Watts Contemporary Gallery sells contemporary artwork to support Watts Gallery Trust’s Art for All programme. Curated exhibitions support and showcase local, new and emerging, and established artists and makers of national and international merit, that resonate with the heritage and ethos of this unique Arts & Crafts site.

The Watts Contemporary programme complements our founding vision of Art for All and the ethos of G F and Mary Watts who were contemporary artists in their own time pushing the boundaries of fine art, craft and design. As well as supporting fellow contemporary artists, the Wattses’ set up a thriving commercial pottery business. The Watts Contemporary Gallery is housed in the original Pottery Building.

Watts Contemporary exhibitions explore different techniques and themes and are interpreted for visitors through storyboards and text panels as well as digital sources. Many exhibitions display exclusive work fulfilling our commitment to support the creation of new artwork.

‘Very well put together show with interesting and enlightening text’
Visitor 2016

‘Beautiful work. I just had to buy one’
Visitor 2015

Cover image: Peter Blake, Another Parade
‘It was a great honour to exhibit at Watts Contemporary Gallery. Not only to have my work in a space steeped in such rich history and in beautiful surroundings, but also in a gallery with great light - it really showed my work at its best’.  

In 2014 Watts Contemporary Gallery sold work by Sir Peter Blake in an exhibition *Pop Victoriana*, lusterware ceramics by Jonathan Chiswell Jones and stunning portraiture by a Compton resident Emma Leone-Palmer.

In 2015 Watts Contemporary Gallery sold watercolours by internationally renowned artist Alexander Creswell and HRH The Prince of Wales, and slipware ceramics by Prue Cooper. An exhibition *Prints for the People* showcased prints from the Wartime School Prints series and lithographs for Lyons Tea Shops.

In 2016 *Linocut Lives On* explored this democratic art form and displayed work by old masters such as Edward Bawden as well as ten contemporary artists. *On The Silk Road* displayed Alexander Creswell’s exquisite series of watercolours created on his 2015 journey to Central Asia.
In 2017 Watts Contemporary Gallery presented a sell-out show with paintings by Mary Wondrausch OBE. Later this year *A Craft Engrained* explores wood engravings by Gwen Raverat (1885-1957) and three of the most eminent wood engravers of today.

**Exhibitions are supported by a Private View event, promotional material in both print and digital formats, a press release, and marketing campaign throughout the duration of the exhibition. There are opportunities to run themed talks and demonstrations to coincide with an exhibition.**
The Artists’ Village was founded by G F Watts and Mary Watts. They shared a creative partnership and ethos of Art for All.

They believed in the transformative potential of art and they campaigned to widen access to art for socially excluded individuals and those living in poverty. Furthermore, they cared deeply about a number of social, cultural and environmental issues which are still relevant today.

The goal of enhancing and transforming people’s lives through art is what inspires the work and activities today at Watts Gallery – Artists’ Village.

‘Watts Contemporary Gallery is part of an ‘enterprise zone’, in keeping with Mary Watts’s original pottery which supported the Picture Gallery and apprentices working in the Pottery. Today it showcases contemporary artists which complement the collection and ethos of the Artists’ Village. As well as looking backwards, we look forwards and Watts Gallery Trustees support contemporary artists in their development and need to reach new publics. The proceeds from the sale of work supports Watts Gallery Trust’s learning and outreach programme which engages over 15,000 participants each year. As an independent charity, which receives no statutory funding, this support is vital and hopefully has the double dividend of helping artists of the past and present, and supporting those who wish to engage with art.’

Director Watts Gallery Trust
George Frederic Watts
OM, RA (1817 – 1904) was a celebrated and visionary Victorian Artist, ahead of his time. He was widely considered to be the greatest painter of the Victorian era. A portraitist, sculptor, landscape painter and symbolist, Watts’s work embodied the most pressing themes of the time, earning him the title ‘England’s Michelangelo’. His paintings hang in Tate Britain and the National Portrait Gallery. His fame was not limited to Britain. In 1884 he was the first living artist to have a solo exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, a show so enormously successful that it led to a longer run. At the time of his death, Watts was the most famous artist in England.

Mary Watts
(1849 - 1938) was an exceptional and influential artist in her own right. She studied at Slade and South Kensington School of Art, and whilst living in Compton started to develop her work in craft and design, inspired by the Arts and Craft movement. As a member of the Home Arts Industries Association she led terracotta clay modelling classes for local people in her home studio. A seam of terracotta clay had been found in the grounds of their Compton home. This led to the design and build of Watts Cemetery Chapel and the establishment of a thriving commercial business – The Compton Potters’ Art Guild which successfully operated for 50 years.
Watts Gallery - Artists' Village was founded by G F and Mary Watts. A unique Arts & Crafts gem nestled in the Surrey Hills, set in beautiful woodland on the Pilgrims Way. This is the only Artists' Village of this kind in the UK, attracting 70,000 visitors. The estate comprises of four striking Arts & Crafts buildings.
WATTS GALLERY

A sumptuous original gallery purpose built in 1904, houses over 100 of G F Watts paintings including portraits, landscapes and his monumental sculptures. Critically acclaimed exhibitions of national importance are staged three times a year.

WATTS CHAPEL

Recognised as one of the most important Art Nouveau buildings in Britain, the Grade 1 listed Watts Chapel is the Arts & Crafts masterpiece of pioneering female designer Mary Watts.

WATTS STUDIOS

Fully restored and opened in 2016, in the east wing of Limnerslease - the artists’ home, is the recreation of the Wattses’ studios and workspace. Watts Gallery Trust continues to fundraise to save the rest of the house and preserve it for the future.

THE POTTERY BUILDING

An original Arts & Crafts building now housing The Tea Shop, Visitor Centre and Watts Contemporary Gallery. Pioneered by Mary Watts The Pottery became a thriving business and famous stockists included Liberty of London.
FURTHER INFORMATION

Admission to Watts Contemporary Gallery is free
Open Monday – Sunday 10.30am – 5.15pm

Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village is in the village of Compton, near Guildford, Surrey. 30 minutes from London Waterloo, with parking for over 100 cars.

Watts Gallery Trust is an independent registered charity.

K D Fine Art Framers is located next to the Watts Contemporary Gallery, giving visitors the convenience of choosing to frame any artwork they have bought.

CONTACT

Jo Wilks
Commercial Manager
01483 901 800 | commercial@wattsgallery.org.uk

Watts Gallery - Artists’ Village
Down Lane, Compton, Guildford, Surrey GU3 1DQ

wattsgallery.org.uk | Charity Number 313612