

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

Katy Hessel, "The best art and architecture of 2023," *The Guardian*, December 19, 2023

**The  
Guardian**

**2023 in Culture** Art and design

## The best art and architecture of 2023

Our critics' high points include a ceramic wedding cake you can climb inside to Alice Neel's fearless portraits, plus a new children's V&A and a school with lumpy yellow walls



📷 Quiet intimacy ... Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window (detail), by Johannes Vermeer. Photograph: Wolfgang Kreische/Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden

**Adrian Searle, Katy Hessel, Jonathan Jones and Oliver Wainwright**

Tue 19 Dec 2023 08.00 EST

### **Katy Hessel's best art shows of 2023**

#### **5. All the Beauty and the Bloodshed**

Laura Poitras's poignant documentary followed artist Nan Goldin and her fight to take down the Sackler name from museums. Running parallel to the story of the disgraced Sacklers is the [story of Goldin's life](#). My favourite quote from the film was: "Nan photographs from the other side" - a movingly accurate description of her work for how it embodies her ability to connect with her subjects with such depth and empathy.

#### **4. Christina Kimeze**

*White Cube, Paris*

Kimeze's debut solo show demonstrated her incredible ability to carve, through dazzling hues of oil pastel, tender scenes that stand on the threshold between two places - whether it be inside/outside, in water/on land, or reality/imagination. Fluidly rendered, often with a female figure amid a wilderness of palms, [Kimeze's paintings are quietly powerful](#) and are interspersed with speckles of glowing light.

#### **3. Clementine Keith Roach**

*Ben Hunter Gallery, London*

A former art historian turned set designer, West Country-based artist Keith-Roach is hailed for her embellished Greek-like pots that feel both ancient and surreal. This exhibition, twinned with her husband who worked in trompe l'oeil but in painting, centred on a relic-like basin adorned with casts of materials (old phones, paper bags, sponges, rolling pine, hot water bottles - acting as a cornice) industrial items (chains, a saw) and debris. A favourite aspect was a cast Jean Paul Gautier perfume bottle that referenced the Venus de Milo - a pertinent play on the commercialised and idealised female body. Going to a Keith-Roach show always offers up surprises, and leaves you entranced with the many layers held in one artwork.

## **2. Gwen John**

*Pallant House Gallery, Chichester*

I loved looking at Gwen John's intimate portraits of girls on the cusp of adolescence. Working at the dawn of the 20th century in Paris, John painted the newfound freedoms offered to women: she captured them in rooms of their own - paid for by themselves, and no longer under the guard of men - giving us an insight into their private worlds. This show reasserted the Welsh-born artist as a key player of modernity, and showed that painting doesn't need to shout to make an impact.

## **1. Carrie Mae Weems**

*Barbican, London*

This spellbinding exhibition brought together work by the US-born artist in such visionary ways. With elegance and beauty, through her art Weems connected the baroque with the present day - visually and culturally - and played with theatre and dance in her electrifying, immersive multi-screen films. Addressing urgent issues, on view were her photographs of erased signage in the wake of the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests, and photographs of herself standing stoically in front of glorified Roman monuments explored "the construction of power in western civilisation is materialised through architecture".



📷 *Untitled (Woman Standing Alone)* from *Kitchen Table Series* by Carrie Mae Weems, 1990. Photograph: Courtesy of the artist, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York/Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin