

29 February 2024

## The King's Galleries in London and Edinburgh announce 2024 exhibitions and launch of £1 tickets

The art galleries formerly known as The Queen's Galleries in London and Edinburgh are to reopen as **The King's Galleries** with the arrival of their new exhibitions this spring.

The two Galleries at Buckingham Palace and the Palace of Holyroodhouse show changing exhibitions of works of art from the Royal Collection, with the aim of increasing public access to one of the largest and most important art collections in the world. Since 2002, when the buildings were opened in their current form, they have welcomed almost five million visitors.

At The King's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, the summer exhibition **Royal Portraits: A Century of Photography** will chart the evolution of royal portrait photography from the 1920s to the present day, revealing the stories behind some of the most celebrated photographs ever taken of the Royal Family. From November, **Drawing the Italian Renaissance** will explore the diversity and accomplishment of drawing across Italy during this revolutionary period, through works by artists including Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael and Titian.

Following a successful run in London, **Style & Society: Dressing the Georgians** will be the first exhibition to open at The King's Gallery in Edinburgh following its 18-month closure for essential maintenance work. Exploring life in Georgian Britain through the fashions of the day, it will be the 40th exhibition to be held in the Gallery since it was opened as a space to share a wider variety of works from the Royal Collection in Scotland.

As part of the organisation's charitable aim to ensure that as many people as possible can access and enjoy the Collection, Royal Collection Trust is proud to launch a new scheme of £1 tickets for exhibitions at The King's Galleries in 2024, available to those receiving Universal Credit and other named benefits.

In addition to £1 tickets, The King's Galleries will continue to offer a range of concessionary rates, while visitors who purchase standard tickets directly from Royal Collection Trust can convert them into a 1-Year Pass, allowing free re-entry for 12 months.

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### Royal Portraits: A Century of Photography

The King's Gallery, Buckingham Palace

17 May – 6 October 2024

For centuries, portraiture has played a vital role in shaping the public's perception of the Royal Family. Over the past 100 years, no artistic medium has had a greater impact on the royal image than photography.

**Royal Portraits: A Century of Photography** will chart the evolution of royal portrait photography from the 1920s to the present day, bringing together more than 150 photographic prints, proofs and documents from the Royal Collection and the Royal Archives.

The photographs presented in the exhibition will be vintage prints – the original works produced by the photographer, most of which have never been on public display.

The works on show will demonstrate how the Royal Family has harnessed the power of photography to project both the grandeur and tradition of monarchy, and at times an unprecedented sense of intimacy and relatability. The exhibition will examine the changing status of photography as an art form and consider the cultural, artistic, and technological shifts that influenced the work of the most celebrated royal photographers, from **Cecil Beaton** and **Dorothy Wilding** to **Annie Leibovitz** and **Rankin**.

Archival documents and unreleased proofs will shed light on the **behind-the-scenes process** of commissioning, selecting and retouching royal portraits. From photographers' handwritten annotations to **never-before-seen correspondence** with members of the Royal Family and their staff, these materials will reveal the stories behind some of the most enduring photographs ever taken of the Royal Family.

The exhibition will open with the 1920s and 30s, the golden age of the society photographer. Post-war prosperity and technological advances led to a boom in photographic studios, and members of the British and European Royal Families were among the 'Bright Young Things' eager to be captured on camera. Many of the new studios were operated by women, and female photographers such as **Dorothy Wilding** and **Madame Yevonde** were among those experimenting with a bolder, more modern aesthetic.

In the mid-20th century, no royal photographer had a greater impact on shaping the monarchy's public image than **Cecil Beaton**. The exhibition will present some of Beaton's most memorable photographs, taken over six decades. These include Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother's famed 1939 shoot in the Buckingham Palace Gardens, dressed in her 'White Wardrobe' by Norman Hartnell, and Beaton's original Coronation portraits of Queen Elizabeth II – arguably the most prestigious photography commission of the century.

Close relationships between royal sitters and photographers will unfold throughout the exhibition, seen most clearly through the lens of **Lord Snowdon (born Antony Armstrong-Jones)**. One of the most sought-after photographers of the 1950s, Snowdon's unpretentious style soon attracted the attention of the Royal Family, and he became a member of the family himself when he married Princess Margaret in 1960. His remarkably intimate portraits of the Princess, taken both before and after their marriage, hint at the depths of trust and collaboration between them.

The exhibition's final room will explore the innovations in digital and colour photography that revolutionised the medium between the 1980s and the 2020s. During this period, photography came to be recognised as an art form in its own right, and the perception of the role of the photographer shifted from image-making craftsman to celebrated artist. From **Andy Warhol's** diamond-dust-sprinkled screenprint of Queen Elizabeth II to famed photographs by **Rankin, David Bailey, Nick Knight, Annie Leibovitz** and more, the bold and colourful works in this room will demonstrate the extraordinary variety, power and at times playfulness of royal portrait photography over the past four decades.

Alessandro Nasini, curator of *Royal Portraits: A Century of Photography*, said: 'This is the first exhibition from the Royal Collection entirely dedicated to modern portrait photography, an artistic medium that has helped to shape how the world views the British monarchy. We are excited for visitors to discover the beauty and materiality of these original prints, many on display

for the first time, and we hope they will also enjoy a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the creative process behind some of these iconic royal images.’

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## Drawing the Italian Renaissance

The King’s Gallery, Buckingham Palace

1 November 2024 – 9 March 2025

The Renaissance saw a growing appreciation of individual creativity and a dramatic transformation in the way that artists worked. Drawing was at the heart of this development – evolving from a simple tool of workshop practice to an exciting means to explore visual ideas, develop new compositions and study the world around us.

The Royal Collection holds one of the world’s great collections of Italian drawings. Bringing together around 160 of these works by more than 80 artists, ***Drawing the Italian Renaissance*** will explore how drawing became central to every stage of the creative process. Artists honed their skills by drawing from posed models; detailed head studies allowed a heightened realism and emotional engagement; and drawing was used to prepare works in all media, from paintings and prints to architecture, sculpture, metalwork, tapestry and costume. The exhibition will show how drawing was increasingly considered as an independent art form, while the materials expanded to include metalpoint, pen and ink, chalks and coloured washes, on all kinds of papers.

The works on display will differ vastly in subject, ranging from sacred compositions such as **Michelangelo’s** *Virgin and Child with the Young St John* and **Raphael’s** first design for his *Disputa* fresco, to secular decoration and designs for metalwork, including a table fountain by **Leonardo da Vinci**. Vigorous studies of heads and figures, such as the chalk nudes by **Ludovico Carracci**, and of landscapes, plants and animals, including **Parmigianino’s** sympathetic *Studies of Dogs*, show artists’ search for realism and an understanding of the natural world.

Major works by lesser-known artists – including many works never before exhibited in the UK for conservation reasons – will reveal the variety and richness of the medium, such as **Polidoro da Caravaggio’s** powerful *Head of St Thomas* or **Paolo Farinati’s** study for a fresco of three mythological figures.

Martin Clayton, curator of *Drawing the Italian Renaissance*, said: ‘The Royal Collection holds an astonishing array of Renaissance drawings, and this exhibition will assemble a wide variety of wonderful sheets. These big, bold, and colourful studies show just how exciting the art of drawing became during this time, and how the Italian Renaissance would have been impossible without drawing in all its forms.’

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## Style & Society: Dressing the Georgians

The King’s Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse

22 March – 22 September 2024

The Georgian period was a time of great change, with the nation impacted by a series of social, political and technological upheavals. ***Style & Society: Dressing the Georgians*** uses fashion as a window into Georgian society during this revolutionary period.

The exhibition will bring together almost 100 works from the Royal Collection, including paintings, prints and drawings by artists such as **Thomas Gainsborough, William Hogarth and their contemporaries**. At the heart of the exhibition will be a selection of surviving period

clothing and accessories, alongside paintings showing comparable items. Together, these works will build up a layer-by-layer picture of what the Georgians wore – from the functional dress of laundry maids to the glittering gowns suitable for court – between the accession of George I in 1714 and the death of George IV in 1830.

Following the exhibition's successful showing in London, new additions have been made with distinctly Scottish links. These include two depictions of **George IV** by Fife-born artist **Sir David Wilkie**, painted to mark the first visit by a reigning monarch to Scotland since Charles I. In the largest of these, the King stands proud in full Highland dress of Royal Stewart tartan, making a statement of unity, with the monarch portrayed as heir to both the Hanoverians and the Jacobites following over a century of conflict. Also on display is a portrait by **Louis Gabriel Blanchet** of **Bonnie Prince Charlie**, showing the Jacobite leader as a defiant prince.

The 18th century was a period of discovery, with new inventions influencing fashion accessories. Imagery on fans – which could be revealed and concealed – gave women an opportunity to participate in topical conversations from which they might otherwise be excluded. A **French fan** from 1783 depicts the second successful manned flight of a hot air balloon, with a central vignette showing the balloon flying above Paris – to the delight of elegantly dressed crowds below. Other accessories on display will include a **miniature of Queen Charlotte**, rings from her **famed jewellery collection** and **jewel-encrusted snuffboxes**.

From the introduction of **military uniforms** to the evolution of **childrenswear** and developments in **haircare**, and with notable loans from Historic Royal Palaces, the Fashion Museum Bath, The Bowes Museum, and The School of Historical Dress, this exhibition will explore what fashion can tell us about all areas of life in Georgian Britain.

Anna Reynolds, curator of *Style & Society: Dressing the Georgians*, said: 'Clothing and historical fashion can tell us an enormous amount about life in the Georgian period. It was a time of rapid change, including particularly momentous events in Scotland with attempts to restore the Stuart line to the throne and George IV's visit north of the border – the first by a reigning monarch in almost 200 years. We are delighted to be launching accessible tickets with the opening of this exhibition, allowing more people than ever to learn about this exciting period in our history.'

**Ends**

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A selection of images for each exhibition is available to download from [Dropbox](#).

Further details about the £1 ticket scheme can be found [here](#). £1 tickets are available for those receiving Universal Credit and other named benefits, for the full duration of the *Drawing the Italian Renaissance* and *Style & Society: Dressing the Georgians* exhibitions. For the *Royal Portraits: A Century of Photography* exhibition, £1 tickets are available from 17 May until 8 July.

For further information, please contact the Royal Collection Trust Press Office, +44 (0)20 7839 1377, [press@rct.uk](mailto:press@rct.uk).

Tickets and visitor information can be found at [www.rct.uk](http://www.rct.uk) or by telephone:  
The King's Gallery, Buckingham Palace: +44 (0)303 123 7301  
The King's Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse: +44 (0)303 123 7306

## **Notes to Editors**

**Royal Collection Trust**, a department of the Royal Household, is responsible for the care of the Royal Collection and manages the public opening of the official residences of The King. Income generated from admissions and from associated commercial activities contributes directly to The Royal Collection Trust, a registered charity. The aims of The Trust are the care and conservation of the Royal Collection, and the promotion of access and enjoyment through exhibitions, publications, loans and educational programmes.

**The Royal Collection** is among the largest and most important art collections in the world, and one of the last great European royal collections to remain intact. It comprises almost all aspects of the fine and decorative arts, and is spread among some 15 royal residences and former residences across the UK, most of which are regularly open to the public. The Royal Collection is held in trust by the Sovereign for his successors and the nation, and is not owned by The King as a private individual.

Admission to The King's Galleries at Buckingham Palace and the Palace of Holyroodhouse is managed by The Royal Collection Trust, a registered charity in England and Wales (1016972) and in Scotland (SC039772).