

Barbara Walker: *Any Time, Any Place, Any Where*

Exhibition: 22 March–3 May 2025

Victoria Miro Venice, San Marco 1994, 30124 Venice, Italy



Barbara Walker, *Self Portrait I (Venice)*, 2025
Conté and charcoal on paper
100.5 x 70.5 cm
39 5/8 x 27 3/4 in
© Barbara Walker
Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro

Victoria Miro is delighted to present an exhibition by Barbara Walker. Completed during a recent residency with the gallery in Venice, this new body of work features self-portraits created in dialogue with Old Masters and the experience of being an anonymous figure immersed in the city.

Described by the art historian Eddie Chambers as ‘one of the most talented, productive and committed artists of her generation’, Barbara Walker is acclaimed for works that tell contemporary stories hinged on historical circumstances, often employing portraiture to invite the viewer to look beyond anonymising acts of categorisation. The issues central to Walker’s practice of belonging, power, visibility and representation are here turned inwards as the artist spent extended time in Venice, negotiating her relationship to the Old Master works she viewed in museums such as the Ca’ Rezzonico, in tandem with the experience of being an anonymous figure in a city of endlessly shifting light, water and reflection.

While Walker has often referenced archival material to confer visibility on the lives of others, in these new works, the artist herself becomes the central subject. She drew inspiration from Old Masters including Veronese, in particular his use of light, and Tintoretto, whose employment of tone and exaggerated perspective to create a sense of unfolding drama, was especially influential. An unexpected engagement with the Italian Rococo painter Rosalba Carriera, acclaimed as a pastel portraitist who often portrayed visitors to Venice, further shaped her approach to these new self-portraits and the conventions of female representation.

Encircling these works are ideas of freedom, vulnerability, permanence, transience, public perception and private reflection. Working in charcoal enabled Walker to experiment with a variety of techniques. Her confident stance is one of self-confrontation, while her mark-making explores different emotional registers, at times calm, at others turbulent and unpredictable. The resulting drawings capture the body in a specific time and space, simultaneously dispersing it to become part of a broader, more elusive reality, while concepts of change in relation to identity, crucial to Walker's practice, are mirrored in Venice's transient nature, constantly shifting with the tides and seasons. This exhibition is the Spring and starting point for a new body of work.

About the artist

Barbara Walker MBE, RA, is a British artist based in Birmingham, UK. Current and forthcoming institutional exhibitions include *Being Here*, the first major survey of the artist's work, organised by The Whitworth, Manchester, UK, where it was on view 4 October 2024–26 January 2025, and Arnolfini, Bristol, UK, where it is on view 8 March–25 May 2025, and the group exhibition *Acts of Creation: On Art and Motherhood*, a Hayward Gallery Touring exhibition on view at Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA), UK, 19 April–13 July 2025.

Previous solo institutional exhibitions include *Place, Space and Who*, Turner Contemporary, Margate, UK (2019); *Vanishing Point*, Jerwood Gallery, Hastings, UK (2018); *Shock and Awe*, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, UK (2016); *Sub Urban*, the James Hockey Gallery, part of the University for the Creative Arts in Farnham, UK (2015).

Her works have been included in significant group exhibitions in the UK and internationally including: *The Time is Always Now: Artists Reframe the Black Figure*, which was first on view at the National Portrait Gallery, London, UK, in 2024 and recently at Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA (2024–2025); *Untold Lives*, Kensington Palace, London, UK (2024); Sharjah Biennial, United Arab Emirates (2023); *Life Between Islands, Caribbean-British Art 1950s–Now*, Tate Britain, London, UK (2021–2022), Lahore Biennale, Pakistan (2020); Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK (2019); *Zeichen*, MEWO Kunsthalle, Memmingen, Germany (2018); Diaspora Pavilion, 57th Venice Biennale, Italy (2017); *A Slice Through the World: Contemporary Artists' Drawings*, Modern Art Oxford, UK (2018); *The Gallery of Small Things*, Dakar Biennale, Senegal (2018).

Her work is held in private and public collections internationally, including the British Museum, London, UK; Government Art Collection, London, UK; Arts Council England, London, UK; Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, UK; Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, UK; Wellin Museum of Art, Hamilton College, Clinton, NY, USA; Yale Center for British Art, Connecticut, USA.

Walker was awarded the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Artist Bursary Award 2020 and Bridget Riley Fellowship 2020 at The British School at Rome, and received the inaugural Evelyn Williams Drawing Award in 2017 in association with the Jerwood Charitable Foundation. She was awarded an MBE in the 2019 New Year Honours for services to British Art. In 2023, she was elected to the Royal Academy of Arts and nominated for the Turner Prize.

For further press information please contact:

Victoria Miro Gabrielle Leung | Content and Communications Manager | gabrielle@victoria-miro.com | +44 (0)7375 789535

Rees & Co Yasmin Hyder | yasmin@reesandco.com | +44 (0)7791 979839