

***Langlands & Bell: Degrees of Truth* opens at Sir John Soane's Museum**

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Langlands & Bell with the bust of Sir John Soane by Sir Francis Chantry, Photo by Dr Erin McKellar

- **Artists Ben Langlands and Nikki Bell explore contemporary society's relationship with architecture in a major exhibition, which opens at Sir John Soane's Museum tomorrow.**
- **Langlands & Bell's work explores the complex web of relationships linking people, architecture and the coded systems of communication we use to negotiate a fast-changing technological world.**
- **New works made specially for the exhibition, together with pieces borrowed from collections across the country, will create a dialogue with Sir John Soane's collection of art and antiquities.**

[*Langlands & Bell: Degrees of Truth*](#) (4 March – 31 May 2020) is a major solo exhibition exploring contemporary society's relationship with architecture, which opens at Sir John Soane's Museum tomorrow.

Reflecting on the capacity of architecture to bear witness to the technological, political, economic and cultural relationships that define contemporary society, specially-made works will be displayed alongside pieces borrowed from collections across the country to create a dialogue with architect Sir John Soane's collection of art and antiquities.

Bringing together artworks from over four decades of collaboration by Langlands & Bell, this exhibition is the Museum's most ambitious partnership with a contemporary artist to date.

Highlights include:

- *Grand Tour* (2020), a new installation featuring a series of handmade white lacquered 'chairs' containing models of historic buildings we know Soane visited and contemporary buildings he might visit today, highlighting the cultural endurance of this eighteenth-century tradition in today's globalised world.
- *The House of Osama bin Laden* (2003), a Turner prize-nominated, interactive digital artwork, where visitors may use a joystick to navigate a digital recreation of Osama bin Laden's former home at Daruntah in Afghanistan.
- *Globe Table* (2020), a new sculpture incorporating an "abstract globe" of the air routes of the world, highlighting the significance of travel, geo-strategic relations, and cultural communication today.
- *Traces of Living* (first made in 1986), an installation in which disdained and ignored relics of everyday life gathered from the rubble and detritus of Whitechapel in the early 1980s - including a rat in a loaf of bread - are presented for museological scrutiny and consideration.
- *Conversation Seat* (1986) and *Interlocking Chairs* (1995), two signature artworks, sometimes viewed as portraits of the artists' collaboration, where ideas of coexistence and the possibilities of communication and exchange between two individuals are explored.

Langlands & Bell said: 'Truth crystalises with the construction, display and interaction of buildings and artworks. In the new worlds we're creating digitally today, truth is contested, but art and architecture have always enacted and reflected reality. At a time when we're all re-assessing what truth is, we are excited to present artworks selected from four decades of our collaboration in dialogue with Sir John Soane's historic collection.'

Bruce Boucher, Deborah Loeb Brice Director at Sir John Soane's Museum, remarked: 'It is a great pleasure to welcome Ben Langlands and Nikki Bell to Sir John Soane's Museum, the earliest institution of architecture and design in London. Langlands & Bell's works resonate with the Museum because they employ objects to conjure up an urban archaeology that looks both forward and back, much as Soane deployed his fragments to recreate a lost landscape of antiquity while also speculating on an imagined future.'

Langlands & Bell: Degrees of Truth is accompanied by a [publication](#) of the same name and [a special in-conversation event](#) on 16 March with the Creative Director, Design Consultant and Editor Tony Chambers at the Museum.

This exhibition has been made possible thanks to the support of Pomellato, Thompson & Caroline Dean, and Christian & Florence Levett.

Press enquiries

Sophie Lealan, Brunswick Arts

+44 (0) 20 7936 7801 | soanemuseum@brunswickgroup.com

Press images can be downloaded from [here](#).

Notes to editors

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About Sir John Soane's Museum

Sir John Soane's house, museum and library at No. 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields has been a National Museum since 1833. On his appointment as Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy in 1806, Soane (1753–1837) began to arrange his books, classical antiquities, casts and models so that students of architecture might benefit from access to them. In 1833 he negotiated an Act of Parliament to preserve the collection after his death for the benefit of 'amateurs and students' in architecture, painting and sculpture. Today, the Museum is one of the country's most unusual and significant museums with a continuing and developing commitment to education and creative inspiration.

Visitor Information

The Museum is free and open on Wednesday to Sunday inclusive, 10am–5pm.

www.soane.org

Sir John Soane's Museum, 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, WC2A 3BP

About Langlands & Bell

London-based artists Ben Langlands & Nikki Bell began collaborating in 1978 after meeting at art school. Working across sculpture, installation, film and video, interactive digital media, and full-scale architecture, they have exhibited widely internationally since the early 1980s

including exhibitions at Tate Britain and Tate Modern in London, the Venice Biennale, State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, MoMA New York, and CCA, Kitakyushu, Japan.

In 2002, Langlands & Bell were commissioned as War Artists to travel to Afghanistan. They were shortlisted for the Turner Prize and won a Bafta for *The House of Osama bin Laden* the trilogy of art works that resulted from their visit. In 2016, they unveiled *Beauty < Immortality*, a permanent installation at Piccadilly Circus Underground station. Other upcoming exhibitions include “The Past is Never Dead...” a major solo exhibition exploring the architecture of the Slave Castles of the Ghanaian ‘Gold Coast’ at Gallery 1957, Accra, Ghana, from 16 May 2020 – 5 July 2020.