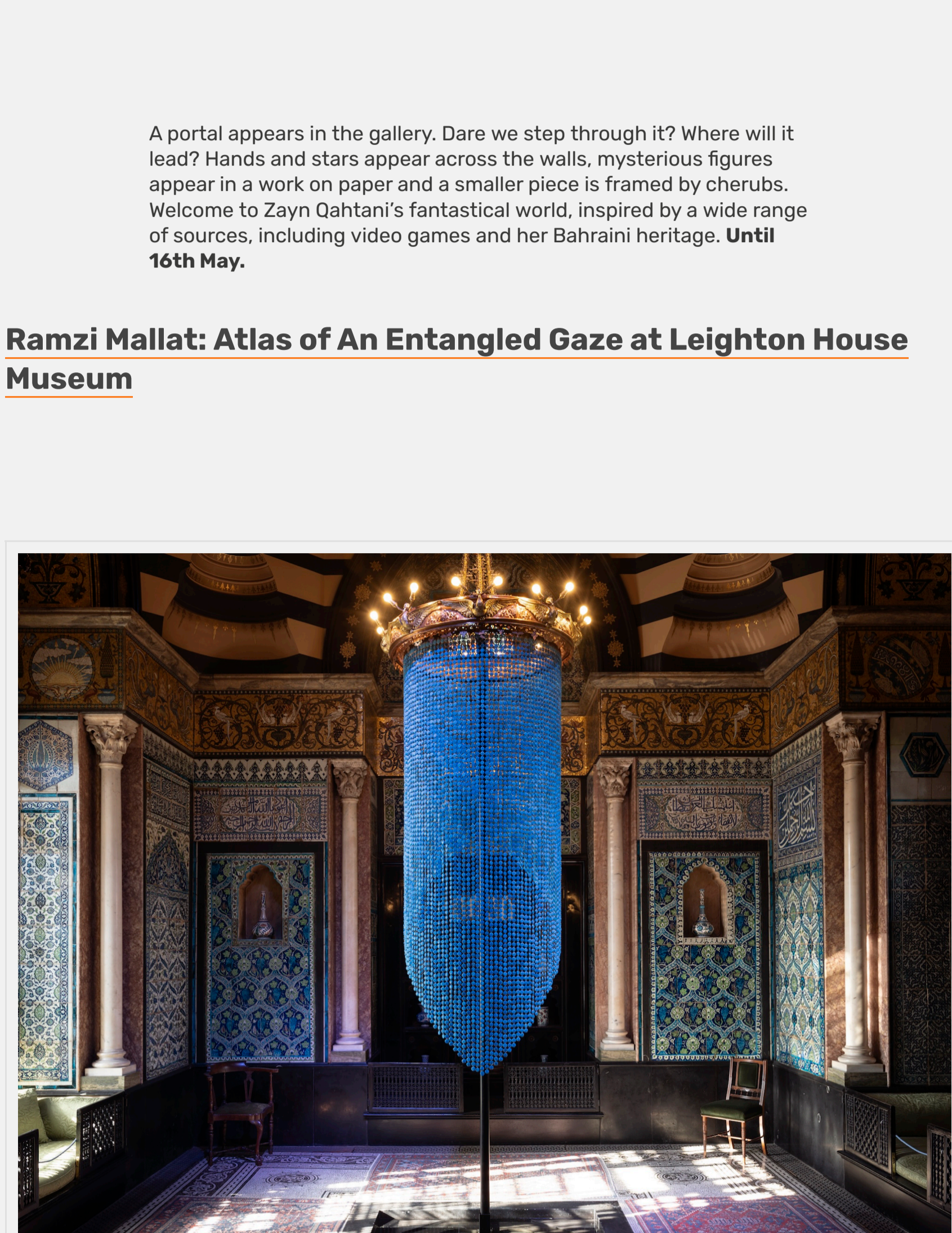


THE TOP 5 ART EXHIBITIONS TO SEE IN LONDON IN MAY

By [Tabish Khan](#) • 1 May 2026
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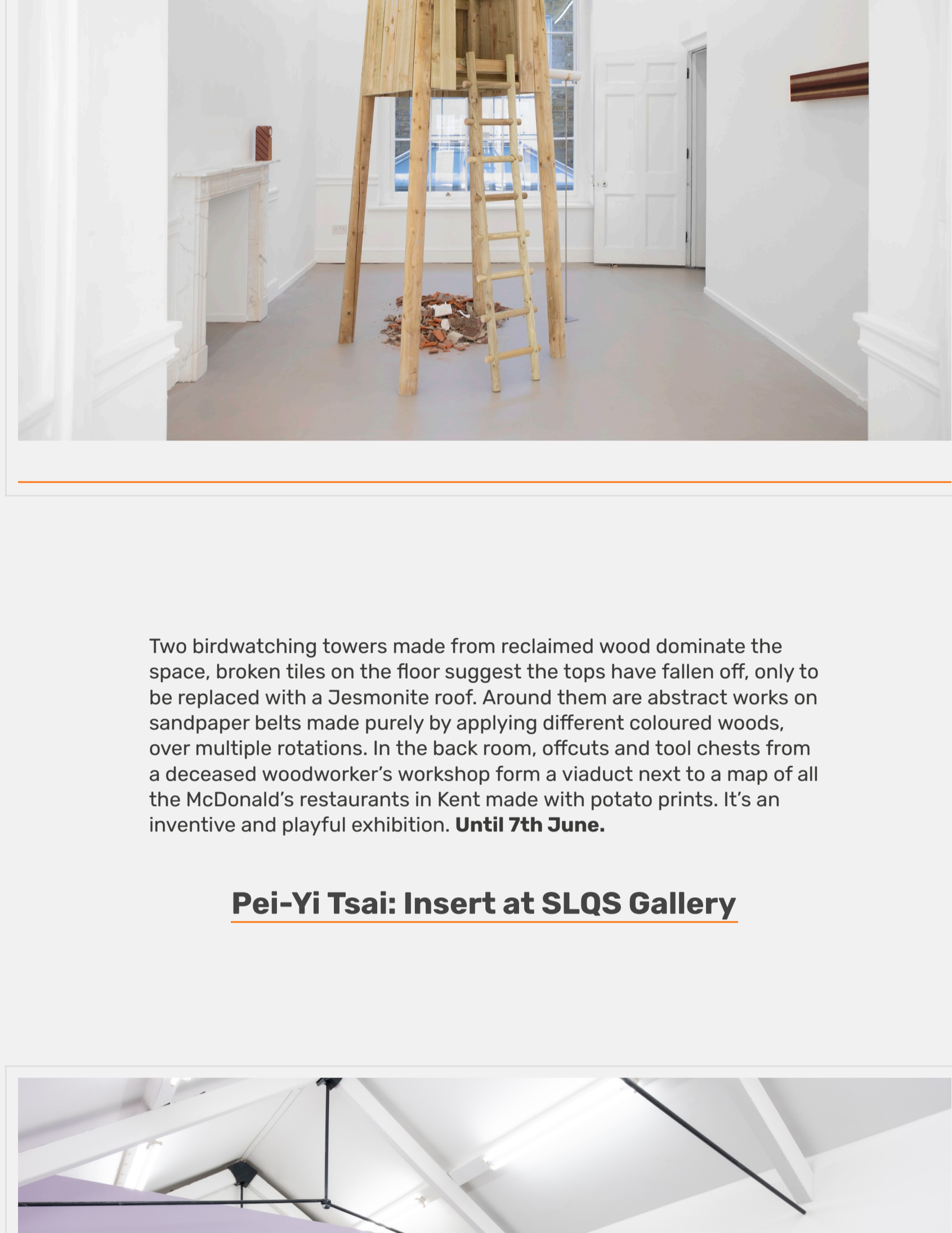
Tabish Khan, the [@LondonArtCritic](#), picks his top 5 exhibitions to see in London. If you are looking for more exhibitions, check out his [previous top 5](#).

Zayn Qahtani: The Whisperings at Kristin Hjellegjerde



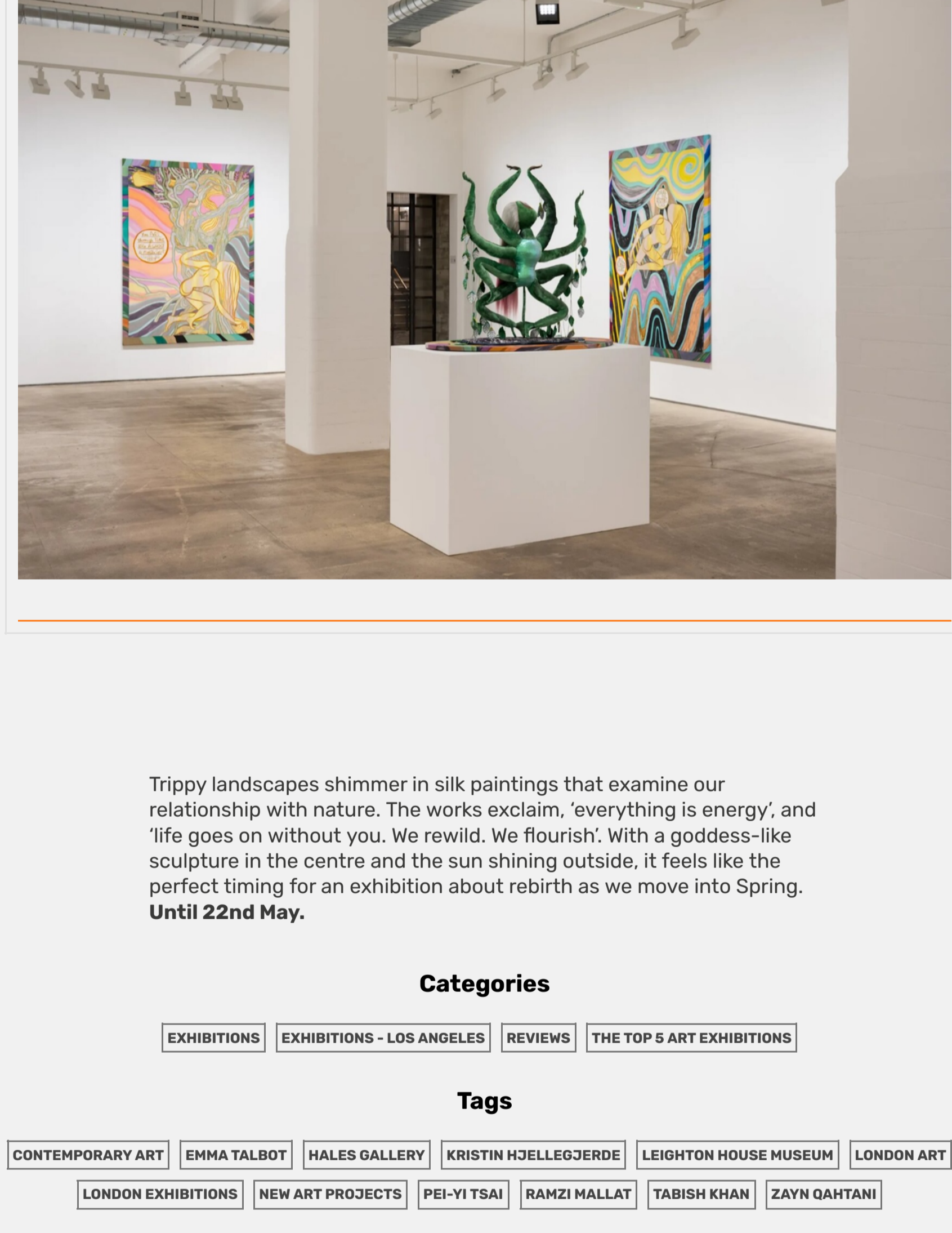
A portal appears in the gallery. Dare we step through it? Where will it lead? Hands and stars appear across the walls, mysterious figures appear in a work on paper and a smaller piece is framed by cherubs. Welcome to Zayn Qahtani's fantastical world, inspired by a wide range of sources, including video games and her Bahraini heritage. **Until 16th May.**

Ramzi Mallat: Atlas of An Entangled Gaze at Leighton House Museum



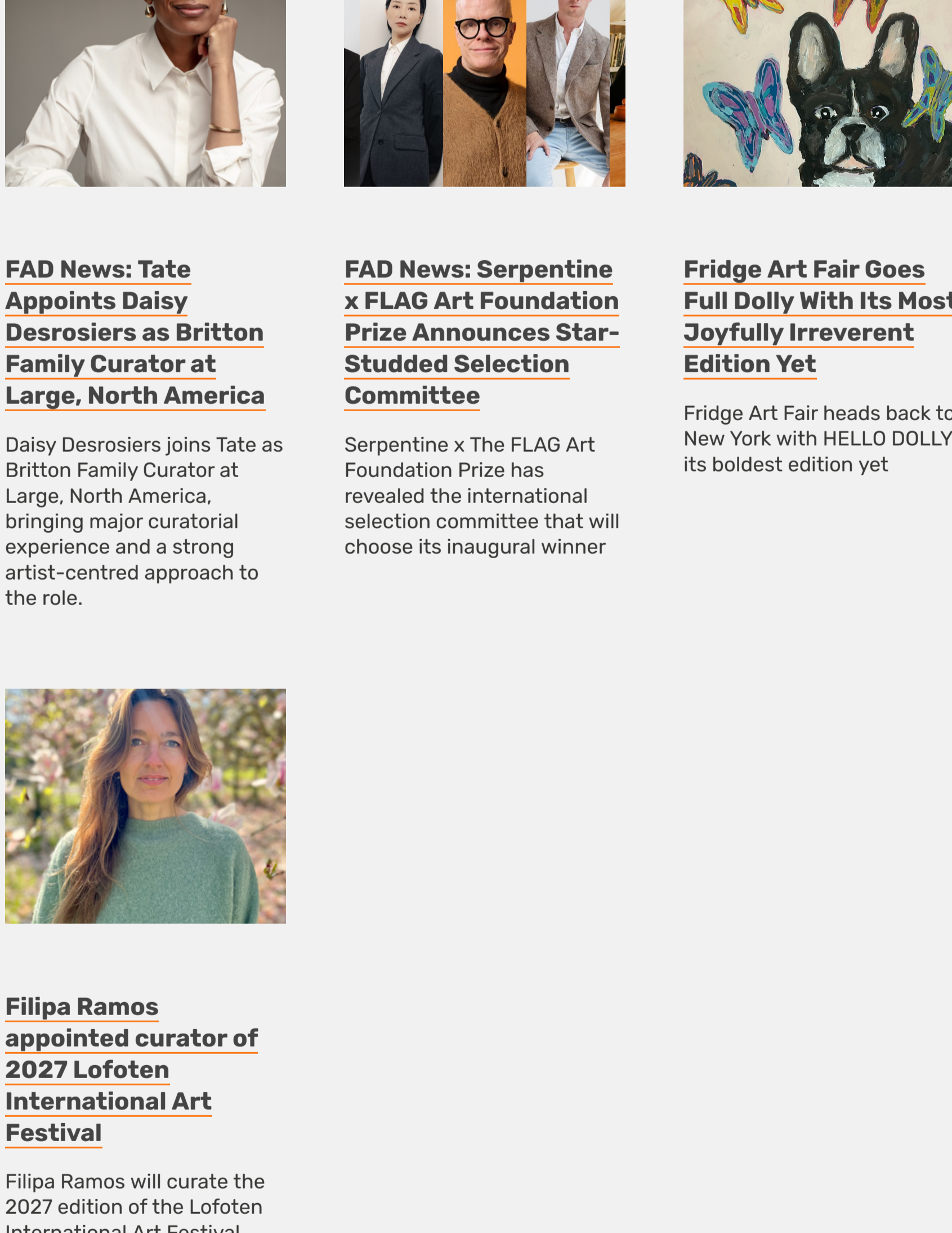
The Arab Hall is the crown jewel of Leighton House, and to mark its 100th anniversary as a museum, it has commissioned three contemporary artists to create responses to it. First up is Ramzi Mallat, who has created thousands of glazed evil-eye charms that look as if they're suspended from a chandelier and reference the design of an Ottoman-style helmet. It's a spectacular installation that mixes the history of the evil eye with the contemporary mass manufacture of them. **Until 13th May, ticketed.**

Dislocations: Rachel Mortlock & Harry Grundy at New Art Projects



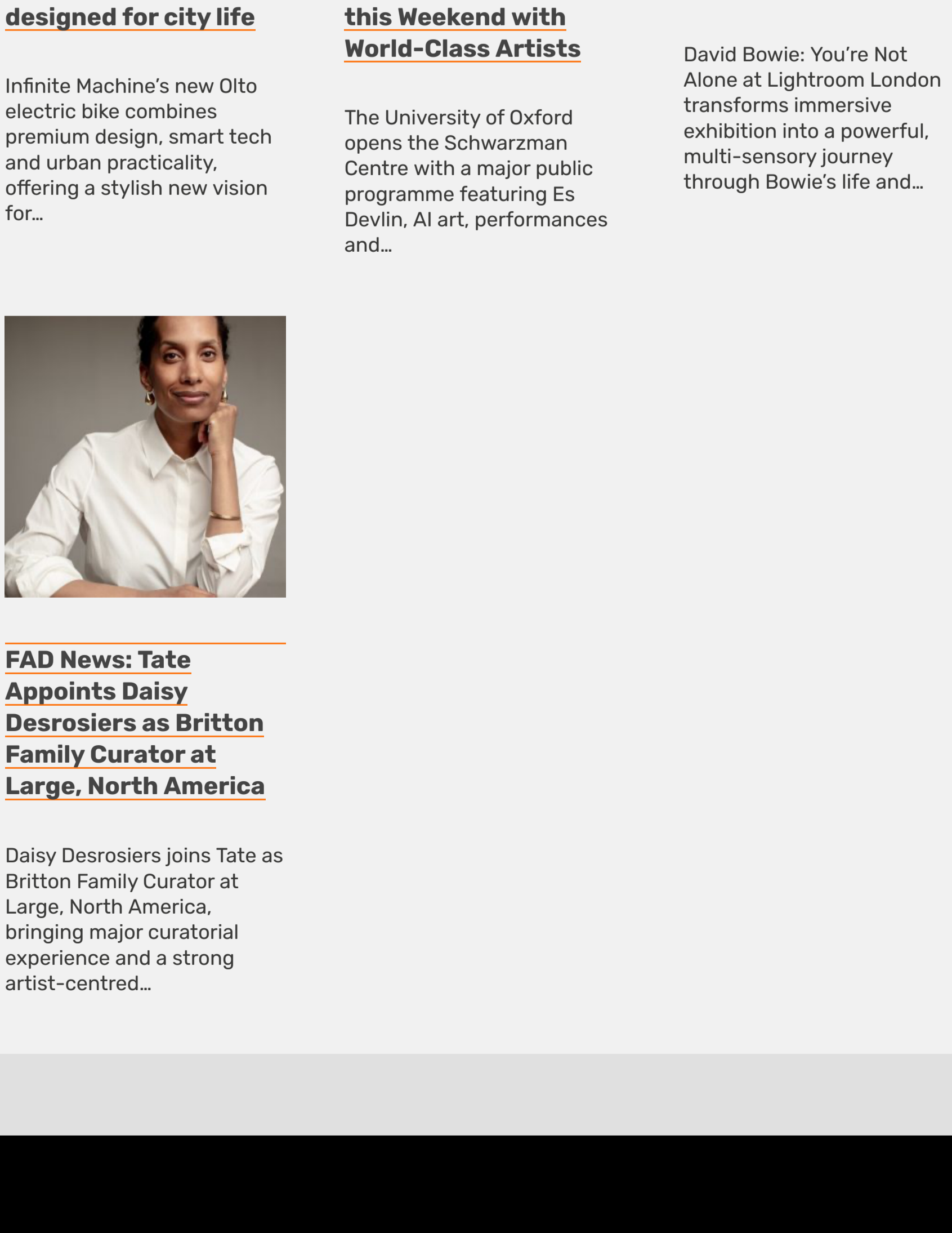
Two birdwatching towers made from reclaimed wood dominate the space, broken tiles on the floor suggest the tops have fallen off, only to be replaced with a Jesmonite roof. Around them are abstract works on sandpaper belts made purely by applying different coloured woods, over multiple rotations. In the back room, offcuts and tool chests from a deceased woodworker's workshop form a viaduct next to a map of all the McDonald's restaurants in Kent made with potato prints. It's an inventive and playful exhibition. **Until 7th June.**

Pei-Yi Tsai: Insert at SLQS Gallery



A mouth and nose, without the rest of the face visible. A head resting on arms, but we can only see the back of the head. These works are all about identity and also about how we often have to conceal it from those around us. It speaks to the artist's personal experience as a queer person from Taiwan, as seen in one of her paintings, where the outline of their country is tattooed on the neck. **Until 23rd May.**

Emma Talbot: Always in Transformation at Hales



Trippy landscapes shimmer in silk paintings that examine our relationship with nature. The works exclaim, 'everything is energy', and 'life goes on without you. We rewild. We flourish'. With a goddess-like sculpture in the centre and the sun shining outside, it feels like the perfect timing for an exhibition about rebirth as we move into Spring. **Until 22nd May.**

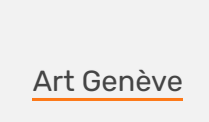
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Art Critic for both FAD and Londonist. See as many exhibitions as possible and write reviews, opinion pieces and a weekly top 5 for FAD.

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