



WE ARE HERE WOMEN IN ART AT CAMBRIDGE COLLEGES

6 March - 24 May 2020

[press release](#)

In 1946, two paintings made their way into college art collections, causing bemusement and some outright hostility. The portrait of Lady Margaret Downing by Thomas Gainsborough and that of ballerina Lydia Lopokova by Duncan Grant were given to Downing College and King's College respectively, two years before women won the right to receive degrees from the University of Cambridge and a full twenty-six years before hitherto all-male colleges began to accept women into their membership. Both women are part of college lore, Lady Downing as the doughty nemesis of the Trustees instructed to set up Downing College and Lopokova as an overlooked member of the Bloomsbury circle so enmeshed in King's College's recent history. They graced the walls of both colleges well before women won the right to enter the halls as full members.

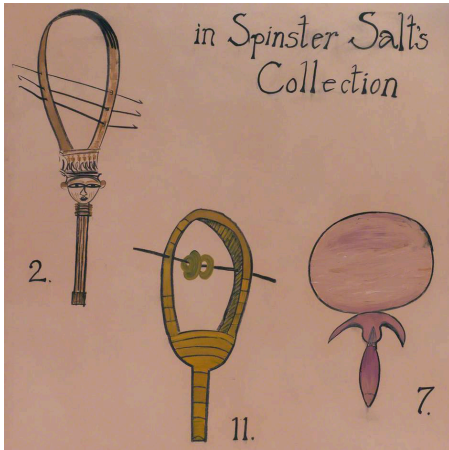
College art collections are relatively unfamiliar to outsiders. They comprise a mixture of gifts and commissions, reflecting the patronage of founders and alumni as well as memorialising heads of house and fellows. Women's colleges, despite the uphill struggle to attain parity, took care to look the part of a legitimate Cambridge college, providing the earliest images of female role models available to the women of the university. Today, over three decades after all colleges voted to accept women, the visual representation of women and the appearance of art by women have both proceeded apace, albeit unevenly in different colleges.

Forty years after Downing College accepted its first female undergraduates, *We Are Here* tells the story of women in college art over the twentieth century, through works that help transform colleges into more inclusive spaces for women and interrogate what it is to be a woman at the University of Cambridge.

PARTICIPATING COLLEGES Churchill College • Darwin College • Downing College • Girton College • Jesus College • King's College • Murray Edwards College • Newnham College

ARTISTS Cathy de Monchaux • Dame Elisabeth Frink • Thomas Gainsborough • Duncan Grant • Lady Christiana Herringham • Lubaina Himid RA • Claerwen James • Mary Kelly • Henry Lamb • Juliette Losq • Melanie Manchot • Louise Nevelson • Kate Nicholson • Winifred Nicholson • Yelena Popova • Gwen Raverat • Sophie Seita and Ciara Phillips • Alison Wilding RA

EDITORS' NOTES



CATALOGUE

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue with an introduction by curator Dr Prerona Prasad (Exhibitions and Programming Manager, The Heong Gallery) and articles by Dr Sophie Pickford (King's College), Henrietta McBurney Ryan (former curator, Newnham College), Harriet Loffler (curator, New Hall Art Collection) and Sophie Seita (artist, formerly of The Queens' College).

THE HEONG GALLERY AT DOWNING COLLEGE

The Heong Gallery at Downing College opened in February 2016 as a new gallery for exhibitions of modern and contemporary art. The Gallery was designed by Caruso St John Architects (winners of RIBA Stirling Prize 2016) and so named in gratitude for the generous benefaction of Alwyn Heong. It won a RIBA East Award 2017.

Recent exhibitions:

Barbara Hepworth: Divided Circle • Yoko Ono Sky Pieces • Kip Gresham: The Art of Collaboration

EXHIBITION FACTS

Title: We Are Here: Women in Art at Cambridge Colleges

Dates: 6 March - 24 May 2020

Address: The Heong Gallery, Downing College, Cambridge, CB2 1DQ

Telephone: 01223 746300

Admission: Free

Opening Hours: Wednesdays-Sunday 12-5

Website: www.heonggallery.com

Email: gallery@dow.cam.ac.uk

Instagram: Heong_Gallery

Twitter: @HeongGallery

Facebook: HeongGallery

For further information and images, please contact Dr Prerona Prasad at gallery@dow.cam.ac.uk.



Images: Thomas Gainsborough, Lady Margaret Downing (detail), ca. 1763. Courtesy the Master, Fellows, and Scholars of Downing College • Lubaina Himid RA, In Spinster Salt's Collection, 1989 © Lubaina Himid. Courtesy New Hall Art Collection • Claerwen James, Professor Lisa Jardine, 2015 © Claerwen James. Courtesy Flowers Gallery • Melanie Manchot, The Ladies (King's Dining Hall), 2017 © Melanie Manchot • Alison Wilding RA, Tooth and Claw, 2014 © Alison Wilding. Courtesy Karsten Schubert Gallery