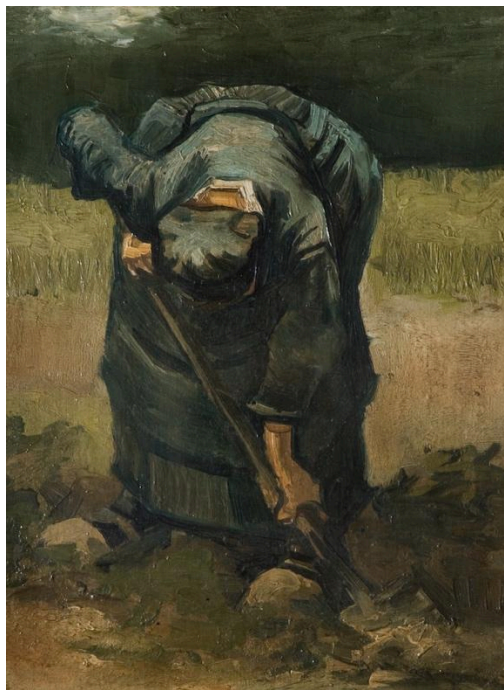


Inventing Post-Impressionism: Works from the Barber Institute of Fine Arts

8 March 2025 - 2 November 2025
Charleston in Firle



Vincent van Gogh, *Peasant Woman Digging*, 1885 © The Henry Barber Trust,
The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham

Charleston presents a major exhibition showcasing impressionist and post-impressionist masterpieces from the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, one of the most important public art collections in the UK. For the first time, these highlights are shown in the context of the community who introduced the work of the post-impressionists to Britain over one hundred years ago.

Inventing Post-Impressionism: Works from the Barber Institute of Fine Arts revisits two groundbreaking exhibitions held in 1910 and 1912 at Grafton Galleries in London, where critic, curator and frequent visitor to Charleston, Roger Fry, along with another Bloomsbury member,

art critic Clive Bell, first introduced post-impressionism – through the work of artists including Paul Cézanne and Vincent Van Gogh – to a shocked British public.

Featuring paintings and works on paper by artists such as Paul Cézanne, Vincent Van Gogh, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Camille Pissarro, Édouard Vuillard, Odilon Redon, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Andre Dérain, Pierre Bonnard and others, the exhibition showcases pieces from Charleston's permanent collection that have never before been displayed alongside a significant number of works from the Barber Institute of Fine Arts at the University of Birmingham. Also included in the exhibition are historic materials from Charleston's archive, including catalogues, cartoons and archive material.

The exhibition will feature the return to Charleston of *Still Life with Apples* (1878), a painting by Cézanne on loan to Charleston from King's College, Cambridge and The Fitzwilliam Museum. Once owned by economist John Maynard Keynes, the work was famously left by Keynes in a hedge near Charleston, following his return in 1918 from a posthumous auction of the contents of artist Edgar Degas' studio. Keynes had made the dangerous journey to wartime Paris to purchase the work by Cézanne alongside others by Delacroix, Ingres and Manet, with the then-director of the National Gallery. Upon seeing the work, Vanessa Bell wrote, "It's most exciting to have it in the house". It was likely the first Cézanne painting in the country, and this season it returns to Charleston for the first time in over 100 years.

This exhibition, blending history, art, and Bloomsbury's role in shaping British modernism, offers a rare opportunity to explore the lasting impact of post-impressionism on British art.

Nathaniel Hepburn, Director of Charleston, says: "We're thrilled to showcase such significant works from the Barber Institute of Fine Arts at Charleston at Firle. Bringing these masterpieces to Sussex allows us to deepen the narrative around the Bloomsbury group, their pioneering role in introducing post-impressionism to Britain, and their enduring impact on British modernism. Exhibiting these iconic works alongside Charleston's own collection enables us to tell these stories in greater depth."

Professor Jennifer Powell, Director of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, says: "Bringing some of the most significant nineteenth- and twentieth-century masterpieces from the Barber collection to Charleston for this exhibition provides a unique opportunity for new audiences to enjoy them while their home gallery is undergoing improvement works. We are delighted to be working in collaboration with our Charleston colleagues and hope that visitors to the exhibition will enjoy seeing these much-loved works in new contexts and dialogues."

Alongside *Inventing Post-Impressionism: Works from the Barber Institute of Fine Arts*, a solo exhibition of works by artist Izumi Kato will be displayed in Charleston's South Gallery, in the artist's first institutional solo show in Europe. Izumi Kato is represented by Stephen Friedman Gallery and Perrotin.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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Exhibition details

8 March–2 November 2025

Charleston in Firle, BN8 6LL

Wednesday–Sunday/Bank Holiday Monday, 10am–5pm

The exhibition is held in the Wolfson Gallery

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, garden and galleries at Firle and our new space in Lewes. We present a dynamic year-round programme of exhibitions, events and festivals. We believe in the power of art, in all its forms, to provoke new ways of thinking and living.

www.charleston.org.uk

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts is the art gallery, principal art collection and original concert hall for the University of Birmingham. It was founded in 1932 'for the study and encouragement of art and music' by Lady Barber, who stipulated the acquisition of works 'of that standard of quality required by the National Gallery and the Wallace Collection'. Housed in a Grade-1 listed Art Deco building, the Barber is home to a National Designated Collection, acquired and owned by the Henry Barber Trust and with holdings that now include some 160 paintings, dating from the early Renaissance through to the late 20th century, more than 800 works on paper, as well as sculpture, decorative arts and one of the most important caches of Roman, Byzantine and Medieval coins in the world. The collection features key works by (among others) Giovanni Bellini, Sandro Botticelli, Rosalba Carriera, Edgar Degas, Vincent van Gogh, Thomas Gainsborough, Gwen John, Käthe Kollwitz, René Magritte, Edouard Manet, Claude Monet, Auguste Rodin, Peter Paul Rubens, JMW Turner, Élizabéth Vigée-Lebrun and James McNeill Whistler. www.barber.org.uk.