**For immediate release:**

***Drawing Together: Members of the Society of Graphic Fine Art***

**18 March – 2 May**

**Watts Contemporary Gallery**

*Drawing Together*, opening at Watts Contemporary Gallery on 18 March, presents work by current members of the Society of Graphic Fine Art to demonstrate the diversity of drawing today.

Recognised as the best artists in this field, the Society’s members work in a variety of styles and mediums, upholding the organisation’s founding commitment to show “pure draughtsmanship [as] an essential – if not the essential – factor of all true art.”

Over 90 works (total) by 30 of the Society’s artists have been selected for this exhibition, many new and on show for the first time. These include portraits in pastel by **Svetlana Cameron**; fabric collages by **Anne Carpenter**, described by the artist as “drawing with scissors”; intricate observations of sea creatures by **Lucy Clayton**; 3-dimensional paper sculpture by **Jackie Devereux** and **Louisa Crispin**; colourful semi-abstract block linocuts by **Eric Gaskell**; linear landscapes in Indian ink by **Les Williams** and flamboyant floral paintings and mixed media creations by **Angela Williams** and **Christine Hopkins**. All works are for sale.

During the exhibition, members of the Society of Graphic Fine Art will lead two Drawing Days and will mentor local students as part of a **Season of Drawing at Watts Gallery – Artists’ Village**, which also features: an exhibition in the Historic Galleries of exquisite Pre-Raphaelite drawings from the Ashmolean Museum, brought together with drawings by G F Watts (1817-1904), to reveal a new side to these artists who painted many of the most recognisable paintings in the history of British Art ([*Pre-Raphaelite Treasures: Drawings and Watercolours from the Ashmolean Museum*](https://www.wattsgallery.org.uk/whats-on/pre-raphaelite-treasures-drawings-and-watercolours/), 8 March – 12 June). The exhibition is supported by the Weston Loan Programme with Art Fund; two artists’ residencies, [Phoebe Boswell](https://www.phoebeboswell.com/) and [Sarah Thien](https://sarahthien.com/) (1 April – 31 May) and artist-led workshops and History of Art courses exploring the theme of drawing.

Commenting, Les Williams, President of the Society of Graphic Fine Art (SGFA), said:

"The SGFA is delighted to work in partnership with Watts Gallery for this exhibition. Our society prides itself on having members whose work encompasses most mediums, but retains an essential drawing foundation. "

Gwen Hughes, Watts Contemporary Gallery Programme Manager, said:

“Watts Contemporary exhibitions are an important part of Watts Gallery Trust’s commitment to showcase recent and current artistic practice and to support artists throughout their careers. These exhibitions create access to contemporary art for members of the public, help to fund our wide-reaching Art for All education programme and ensure that current artistic practice continues to thrive at Compton as envisaged by our founding artists.”

Alistair Burtenshaw, Brice Director and Chief Executive of Watts Gallery Trust, said:

“We are delighted to be holding a Season of Drawing at Watts Gallery – Artists’ Village, inspired by our co-founder G F Watts who produced thousands of drawings, either as studies for paintings or as works in their own right. Watts Gallery holds the largest collection of these – about 800 – which show the trajectory of his artistic development over eight decades, from the late 1820s up to his death in 1904.”

“The two exhibitions which are at the heart of this Season will illustrate what has developed in the arena of drawing, and what has stayed the same. The variety of media, styles and subjects in *Drawing Together* reflects a diversity that might have surprised G F Watts, but the experimentation and self-challenging of the artists would surely have struck a chord.”

*Drawing Together: Members of the Society of Graphic Fine Art* opens at Watts Contemporary Gallery on 18 March (until 2 May). All work is for sale, with prices from £50. For further information:

[wattsgallery.org.uk](http://wattsgallery.org.uk)

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

Instagram [@wattsgallery](https://www.instagram.com/wattsgallery/?hl=en)

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

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**FOR HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/xea8fk2jcfdkdgk/AABEQp6vh5EuhPmE3vYmxDWGa?dl=0>

**For further press information:**

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**Notes to Editors**

**Watts Contemporary Gallery**

Watts Contemporary Gallery provides visitors with an opportunity to see and buy contemporary art and craft that resonate with the history and heritage of Watts Gallery – Artists’ Village.  Located in the old Compton Pottery, today Watts Contemporary Gallery presents six exhibitions each year.  All profits raised through Watts Contemporary exhibitions support Art for All, Watts Gallery Trust’s learning and outreach programme inspired by GF and Mary Watts, founders of Watts Gallery – Artists’ Village.

Open Monday to Sunday, including Bank Holidays, 10am - 5pm, free entry. Located above the Shop. For further information: [Watts Contemporary Gallery](https://www.wattsgallery.org.uk/visit/watts-contemporary-gallery/)

**The Society of Graphic Fine Art**

The SGFA’s mission is to promote and exhibit original works, with the emphasis on excellence in drawing and draughtsmanship. Members work in a variety of styles and mediums, including pencil, pen, brush, painting, charcoal, conte and forms of original printmaking.

In the early 20th century, feeling that the skill of drawing was being overshadowed by more “glamorous” art forms such as painting, a group of artists, under the Presidency of Frank Brangwyn, decided to act. The catalogue of the Society’s first exhibition in 1921 stated that the Society “should do something to reinstate in the estimation of the public …the importance of pure draughtsmanship, as an essential – if not the essential – factor of all true art.”

Since then, many illustrious artists have been numbered amongst the Society’s members – including William Russell Flint, Sir William Orpen, W. Heath Robinson, E. H. Shepherd and John Piper. Dame Laura Knight was so impressed when she visited the society’s annual exhibition in 1953 that she asked if she could join and exhibited with them the following year.

Today there are 99 full members, 43 associate members and 19 honorary members. Potential members must have had work selected for the Society’s open submission exhibitions at least twice, and are then asked to submit a portfolio of work (including finished works and sketchbooks) which is reviewed by a selection committee on a day each October.