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Five Years of the Frieze x Deutsche Bank Emerging Curators Fellowship

Deutsche Bank

In Collaboration with **Deutsche Bank**

In its five years, the programme has helped young, diverse curators start work in leading UK musuems and galleries. They explain its impact

IN FRIEZE | 15 MAY 25

'If you want to feel optimistic about the future,' says Gus Casely-Hayford, director of London's V&A East, 'have a look at the Frieze Deutsche Bank Fellows: they are the future we could only hope for.'

In this video, four of the particpants in the **Frieze x Deutsche Bank Emerging Curators Fellowship** explain why the programme – which Casely-Hayford describes as 'one of the few initiatives making real strides in curatorial diversity' – has been so vital for them.

The fellowship, which supports Black and global majority heritage curators through 12-month, full-time, paid placements within leading arts organizations, **was established in 2020** amid the Covid pandemic and a time of self-reflection on the part of UK museums and galleries. 'Our sector needed to change,' Casely-Hayford says. 'This nation is brilliant at innovation, but innovation without equity is not something we should be going for.'

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To give some context to this, the 2022 **<u>Art Fund Report on Curatorial</u> <u>Diversity</u> cites statistics from studies of the sector undertaken in 2018 and 2021. The 2018 research by Create estimated that only 2.7% of workers in UK museums, galleries and libraries were from minority-ethnic backgrounds. In 2021, it was reported that, across all organizations and disciplines supported through Arts Council England's national portfolio, museums had the lowest rate of ethnic diversity, with only about 6% of workers identifying as being Black, Asian, or Ethnically Diverse.**

In its five years, the Emerging Curators Fellowship has partnered with London's Chisenhale Gallery, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead, Birmingham's IKON Gallery and The Whitworth Gallery in Manchester, as well as V&A East. Middlesborough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA) is set to be the 2025–26 host institution. It will will receive a £45,000 grant to cover the fellowship costs, inclusive of the Fellow's salary, expenses, travel and research. Recruitment for this year's Fellow will commence in the summer of 2025, with the successful candidate announced during Frieze London 2025.

'My relationship to museums and galleries growing up was very educational,' says Sophia Harari, Curatorial Fellow at The Whitworth. '[The scheme] was an opportunity to engage with them in a way that felt more meaningful.'

V&A East Curatorial Fellow Ben Swaby Selig agrees that what the participants bring to their institutions is as valuable as the experience they gain working there: 'There's a long history where museums are the arbiter of truth. A curator is trying to expand on what that notion of "truth" means. Also, that there isn't one truth: it's many people's voices, many people's stories.'

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Ja'Lisa Arnold Wins the Deutsche Bank Frieze Los Angeles Film Award



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That diversity of message – as well as of those taking part – is one of the things that makes Frieze Deutsche Bank Emerging Curators Fellowship so galvanizing for the future direction of UK arts organisations, as well as establishing a generation of young curators entering the field used to having their voices heard.

'It's very rare to see people like me in these massive institutions,' says Kinnari Saraiya, Curatorial Fellow at Baltic. 'I do carry that with a sense of responsibility but also in a very joyous way.'

Watch the full video for more.

About the Fellowship

Launched in 2020, the Emerging Curators Fellowship reflects Frieze and Deutsche Bank's wider commitment to amplify diverse and underrepresented voices in the UK art world. Designed to address the significant lack of diversity in curatorial practice in the UK – the area of arts and heritage with the lowest proportion of Black and global majority professionals – the initiative supports emerging curators through 12-month, full-time, paid fellowships within leading arts organizations.

Futher Information

To keep up to date on all the latest news from Frieze, sign up to the newsletter at **frieze.com**, and follow @friezeofficial on **Instagram** and **X**, and Frieze Official on **Facebook**.

Deutsche Bank is the global lead partner of Frieze, continuing its legacy of celebrating artistic excellence on an international scale.



The 2025 Frieze Los Angeles Film Award Fellows Introduce Their Films





'Grief Cannot Exist Without Joy' by Ja'Lisa Arnold

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