

# SI

# FRIEZE

Frieze  
Brooke Wilson  
Saodat Ismailova: 21 Jan - 12 Apr  
December 30, 2025

## 11 Unmissable Exhibition Openings in 2026

From Duchamp's long-awaited US retrospective to a thematic celebration of wisdom in Uzbekistan, these are the shows that demand a place on your calendar



BY BROOKE WILSON IN OPINION | 30 DEC 25



Saodat Ismailova | Swiss Institute, New York | 21 January – 12 April



Saodat Ismailova, *Amanat*, 2026, video still. Courtesy: the artist

In a recent piece for *frieze*, Saodat Ismailova reflected on her journey into film, stating: 'My story is a very simple one, although it might not be the kind you would expect to hear from a female director from Uzbekistan.' She goes on to describe how being raised in the post-Soviet era by a filmmaker father, in an apartment building where many of her neighbours also worked in the industry, shaped her path into filmmaking, as well as the cultural concerns that continue to inform her work.

At the Swiss Institute, the world premiere of Ismailova's newly commissioned film *Amant* (2026) will mark her first solo exhibition in the United States. The film focuses on the artist's long-term engagement with Arslanbob – a vast walnut forest in present-day Kyrgyzstan that for centuries has been regarded as a spiritual site. Accompanying the film will be a group of sculptural works derived from the project, alongside a complementary sound installation intended to attune listeners to a meditative, drifting state, capturing nocturnal soundscapes from the forest. Following its presentation in New York, the exhibition will travel in an expanded form to LUMA Arles before concluding at Kunsthalle Bern.