

# CHARLESTON



## CHARLESTON ANNOUNCES 2022 EXHIBITION PROGRAMME

**Two new artist commissions – including the first ever time that a newly commissioned piece of art will be on display in the house – contemporary responses to Charleston and the Bloomsbury group, and the first exhibition of Duncan Grant’s recently discovered erotic drawings are among the highlights of Charleston’s 2022 exhibition programme.**

**2 April – 29 August 2022**

Two commissions by leading British artists will be revealed in the house and grounds of Charleston. These will be free for visitors and will reflect on the enduring impact of the Bloomsbury group and their rural Sussex home.

### **New Langlands & Bell commission: *Near Heaven***

A new work by artists Langlands & Bell will be installed in Vanessa Bell’s attic studio at Charleston, a space overlooking the garden which has been closed to visitors for over 15 years. This is a landmark moment for Charleston, and it also marks the first ever time a contemporary artwork has been installed in the house.

The title is drawn from a quote by Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant’s daughter Angelica Garnett talking about the importance of this attic space to her mother. The free-to-visit installation will explore traces of the absent artist and consider the studio as a place of contemplation, creation, and retreat.

### **New Nathan Coley commission**

Internationally renowned and Turner Prize-shortlisted artist Nathan Coley will unveil a major illuminated text work in the grounds of Charleston.

Coley creates his monumental sculptures using existing phrases. In the past these public proclamations have come from George Bernard Shaw, a sign found in rural Denmark and a radio interview with a woman reflecting on 10 years after 9/11. The Charleston commission will encourage audiences to reflect on the meaning of this modernist home, and the conversations which happened within it a century ago.

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## **Langlands & Bell: Ideas of Utopia (Wolfson Gallery)**

A solo exhibition spotlighting over 40 years of work by BAFTA award-winning and Turner Prize-shortlisted artist duo, Langlands & Bell will open at Charleston in April 2022.

Artists Ben Langlands and Nikki Bell's creative partnership began in 1978 while they were still at art school in London. Central to the artists' work is an interrogation of the role of architecture in imagining and shaping our lives. The exhibition will present artworks from throughout Langlands & Bell's career examining attempts – knowing and unknowing – to create utopias whether domestic, religious, social, or commercial.

The exhibition will consider Charleston as an important place of early modernist social experimentation. *Langlands & Bell: Ideas of Utopia* will feature the first ever work the artists made collaboratively, *The Kitchen* (1978), through to recent work examining the iconic new headquarters of global tech giants.

Using film, video, interactive digital media, sculpture, installations and full-scale architecture, Langlands & Bell explore the complex web of relationships linking people through architecture and the systems of communication that surround us. Artworks in the exhibition are drawn from public and private collections across the UK, and the artists' own archive.

## **Absent Artists (South Gallery)**

Curated by Langlands & Bell, *Absent Artists* explores artists' studios devoid of the physical form of the artist themselves. The exhibition includes works by Phyllida Barlow, Annie Leibovitz, David Hockney, Michael Craig-Martin, William Hogarth and James Ensor through a range of different mediums including paintings, drawings, photographs, sculpture and print.

The exhibition will consider the importance of artists' studios, and the traces of creativity left once the artist has gone. It coincides with a new installation by Langlands & Bell in Vanessa Bell's attic studio at Charleston which will draw on the importance of their own studios and on the context of Charleston. The exhibition will also include an early interactive artwork which links Turner's studio at Petworth House in West Sussex, with Langlands & Bell's own studio in Whitechapel.

The exhibition is primarily drawn from the Katrin Bellinger Collection which focuses on the theme of the 'Artist at Work'. Investigating the artistic process and the mystique surrounding it, the collection now includes over 1,500 examples from the Renaissance to the present day.

**17 September 2022 – 12 March 2023**

## **Very Private?**

Exploring themes of sex, intimacy, gender, and identity a selection of Duncan Grant's recently uncovered erotic drawings will be shown for the first time alongside new contemporary responses by artists including Tim Walker, Somaya Critchlow, Ajamu X and Linder Sterling.

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Drawn during the 1940s and 50s when sex between men was still illegal in England, the drawings by Grant were previously feared lost or destroyed. Instead, they had been passed from lover to lover, friend to friend in secret, before being donated to Grant's former home Charleston in 2020.

The exhibition also marks the start of a period of research into the collection of drawings and hidden queer histories. The research project is a collaborative PhD between Charleston and the University of Sussex and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. It will include cataloguing, conserving, and digitising this previously unknown part of Grant's oeuvre.

Opening concurrently with this exhibition, the artist duo Jakob Lena Knebl and Ashley Hans Scheirl will present a fantastical mise-en-scène installation at Belmacz London. Following their representation of Austria at the 59th Venice Biennale and ahead of their solo exhibition at Palais de Tokyo in Paris in 2023, the pair will respond to some of Grant's erotic drawings from Charleston's collection, presenting their dynamic dual practice for the first time in the UK.

## **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

**Charleston** is a place that brings people together to engage with art and ideas. The modernist home and studio of the painters Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, Charleston was a gathering point for some of the 20th century's most radical artists, writers and thinkers known collectively as the Bloomsbury group. It is where they came together to imagine society differently and has always been a place where art and experimental thinking are at the centre of everyday life. Today, we present a dynamic year-round programme of exhibitions, events and festivals. We believe in the power of art, in all its forms, to provoke new ways of thinking and living.

## **[A SELECTION OF HIGH-RESOLUTION IMAGES FOR MEDIA USE CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE](#)**

Duncan Grant, *Untitled Drawing*, c.1946-1959, The Charleston Trust © The Estate of Duncan Grant, licensed by DACS 2021

Langlands & Bell, *Surrounding Time* (detail, Colosseum, Rome), 1990. Private collection, London; photo: Steve White, courtesy the artists

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES**

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