

Livingetc

'7 Too-Good-to-Miss Exhibitions in London Every Art and Design Lover Should Have on Their Radar Right Now — A Culture Editor's Winter Bucket List'

By Gilda Bruno

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Massimiliano Gottardi, *Mirages I*, 2026, 35 x 35 x 76 cm

January can be a hell of a month for those of us who have indulged too hard in the holiday period and are yet to get back to their top form. But if there's one thing to rejoice about us being at the peak of winter, it's that the most depressing month of the year also coincides with the awakening of the British capital's cultural scene, where hundreds of appointments are ready to entertain arts-versed readers for weeks to come, starting from the best design and art exhibitions in London.

This month, a leitmotif runs through many of the most exciting London art shows: the desire to embrace objects and their materiality as vehicles for meaning; as containers for the most absurd, surreal, or verosimile of stories. Or, even, as gateways into specific beliefs, traditions, and cultures — into different ways of being. It is a theme that proves just how much the things we surround ourselves with can influence our lives, one that rings especially relevant as we approach a new beginning. Still, when it comes to uncovering the best new exhibitions in London, things are (forgive the pun) very rarely so black and white.

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Massimiliano Gottardi: Zero, Alice Amati



Massimiliano Gottardi, *Mirages I, Mirages II, Mirages III*, 2026,

Instinctively, the see-through, fish tank-looking boxes that punctuate, alongside other crafty, curious forms, Zero, artist Massimiliano Gottardi's ongoing solo show at gallery Alice Amati, feel like long-forgotten time capsules — visible manifestations of a way of living, of being, created to be discovered by someone else further down the line. Staring closely at these glass cases, it is easy to spot the many domestic objects that, much like sea life constrained into a bowl, exist pretty much motionless inside them, submerged in water.

A chunky, vintage radio. Cutlery, stacked-up plates, and wine glasses. Crunched up foliage, paper cutouts, and half-finished beverages. There is a familiarity in Gottardi's work that attracts viewers almost immediately to it, but it's in depriving these common items of their original purpose that the artist imbues them with an almost eerie feeling. To him, they are embodiments of our relationship to chance; how the flow of life is constantly reassessed by it, put on hold, or disrupted.

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Massimiliano Gottardi, *Untitled I*, 2026, 140 x 140 x 140 cm

Elsewhere in the gallery, geometrically designed talismans, including an oversized, 20-faced die, hint at mysterious sacred rituals. Despite the immediacy of certain symbols — the candle-lit altar, for example — it's like we have lost our ability to interact with them; to decipher their use. The London art show, then, feels like a metaphor for the dual face of the consumerist world, where stuff is sold to us as a remedy to everything, but most often than not, it doesn't cure us. Rather, it clutters our lives.