

barbican

Lucy Raven: Rounds

The Curve

9 October 2025 – 4 January 2026

Press images available [here](#)



Image: *Murderers Bar (2025)* by Lucy Raven, Installation View, The Curve, Thurs 9 October 2025 – Sun 4 January 2026 © Jo Underhill, Barbican Art Gallery

Opening this Thursday, **Lucy Raven** transforms The Curve with a major new exhibition titled **Rounds**. The exhibition marks the premiere of a monumental kinetic light sculpture, co-commissioned by the Barbican and the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, and a new moving image installation, *Murderers Bar (2025)*, shown for the first time in the UK and Europe.

Raven's wide-ranging practice encompasses film, installation, sculpture, photography, and drawing. Across these media she examines the dynamics of material transformation, and the entwined histories of image capture technologies and infrastructural systems, particularly as they relate to land and landscape. Raven's recent work incisively investigates the industrial foundations of the Western United States and the destructive consequences of its development.

On entering The Curve, visitors will encounter newly commissioned kinetic light sculpture *Hardpan*. Taking inspiration from rotating devices that utilize centrifugal force—to separate solids and liquids, or to increase pressure and scale through acceleration—Raven's sculpture spins an electronic arm, sweeping light around an aluminium and concrete enclosure. The continuous movement of centrifuges can also be used to simulate extreme forces exerted on astronauts during flight, which can alter the body drastically, first losing colour vision, then vision, then consciousness together.

In this installation, the human body remains outside the centrifuge, where two apertures allow a view in and light out. Here, the industrial scale of Raven's sculpture, its heavy materiality, the intensity of the light spinning by itself, all combine to alter the atmospheric conditions in *The Curve*, the effects of which are acutely felt by visitors.

While the sculpture viscerally evokes the physiological sensations brought about by accelerated force, a complementing work in the show – *Murderers Bar* – explores the effects of material state change on a geologic and infrastructural level.

Murderers Bar is the final instalment in Raven's series *The Drumfire*. Departing from the genre convention of the Western, the four moving image works in the series explore themes of pressure, force, and cycles of violence in the (de- and re-)formation of the Western United States: the transformation of solid rock into concrete in *Ready Mix*, filmed at a plant in Idaho, and the accumulation of shock waves caused by explosive blasts in *Demolition of a Wall (Albums 1 and 2)*, filmed at an explosives test range in New Mexico. Showing at *The Curve*, *Murderers Bar* turns its attention to fluid dynamics and water.

Murderers Bar begins with the laying out of dynamite inside a large-scale concrete dam. After its powerful detonation, the work traces the rush of the river 200 miles to the Pacific Ocean. The film then turns and heads back upstream, finding the river winding through the drained reservoir behind the dam, a stark landscape of sediment that will be transformed by life in years to come, the original surface drowned, now revealed as potential. Along the way, it uses a range of aerial and underwater imaging strategies, including helicopter, drones and lidar and sonar generated animations. The dam, the immense reservoir behind it, and the river now coursing through both are inexorably transformed through the duration of the work, *Murderers Bar* finds its form from the release of water at such a colossal scale.

The film is centred on the recent undamming of the Klamath River in Northern California, part of the largest dam removal and river restoration project in US history. The dam, built in 1918, caused detrimental impact to local ecosystems, inhibiting the river's natural flow and the migratory routes of its fish, most notably the Chinook and Coho salmon, sources of crucial, cultural, spiritual and nutritional importance to the indigenous peoples who have populated the Klamath region for thousands of years. The dam was dismantled following decades of activism, testimony, and lawsuits by local tribes including the Yurok, Karuk, Klamath, and Hoopa Tribes, and the Shasta Indian Nation.

Murderers Bar can be viewed within the context of social and political movements past and present, from industrial progress and the 19th century belief of expansion - *Manifest Destiny* - to current global campaigns, including the Land Back movement and taking down of monuments in the US.

Projected on a large-scale curved vertical screen, the film is accompanied by bleacher-style seating and an immersive, quadraphonic soundtrack scored by Raven's frequent musical collaborator, composer and percussionist **Deantoni Parks**. The sweeping orchestration adds a new scale to *The Drumfire*'s score, all of which has been composed by Parks.

The works in *Rounds* powerfully carry forward Raven's longstanding engagement with materiality and abstraction to investigate the economic and ecological effects of human-made changes to the natural environment and its enduring violence.

Following its debut at the Barbican, *Lucy Raven: Rounds* will open at the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston in May 2026.

Hardpan commissioned by Barbican, London and the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston.

Murderers Bar co-commissioned and jointly acquired by Vancouver Art Gallery and The Vega Foundation.

About Lucy Raven

Lucy Raven (born 1977) is originally from Tucson, Arizona. She lives and works in New York City. She received a BFA in studio art and a BA in art history from the University of Arizona, Tucson, in 2000, and an MFA from Bard College's Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, in 2008. Her work has been exhibited in solo presentations at the Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada (2025); Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany (2024); Remai Modern, Canada (2023-24); Wiels, Brussels, Belgium (2022); Dia Chelsea, New York, USA (2021); Serpentine Galleries, London, UK (2016–17); Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio, USA (2016); VOX centre de l'image contemporaine, Montreal, Canada (2015); Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, USA (2014); Portikus, Frankfurt, Germany (2014); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, USA (2012); and Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, USA (2010). Raven's work appears in public collections around the world, including Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Tate Britain, London; Dia Foundation, New York; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Whitney Museum, New York. Additionally, Raven's work was included in the 2022 and 2012 Whitney Biennials, New York; 2016 Montreal Biennial; and 2018 Dhaka Art Summit, Bangladesh. With Vic Brooks and Evan Calder Williams, she is a founding member of 13BC, a moving-image research and production collective. Raven teaches at the Cooper Union School of Art in New York

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Public Information

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www.barbican.org.uk

Opening Hours

Mon Closed

Tue–Sun 11am – 7pm

Refer to the website for Bank Holiday hours.

Entry to The Curve is free.

FURTHER INFORMATION

About the Barbican

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We are an international arts and events centre rooted firmly in our own neighbourhood, collaborating with local communities and putting the City of London on the map as a destination for everybody. Central to our purpose is supporting emerging talent and shaping opportunities that will accelerate the next generation of creatives.

As a not-for-profit, we rely on the generosity of individuals and organisations, including our principal funder the City of London Corporation. Every ticket purchased, donation made, and pound earned supports our arts and learning programme and enables the widest possible range of people to experience the joy of the arts.

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Barbican Art Gallery and The Curve

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We invest in the artists of today and tomorrow; The Curve is one of the few galleries in London devoted to the commissioning of new work. Through our activities we aim to inspire more people to discover and love the arts. Entrance to The Curve is free. Through Young Barbican we offer £5 tickets to 14 – 25 year olds for our paid exhibitions, children under 14 attend for free.

Our exhibitions are complemented by comprehensively researched catalogues and a full range of public events. In partnership with renowned museums and art galleries, many of our exhibitions travel to reach both national and international audiences.

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