Press Release
LR Vandy: Rise

14 March – 13 September 2026
The Weston Gallery and Outdoors

Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) presents *Rise*, an ambitious first solo museum exhibition by LR Vandy, spanning The Weston Gallery and outdoors.

LR Vandy, *Twist,* exhibition view at October Gallery, 2024. Courtesy the artist and October Gallery, London. Photo © Jonathan Greet. Courtesy Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

Rise introduces a major new body of work from LR Vandy that brings together large-scale rope installations, figurative sculpture and wall-based works to examine resilience, collective movement, and the material legacies of trade and labour. The title of the exhibition references ideas of protest, liberation, resilience and collective joy explored through rituals and dance.

LR Vandy's practice is grounded in material inquiry. Working from her studio at the Historic Dockyard in Chatham, Kent – one of only four remaining original Royal Navy Ropeyards still in operation – she has developed a sustained engagement with rope as both a physical medium and a carrier of historical

meaning. Vandy is interested in rope's entanglement in human history, its role in the development of civilisations and its inextricable links to colonial enslavement of people. An avid collector of curious and historical objects, the artist incorporates found and repurposed materials to explore processes of transformation, drawing attention to the social, economic and political systems embedded within everyday objects.

Vandy will transform The Weston Gallery into an immersive sculptural environment centred around a monumental rope maypole, *A Call to Dance*, created onsite at YSP. Twisting and reaching upward, the maypole draws on longstanding traditions of communal gathering, ritual and seasonal renewal. The artist continues to draw on histories of dance and the joy of collective expression, both linked to maypoles, along with their lesser-known association as sites of resistance.

LR Vandy, *Spinning a Yarn, 2025*. Courtesy the artist and October Gallery, London. Photo © LR Vandy. Courtesy Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

Surrounding this structure at the heart of the exhibition are other new works, primarily made onsite, including two spinning-top-like structures appearing to be precariously balanced and extending to the gallery's ceiling. Reinforcing Vandy's continued integration of the textile industry into her practice, the forms are based on wooden spindles used in the spinning process. Embodying movement and rhythm, the spinning tops will be partially wrapped in rope and the circular form at the base will be filled using an old maritime industry technique of discarded masses of rope called 'pudding'. Looping rope lengths will span the installation and will incorporate various cuffs and clamps that restrain the strands.

Other dancing figures of twisted and bound rope are suggestive of feminine forms and continue Vandy's challenge of the often-skewed representation of the female body. This energetic series, initiated in 2024, incorporates carefully considered details including hair cuffs and bindings that reference the violent histories of the trade in enslaved people. While the figures appear partially constrained, they embody a sense of freedom, resilience and joy. The figures are supported by a series of bespoke plinths, some made from found objects and others fabricated by the artist. The gabion-like structures are made with wire mesh and utilise various binding techniques that extend the rich material language of Vandy's practice.

New wall-based mandalas and circular forms made using traditional weaving loom shuttles, coloured threads and other found objects, including a wooden ship wheel and barrel rings, extend Vandy's investigation of pattern, labour and repetition.

Rise features a deliberate colour palette: green represents harvest and land; pale blue and yellow represent the sky and sun; gold references the mining industry, exploitation and trade; red for blood; and rich blue connects to the sought after natural dye that is harvested from the indigo plant. Between the 16th and 19th centuries, indigo was the only means to achieve a deep blue colour for clothing and became a symbol of wealth and status in the Western upper classes. Its production depended on the exploitation of land and enslaved labour across India, West Africa and the Americas, and the toxic processes involved caused widespread illness and death. By incorporating indigo, Vandy points to the entanglement of material culture with colonialism, slavery and environmental harm.

The exhibition highlights process as much as outcome. Vandy will work on site alongside the YSP team and local fabricators to produce key elements of the installation, reinforcing YSP's role as a centre for sculptural research, making and material experimentation. Drawing underpins her practice, but it is through working directly with rope, responding to its weight, resistance and inherent curve that forms emerge.

An outdoor sculptural work, *Dancing in Time: The Ties That Bind Us*, commissioned by National Museums Liverpool for the International Slavery Museum's 2023 Martin Luther King Pop Up series, will now overlook YSP's historic landscape. The five-metre-high rope structure crowned with willow will establish a dialogue between interior and exterior spaces and extends the exhibition's exploration of movement, scale and collective presence across the landscape.

Vandy says: *"YSP has provided me with a unique and exciting opportunity to create a site-specific installation – giving me the physical space to expand the scope of recurring themes and ideas within my practice. The amazing support from the curatorial and technical teams makes it possible to mount a complex, immersive exhibition intended as a complete, self-contained sensory experience rooted in materiality."*

Rise is presented in collaboration with October Gallery.

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LR Vandy, *Dancing in Time: Copper Bottom,* 2023. © LR Vandy. Collection of the National Museums Liverpool. Courtesy the artist and October Gallery, London. Photo © Jonathan Greet. Courtesy Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

LR Vandy, *Dancing in Time: Harlem Shake,* 2024. © LR Vandy. Courtesy the artist and October Gallery, London. Photo © Jonathan Greet. Courtesy Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

LR Vandy in front of *Dancing in Time: The Ties That Bind Us*. Installation view, 2023 National Museums of Liverpool. Photo © Pete Carr. Courtesy Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

LR Vandy. Photo © Jonathan Greet. Courtesy Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

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Check online for opening hours
Book tickets at ysp.org.uk

Social media

Instagram: @YSPsculpture
Facebook: @YorkshireSculpturePark
LinkedIn: Yorkshire Sculpture Park
#YSPSculpture

About LR Vandy

LR Vandy (born 1958) lives in London and works in Chatham Historic Dockyard, Chatham. She has a background in graphic design, printmaking, jewellery, furniture and set design. This multidisciplinary background underpins a practice that moves fluidly between sculpture, installation, and works on paper, with a strong emphasis on materiality, process, and form.

Vandy has exhibited widely in the UK and internationally, with solo exhibitions including *LR Vandy: Twist* (2024) and *LR Vandy: Hidden* (2019) at October Gallery, London. Vandy has participated in major group exhibitions and art fairs such as the *1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair* (London and New York), *Frieze Sculpture, Abu Dhabi Art*, and *Get Up, Stand Up Now* at Somerset House. Vandy's work is held in public collections including The British Museum, National Museums Liverpool, and the Africa First Collection, Tel Aviv. In 2023, Vandy completed the public commission *Dancing in Time: The Ties That Bind Us* for National Museums Liverpool, International Slavery Museum, Canning Dock, Liverpool. In 2024 and 2025, Vandy's large-scale works were exhibited in the COLAB exhibition, *Mary, Mary*, at The Artist's Garden, Temple Place, London.

About Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Awarded VisitEngland's gold accolade in 2023-24 for an outstanding visitor attraction, Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) is the leading international centre for modern and contemporary sculpture. Welcoming around 380,000 visitors each year, YSP is a registered charity and accredited museum situated in the 500-acre, 18th-century Bretton Hall estate in West and South Yorkshire.

YSP is the largest sculpture park in Europe. Founded in 1977 by Sir Peter Murray CBE it is currently led by Interim Director Kevin Rodd. It is the only place in Europe to see Barbara Hepworth's *The Family of Man* in its entirety, alongside a significant collection of sculpture, including works by Anthony Caro, Vanessa da Silva, Auke de Vries, Elisabeth Frink, Damien Hirst, Henry Moore, Marc Quinn, Ursula von Rydingsvard and Hank Willis Thomas, and site-specific works by Hemali Bhuta, Andy Goldsworthy, Alfredo Jaar, David Nash, Sean Scully and James Turrell.

YSP mounts a year-round temporary exhibitions programme including some of the world's leading artists across three indoor galleries and the outdoors. Highlights include exhibitions by Fiona Banner, Anthony Caro, Tony Cragg, Leonardo Drew, Robert Indiana, Amar Kanwar, KAWS, William Kentridge, Bharti Kher, Kimsooja, Joan Miró, Henry Moore, Lindsey Mendick, Annie Morris, Giuseppe Penone, Jaume Plensa, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Sean Scully, Chiharu Shiota, Yinka Shonibare CBE, David Smith, Joana Vasconcelos, Bill Viola and Erwin Wurm.

Across its 49-year history, YSP has worked with over 1,000 artists from more than 40 countries, on varied projects from short-term residencies to major surveys. YSP supports artists at vital stages in their careers and is rare in having the accommodation, workshops and expertise to enable open-ended and risk-taking practice, giving artists space, time and support to think and to develop new ideas.

Over this time, YSP has sought to ignite, nurture and sustain interest in and debate around contemporary art and sculpture, especially with those for whom art participation is not habitual or familiar. It enables open access to art, situations and ideas, and continues to re-evaluate and expand the approach to considering art's role and relevance in society. Supporting 40,000 people each year through YSP's learning programme, this innovative work develops ability, confidence and life aspiration in participants.

YSP's core work is made possible by investment from Arts Council England, Wakefield Council, Roger Evans, the Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation, The Garfield Weston Foundation and the Dunard Fund. YSP was named Art Fund Museum of the Year in 2014 and awarded the 2023 Visitor Attraction of the Year and Cultural Award in the Yorkshire Post Tourism Awards.

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