

TATE MODERN

## TRACEY EMIN: A SECOND LIFE

27 FEBRUARY – 31 AUGUST 2026

Next Spring, Tate Modern will stage the largest ever survey exhibition celebrating the groundbreaking work of world-renowned artist Dame Tracey Emin (b.1963). Emin's commitment to unapologetic self-expression has transformed our understanding of what art can be and continues to influence contemporary art today, using the female body to explore passion, pain and healing. Spanning her extraordinary 40-year practice - from seminal installations made in the 1990s, to recent paintings and bronzes going on display for the first time - *A Second Life* marks the most significant exhibition of Emin's career, tracing the key life events that have shaped her journey and transformation. Conceived in close collaboration with the artist, it will bring together over 90 works encompassing painting, video, textile, neon, sculpture and installation, demonstrating her uncompromising confessional approach to sharing experiences of love, trauma and personal growth.

Charting Emin's lifelong commitment to painting, the show will begin by presenting works from her first solo exhibition at White Cube, *My Major Retrospective* 1982-93, comprising a series of tiny photographs of her art school paintings from the 1980s which she destroyed following a difficult period of her life. These will be shown alongside *Tracey Emin CV* 1995, a self-portrait and first-person narration of her life up until that moment and the poignant video work *Why I Never Became A Dancer* 1995, in which the artist recounts traumatic events from her teenage years in Margate. Together, these early works will introduce visitors to Emin's instantly recognisable first-person voice and confessional approach to storytelling.

Emin's deep-rooted connection to her hometown of Margate has been a constant thread throughout her practice. Leaving Margate aged 15, Emin returned intermittently during her late teens and early 20s before moving to London in 1987 to study at the Royal College of Art. After witnessing her mother's passing in Margate in 2016 and surviving cancer in 2020, Emin returned to the seaside town, making it her permanent home and establishing the Tracey Emin Artist Residency, a free studio-based art school. Tate Modern will showcase works from Emin's life centered around Margate and memories of her childhood, exploring how she revisits and retells her personal history. Emphasising the turbulent years she spent there, *Mad Tracey From Margate: Everybody's Been There* 1997 lays bare her most intimate thoughts through handstitched phrases, letters and drawings, while the wooden rollercoaster *It's Not the Way I Want to Die* 2005 takes inspiration from the town's famous amusement park Dreamland to reflect on her anxieties and vulnerabilities.

Emin frequently confronts personal trauma and pain, dispelling the stigma surrounding issues that are often left undiscussed. The exhibition addresses the artist's experience of sexual assault, including the neon *I could have Loved my Innocence* 2007 and the embroidered calico *Is This a Joke* 2009. In one of her most personal video works, *How It Feels* 1996, Emin gives a challenging yet empowering account of an abortion that went wrong, describing institutional neglect, the physical and psychological implications of refusing motherhood, and the misogyny associated with it. Shown publicly for the first time, the quilt *The Last of the Gold* 2002 is emblazoned with an 'A to Z of abortion', providing advice for women facing a similar situation.

At the heart of the show sit two seminal installations: *Exorcism of the Last Painting I Ever Made* 1996 and *My Bed* 1998. The first documents a period of three weeks where Emin locked herself in a Stockholm gallery attempting to reconcile her relationship with painting, which she had abandoned six years prior after her experience of abortion. This is followed by Emin's iconic Turner-Prize nominated installation, documenting her recovery from an alcohol-fuelled breakdown. These extraordinary works move the visitor from Emin's first life to her second life, post illness and surgery.

Emin's experience of cancer, surgery and disability are directly addressed in the exhibition, emphasising her disregard for any separation of the personal and public. The recent bronze sculpture *Ascension 2024*, exploring Emin's new relationship with her body following major surgery for bladder cancer, is joined by new photographs showing the stoma that she now lives with.

The exhibition culminates with the artist exploring the dimensions of her second life in painting. While pain and heartbreak are still present, Emin's ambitious large-scale paintings offer a transcendent, spiritual quality, showing a resolute determination to live in the present. Never without a darker side, the sculpture *Death Mask 2002* sits amongst these expansive paintings illustrating a life lived to the full. Moving beyond the gallery walls, the monumental bronze *I Followed You Until The End 2023* will command the landscape outside Tate Modern, inviting passersby to experience Emin's groundbreaking, visceral work.

Dame Tracey Emin said "I'm very excited about having a show at Tate Modern. For me, it's one of the greatest international contemporary art museums in the world and it's here in London. I feel this show, titled 'A second Life', will be a benchmark for me. A moment in my life when I look back and go forward. A true celebration of living"

#### Notes to editors

*Tracey Emin: A Second Life* is presented in the Eyal Ofer Galleries. The exhibition is in partnership with Gucci, with additional support from the Tracey Emin Exhibition Supporters Circle and Tate Members. It is curated by Maria Balshaw, Director, Tate; Alvin Li, Curator, International Art, supported by Asymmetry, Tate Modern; and Jess Baxter, Assistant Curator, International Art, Tate Modern.

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#### Listings Information

*Tracey Emin: A Second Life*

27 February – 31 August 2026

Tate Modern, Bankside, London SE1 9TG

Open daily 10.00–18.00, and until 21:00 every Friday and Saturday from 26 September 2025

Tickets available at [tate.org.uk](https://tate.org.uk) and +44(0)20 7887 8888

Free for Members. Join at [tate.org.uk/members](https://tate.org.uk/members)

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#### About Tracey Emin

Tracey Emin was born in 1963 in London. She currently lives and works in Margate, UK and France. Emin has exhibited extensively including major exhibitions at Munchmuseet, Oslo (2021); Royal Academy of Arts, London (2020); Musée d'Orsay, Paris (2019); Leopold Museum, Vienna (2015); Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami, Florida (2013); Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (2012); Turner Contemporary, Margate (2012); Hayward Gallery, London (2011); Kunstmuseum Bern (2009); Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (2008); Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (2003); and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2002). Emin's work is included in museum and public collections worldwide, including Arts Council of Great Britain; British Museum, London; Castello di Rivoli, Turin; Dallas Museum of Art, Texas; Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City; Getty Institute, Los Angeles; Istanbul Museum of Modern Art; Museum MACAN, Jakarta; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Pompidou Centre, Paris; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Tate, London; and Yale Center for British Art, New Haven. In 2007, Emin represented Great Britain at the 52nd Venice Biennale. In 2011, she was appointed Professor of Drawing at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, and in 2012, was made Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for her contributions to the visual arts. In 2024, she was awarded a Damehood in the King's Birthday Honours for her services to art.

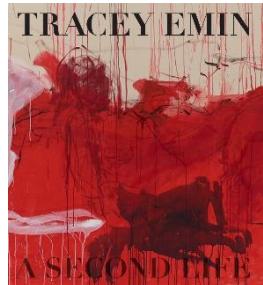
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## Related Publications

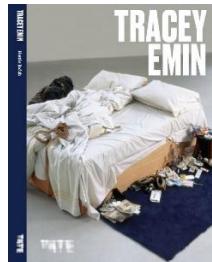


### Tracey Emin: A Second Life

Edited by Maria Balshaw and Alvin Li

Hardback £45; Paperback £32; Signed limited edition with slip case £500

Published alongside Tracey Emin's landmark Tate Modern exhibition, this monograph celebrates her raw and confessional approach as she poses profound questions on love, trauma and autobiography. Featuring contributions from Josh Cohen, Joanna Hedva, Helen Laville, Alvin Li, Harry Weller and a brand-new interview between Tate director, Maria Balshaw and the artist herself, it shines a light on Emin's astounding career and what life and art mean for her now.



### Tracey Emin by Hettie Judah

Paperback £12

This book offers a candid look into the life and work of Tracey Emin, exploring the events and relationships that influenced her art, including her formative years in Margate, her artist peers, and the expressionist painters with whom she has identified across the generations. Bringing together a wide spectrum of her work, it reveals an artist who confronts the subject of mortality – however wondrous, difficult or shameful – and ultimately celebrates the joy of living.

## Related Events

### Tate Modern Late

29 May 2026, 18.00-22.00

Tate Modern will open after-hours to celebrate Tracey Emin. The evening will feature music, workshops, talks and performances inspired by her groundbreaking practice, exploring themes of passion and healing.