

Charleston launch new initiative to find Bloomsbury treasures at London Art Fair in January 2024



The studio at Charleston. Photography by Lee Robbins; Roger Fry, Portrait of E.M. Forster, 1911. Oil on canvas, private collection

- Charleston to launch a new campaign titled '50 for 50' at London Art Fair (17–21 January 2024) ahead of their 50th anniversary
- As part of its search for the most significant Bloomsbury works still in private collections, Charleston will unveil a number of artworks already secured, many of which have never been on public display outside of Charleston
- London Art Fair has partnered with Charleston who will be their Museum Partner for 2024

London Art Fair has partnered with Charleston, the modernist home and studio of painters Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, for its annual Museum Partnership. At the Fair Charleston will launch '50 for 50' – an ambitious search for 50 of the most significant Bloomsbury group artist paintings still held in private collections.

Charleston, situated in the South Downs National Park, was the regular meeting place of 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 Charleston welcomes over 65,000 visitors to its house, garden and galleries at Firle – the location for a year-round programme of festivals, events and exhibitions – and has recently opened a new space in central Lewes.

In 2030 Charleston is set to celebrate 50 years since the charity was set up to safeguard the historic house and its collection and with that they have announced their '50 for 50' initiative. During the Fair, Charleston will unveil a selection of secured artworks, alongside some of the most significant pieces from its collection. These include 'The Cloak' by Vanessa Bell, a painting from 1912; a study featuring Charleston farm buildings by Duncan Grant; and a rare and newly

conserved work by French artist Simon Bussy of Mansion House, c.1902; all of which have never been on public display outside of Charleston before.

These artworks will be exhibited alongside a selection of soft furnishings, ceramics and furniture from Omega Workshops, an artistic interiors firm founded by Roger Fry in 1913 as an attempt to bring the aesthetics of Post Impressionism into the home. Fry employed young artists and designers to inject everyday objects like plates, curtains, rugs and furniture with colour, life and dynamism. Fry also created many of the designs himself and one of his chairs, which has a grey and green scallop design painted over a gesso ground, will be on display at the London Art Fair. Shown alongside this chair will be Omega Plates decorated by Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, as well as an embroidered fire screen by Grant.

Nathaniel Hepburn, Charleston Director, says: *"We're thrilled to be able to launch '50 for 50' at the London Art Fair as this year's Museum Partner. The hope is that through generous gifts and bequests these important and unique objects will join what is already the largest collection of Bloomsbury group artworks worldwide. It's exciting to be able to showcase never-before-seen artworks at the London Art Fair for the public to discover as part of our exhibition."*

First introduced in 2014 to champion and support important regional collections, London Art Fair's annual Museum Partnership has seen collaborations with the Hepworth Wakefield, Pallant House Gallery, Jerwood Gallery, The Lightbox, Towner Art Gallery, Southampton City Art Gallery, The Women's Art Collection, and most recently Ben Uri Gallery.

The full Charleston collection on display at London Art Fair can also be viewed via the Bloomberg Connects app. For more information about '50 for 50' and how to get involved, visit www.charleston.org.uk/50-for-50-campaign/

London Art Fair will run from 17–21 January 2024 at Business Design Centre, Islington. Tickets can be purchased at www.londonartfair.co.uk/tickets/

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NOTES TO EDITORS

LONDON ART FAIR – 17–21 January 2024

Business Design Centre, 52 Upper Street, Islington, London, N1 0QH

Full ticket types and prices at: www.londonartfair.co.uk/tickets

For the latest news, follow @LondonArtFair on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (#LAF24)

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ABOUT LONDON ART FAIR

London Art Fair will return to London for its 36th edition in 2024, recognised as a platform for connecting the best galleries from around the world with both seasoned and aspiring collectors, providing a unique opportunity to discover and champion outstanding modern and contemporary art.

The Fair seeks to nurture collecting at all levels whilst providing expert insight into the changing international market. Sitting alongside the main Fair, curated sections Encounters and Photo50 feature the next generation of artists, collectives and gallerists; showcasing increasingly innovative and interactive ways to engage with art. The Fair's strong gallery line up is also complemented by an extensive programme of engaging talks, panel discussions, interactive performance art, and onsite activations from the Fair's partners.

Taking place from 17–21 January 2024, London Art Fair is an unmissable opening to the international art calendar. www.londonartfair.co.uk

ABOUT CHARLESTON

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 have two locations, the house and galleries at Firle and a venue in Lewes, and present a dynamic year-round programme of exhibitions, events and festivals.

ABOUT BLOOMBERG CONNECTS

The Bloomberg Connects app is a free digital guide to cultural organisations around the world that makes it easy to access and engage with arts and culture from mobile devices, anytime, anywhere. The app offers information about current exhibitions at a portfolio of over 250 participating cultural partners through dynamic content tailored to each organisation. Participating collections currently include botanical gardens, performance venues, outdoor sculpture parks, and world-class museums. Features include expert commentary, video highlights, pinch-and-zoom capability and exhibition maps. The app can be downloaded for free via Google Play or the App Store.