exhibition of British artist Lubaina Himid (b. 1954, Zanzibar) in China in a comprehensive reflection on the key stages of Himid’s artistic career. The selection of works spans nearly half a century of vividly poignant creations, showing the diversity of her approach with painting, sound installations, found objects, canvases, and cut-outs. Key works include *A Fashionable Marriage* (1986), *Naming the Money* (2004), the “Plan B” series, and a recent series of paintings focused on street sellers. A pivotal figure in the British Black Arts Movement of the 1980s, Himid has been reconstructing and reimagining Black experiences and histories to challenge dominant historical narratives ever since. This exhibition is curated by UCCA Curator Luan Shixuan and organized on the occasion of the Maria Lassnig Prize awarded to Lubaina Himid in 2023.

“Lubaina Himid” brings together 19 groups and pieces of the artist’s key works created between the 1980s and the present, delving into the artist’s innovative exploration of Black experiences, histories, and identities of the African diaspora through multidimensional artworks. Trained in theater design and with a longstanding interest in materiality and performativity, Himid’s utilization of diverse mediums in layered storytelling, challenging traditional notions of artistic mediums, also stands as a unique approach to challenging mainstream perspectives of history and enduring socio-political obstacles faced by communities of African heritage. Her works, drawing on a rich variety of symbolic languages and cultural motifs, evoke the performative aspects of theatrical stages. Life-sized cut-out figures, overpainted everyday objects, sound works made in collaboration with Magda Stawarska, and audio elements create stronger spatial engagement.



Also highlighted in this exhibition is Himid's innovative practice of painting over found objects, a method the artist uses to reconstruct narratives in Black history. Works such as *Swallow Hard: The Lancaster Dinner Service* (2007) transform colonial-era porcelain tableware, often used among the upper-class, into miniature monuments of remembrance for forgotten Black voices, layering historical echoes with her artistic reinterpretations. In the "Feast Wagon" series, the pushcarts are inserted into the scene like stage props for the audience to walk around, symbolizing migration and memory.

From the "Plan B" series to works like *Tide Change* (1998), the ocean is woven in as an element of duality: trauma and transformation. Bridging the past and present in the context of the transoceanic slave trade, the ocean in these works embody cultural and historical collision, and the resulting trauma and resilience in displacement.

Pieces like *Six Tailors* (2019) and *Close Up – Materials for Change* (2019) explore the collaborative and material aspects of craftsmanship, while installations like *Blue Grid Test* (2020) expand on the narrative potential of patterns and language, combining visual elements with soundscapes. In this installation, decorative motifs and the repeated word "blue" in multiple languages evoke connections between cultural histories and emotional resonances, further emphasizing the universality of shared experiences and perspective.

In Himid's portraiture, the works are often seemingly inspired by historical moments, with her reimagined portraits challenging and expanding the canon of traditional Western art by centering Black figures as protagonists with complex, autonomous narratives. In works like *Five Conversations* (2019), fashionably-dressed Black women stand poised and ready to engage, claiming their presence.

Throughout her career of nearly five decades, Lubaina Himid has become increasingly influential in the contemporary art with her compelling works that address enduring societal themes while fostering dialogue about history, identity, and resilience. The exhibition "Lubaina Himid" is a profound opportunity to engage with the pioneering artist's rich and multifaceted oeuvre and her powerful yet nuanced artistic voice in disrupting so-called established narratives that transcend mere representation.

#### **About the Artist**

Lubaina Himid CBE RA (b. 1954, Zanzibar; lives and works in Preston, UK) is Emeritus Professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Central Lancashire. She is recipient of



numerous awards including the 2017 Turner Prize, the 2023 Maria Lassnig Prize, and the 2024 Suzanne Deal Booth | Flag Art Foundation Prize. Himid has exhibited extensively in the UK and internationally.

Himid's solo exhibitions include: "Barricades" (Hollybush Gardens, London, 2024); "Make Do and Mend" (FLAG Art Foundation, New York/ The Contemporary, Austin, Texas, 2024); "Street Sellers" (Greene Naftali, New York, 2023); "Plaited Time/Deep Water" (Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE, 2023); "What Does Love Sound Like?" (Glyndebourne, Lewes, 2023); "So Many Dreams" (Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, 2022); "Water Has a Perfect Memory" (Hollybush Gardens, London, 2022); "Lubaina Himid" (Tate Modern, London, 2021); "Spotlights" (Tate Britain, London, 2019); "The Grab Test" (Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, 2019); "Lubaina Himid" (CAPC Bordeaux, 2019); "Work From Underneath" (New Museum, New York, 2019); "Gifts to Kings" (MRAC Languedoc Roussillon Midi-Pyrénées, Sérignan, 2018); "Our Kisses are Petals" (BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, 2018); "The Truth Is Never Watertight" (Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, 2017); "Navigation Charts" (Spike Island, Bristol, 2017); and "Invisible Strategies" (Modern Art Oxford, 2017).

Recent group exhibitions include: "The Time is Always Now: Artists Reframe the Black Figure" (Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia/The Box, Plymouth/National Portrait Gallery, London, 2024); "Entangled Pasts, 1768-now" (Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2024); "Women in Revolt!" (National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh/Tate Britain, London, 2024); "A Fine Toothed Comb" (HOME, Manchester, 2023); "A Tall Order! Rochdale Art Gallery in the 1980s" (Touchstones Rochdale, 2023); "Arcadia for All?" (The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery, Leeds, 2023); "Being and Belonging" (Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, 2023); "Divided Selves: Legacies, Memories, Belonging" (Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, 2023); "Le Retour" (MRAC Languedoc Roussillon Midi-Pyrénées, Sérignan, 2023); "Thinking Historically in the Present" (Sharjah Biennial 15, 2023); and "uMoya: The Sacred Return of Lost Things" (Liverpool Biennial, 2023).

Himid's work is held in various museum and public collections, including Tate, London; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Guggenheim Abu Dhabi; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Sharjah Art Foundation; Kistefos Museum, Norway; Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne; Rennie Collection, Vancouver; MIMA, Middlesbrough; British Council Collection, UK; Arts Council Collection, UK; Government Art Collection, UK; Victoria & Albert Museum, London; National Museums, Liverpool; Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester; and Rhode Island School of Design, Providence.



### **Public Programs**

On the exhibition's opening weekend, UCCA will present a special conversation featuring artist Lubaina Himid, UCCA Curator Luan Shixuan, and Berlin-based researcher and curator Clémentine Deliss. The event will include a keynote speech by Deliss and a roundtable discussion among the three guest speakers. Together, they will offer distinct insights shaped by their respective expertise, illuminating the themes and narratives central to Lubaina Himid's artistic practice. The conversation is designed as an invitation for audiences to delve into Himid's artistic world, exploring her focus on Black experiences, gender perspectives, linguistic systems, and poetic yet incisive reflections on history. For the latest updates on this and other events, please visit UCCA's official website, WeChat account, or other social media platforms.

### **Support and Sponsorship**

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### **About UCCA**

UCCA Center for Contemporary Art works to bring the best in art to ever wider audiences, promoting global dialogue and cultural exchange. Opened in 2007, its Beijing flagship is registered as a non-profit museum, occupying over 10,000 square meters of regenerated factory space at the heart of the 798 Art District. UCCA also operates UCCA Dune in Beidaihe, UCCA Edge in Shanghai, and UCCA Clay in Yixing. In addition to its exhibitions, public programs, and research initiatives, UCCA includes a charitable foundation (UCCA Foundation), a comprehensive children's art education program (UCCA Kids), and a platform for new artistic collaborations (UCCA Lab). Consistently ranked as China's leading art institution, UCCA has pioneered an integrated operating model distinct in the world.

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