

The Centre of the Frame

Maud Sulter:
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New Hall Art Collection
Murray Edwards College,
Cambridge

4 September 2021 –
2 January 2022

Maud Sulter: The Centre of the Frame will spotlight the work of Scottish-Ghanaian artist Maud Sulter (1960–2008), whose practice is rooted in questioning the representation of Black women in art and literature. The exhibition brings together Sulter's iconic photographic series *Zabat* (1989), which features portraits of contemporary Black female figures dressed as the Greek Muses. It is drawn from public and private loans from across the UK.

In the introduction to *Maud Sulter: Passion* (2015), Sulter is quoted as saying:

'It's important for me as an individual, and obviously as a black woman artist, to put black women back in the centre of the frame – both literally within the photographic image, but also within the cultural institutions where our work operates.'



Maud Sulter *Clio (Portrait of Dorothea Smartt)* 1989
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Maud Sulter created *Zabat* in 1989 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the invention of photography. The series, which the artist called a 'diasporan family portrait', challenges the invisibility of Black women in art history. The photographs subvert usual representations of the Muses in Western art and highlight the connections between European and African histories and cultures.

Sulter herself has been largely left out of art history. This timely and necessary exhibition will be a unique opportunity to showcase the work of Sulter and her network of female collaborators. *Phalia (Portrait of Alice Walker)* was one of the first works to enter the New Hall Art Collection when it was established in the early 1990s. This display highlights the Collection's history and emphasises its ongoing significance in generating discussion around gender, race and representation.

Maud Sulter (1960–2008) was a Scottish-Ghanaian artist, poet and curator. Sulter grew up in Glasgow and moved to London at the age of 17 to study at the London College of Fashion. She later earned a Master's degree in Photographic Studies from the Derby School of Art. Throughout her career, Sulter interrogated the representation of Black women in the histories of art, photography and the media. She researched and reflected the complex experiences of the African diaspora in Europe.

Sulter's work is held in the Victoria and Albert Museum, Tate, Arts Council Collection, British Council Collection, Scottish Parliament, National Portrait Gallery, National Galleries of Scotland, City Art Centre Edinburgh, McManus Dundee, Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Leeds University Art Gallery, St Andrews University Museums, New Hall Art Collection, Cambridge, and numerous private collections.



Maud Sulter *Calliope* 1989
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Public Programme

The exhibition will be accompanied by a public programme of both online and in-person events, including curator-led tours, talks, screenings, a newly commissioned artist performance and a panel discussion in partnership with the Paul Mellon Centre for British Art. All events are free and open to the public. For more information and to book tickets, please follow us on social media or go to our website:

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About the New Hall Art Collection

The New Hall Art Collection is a collection of modern and contemporary art by women at Murray Edwards College. The largest of its kind in Europe, the Collection is on display across the iconic Brutalist building, designed by Chamberlin, Powell and Bon as a manifesto for the education of women.

The Collection was founded in 1986 with the acquisition of Mary Kelly's six-part work *Extase* and has evolved through gifts and loans from artists, donors and alumnae. Today it includes over 500 works by leading international artists, including Judy Chicago, Maggi Hambling, Lubaina Himid and Paula Rego.