



## Flora Yukhnovich at the Wallace Collection

June - October 2024

The Wallace Collection has announced an exciting 2024 collaboration with British artist Flora Yukhnovich (b.1990), renowned for her contemporary interpretation of Rococo paintings.

Drawing inspiration from the French Rococo – whose leading exponents included Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684-1721), François Boucher (1703-1770) and Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806) – Yukhnovich creates extraordinary, large-scale paintings, which move between representation and abstraction.

Home to the most important collection of François Boucher's paintings worldwide, the Wallace Collection has invited Yukhnovich to create two new works inspired by his oeuvre. During his lifetime, Boucher became the most fashionable artist in France under the patronage of Madame de Pompadour (1721-1764), Louis XV's powerful mistress, whose refined tastes would influence French art for two decades. His celebrated and influential paintings have had an enduring influence on Yukhnovich's work.

Yukhnovich's work also addresses the traditional male gaze, inherent in several of her sources of inspiration and perhaps exemplified by one of the Wallace's most famous paintings, Fragonard's *The Swing* (1767). She challenges this trope by playing with the received notions of femininity and gender through colour and form and, by using dynamic and rhythmic brushwork, she adopts the 'language' of the Rococo through a filter of contemporary cultural references.

Flora's paintings will temporarily replace two works by François Boucher at the top of the grand staircase on the landing of Hertford House, a unique space at the Collection which displays only works by this undisputed master of the Rococo.

Boucher's two large scenes, *Pastoral with a Bagpipe Player* (1749) and *Pastoral with a Couple near a Fountain* (1749), will be moved to a white-walled contemporary display space on the ground floor. The paintings will be replaced by the new Yukhnovich works for the duration of the display; the works will hang as part of the Collection's display, immersed in the 18th century and conversing with the works by Boucher surrounding them.

This juxtaposition of new with old will invite visitors to overturn any preconceptions they may have. The display will ask how we can still connect with the Rococo style today? *Flora Yukhnovich at the Wallace Collection* enquires what are the similarities between today and the 18th-century in France? How does the setting or showing of art change our view of it? And how can we re-evaluate history by combining the contemporary with the traditional?

Announcing the collaboration with Flora Yukhnovich, Dr Xavier Bray, Director of The Wallace Collection, says: “*Flora Yukhnovich creates mesmerising, painterly works which remind us of the influence that the 18th century still exerts on our visual taste. I hope that her work will open up the Collection to a new generation of art lovers, who have yet to discover the joys of François Boucher, and will also give those who know the Collection well an opportunity to see it with fresh eyes.*”

From her studio in Bermondsey, Flora Yukhnovich comments: “*I couldn’t be more excited to work on this project with Xavier and the Wallace Collection! I have been visiting since I was a student to immerse myself in the 18th century and to study the Boucher paintings. They have been incredibly important to me, finding their way into many of my paintings over the years. It will be such a privilege to see my work in dialogue with the paintings that have inspired them for so long.*”

## **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

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François Boucher, *Pastoral with a Couple near a Fountain*, 1749 © The Trustees of the Wallace Collection

Flora Yukhnovich in her London studio, February 2022. Photo: Eva Herzog © Flora Yukhnovich. Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro (detail)

François Boucher, *Pastoral with a Bagpipe Player*, 1749 © The Trustees of the Wallace Collection

### **About the artist**

Born in 1990, **Flora Yukhnovich** completed her MA at the City & Guilds of London Art School in 2017. She had her first solo exhibition at Brocket, London, in December 2017 and has exhibited at Parafin, London, GASK, the Gallery of the Central Bohemian Region, Czech Republic, the Jerwood Gallery Hastings and at Blenheim Walk Gallery, Leeds Arts University, UK. Previous solo exhibitions with Victoria Miro include *Thirst Trap*, 2022, and *The Venice Paintings* and *Barcarole*, both held in 2020. Collections include the Government Art Collection, London, UK; Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC, USA; The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Canada and National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia. In 2018 she completed The Great Women Artists Residency at Palazzo Monti, Brescia, Italy. Yukhnovich is one of the first artists to take part in a new series of solo exhibitions responding to the collections of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, titled *Ashmolean NOW*, currently on view until 14 January 2024.

**François Boucher** (b Paris, 1703; d Paris, 1770) was not only a celebrated painter but also an accomplished draughtsman, etcher, and designer, whose work best characterises the frivolous and superficial nature of life in the French court during the mid-18th century. Boucher’s father Nicolas was a minor painter, who probably trained his son before he went on to briefly study under François Lemoyne. Despite winning the Prix de Rome in 1723, there were insufficient funds to pay for his scholarship and for the next few years Boucher earned a living as a printmaker, his work including etchings after drawings by Watteau. In 1728 he was able to travel to Rome at his own expense and returned to Paris in 1731, where he soon embarked upon on a varied, prolific, and enormously successful career, punctuated by many accolades and honours.

### **About the Wallace Collection**

As one of Britain's preeminent cultural institutions, the **Wallace Collection** is home to one of the most significant ensembles of fine and decorative arts in the world. Highlights include oil paintings from the 14th to the late 19th centuries by artists such as Titian, Velázquez, Rubens and Van Dyck; princely arms and armour; and one of the finest collections of 18th-century French paintings and decorative arts. Visitors can also enjoy superb medieval and Renaissance objects, including Limoges enamel, maiolica, glass and bronzes. Displayed at Hertford House, former home to Sir Richard and Lady Wallace, this outstanding collection is displayed in a manner designed to evoke the lives and tastes of its founders, creating a special ambiance that remains an essential part of its charm.

[www.wallacecollection.org](http://www.wallacecollection.org)

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### **FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES**

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