

## SERPENTINE KICKSTARTS SUMMER PROGRAMME WITH NEW PUBLIC SCULPTURE BY JESÚS RAFAEL SOTO

Serpentine will activate its campus with the new public sculpture, a dynamic live programme, centred around its exhibition programme and the 25<sup>th</sup> Pavilion designed by LANZA atelier and an archive display

At Serpentine South

16 June to 25 October 2026.

Please RSVP to: [press@serpentinegalleries.org](mailto:press@serpentinegalleries.org)

Summer programme sponsored by Kenneth C. Griffin – Griffin Catalyst



Image: Front view, design render of *Pénétrable BBL Jaune* (1999; 2023 Edition) by Jesús Rafael SOTO at Serpentine South. © Jesús Rafael SOTO / ADAGP, Paris 2026. Render by Logan Paine. Courtesy Serpentine.

**Serpentine is delighted to announce the presentation of a public sculpture by Jesús Rafael SOTO, launching a dynamic summer programme in the park. Situated in the vicinity of**



Serpentine South, *Pénétrable BBL Jaune* (1999; 2023 Edition) will be on show from 16 June to 25 October 2026. This is the first outdoor presentation of the artist's work in the UK. Art situated in the park has become central to Serpentine's year-round activities, extending its exhibitions beyond the gallery walls and into the surrounding landscape.

*Pénétrable BBL Jaune* (1999; 2023 Edition) exemplifies the artist's lifelong interest in movement, space and tactility. Born in Venezuela in 1923, SOTO became one of the leading exponents of kinetic art and created more than seventy *Pénétrable* sculptures of various sizes and colours throughout his seven-decade long career: works composed of metal rods and nylon strands suspended in space through which viewers are invited to enter.

**In a conversation between Hans Ulrich Obrist and SOTO, that took place in Paris in March 2004, the artist said:** "Contrary to what we have always believed, space is not something that is filled with objects. Objects are in fact filled with space. Space flows. Nothing limits it. I'm interested in showing people who are interested in space as a quality or a universal density that in fact it is space that is in control—it defines and sets its own conditions."

**Bettina Korek, CEO and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director said:** "We are delighted to inaugurate our summer programme with the unveiling of a playful, vibrant sculpture by SOTO. The work will activate the entire campus, and we look forward to welcoming visitors from London and beyond for what promises to be an exceptional season. We are sincerely grateful to our partners for helping make this possible."

The work on view in Kensington Gardens is based on the *Pénétrable BBL Jaune* conceived and executed by SOTO in 1999 and relaunched in 2023 by the artist's estate to mark the centenary of his birth. Spanning 10 meters in length, the work consists of 4000 identical PVC strands suspended from a rectangular steel framework. Each strand is hung with a slight gap between each other, creating a 'moiré' effect in which the vertical lines seem to move and flicker when viewed from afar.

The audience is considered as an integral part of the work. Visitors are invited to walk through, interact with and push against the yellow tubes. Their physical presence subtly changes and shifts the environment they are immersed in, invoking the more playful and participatory aspect of SOTO's practice.

SOTO created his first *Pénétrable* in 1967, pushing the boundaries of how sculpture can generate dynamic interaction between the object and the viewer.

Since its launch in 1970, Serpentine has had a long-standing commitment to bringing art out of the traditional gallery context and into the surrounding landscape, offering an opportunity for artists to engage with the immediate environment of Kensington Gardens. SOTO's *Pénétrable BBL Jaune*, alongside Giuseppe Penone's *Albero folgorato* (Thunderstruck Tree, 2012) situated on the plinth at Serpentine South, are the latest additions to a long-standing series of remarkable public presentations in The Royal Parks which includes the large-scale printed mural *A Year in Normandie (Detail)* by David Hockney in the garden at Serpentine North.



This year, the Mexican architecture studio LANZA atelier, founded by Isabel Abascal and Alessandro Arienzo, has been selected to design the 2026 Pavilion. Titled *a serpentine*, LANZA atelier's Pavilion was unveiled to the public at Serpentine South on 6 June 2026 with Goldman Sachs for the 12th consecutive year and Rolex as the Official Timepiece of the Serpentine Pavilions as of this year. As the Pavilion reaches its 25th edition, Serpentine will celebrate this landmark anniversary through a special partnership with the Zaha Hadid Foundation.

Throughout its history, the Serpentine Pavilion has grown into a highly anticipated showcase for emerging talents. The Pavilion has evolved over the years as a participatory public and artistic platform for Serpentine's experimental, interdisciplinary, community and education programmes. Launching a season of specially curated activations, this year's Pavilion will play host to a series of live events and become a stage for public engagement including Park Nights.

## Notes to Editors

### ON VIEW AT SERPENTINE:

#### **DAVID HOCKNEY: *A YEAR IN NORMANDIE AND SOME OTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT PAINTING*** Serpentine North

**On view until 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2026**

An exhibition of new and recent works by David Hockney brings together a series of new paintings created in late 2025 alongside the artist's monumental frieze *A Year in Normandie* (2020-2021), presented in London for the first time. Accompanying the exhibition, a large-scale mural by the artist is on view in the garden at Serpentine North echoing its creation in the artist's own garden in Normandy.

#### **CECILY BROWN: *PICTURE MAKING***

Serpentine South

**On view until 6 September 2026**

Cecily Brown presents *Picture Making*, an exhibition featuring new and recent works by one of the most important painters working today. Marking a homecoming for the British artist who has lived and worked in New York for the past thirty years, the exhibition brings together works inspired by Serpentine's unique location in Kensington Gardens, a site of personal significance to the artist. Themes of nature and park life have long shaped Brown's formal explorations and, for her exhibition at Serpentine, the artist revisits familiar subjects such as amorous couples, woodland settings and uncanny nature walks.

**Artists in Conversation – Monday 6 July, 7pm**

Serpentine Pavilion

£10, £8 conc.

Join fellow artists Cecily Brown and Celia Paul for a live conversation exploring their individual approaches to painting, daily studio practice and the images that continue to inspire them.



**processing...**

**13 July - 6 September 2026**

**Education Space, Serpentine South**

Made possible through support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Arts Technologies archive display marks a significant moment in the ongoing preservation and activation of Serpentine's pioneering work at the intersection of art and advanced technologies. Thanks to National Lottery players, Serpentine will present an open-access archive dedicated to sharing the generative legacy, experimental methodologies and creative research developed through the Arts Technologies department since its inception in 2012.

Over the past decade, the department has cultivated critical and interdisciplinary approaches to emerging technologies through artist-led interventions, commissions, and collaborative research, continually reimagining the role technologies might play within culture and civic life.

In September 2026, Serpentine will convene interdisciplinary and intergenerational practitioners to reflect on and respond to this evolving history through a public symposium accompanying the inaugural Future Art Ecosystems (FAE) Fellowship: *Art x Convergence*. Bringing together artists, researchers, technologists and cultural thinkers, the programme will foreground new lines of enquiry into the future of artistic practice, technological experimentation and collective knowledge production.

#### **SUMMER PROGRAMME:**

##### **Serpentine Family Days 2026**

Across three summer Sundays, families are invited to gather at Serpentine for free, drop-in days of hands-on making, outdoor play and artist-led workshops. Each Family Day takes inspiration from a different element of our summer 2026 exhibition programme, offering playful ways to engage with art, architecture, nature and the surrounding park.

All families are welcome to bring a picnic to enjoy on the Serpentine Lawn.

##### **Family Day – Sunday 19 July Serpentine South**

Inspired by the work of David Hockney, this Family Day invites children and adults alike to look closely, move freely and capture the world around them. Through collage, drawing and walking-based activities, families can explore colour, perspective and landscape in playful and unexpected ways.

Join us for a day of making, mapping and imagining, celebrating the joy of seeing and creating in the open air.

##### **Family Day – Sunday 23 August Serpentine South**



This Family Day is in part made possible through funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, this event will draw on the expressive, imaginative world of Cecily Brown, alongside a special focus on Serpentine's Pavilion archive. Families are invited to explore storytelling, fairytales and mark-making through a series of hands-on workshops.

## Notes to Editors

### About Jesús Rafael SOTO

Jesús Rafael SOTO (1923–2005) worked as the director of the School of Fine Arts in Maracaibo in 1947 and relocated to Paris in 1950, where he became part of a generation of artists experimenting with motion in art. He participated in the landmark exhibition *Le Mouvement* at Galerie Denise René in 1955, alongside artists such as Alexander Calder, Marcel Duchamp and Victor Vasarely – a defining moment in the development of kinetic art. During the same decade, he began making kinetic constructions via the use of industrial and synthetic materials such as nylon, Perspex, steel and industrial paint. SOTO's work sought to evoke movement, spatial volume and tactility, a vision that is exemplified by his renowned *Pénétrables* series.

Major exhibitions of SOTO's works have been held at Signals London (1965); the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (1971); the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1974); Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris (1979); Musée du Jeu de Paume, Paris (1997); Museo Tamayo, México (2005) and Guggenheim Bilbao (2019). His works are in the collections of museums around the world such as Tate, London; Museum Ludwig, Germany; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome and MoMA, New York.

### About LANZA atelier

LANZA atelier, founded in 2015 by Isabel Abascal and Alessandro Arienzo, is a Mexico City-based architecture studio. Their collaborative practice reinterprets familiar materials and forms by paying close attention to craftsmanship, technology and spatial design traditions. Their work proposes ways of building that foreground dialogue and collective experience.

### About Serpentine

Building new connections between artists and audiences, Serpentine presents pioneering contemporary art exhibitions and cultural events with a legacy that stretches back over half a century, from a wide range of emerging practitioners to the most internationally recognised artists, writers, scientists, thinkers, and cultural thought leaders of our time.

Based in London's Kensington Gardens, Serpentine features a year-round, free programme of exhibitions, architectural showcases, education, live events and technological activations across two sites, Serpentine North and Serpentine South, in the park and beyond the gallery walls.

Public art has emerged as a central strand of Serpentine's programme. Major presentations include a collection of Eduardo Paolozzi's sculptures (1987); Anish Kapoor's *Turning the World Upside Down* (2010); Lee Ufan's *Relatum – Stage* (2018–19); Christo and Jeanne-Claude's *London*



*Mastaba* in the Serpentine Lake (2018); *I LOVE YOU EARTH* by Yoko Ono (2021); Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's *In remembrance of the coming alien (Alienor)*(2022); Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg's *Pollinator Pathmaker* (2022–24); Atta Kwami's *Dzidzɔ kple amenuveve* (Joy and Grace) (2021-22); Gerhard Richter's *STRIP-TOWER* (2024); Yayoi Kusama's *Pumpkin* at the Round Pond (2024); Esther Mahlangu's mural *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (2024) and Giuseppe Penone's *Albero folgorato (Thunderstruck Tree)* (2012) and *Idee di pietra (Ideas of Stone)*, (2010 – 2024) on view until August 2026.

Proud to maintain free access for all visitors, Serpentine also reaches an exceptionally broad audience and maintains a profound connection with its local community.

To coincide with the presentation of the work, Serpentine will present three editions consigned from the SOTO Estate, in a site-specific displayed in the lobby of the South Gallery.

In addition, throughout the summer, Serpentine will feature a collection of children's products developed in collaboration with the Estate. This marks the first time the SOTO Estate has agreed to create and license products with any institution, making the initiative a significant milestone in extending the artist's legacy to wider audiences.

*Pénétrable BBL Jaune (1999; 2023 Edition)* is made possible by Britannia Financial Group, with wider support for Serpentine's Art in the Park programme provided by Kenneth C. Griffin via Griffin Catalyst, and Don Quixote Foundation.

### **About The National Lottery Heritage Fund**

Our vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future. That's why as the largest funder for the UK's heritage we are dedicated to supporting projects that connect people and communities to heritage, as set out in our strategic plan, Heritage 2033. Heritage can be anything from the past that people value and want to pass on to future generations. We believe in the power of heritage to ignite the imagination, offer joy and inspiration, and to build pride in place and connection to the past.

Over the next 10 years, we aim to invest £3.6billion raised for good causes by National Lottery players to make a decisive difference for people, places and communities.

[heritagefund.org.uk](https://heritagefund.org.uk)

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