

PRESS RELEASE

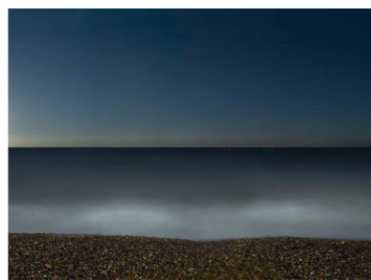
BORDERLANDS: From the Welsh Borders to Antarctica: twenty-two contemporary artists explore territory, identity and belonging

Hay Castle, Hay-on-Wye, Herefordshire, 15 May - 31 August 2026

- Meadow Arts presents a major exhibition across the historic interiors and grounds of Hay Castle in the border town of Hay on Wye
- Painting, photography, film and sculptural installations present alternative perspectives on borders and boundaries, real and imagined
- Artists: Larry Achiampong, Henna Asikainen, Iwan Bala, Maya Rose Edwards, Peter Finnemore, Leo Fitzmaurice, Ghazel, Shilpa Gupta, Mark Houghton, Gabriella Hirst, Verity Howard, Charlie Hurcombe, Hilary Jack, Delaine Le Bas, André Lichtenberg, Daniel MacCarthy, Hélène Muheim, Lucy + Jorge Orta, Sally Payen, Corinne Silva and Donovan Wylie



Lucy + Jorge Orta. *Antarctic Village No borders* (2026)



Top: Leo Fitzmaurice, *Arcadia* (2007),
Below: André Lichtenberg, *Impossible Utopia* (2016)

Meadow Arts presents *BorderLands: From the Welsh Borders to Antarctica: twenty-two contemporary artists explore territory, identity and belonging*, an exhibition in Hay Castle in the Welsh border town of Hay on Wye between 15 May and 31 August 2026. *BorderLands* is made possible thanks to funding from The de Laszlo Foundation and the Colwinston Charitable Trust 30th Anniversary Fund.

At a time of renewed geopolitical tensions and increasing polarization, when issues around identity, belonging and territory are amplified, borders are often the focus for socio-political and cultural disunity. Set within the thousand year old border fortress of Hay Castle, *BorderLands* attempts a more layered understanding of borders and explores their ambiguity.

The artists in *BorderLands* span a range of practices including painting, photography, film, sculpture, walking, drawing and textiles. Whilst some focus on the shifting borders and communities of the English/Welsh landscape, others draw on Africa, Antarctica, Spain,

Morocco and Northern Ireland, and specific sites such as Hadrian's Wall and the English Channel to explore socio-political issues, identity, environment, protest, migration and colonisation. Others redraw the world map, erasing borders and countries, or investigate historical, mythical and abstract places.

BorderLands is part of Meadow Arts' three-year programme marking their 25th anniversary, which attempts to uncover a more nuanced understanding of borders. Specially commissioned artist **Maya Rose Edwards** has worked with communities in three border towns to reimagine the border as a living, evolving space through talking and walking, beating the bounds and collaborative map making. In 2027 Meadow Arts will present a new commission for the programme by artist **David Blandy**.

From the 12th century Gate Tower of Hay Castle flies a large flag from **Lucy + Jorge Orta's** *Antarctic Village No borders* (2026), patterned with the flags of many nations. Beyond a medieval gate leading to the Castle's terraced lawn is *Arcadia* (2007), **Leo Fitzmaurice's** three traffic signs that playfully allude to the rural idyll of the scenic borderlands beyond.

Inside the Castle, on the ground floor of the Great Hall two of **Lucy + Jorge Orta's** domed tents from *Antarctica* (2015), stitched with second-hand clothing, flags and gloves, hint at struggles for freedom of movement and safety. Above the fireplace **Larry Achiampong's** new flag *Siblinghood* (2026) relates to attempts by the African Union to allow African citizens to travel visa-free across the continent. In front of the fireplace mimicking a protective fireback, **Mark Houghton's** plate-bronze *Plan* (2019) contains the folds and creases of a world map but without the borders of countries. **Maya Rose Edwards'** maps, documentary film and soundtrack, and her long sculptural hedge created with hedge layer **Trefor Prothero** suggest alternative ways to create borders without identified routes, rights of way or borderlines.

Nested within *BorderLands* on the Great Hall Mezzanine artists **André Lichtenberg**, **Donovan Wylie**, **Charlie Hurcombe**, and **Henna Asikainen** present works investigating the borders of the United Kingdom. Lichtenberg's large-scale photograph *Impossible Utopia* (2016) taken following the Brexit referendum, depicts a seascape that stretches from a beach in southern England to the French coast. Wylie's image from *British Watchtowers* (2007) of a surveillance tower on the Northern Irish border weaves the presence of conflict and borders into daily life. From Wylie's *Lighthouse* series a photograph taken on a key date in the Brexit timeline depicts the Irish Sea, as a symbol of identity and insularity. Hurcombe's meandering 7-metre, 22-piece *Wanderlust* (2024) made from an oak felled by a storm on the Welsh Borders, draws on ideas of separation and connection. In *Future Pasts* (2023), a performative protest filmed by drone, Asikainen explores nature, community and belonging in an act linking origin to destination along Hadrian's Wall.

On the inside walls of the ruined tower in the Castle's medieval keep **Hilary Jack's** new edition of her neon installation *No Borders* (2026) quotes aviator Amelia Earhart's response to the world from above: *NO BORDERS JUST HORIZONS ONLY FREEDOM*, a proposal for landscapes without borders that resonates deeply with current conflicts.

In the main gallery space under the eaves of Hay Castle's Jacobean manor house, **Ghazal's** *Untitled* (1990), superimposes a Telex message sent from Iran by her father during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War over an inverted faded map of the country. Now confined in Tehran herself, the work becomes her own reassurance of safety in a new and different war. **Shilpa Gupta's** *There Is No Border Here* (2007) is a national flag made from high-visibility security tape in the form of a lyrical text expressing personal attempts to deal with control. **Gabriella Hirst's** *Skin I* (2025) rendered in ornate wrought iron fencing, garden planters with plants, and steel security blades presents the domestic garden as a fiercely defended territory. **Hélène Muheim's** *Ending Frozen Line* (2022), is a diptych drawing of a mountain range created from

eye make-up powders and graphite that amplifies the geological power of landscapes as indivisible entities where humankind has little agency.

Corinne Silva's large photographic image *Imported Landscapes* (2010), features photographs of Moroccan scenery installed on huge billboards in southern Spain, physically connecting the landscapes of two countries with a history of exchange and conflict. **Daniel McCarthy's** painting *The Crossing*, of a pair of feet edging along a log over water, explores the watery divisions that separate territories and the instability that borders engender. *Drovers Lane* (2025), **Verity Howard's** abstract ceramic sculpture made from the earth of the Welsh borderlands is inspired by the old drovers' routes around Offa's Dyke that switched across English and Welsh borders. **Delaine Le Bas's** photograph, *No State Control* (2025) draws on her familial Romany heritage, asking "Who puts who in the boxes and who labels the boxes? Who has the right to call who what?"

Sally Payen's painting *Cross stitch through the Dirty Page of History* remembers the women's peace camp of Greenham Common in the 1980s, representing the mesh fencing with the repetitive, decisively gendered marks of cross stitch. In *Lesson 56* (1997), **Peter Finnemore's** photographic blend of history and myth centres on the pages of a history book that his Welsh grandmother used as a schoolgirl, portraying her country as seen from the English side of the border. Iwan Bala's three works, *Castles Everywhere / Cestyll Bobman* (2014-2025), *Colony / Cambromundo* (2010-2015), and (created especially for the exhibition) *On the Borderlands / Ar y ffin-diroedd* (2026) are vigorous 'fieldnotes' contemplating Wales' place in culture, society and history.

Artistic Director of Meadow Arts, Anne de Charmant said, "In this troubled period of global uncertainty and socio-political tensions, Meadow Arts wanted to attempt a more layered understanding of borders through the contribution of twenty-one artists. Our location in the rural region known as the Welsh Border creates a fertile environment for exploring new perspectives and envisaging new connections, with Hay Castle the perfect host for such a project."

Tom True, Executive Director of Hay Castle said, "Hay Castle sits on the Welsh border itself, so it feels like a particularly fitting place to explore ideas of borders, belonging and landscape. *BorderLands* brings contemporary art into dialogue with the castle's 900 year history and the landscape that surrounds it. It reflects our ambition for the castle to be a place where history, contemporary art and new ideas meet."

Mathew Prichard CBE, Chair of The Colwinston Trust said, "The Colwinston Trust is delighted to celebrate 30 years of working with many high-quality arts organisations across the UK by awarding a special Anniversary Grant to support exhibitions at Hay Castle, including the inaugural exhibition *BorderLands*, and the forthcoming exhibition *Within* by Rebecca Louise Law in an ambitious new contemporary arts offer for Mid Wales."

BorderLands (15 May - 31 August 2026) is presented in partnership with Hay Castle Trust. Made possible thanks to funding from The de Laszlo Foundation, the Colwinston Charitable Trust 30th Anniversary Fund and Arts Council England.

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PR

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NOTES TO EDITORS

BorderLands, 15 May - 31 August 2026, Hay Castle, Oxford Road, Hay on Wye, Herefordshire HR3 5DG. Opening times: Daily, 10:00am to 4:00pm. Telephone: 01497 820079. Email: info@haycastletrust.org

Admission: Adults £7.50 and ArtFund Members £3.75, entry valid for one year. 18 and under; Hay Castle Pass Holders; Historic Houses Members; and Friends of Hay Castle, all free. For further information www.haycastletrust.org

Events

Artist Walks and Talk

BorderLands Artists Walk Series: Sundays 5 July, Thursday 20 August Sunday 30 August, 13 September.

A series of walks along the Hay border devised by Sarah Price, a professional walking guide, and led by an artist. Through their own creative practices, each artist will encourage participants to connect with the textures, rhythms and hidden stories of the landscape.

Walks on 5 July, 20 & 30 August depart at 10am and return by 12pm.
Meet in front of Hay Castle main gates, Oxford Road, Hay-on-Wye HR3 5DG.

The walk on 13 September departs at 10am and returns by 12pm.
Meet Ridgebourne Road HR5 3EG.

Cost: £7.50 per ticket. Free for under 18's. All welcome.

BorderLands Talk, Hay Castle, 26 August 6:00-7:30pm

Featuring artists from *BorderLands* who discuss their practice and the broader themes within the exhibition. £5.00, free for under 18's.

Meadow Arts

Born in 2001, Meadow Arts has evolved to become an important part of the creative landscape across Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire, collaborating with a variety of significant partners and host locations. Meadow Arts collaborates with highly regarded heritage organisations, historic sites, museums, universities, landscapes and public spaces to present contemporary art projects in unexpected, often rural places that encourage new ideas and expand horizons.

Since 2001, Meadow Arts have worked with over 150 artists including Leah Gordon, Yinka Shonibare, Fiona Banner, Mat Collishaw, Pablo Bronstein, Heather and Ivan Morison, Marcus Coates, Shezad Dawood, Ryan Gander and Jasleen Kaur on new commissions, exhibitions and installations in a diverse range of places including Hardwick Hall, Croft Castle, Shrewsbury Museum & Galley, Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron, Hereford Cathedral and the Herbert Museum, Coventry.

Meadow Arts is an Arts Council England National Portfolio funded organisation presenting a regular programme of exhibitions, events, talks and workshops, which reach diverse audiences and engage with a wide range of participants in both town and countryside.

www.meadowarts.org

Hay Castle

Hay Castle is a restored medieval castle and contemporary cultural centre in the heart of Hay-on-Wye, Wales. Steeped in history but not confined by it, the castle reimagines what a heritage site can be. Reopened in 2022 following a major conservation project, the site combines its 12th-century tower and Jacobean mansion with bold contemporary design. The renovation was recognised with the RSAW Building of the Year Award 2024 and the RSAW Conservation Award 2024. It also enabled the castle to open to the public for the first time in 900 years. Run by Hay Castle Trust, an independent charity, the Castle presents exhibitions, commissions and public programmes across literature, history and the arts, serving as a platform for debate, creative practice and new ideas. It welcomes around 100,000 visitors each year.

www.haycastletrust.org

Colwinston Charitable Trust 30th Anniversary Fund

Established in 1995 by its Founder and Chairman, Mathew Prichard CBE, The Colwinston Charitable Trust distributes grants to UK Registered Charities delivering high quality work in the Live Performing Arts and the Visual Arts. High quality projects that help young people to better appreciate the possibilities the arts can offer are of particular interest, as well as collaborative projects that extend the range and reach of the activity to be funded.

The Trust derives its main income from royalties from *The Mousetrap*, the murder mystery written by Mathew's grandmother, Agatha Christie. The play opened in 1952 and has been running continuously ever since, and with over 30,000 performances, *The Mousetrap* has had by far the longest initial run of any play in history, and is the longest running show of any type in the world.

Applications in excess of £100,000 were invited from Arts organisations delivering ambitious, innovative and high-profile projects that aimed to help people appreciate the endless possibilities the Arts can offer. The Trust is especially interested in projects that demonstrate excellence in the relevant field and especially collaborative projects that assist organisations to share costs, skills and expertise, and that extend the range and reach of the activity to be funded. The Trust particularly encourages applications from Arts organisations working for the benefit of Wales. Since 1995, the Trust has supported more than 180 (182) arts organisations across the UK, awarding grants totalling £11,776,735. The five Trustees are Mathew C T Prichard CBE (Chair), Lucinda M Prichard (Vice Chair), Rebecca A Evans CBE, Martin P Tinney and Sian LI Williams.

www.colwinston.org.uk



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