

PRESS RELEASE

Dominique White
Deadweight

27 October 2024 – 16 February 2025



Dominique White, winner of the ninth edition of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women, presents *Deadweight*, a body of works made in 2024. After a premiere at Whitechapel Gallery in London (2 July – 15 September 2024), White has conceived a new exhibition design adapted to the spaces of Collezione Maramotti in Reggio Emilia.

A thought-provoking exploration of rebellion and transformation, *Deadweight* comprises four large-scale sculptural works which pursue the artist's interest in creating new worlds for Blackness, as well as her fascination with the metaphoric potency and regenerative power of the sea.

The title *Deadweight* derives from a nautical term that compresses everything on a ship into a single unit, one which determines the ship's ability to float and function as intended. White deliberately inverts this concept, offering disruption as opposed to stability – a reckoning with the tipping point of the ship, to offer the possibility of emancipation through abolition.

The works combine force and fragility: undulating angular structures in which metals have been manipulated into shapes evocative of anchors, a ship's hull, mammal carcasses or skeletons.

They are lost or abandoned material forms that, through White's treatment, become symbols of defiance.

As part of the process, the sculptures were immersed in the Mediterranean Sea: an act that was both physical and poetic, to explore the transformative effect of water on material objects. The resulting forms display the rust and oxidation of the metal and the fragmentation of organic elements such as sisal, raffia and driftwood, while carrying the lingering scent of seawater.

The new commission weaves together concepts of Afrofuturism, Afro-pessimism and Hydrarchy – philosophies central to White's artistic investigation and practice. Her work envisions an Afro future located outside of traditional utopian science fiction, in an oceanic realm with the potential to offer fluid, rebellious realities, liberated from capitalist and colonial influence. White's sculptures, or 'beacons', recall sea-bound, imagined worlds which prophesize the emergence of the Stateless: "a [Black] future that hasn't yet happened, but must."

Deadweight developed out of White's winning proposal for the ninth edition of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women, and was made during a six-month residency organized by Collezione Maramotti. Specifically tailored to support, inform and help realize the work, this residency allowed White to travel through Agnone, Palermo, Genoa, Milan and Todi, where she worked with academics, researchers and specialists in naval and maritime history and the Mediterranean slave trade, visited historic foundries and artisan workshops and learned new skills from experts in historic, traditional and contemporary metalworking techniques. A [brief documentary](#), available online, describes the artist's residency experience in Italy.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue containing essays by Alexis Pauline Gumb and Olamiju Fajemisin, a conversation between the artist and Bina von Stauffenberg and three poems by June Jordan.

The biannual Max Mara Art Prize for Women was established in 2005 and is a collaboration between Whitechapel Gallery, Max Mara and since 2007 Collezione Maramotti. It is the only visual art prize of its kind for UK-based emerging women-identifying artists, aimed at promoting and nurturing them at a crucial stage in their careers through increased visibility, and by giving them the space, time and resources to develop an ambitious new work.

The previous prize winners are: Emma Talbot, Helen Cammock, Emma Hart, Corin Sworn, Laure Prouvost, Andrea Büttner, Hannah Rickards and Margaret Salmon.

The judging panel for the ninth Max Mara Art Prize for Women was chaired by curator Bina von Stauffenberg, with a jury of art-world experts comprising gallerist Rózsa Farkas, artist Claudette Johnson, writer Derica Shields, collector Maria Sukkar and Whitechapel Gallery Director Gilane Tawadros.

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Free admission to the exhibition during the opening hours:
Thursday and Friday, 2:30 pm – 6:30 pm
Saturday and Sunday, 10:30 am – 6:30 pm
Closed: 1 November, 25–26 December, 1 and 6 January

Info

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Notes to Editors:

About Dominique White

Dominique White has a BA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths and a Foundation in Art and Design from Central Saint Martins (London, UK).

Recent solo exhibitions and presentations include: *Destruction of Order*, VEDA (Florence, Italy, 2024); *Dominique White and Alberta Whittle: Sargasso Sea*, ICA Philadelphia (Philadelphia, USA, 2024); *When Disaster Strikes...*, Kunsthalle Münster (Münster, Germany, 2023-24), *May You Break Free and Outlive Your Enemy*, La Casa Encendida (Madrid, Spain, 2023) and *Statements*, Art Basel (Basel, Switzerland, 2022).

Recent group exhibitions include: *Afterimage*, MAXXI L'Aquila (L'Aquila, Italy, 2022-23); *Love*, Bold Tendencies (London, UK, 2022); *Techno Worlds*, Art Quarter Budapest, commissioned by Goethe-Institut (travelling, 2021-25).

White was awarded the 2022 Foundwork Artist Prize (USA) and has received awards from Artangel (UK), the Henry Moore Foundation (UK) in 2020 and the Roger Pailhas Prize (Art-O-Rama, FR) in conjunction with her solo presentation with VEDA in 2019.

White was in residency at Sagrada Mercancía (Chile), Triangle France – Astérides (France) and La Becque (Switzerland) in 2020 and 2021.

About Max Mara Art Prize for Women

Now in its ninth edition, the Max Mara Art Prize for Women, is a biennial award established in 2005 by **Whitechapel Gallery** and **Max Mara** with the further participation of **Collezione Maramotti** since 2007. It is the only visual art prize of its kind for UK-based emerging women-identifying artists, set up to identify, nurture and support them at a crucial stage in their careers by offering them the opportunity and resources to create an ambitious new work. The prize is open to women-identifying artists of any age who live and work in the United Kingdom and have not previously had a major solo exhibition. For each edition a jury, comprising a gallerist, critic, artist and collector, and chaired by the Whitechapel Gallery Director, submits a longlist of women-identifying artists, from which a final shortlist of five is chosen. The winner, selected on the strength of their proposal for the prize, is awarded a bespoke six-month Italian residency, organized by Collezione Maramotti, as well as a dedicated exhibition at both Whitechapel Gallery and Collezione Maramotti. Collezione Maramotti also acquire the work for their world-class art collection, completing the cycle of support for the artist. The Max Mara Art Prize for Women is distinct and exceptional in recognizing and supporting the creative process, and was awarded the British Council Arts & Business International Award in 2007. Further details on the prize and its history can be found at [here](#).

Previous winners of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women:

- **Emma Talbot (2019 – 22)** – Talbot's (b. 1969) installation *The Age/L'Età* comprised animation, free-hanging painted silk panels, three-dimensional works and drawings. The project explores themes of representation and ageing, power and governance, and attitudes towards nature. For the Max Mara Art Prize for Women, Talbot imagined a future environment where humankind encounters the disastrous consequences of late capitalism and must look to more ancient and holistic ways of crafting and belonging – which rethink ancient power structures and celebrate the natural world – in order to survive. Talbot took part in *The Milk of Dreams*, the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, curated by Cecilia Alemani.
- **Helen Cammock (2017 – 19)** – Cammock (b. 1970) presented a film, a series of vinyl cut prints, a screenprinted frieze and an artist's book interweaving women's

stories of loss and resilience with seventeenth-century Baroque music by female composers, exploring the concept of lament in women's lives across histories and geographies in her exhibition *Che si può fare*. After winning the Max Mara Art Prize for Women, she was awarded the Turner Prize 2019 together with Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Oscar Murillo and Tai Shani.

- **Emma Hart (2015 – 17)** – Hart's (b. 1974) large-scale installation *Mamma Mia!* consists of a family of large ceramic heads; the space inside them is filled with vivid patterns, designed and hand-painted by Hart after researching the traditional designs and methods of Italian maiolica. This project is the culmination of her investigation into pattern: whether in visual patterns, or psychological patterns of behaviour.
- **Corin Sworn (2013 – 15)** – Sworn (b. 1976) created a working drawing from the commedia dell'arte improvised plays originating in sixteenth-century Italy, where they continue to be of great cultural importance. Her installation titled *Silent Sticks* consists in a dramatic stage set with props, costumes, sound and video elements. She was awarded the Leverhulme Prize 2015 which recognizes the achievement of outstanding researchers whose work has already attracted international recognition and whose future career is exceptionally promising.
- **Laure Prouvost (2011 – 13)** – Prouvost (b. 1978) created an ambitious large-scale installation for her Max Mara Art Prize exhibition *Farfromwords*, inspired by the aesthetic and sensuous pleasures of Italy and plays on the historic idea of visiting the Mediterranean for inspiration. In 2013 she was awarded the Turner Prize. Her project *Deep See Blue Surrounding You* was presented in the French pavilion at the 2019 Venice Biennale.
- **Andrea Büttner (2009 – 11)** – Büttner's (b. 1972) *The Poverty of Riches* explored the intersection of religion, art and the condition of the artist in the contemporary world. Including woodcuts, cloths, photographs and objects she transformed the exhibition space into a space of contemplation. Part of her project was included in the Whitechapel Gallery's landmark exhibition *Adventures of the Black Square* in 2015.
- **Hannah Rickards (2007 – 09)** – The prize enabled Rickards (b. 1979) to realize *No, there was no red.*, an ambitious two-screen film she had been researching before winning the Prize. She was also awarded the Leverhulme Prize in 2015 and had a major exhibition at Modern Art Oxford in 2014.
- **Margaret Salmon (2005 – 07)** – Salmon (b. 1975) travelled to Italy and created *Ninna Nanna*, a triptych of black and white films exploring themes of motherhood. She took part to *Think with the senses, Feel with the mind: Art in the present tense* the 52th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, curated by Robert Storr.

About Max Mara

Founded in 1951 by the late visionary Achille Maramotti, Max Mara is the embodiment of Italian luxury and style: a contemporary collection of ready-to-wear and accessories designed for today's powerful woman. Recognized for its timeless designs and luxurious fabrics, Max Mara is the epitome of elegance, known for its chic coats, sharp suits and modern accessories. Max Mara is distributed in 2,500 locations in more than 100 countries worldwide. The Max Mara Fashion Group counts nine brands within its portfolio. The company remains privately held and managed by the Maramotti family. www.maxmara.com

About Collezione Maramotti

Collezione Maramotti is a private contemporary art collection which opened to visitors in 2007, housed in the former headquarters of the Max Mara company in Reggio Emilia. It includes a permanent collection of more than 200 works from 1950 to 2019, while regularly presenting new projects and commissions from international mid-career and emergent artists. www.collezionemaramotti.org

About Whitechapel Gallery

Whitechapel Gallery was founded in 1901 with the aim of bringing great art to the people of East London. From the outset, the gallery has put forward a bold programme of exhibitions and educational activities, driven by the desire to enrich

the cultural offer for local communities and provide new opportunities for extraordinary artists from across the globe to showcase their works to UK audiences, often for the first time. It has presented groundbreaking solo shows ranging from artists as diverse as Barbara Hepworth (1954), Jackson Pollock (1958), Helio Oiticica (1969), Gilbert & George (1971), Eva Hesse (1979), Frida Kahlo (1982), Sonia Boyce (1988), Sophie Calle (2010), Zarina Bhimji (2012), Emily Jacir (2015), William Kentridge (2016), Theaster Gates (2021) and Nicole Eisenman (2023), to thought-provoking exhibitions that reflect key artistic and cultural concerns. www.whitechapelgallery.org