

From Life

The Sackler Wing of Galleries and Tennant Gallery

11 December 2017 – 11 March 2018

The Royal Academy of Arts presents *From Life*, a special exhibition project taking place across two distinct spaces: the Sackler Wing of Galleries and the Tennant Gallery. *From Life* examines what making art from life has meant to artists throughout history and how the practice is evolving as technology opens up new ways of creating and visualising artwork.

Drawing from casts of Classical and Renaissance sculpture and life models was long considered essential training for any aspiring artist, and was once a staple of the RA Schools, Britain's longest established fine art school. Beginning with a display of historic paintings and works on paper drawn from the RA Collection, *From Life* explores the practice of life drawing, from the origins of the Royal Academy in the 18th century to the present day, whilst also looking to the future. Historic paintings by artists such as Johann Zoffany are followed by works in a diverse range of media by contemporary artists, including Jeremy Deller's *Iggy Pop Life Class* (2016), Cai Guo-Qiang's film *One Thousand Youngsters Drawing David* (2010) and Jenny Saville's *Entry* (2004). *From Life* also presents work by Royal Academicians who continue to interrogate the practice of working from life, among them Antony Gormley, Chantal Joffe, Michael Landy and Gillian Wearing.

For the first time the Royal Academy is working with artists exploring emerging technologies, which presents them with new ways to both observe and represent themselves and the world around them. Farshid Moussavi RA, Humphrey Ocean RA, Yinka Shonibare RA and Jonathan Yeo have experimented with virtual reality technologies, creating new artwork for the exhibition using virtual reality platform HTC Vive, Tilt Brush by Google and artistic software programmes, including MakeVR Pro. Farshid Moussavi's VR experience transports visitors into masterpieces of ecclesiastical architecture, which they can adapt and transform themselves, while creative technology and content studio Happy Finish have worked with Yinka Shonibare to develop a three-dimensional rendering of a neo-classical painting, featuring a cast of Venus dressed in Shonibare's trademark batik fabric. Meanwhile, Humphrey Ocean invites audiences to create their own three-dimensional sketches within a playful virtual environment centred on the artist's fascination with chairs.

From Life reveals the creative process in making these new artworks, as well as opening up the exciting potential of future artistic applications of virtual reality. HTC Vive has supported the development of these works, which will also be available for audiences to experience at home on Viveport, HTC's global VR app store. Artist Jonathan Yeo has collaborated with Google Arts & Culture to create the first physical free-standing sculpture in metal made by using Tilt Brush, his creative process is captured in a VR film to be published on Google Arts & Culture Youtube channel. The visitors' experience of the virtual reality element within the exhibition will depend on availability. As each virtual reality artwork can only be experienced individually, access cannot be guaranteed.

Tim Marlow, Artistic Director of the Royal Academy of Arts said: “This is an experimental project that explores everything from artistic process to technological evolution and creative collaboration. In a sense, *From Life* embodies what an artist-run academy was, is and might become.”

Sky Arts have commissioned immersive content studio Factory 42 to produce a documentary entitled *Virtual Reality: Mystery of Creativity*, which explores creating art in a virtual environment and how artists use these cutting-edge technologies to explore the limits of traditional artistic methods. There are also a series of short films across the Royal Academy’s online platforms, as well as available via the Sky VR and Google Arts & Culture apps.

250 free life drawing experiences for 250 years: To coincide with *From Life* and as part of the 250th anniversary celebrations in 2018, the Royal Academy is offering free life drawing classes for 250 people of all abilities in the historic Life Room in the RA Schools. Each class is for a particular group that has a special relationship with either the RA, drawing, or the human body, from members of the Royal Academy’s outreach programmes to nurses and architects. The guest tutors will not be revealed until the life drawing class begins. The project will be documented by online features and videos.

The RA is also inviting the public and Friends of the RA to participate through an open ballot to win 50 places at the following free classes, led by guest tutors who will be revealed on the day. Enter the ballot at roy.ac/FromLife

13 December 2017 (10.30am – 1.30pm) – Exclusive to Friends of the RA

24 January 2018 (10.30am – 1.30pm) – Open to all

Organisation

From Life is organised by the Royal Academy of Arts, London. The exhibition is curated by Adrian Locke, Royal Academy of Arts.

Accompanying Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by the book *Artists Working from Life*, a collection of over 15 interviews with contemporary artists whose practice responds to the traditions of working from life, encompassing sculpture and conceptual art as well as figurative works on paper. The interviews are written by contributors including Caroline Bugler, Martin Gayford, Laura Gascoigne, Angela Kingston, Adrian Locke, Ben Luke, Sam Phillips and Michael Prodger. The book is introduced by an essay on the history of life drawing by Annette Wickham, the Royal Academy's Curator of Works on Paper.

Supporters

Virtual Reality Partner



Project Partner



Project Partner



Supporter statement

Victoria Chang, Director of VIVE Arts & Culture said: “It is our mission to enable, cultivate, and preserve creation with virtual reality in the arts. The *From Life* exhibition is an incredible opportunity to enable some of the UK’s leading artists to explore the creative potential of Vive’s room-scale VR technology. We

are proud to work with the RA to also bring these artists' works to a wider audience, to be experienced in homes around the world through being published on Viveport, our global VR app store."

Dates and Opening Hours

Press View: Thursday 7 December 2017, 10am – 1pm
Open to public: 11 December 2017 – 11 March 2018
10am – 6pm daily (last admission 5.30pm)
Late night opening: Fridays until 10pm (last admission 9.30pm)

Admission

£13.50 full price (£12 without Gift Aid donation); concessions available; children under 16 and Friends of the RA go free.

Tickets

Tickets for *From Life* are available online at www.royalacademy.org.uk or telephone 020 7300 8090.

Images

Publicity images can be obtained from Picselect, the Press Association's image service for press use. Please register at www.picselect.com and once registered go to the Royal Academy folder in the Arts section.

Social Media

Join the discussion about the exhibition online at:

Facebook [/royalacademy](https://www.facebook.com/royalacademy)

Instagram [@royalacademyarts](https://www.instagram.com/royalacademyarts)

Twitter [@royalacademy](https://twitter.com/royalacademy)

[#FromLife](https://twitter.com/royalacademy)

About the Royal Academy of Arts

The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by King George III in 1768. It has a unique position in being an independent, privately funded institution led by eminent artists and architects whose purpose is to be a clear, strong voice for art and artists. Its public programme promotes the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the visual arts through exhibitions, education and debate.

The RA is undergoing a transformative redevelopment which will be completed in time for its 250th anniversary in 2018. Led by the internationally-acclaimed architect Sir David Chipperfield RA and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), the plans will link Burlington House on Piccadilly and Burlington Gardens for the first time, uniting the two-acre site. The redevelopment will also reveal the elements that make the RA unique, sharing with the public [the historic treasures in its Collection](#), the work of its [Academicians](#) and [the RA Schools](#), alongside its world-class exhibitions programme. For more information on the RA visit www.royalacademy.org.uk/ra250#video

**For public information please print 020 7300 8090 and www.royalacademy.org.uk
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