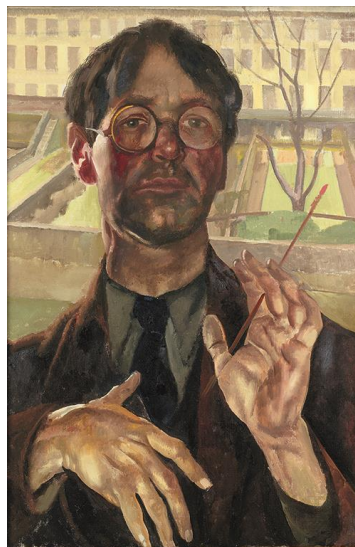


Press release – 13 June 2016

THE LARGEST STANLEY SPENCER EXHIBITION IN 15 YEARS  
OPENS THIS SUMMER AT THE HEPWORTH WAKEFIELD  
OFFERING A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON ONE OF BRITAIN'S GREATEST PAINTERS

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STANLEY SPENCER: OF ANGELS AND DIRT



STANLEY SPENCER: OF ANGELS AND DIRT  
24 JUNE – 5 OCTOBER

Press Preview: Wednesday 22 June 2016, 11am – 3pm

From 24 June until 5 October, The Hepworth Wakefield will present *Stanley Spencer: Of Angels and Dirt* – the first UK major survey exhibition in 15 years of work by one of Britain's best loved painters.

Presented during the 125th anniversary of Spencer's birth, the exhibition brings together more than 70 significant works spanning the artist's entire 45 year-career.

Highlights on display will include a number of Spencer's rarely-seen self-portraits and important works from private collections that will be publicly exhibited for the first time in decades. Also, on

show will be the monumental paintings from the *Shipbuilding on the Clyde* series, created by during World War II, on loan from the Imperial War Museum and a work from Spencer's *Empire Marketing Board, 1929* series.

The exhibition explores the seemingly conflicting themes that Spencer fused together in his richly detailed paintings, of religion and sexuality, work and leisure, nature and industry, highlighting Spencer's distinctive view of everyday life. As Spencer himself put it, '*I am on the side of the angels and dirt*'.

The thematic presentation of Spencer's work within the exhibition is aligned to the artist's own interpretation of his paintings. It will allow visitors to view bodies of work that he created throughout his life as a whole, such as his landscape paintings, including views of his beloved hometown of Cookham, and of Halifax where he spent his holidays during the late 1920s. It will also showcase his series of portraits of people close to him, including a number of depictions of Spencer's second wife, Patricia Preece.

A prolific writer, Spencer's own interpretation of his paintings from his diaries and fragmented autobiography, (without which Spencer claimed no-one could properly understand his work) will be presented alongside his paintings, to offer visitors a unique insight into his life and work. Additional preparatory drawings, including sketches made of the shipbuilders during World War II, never before exhibited early landscape drawings, Spencer's earliest oil painting of 1907, and rarely seen family photographs, in addition to his writings on artistic inspiration and composition will further reveal Spencer's view of the world.

The first volume of a new three-part Spencer autobiography will be published by the Spencer Estate and Unicorn Press shortly after the exhibition opens, using Spencer's own writings to discuss his work in a similarly thematic way.

Stanley Spencer's grandson, John Spencer said: "A few weeks before Stanley died he was heard to say, 'Do you think I will be remembered?'. With The Hepworth Wakefield's comprehensive exhibition *Stanley Spencer: Of Angels and Dirt*, it seems my grandfather is still very much remembered. 2016 feels like the 'Year of Stanley Spencer', with exhibitions also taking place in Cookham and Hastings this year. I know my grandfather would be as proud as I am to be able to share this celebration of his life and art."

The exhibition will also examine the lifelong influence that early Italian paintings by such artists as Botticelli, Fra Angelico and Giotto had on Spencer's work.

Stanley Spencer fans and collectors include the late David Bowie, who narrated the BBC Omnibus Special about the painter in 2001. Spencer was among Bowie's favourite British artists. Adam Ant (born Stuart Goddard) spent summer holidays in Cookham and grew up being inspired by the painter, who he calls his "*favourite artist of all time*". Andrew Lloyd Webber, who owns several works by Spencer and considers both Stanley Spencer and Francis Bacon as two of the greatest British painters of the twentieth century as well as British sculptor Anthony Gormley, broadcaster Jon Snow and art historian James Fox, who recently became President of the Friends of Stanley Spencer Gallery.

The exhibition is supported by Grand Central Rail.

ENDS

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

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#### EDITOR'S NOTES:

#### STANLEY SPENCER (1891 - 1959)

- 1891 Born 30 June, in 'Fernlea', High Street, Cookham.
- 1907 Studied art, Maidenhead Technical Institute.
- 1908-12 Student at the Slade School of Art; contemporaries included Nevinson, Roberts, Gertler, Bomberg & Paul Nash. Nicknamed 'Cookham'. Awarded scholarship, Melville Nettleship & Composition Prizes.
- 1912 Exhibited in Roger Fry's 'Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition'.
- 1915-18 Enlisted RAMC, 1915. Stationed Beaufort War Hospital, Bristol. Posted to Macedonia, 1916. Volunteered for infantry, 1917.
- 1919 Official war picture, Travoy with Wounded Soldiers... (Imperial War Museum) Spencer meets Hilda Carline.
- 1920 'The Last Supper' (Stanley Spencer Gallery).
- 1925 Married the artist Hilda Carline; 23 February. His first daughter, Shirin is born in November.
- 1927 First one-man exhibition, Goupil Gallery. Created a stir with 'The Resurrection, Cookham', 1924-6 (Tate).
- 1927-32 Mural decorations based on wartime experiences in Bristol & Macedonia, Sandham Memorial Chapel, Burghclere (National Trust).
- 1929 Meets Patricia Preece.
- 1930 His second daughter, Unity is born in May.
- 1932-38 Returns to live in Cookham. 1932 elected Associate of the Royal Academy.
- 1935 Resigned from RA after rejection of two paintings by hanging committee.
- 1937 Divorced by Hilda.
- 1937 Married Patricia Preece 29 May, but separated almost immediately.
- 1939-1941 Stayed and worked at The White Hart Inn, Leonard Stanley, Gloucestershire with George and Daphne Charlton. Started 'Ship Building on the Clyde' series here.

- 1940 Commissioned to record the war effort by War Artists Advisory Committee. Finished 'Shipbuilding on the Clyde' series, 1946.
- 1945-50 Port Glasgow Resurrection series.
- 1945-59 Lived at Cliveden View, Cookham Rise.
- 1950 CBE; rejoined Royal Academy & elected RA. Hilda dies in November.
- 1955 Retrospective exhibition, Tate Gallery.
- 1959 Returned to 'Fernlea'. Knighted. Died 14 December at Canadian Memorial Hospital, Cliveden, Berkshire

#### STANLEY SPENCER EXHIBITIONS 2016-17

2016 marks the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Spencer's birth, a programme of exhibitions will be taking place throughout the year.

24 March to 31 October 2016

*Stanley Spencer: Visionary Painter of the Natural World*

Stanley Spencer Gallery

[www.stanleyspencer.org.uk](http://www.stanleyspencer.org.uk)

Paintings of the natural world, exploring Spencer's consummate skill in a series of exquisitely executed floral compositions, garden vistas and landscapes. Figurative and spiritual scenes amongst these paintings remind us of Spencer's visionary leanings.

5 August 2016 to 31 January 2017

*Stanley Spencer: A 20th Century British Master*

Carrick Hill, South Australia

[www.carrickhill.sa.gov.au](http://www.carrickhill.sa.gov.au)

This is the first major exhibition of Spencer's work in Australia, featuring paintings and drawings telling the story of Stanley Spencer's muses and subjects that made this painter one of the greatest forces in British painting.

15 October 2016 to 8 January 2017

Jerwood Gallery

*In Focus: Stanley Spencer a Panorama of Life*

[www.jerwoodgallery.org](http://www.jerwoodgallery.org)

The main focus of this one room display is on Spencer's observations of everyday working and domestic life; from plumbers and mechanics at work, to the undertaking of household chores: taking in the washing, hedge-clipping and shopping for wool.

3 November 2016 to March 2017

Stanley Spencer Gallery

*Stanley Spencer: Facets of Genius (TBC)*

[www.stanleyspencer.org.uk](http://www.stanleyspencer.org.uk)

A further opportunity to see many of the works from the acclaimed 2015 exhibition, The Creative Genius of Stanley Spencer, intermingled with additional works from the Gallery's own collection.

#### THE HEPWORTH WAKEFIELD

The gallery is at the heart of Wakefield's regeneration. Designed by the internationally acclaimed practice, David Chipperfield Architects, it is funded by Wakefield Council and Arts Council

England and an increasing number of charitable trusts, private individuals, Patrons and Members. To date, the gallery has welcomed almost 1.5 million visitors.

Address: The Hepworth Wakefield, Gallery Walk, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF1 5AW

Telephone: +44 (0)1924 247360

Admission: Free

Website: [www.hepworthwakefield.org](http://www.hepworthwakefield.org)

Email: [hello@hepworthwakefield.org](mailto:hello@hepworthwakefield.org)

Opening Hours: 10am - 5pm Tuesday – Sunday  
10am - 9pm Third Thursday of the month  
Closed Mondays (except local school holidays and bank holidays)

Travel: By Train: the nearest stations are Wakefield Westgate and Kirkgate  
By Car: the gallery is situated off the A61, with nearby links to the M1 motorway. A pay & display visitor car park is located on Thornes Lane, WF1 5QJ, with free blue badge car parking on site  
By Bus: the gallery is situated on main bus routes and the FreeCityBus route (Mon-Sat, 9.30am-3pm)  
By Bicycle: bicycle racks are located by our main entrance  
By Air: the nearest airport is LeedsBradford

Polite Request: The gallery should be cited in full, as The Hepworth Wakefield

Twitter: @HepworthGallery

Facebook: TheHepworthWakefield

Instagram: HepworthWakefield

END OF ALL