

46 Museum Shows and Biennials to See This Summer



Gladys Nilsson, *Big Birthday*, 2010.
PD YOUNG/COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST

By Alex Greenberger
May 25, 2026

Spectacle in all its many forms is the big theme of the summer season, when big, glitzy projects will take over museums across the globe. Laure Prouvost has been given a wide playing field for a show about quantum physics at Paris's Grand Palais, while Carsten Höller is planning a vast exhibition for Beijing's UCCA Center

for Contemporary Art, the details of which he has largely kept secret. Meanwhile, Tomás Saraceno will bring his monumental sculptures to Munich's Haus der Kunst; a permanent land artwork by him is also going on view in his native Argentina.

He is hardly the only artist considering the land and all the histories embedded within it. Carolina Caycedo is having a show at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo, while the National Gallery of Canada is surveying contemporary Indigenous artists from Inuit Nunaat, Sápmi, and Denendeh. This is not exactly a new theme, of course, and Ana Mendieta was considering it before many others. Tate Modern is giving her a proper retrospective, in one of the season's most anticipated art events.

This period of relative quiet will also leave collectors, curators, critics, and artists with plenty of time to travel—perhaps to the Venice Biennale, which remains on view through November. It's not the biennial happening this season, however. Manifesta, a roving European biennial, this time touches down in Germany's Ruhr region, while two new biennial-style shows will launch in the Northeastern US. If you can't beat biennial fatigue, join it.

Below is a look at 46 museum exhibitions and biennials to see this summer.



Gladys Nilsson, *Gigantica*, 1964.

Photo : Courtesy the artist; Garth Greenan Gallery, New York; and Parker Gallery, Los Angeles/Collection of the artist

“Gleefully Askew: A Gladys Nilsson Retrospective” at Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, California

Famed for her contributions to the Chicago-based Hairy Who group of the 1960s, Gladys Nilsson has gained a cult following for her raucous paintings dense with people twisting around and through each other as they fly through space. These figurations have almost always been out of step with critical tastes, but she has continued producing them anyway, undaunted. It’s an attitude she attributed to her working-class upbringing. “There’s a lot to be said about that, the ability to continue on,” she told Frieze in 2020, just days before she turned 80. Class identity forms one focus of her biggest retrospective to date, which includes approximately 115 works.

July 19–November 29