

On my radar  
Lemn Sissay



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On my radar: Lemn Sissay's cultural highlights

The author and poet on Ethiopia's art - and its amazing piano-playing nun; plus an Instagram page with a difference



▲ Lemn Sissay: 'There's no better time for soothing music than now' Photograph: Hollie Fernando/The Observer

Lemn Sissay is an author, poet and broadcaster born to an Ethiopian mother in 1967 in London. He has been publishing poetry since 1985, and is the author of five collections. He was appointed MBE for services to literature in 2010 and was the official poet of the 2012 London Olympics. His critically acclaimed memoir, *My Name Is Why*, was published in 2019. He is supporting WaterAid's [Future on Tap appeal](#) to help transform lives with clean water.

1. Art  
Addis Fine Art Gallery



▲ Pillars of Life by Tadesse Mesfin. Photograph: Eyerusalem A Jiregna/Courtesy Addis Fine Art

It's the first Ethiopian art gallery in British history. My tip for investors is to buy Ethiopian art now! It opened in October in west London. I went to their latest exhibition, but it closed three days later because of Covid. The artist they are currently presenting is Tadesse Mesfin. He is a giant of the Ethiopian art scene, he holds a unique position as a figurehead of the Ethiopian modernist movement. The work in this exhibition, called Pillars of Life, is of the women of the markets of Ethiopia working day in day out. He's exalting the women and depicting the real heroes of Ethiopian society.

