

News Release

Embargoed until Tuesday 8 March 2022, 00.01

With support from CHANEL, the National Portrait Gallery acquires five new self-portraits by ground breaking female artists

***One year on from the launch of its partnership with CHANEL, the Gallery
shares how it is enhancing the representation of women within its Collection***



L-R: *Portrait, Eyes Lowered* by Celia Paul, 2019 © Celia Paul. Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro; *Självporträtt, Åkersberga* by Everlyn Nicodemus, 1982 © the Artist, Courtesy Richard Saltoun Gallery; *Preparatory study for 'Divided Self'* by Rose Finn-Kelcey, 1974 © the Estate of Rose Finn-Kelcey, Courtesy Kate MacGarry gallery.

Today, the National Portrait Gallery announces its acquisition of five important self-portraits by artists Chila Burman (1957-), Susan Hiller (1940-2019), Rose Finn-Kelcey (1945-2014), Everlyn Nicodemus (1954-) and Celia Paul (1959-). Nicodemus' *Självporträtt, Åkersberga* is the first painted self-portrait by a Black female artist to enter the Gallery's Collection.

These acquisitions are made one year on from the launch of *Reframing Narratives: Women in Portraiture*, a three-year project in partnership with the CHANEL Culture Fund, which aims to enhance the representation of women in the Gallery's Collection. The project will increase the proportion of women artists and sitters on display at the Gallery in London when it re-opens in 2023, following a major transformation, which includes a complete re-presentation of the entire Collection and a significant refurbishment of the building.

Highlighting the often-overlooked stories of individual women who have shaped British history and culture, these recent acquisitions explore the artists' unique approaches to self-portraiture. **Celia**

Paul reflects upon the history of female representation, making a powerful self-assessment in *Portrait, Eyes Lowered* (2019) that questions her own position within the artistic canon. **Rose Finn-Kelcey's** *Preparatory study for 'Divided Self'* uses photographic techniques to duplicate herself in a conceptual piece that highlights the paradox of making public, what is intrinsically private. She chooses to stage the conversation between her 'divided self' at Speaker's Corner in Marble Arch, a traditional location for public speaking and debate. **Everlyn Nicodemus** layers multiple faces in *Självporträtt, Åkersberga* (1982), as she contemplates herself from different perspectives. Suggesting that plurality is part of her identity, her work recognises that societal pressures felt by women to fill multiple roles at once: artist, writer and wife. Similarly, **Chila Burman**, whose colourful installations have covered the exteriors of Tate Britain and Covent Garden's Market Building, uses a combination of surreal imagery and fragmentation to create her self-portrait. In *Aphrodisiacs Being Socially Constructed* (1988), Burman depicts herself dually – both a young woman, subject to prying eyes, and as a powerful artist, a fierce warrior, taking charge of her destiny. Combining self-portraits, each taken at a different point in time, **Susan Hiller's** *Ace (retrieved)* from *The Photomat Portrait Series* (1972-3) moves beyond traditional notions of portraiture to negotiate an original collaboration between the artist and the automated machine.

Dr Flavia Frigeri, CHANEL Curator for the Collection at the National Portrait Gallery, said: "Each of these self-portraits, acquired since the launch of *Reframing Narratives: Women in Portraiture* in March 2021, challenges traditional notions of female self-representation and identity. Made possible through our partnership with CHANEL, we are thrilled to have acquired these important works for the Gallery's permanent Collection, and look forward to building on this as the project continues."

Yana Peel, Global Head of Arts and Culture at CHANEL, said: "Diversity of perspective drives creativity and moves culture forward. CHANEL is delighted to be partnering with the National Portrait Gallery on this important initiative to foster new thinking on female innovation in portraiture, as part of its global Culture Fund."

Women's History Month 2022

In addition to these acquisitions, the Gallery is releasing a series of filmed interviews with inspirational women throughout March as part of *Reframing Narratives: Women in Portraiture*, coinciding with Women's History Month in 2022. These women include award-winning design critic and author, Alice Rawsthorn; British comedian and actress, Rosie Jones; and multi-award-winning producer and founder of the Black Ticket Project, Tobi Kyeremateng. The films will be available on the Gallery's website and social media channels, alongside further new digital resources. These will include recent interviews with photographers Tereza Červeňová, Vinca Petersen and Violeta Sofia, while *Female Focus* and *Trailblazing Through Time* series will both provide opportunities to explore women artists, sitters and portraits within the Gallery's Collection in greater detail.

The National Portrait Gallery will also be working in partnership with Westminster Council as part of [Westminster Reveals](#) to produce a display of ten portraits from its Collection on Villiers Street, London, showcased between 5 and 31 March 2022.

Councillor Paul Swaddle OBE, Cabinet Member for Finance and Smart City and Councillor at Westminster City Council, said: "The West End is home to over 300 cultural institutions, including world-leading art galleries, theatres and music venues. We supported these attractions throughout the pandemic enabling them to bring their art out onto the streets, making culture accessible for all. This year, we are so pleased to provide our support again to National Portrait Gallery, allowing visitors to enjoy an outdoor exhibition celebrating innovative female artists."

To celebrate this, the Gallery have launched *Inspirational Women*, a new competition encouraging by-passers and Gallery fans alike to share images of the women who inspire them on social media. By tagging the Gallery, entrants will be in with the chance of winning copies of *Inspirational Women: Rediscovering Stories in Art, Science and Social Reform*, a new book from the National Portrait Gallery that includes a forward by the award-winning BBC journalist, broadcaster and writer, Samira Ahmed.

For further press information, images and interview requests please contact:

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Notes to Editors

Inspirational Women: Rediscovering Stories in Art, Science and Social Reform (£16.95) will be available to pre-order from the National Portrait Gallery's online shop from 1 March 2022: npgshop.org.uk

For more information about Women's History Month 2022 and T&Cs relating to the National Portrait Gallery's *Inspirational Women* competition, please visit: npg.org.uk/womenshistorymonth

National Portrait Gallery

The National Portrait Gallery was founded in 1856 to encourage, through portraiture, the appreciation and understanding of the people who have made and are making British history and culture. Today it promotes engagement with portraiture in all media to a wide-ranging public by conserving, growing and sharing the world's largest collection of portraits.

The Gallery in St Martin's Place, London is currently closed until 2023, while essential building works take place on the *Inspiring People* redevelopment project, which will transform the Gallery, including a complete refurbishment of the building and a new learning centre. During the closure period, the Gallery will continue to share its Collection through its digital channels and a series of nationwide partnerships and collaborations.

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CHANEL Culture Fund

The CHANEL Culture Fund, launched in 2021, is a global programme of initiatives and long-term partnerships that will support innovators across the arts in advancing new ideas and greater representation in culture and society. Expanding upon the House's rich history of cultural patronage, through the Fund, CHANEL is committed to championing equality of voice and innovation in creative and cultural thinking. The projects are intended to foster collaboration across disciplines, and help propel transformative ideas.

www.chanel.com/gb/chanel-culture-fund/