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## The King's Gallery to host first Artists in Residence programme with the Royal Drawing School

Royal Collection Trust today announces the artists who will join its first artist residency at The King's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, organised in partnership with the Royal Drawing School for the exhibition *Drawing the Italian Renaissance*.

Jesse Ajilore, Joshua Pell and Sara Lee Roberts are graduates of The Drawing Year, the Royal Drawing School's full-scholarship postgraduate level course, and bring with them a wide range of styles and experiences of drawing, from computer game design to urban landscape drawing.

Each at different stages of their career, the three artists have been invited to respond to the exhibition, finding inspiration in the drawings of over 80 artists from the Italian Renaissance, from Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael to lesser-known names such as Paolo Farinati and the Carracci family. Opening on Friday, 1 November, it will be the widest-ranging exhibition of Italian Renaissance drawings ever to be held in the UK.

The three artists will be drawing in the gallery on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays throughout the duration of the exhibition. Visitors to the exhibition will also be encouraged to try their hand at drawing, with paper and pencils available in the gallery, and will hear from one of the artists, Jesse Ajilore, on the complimentary multimedia guide.

Computer game design graduate **Jesse Ajilore**, 25, from Lewisham, south-east London, completed The Drawing Year in 2023 and now mentors young people with special education needs (SEN) with art classes, among other subjects, in a primary school alongside his work as a fine artist. With a background in designing characters for gaming (often focusing on single character studies) and creating imagined worlds, he has set himself the challenge of creating large studies with multiple figures interacting with each other for his first artist residency.



The King's Gallery's first artists in residence:  
Jesse Ajilore, Joshua Pell and Sara Lee Roberts

**Ajlore** said: *'I'm looking forward to learning more about how Renaissance artists approached drawing – both literally with their almost mathematical approach of using measurements, but also how they used it to understand the world. I'd love to pick the brains of the artists, and having the time and space to explore their work will let me get close to that.'*

**Joshua Pell**, 29, from Beverley in East Yorkshire, studied illustration before turning to drawing urban and industrial landscapes around Hull and Leeds. It was a tutor during his undergraduate course who encouraged him to apply to the Royal Drawing School, from which he graduated in 2023.

**Pell** said: *'In my day-to-day practice I consciously make the decision to not work from photographs or other images and do as much as I can on location and in the street – so this will be a different way of working for me. We're used to seeing finished works of art in galleries but I'm excited to see how these works began and the start of their creative process. I'm also intrigued to see how visitors will engage with the exhibition through drawing themselves.'*

For **Sara Lee Roberts**, from Camden, London, it is the chance to show that historic drawings can still be relevant and inspiring today. Having previously worked as a painting conservator, she completed The Drawing Year in 2008 and has gone on to have solo exhibitions, lead multiple courses in fine art and write a book on reinterpreting the work of Old Masters for today, something she is passionate about.

**Roberts** said: *'As a tutor, I'm keen to remove the idea that you need to know about the history of art to appreciate these works. I think there's something very straightforward about looking at art, you can just connect to how the work looks: the light, the shapes. There's an immediacy with drawings, you sense the artist's hand. I hope to make work that has a genuine connection with the original Renaissance drawings but that is thoroughly contemporary and can speak to people today.'*

Their sustained access to the Royal Collection's holdings of Italian Renaissance drawings – one of the greatest surviving collections of work from the period – will allow the artists to create a new body of work inspired by the techniques and subjects of the drawings. A selection of their drawings will be displayed in the gallery's Millar Learning Room as part of an evolving display for visitors to enjoy throughout the exhibition's run.

The artist residency is intended to show that drawing is still an essential part of today's creative landscape, just as it was 500 years ago. It is a collaboration with the Royal Drawing School, the not-for-profit art school founded by His Majesty The King, when Prince of Wales, and artist Catherine Goodman CBE LVO in 2000.

**Martin Clayton, Head of Prints and Drawings, Royal Collection Trust**, said: *'Drawing was central to all artistic fields during the Italian Renaissance and its use has continued to diversify to the present day. We are delighted to invite Jesse, Joshua and Sara to The King's Gallery in London to be inspired by some of the finest drawings made during the Italian Renaissance. They will bring new insights to a rich part of the Collection from which there is still so much to learn.'*

**Julia Balchin, Principal of the Royal Drawing School**, said: *'We are thrilled that three of our alumni are artists in residence at this remarkable Renaissance exhibition at The King's Gallery. At the Royal Drawing School, drawing from art is one of the key methods we use in our teaching, and it's exciting to see how each of these artists, with their distinct styles, will engage with the drawings of the Renaissance Masters. We look forward to witnessing their creative process and contemporary response.'*

The artists in residence will also be leading drawing workshops for visitors, including:

- **Drop-in ‘Masterclass’ sessions** Free with an exhibition ticket, these drop-in sessions will be led by one of the artists in residence. Each session will have a different focus, and the artist will demonstrate tips and techniques to achieve different effects. (Multiple dates, see website for details)
- **Inspired by the Masters: How to Draw the Human Figure** Led by artist in residence Sara Lee Roberts, participants on this full-day course will be taught approaches to drawing the human figure, taking inspiration from the works displayed in the exhibition. (12 December 2024, 09:30–16:30)
- **Drawing Live from the Gallery: Inspired by the Italian Renaissance** The Royal Drawing School will be running a two-hour [online drawing class](#), broadcast live from The King’s Gallery. This live online session offers a unique opportunity for participants worldwide to draw from the exhibition. The tutor-led class will feature a live model and take direct inspiration from the Italian Renaissance works on display. (Wednesday, 4 December, 13:00–15:00)

## Ends

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*Drawing the Italian Renaissance* is at The King’s Gallery, Buckingham Palace, 1 November 2024 – 9 March 2025.

A selection of images is available via [Dropbox](#). For further information and images, please contact the Royal Collection Trust Press Office, +44 (0)20 7839 1377, [press@rct.uk](mailto:press@rct.uk).

The credit line for the artists’ photographs is: *Courtesy of the artist*.

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As part of Royal Collection Trust’s charitable aim to ensure that as many people as possible can access and enjoy the Collection, £1 tickets for the exhibition are available to those receiving Universal Credit and other named benefits.

In addition to £1 tickets, The King’s Galleries will continue to offer a range of concessionary rates, while visitors who purchase tickets directly from Royal Collection Trust can convert them into a 1-Year Pass, allowing free re-entry for 12 months.

Visitor information and tickets for The King’s Gallery, Buckingham Palace: [www.rct.uk](http://www.rct.uk), T. +44 (0)30 3123 7301. The King’s Gallery is open Thursday to Monday, remaining closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Instagram: [@royalcollectiontrust](#) [@royaldrawingschool](#)

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## Notes to Editors

**Royal Collection Trust**, a department of the Royal Household, is responsible for the care of the Royal Collection and manages the public opening of the official residences of The King. Income generated from admissions and from associated commercial activities contributes directly to The Royal Collection Trust, a registered charity. The aims of The Trust are the care and conservation of the Royal Collection, and the promotion of access and enjoyment through exhibitions, publications, loans and educational programmes.

**The Royal Collection** is among the largest and most important art collections in the world, and one of the last great European royal collections to remain intact. It comprises almost all aspects of the fine and decorative arts, and is spread among some 15 royal residences and former residences across the UK, most of which are regularly open to the public. The Royal Collection is held in trust by the Sovereign for his successors and the nation, and is not owned by The King as a private individual.

**The Royal Drawing School (RDS)** is independent and not-for-profit, ensuring artists and creatives everywhere can access world-leading skills-based drawing tuition regardless of background, age or circumstance. The RDS delivers over 350 different full and part-time drawing courses each year for adults and children, from beginner to

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postgraduate level. Based in East London, but supporting artists everywhere, courses are run in the Shoreditch studios, online, in green and urban spaces and in major museums and galleries. The Royal Drawing School was founded in 2000 by HM King Charles III and artist Catherine Goodman CBE LVO.

**The Drawing Year** The artists in residence for this exhibition are alumni of the Royal Drawing School's *The Drawing Year*, a full scholarship, postgraduate-level drawing programme. Charging no fees and taught by leading practising artists, students benefit from in-person tuition, a dedicated studio space, a lecture programme, and a celebrated end-of-year exhibition.

Admission to The King's Gallery, Buckingham Palace is managed by The Royal Collection Trust, a registered charity in England and Wales (1016972) and in Scotland (SCO39772).