

# Stephen Friedman Gallery

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Yinka Shonibare CBE RA sculptures sold to fund fellowship for Black and POC curators at V&A East

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It's time to "to grasp the nettle", says the museum's director Gus Casely-Hayford of the Frieze x Deutsche Bank Emerging Curators Fellowship.

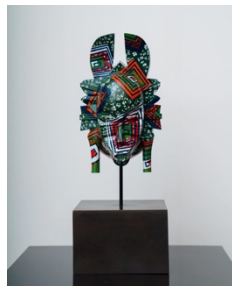


Image: Yinka Shonibare CBE's Hybrid Mask II (K'peliye'e, 2021). Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Ben Broomfield

The British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare CBE has created a special edition of 50 sculptures to help support a 12-18 month fellowship for a Black or POC curator.

The Emerging Curators Fellowship, produced by Frieze and supported by Deutsche Bank, "aims to increase accessibility, representation and social mobility within the arts" and "to grow and deepen curatorial practice in some of the UK's leading public art institutions".

The 2021 fellow will work at V&A East, a new outpost for the arts and design museum being built on the edge of the 2012 Olympic park in Stratford, East London. It will feature a self-guided open storage space, planned to open in 2024, while the main museum is now due to open in 2025.

V&A East's director, Gus Casely-Hayford, says the fellow will be able to help with moving over quarter of a million objects on to the site, as well as contributing to the creation of the exhibition and community programmes. "It's a once in a generation opportunity to help us shape a new museum, a new kind of museum, from the very ground up."

Inspired by Shonibare's recent series of African masks, the work will feature one of Shonibare's signature vibrant Dutch wax batik patterns, exploring the relationship between African aesthetics and Western Modernism. The edition of 50 is priced at £1,500 + VAT and available online from [frieze.com](http://frieze.com) and at the Frieze art fairs in London next week. All the money raised will benefit the fellowship, and one work will be made available via a free prize draw.

The Emerging Curators Fellowship was established in 2020, and the first partnership was with East London's Chisenhale Gallery and the artist Idris Khan. The Chisenhale's director, Zoé Whitley, says: "A years-long conversation between me and [Frieze artistic director] Eva Langret about our personal journeys into careers in the arts as Black women took on new urgency as we took on leadership roles. We asked ourselves how we could create additional routes into the sector, seeing as barriers to access based on race, class and disability can be even greater now than when we were starting out."

For Casely-Hayford too, the fellowship is an important step in removing the barriers to careers in the arts faced by people of colour.

"It's been too long for us to continue to make excuses and say that we'll sort it out tomorrow. I think we now have to grasp the nettle and begin to deliver on this. At V&A we are going to make sure that we're not in a generation looking back with a degree of regret. And this fantastic programme... is one of the many answers we are deploying to resolve this very urgent issue."

The fellowship is open to UK-based emerging curators who identify as Black, Asian or ethnic minority. Applicants will be required to make a written application outlining the change they want to see implemented in the sector.