

# Hew Locke ARMADA

May 15 — Nov 1, 2025 | Newlyn Art Gallery, UK

“The presentation of Armada in Newlyn is a homecoming.” [Hew Locke](#)

[Hew Locke](#) is one of this country’s leading contemporary artists, with a practice that explores the language of colonial and post-colonial power, how different cultures fashion identities through visual symbols of authority, and how these representations are altered by the passage of time.

Locke spent his formative years in Guyana, returning to the UK to complete a BA in Fine Art at Falmouth School of Art. His experience of travelling across oceans, and study in Cornwall, have led to a life-long fascination with the sea, and the vessels we construct to navigate it.

Locke has said “I have a deep personal compulsion to make at least one boat every two years or so. It is part of my personal history, having sailed to and from Guyana to England as a child”.

'Armada' is an evocative and multi-layered installation, made up of around 35 boats of varying sizes, created by the artist between 2017 and 2019. Suspended from the ceiling, these vessels form a striking flotilla that draws on maritime histories and contemporary global issues. The boats themselves are diverse, representing different time periods and cultures, with miniature cargo ships and fishing vessels sitting alongside caravels and galleons. Each piece is carefully crafted using an array of materials, from plastic toys and fishing nets to replica medals, charms, and military insignia. Some boats feature brass cut-outs depicting Portuguese mercenaries, as seen in 16th-century Benin sculptures, while others display coins from places such as the Caribbean, Gambia, and Syria, evoking themes of international trade, migration, and displacement.

In the lower gallery we present a selection from Hew’s Share series of drawings on historical share certificates from companies that no longer trade. Each reflects the reach of different colonial powers at points in history, and through their re-working, draws attention to contemporary legacies.