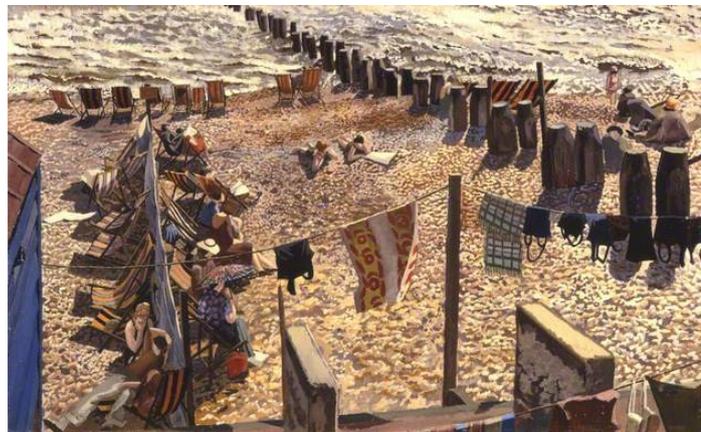
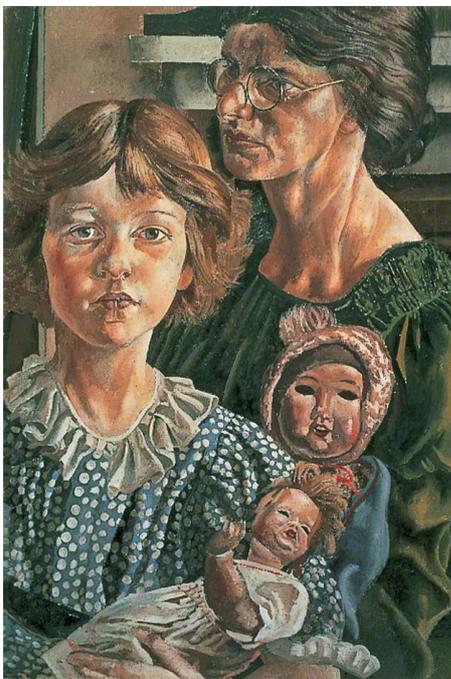


## Stanley Spencer Gallery – Current Exhibition

### The Creative Genius of Stanley Spencer

- Celebrated Northern Collections come to Spencer's Cookham



**Left:** Family Group: Hilda, Unity and Dolls, 1937. Loaned to the Stanley Spencer Gallery by Leeds Museums and Galleries (Leeds Art Gallery).

**Above:** Southwold, 1937. Loaned to the Stanley Spencer Gallery by Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums Collections.

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**Commencing on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2015, the Stanley Spencer Gallery is displaying an unprecedented combination of fine Spencer paintings, including the full permanent Spencer collections of Aberdeen City Art Gallery and Leeds City Art Gallery.**

The opportunity to borrow the Spencer collections of Aberdeen and Leeds for a period of more than two years has delighted the Trustees and staff of the Stanley Spencer Gallery and assures an exceptional experience for our visitors. **'The Creative Genius of Stanley Spencer'** includes both the Aberdeen and Leeds collections in their entirety, together with selected hauntingly profound works from the Gallery's own collection and others loaned from private collectors. The resulting varying-themed exhibition exemplifies the extraordinary diversity of Spencer's output and the breadth of his creative genius.

The visitor experience flows naturally through three main facets of Spencer's oeuvre, recognising at the same time that nothing of Spencer's work can be neatly pigeon-holed. Vivid fusions of the earthly, the spiritual and the beloved can be discerned across all of Spencer's paintings, every one of his works having successive layers of 'story to tell' and many being touched by images or reflections of Cookham.

Firstly in order of exhibit there is an astonishing series of passionate spiritual works, including 'The Betrayal', 'Crucifixion, 1921', 'The Last Supper', the mighty 'Christ Preaching at Cookham Regatta' and 'Christ's Entry into Jerusalem'. Then follow several exemplars of Spencer's meticulous observational skill in the representation of the natural world and the outdoor environment, including 'Clipped Yews', 'Gardens in the Pound', 'Madonna Lilies', 'Gardening', 'Southwold' and 'Greenhouse Interior'. The latter, focusing on graceful white and magenta fuchsias, is a new, long-term loan from a private collector and has rarely been on public view. The flow then moves back to figurative works depicting loved ones and significant scenes from Spencer's complex personal life, reflecting his joys and his anguish amid paintings such as 'Separating Fighting Swans', 'Hilda, Unity and Dolls', 'Patricia at Cockmarsh Hill', 'Neighbours' and 'At the Chest of Drawers'.

This is an exhibition to enthral everyone, from Spencer cognoscenti to those, unaware of the extraordinary world of the artist, entering the Stanley Spencer Gallery for the very first time.

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**Quotation** *"Stanley Spencer was one of the most original artists of the twentieth century. His paintings are beautiful, inimitable and irresistibly uplifting. To see so many of them on show in his lifelong home of Cookham is an experience that will not be forgotten. With this glorious exhibition the ever superb Stanley Spencer Gallery has outdone itself!"*

**Dr James Fox, Fellow of Gonville and Caius College Cambridge, Art Historian and Broadcaster**

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**About the Stanley Spencer Gallery** The Stanley Spencer Gallery, in Cookham High Street, was established in 1962 and refurbished in 2006-7 as a beautiful modern art display space with video presentations to accompany each current exhibition. The Gallery's archives include personal letters, photographs, press cuttings and a comprehensive library of books on the artist, all readily accessible for visitors to enjoy. The Gallery is already widely known as the world's largest repository of works by Sir Stanley Spencer, whose reputation continues to soar. The Gallery won a series of accolades in 2014, including its naming as one of the five most 'unmissable' small Art Galleries in the UK and the award of a Michelin star in the Great Britain Michelin Green Guide.

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**Images** High resolution images available for use in reviewing 'The Creative Genius of Stanley Spencer' include those contained in this Press Release, but enquiries for other images are welcome.

<p><b>The Creative Genius of Stanley Spencer</b> - Celebrated Northern Collections come to Spencer's Cookham From 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2015 to 20<sup>th</sup> March 2016</p>	<p>2 April to 1 November 2015. Daily 10.30am to 5.30pm. 2 November 2015 to 20 March 2016 Thursday to Sunday 11.00am to 4.30pm Stanley Spencer Gallery, High Street, Cookham, Berks SL6 9SJ <a href="http://stanleyspencer.org.uk">stanleyspencer.org.uk</a> Publicity: Shez Courtenay-Smith email <a href="mailto:shez@stanleyspencer.org.uk">shez@stanleyspencer.org.uk</a></p> <p> @ SpencerCookham  Stanley Spencer Gallery</p>
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