

British Art Network Seminar Displaying Art in Domestic Settings

Monday 13 July 2015, 11.00 – 17.00
Gainsborough's House, Sudbury, Suffolk



Historic house museums and galleries face the shared challenge of how to display their collections to the visiting public. Ensuring that these kinds of spaces are used to their best advantage – both practically and intellectually – is not always straightforward.

Organisations like Gainsborough's House, which are recognised as the birthplace or home of an artist, face the additional question of how to display and interpret that individual's work in a space implicitly connected with their life, or what we know of their biography. Potential strategies may include the re-creation of period rooms or domestic studios to create an immersive visitor experience; alternatively, the historic setting may be approached more neutrally, as a more conventional museum or gallery space.

This British Art Network seminar brings together curators and academics who have had to deal with some of these issues in a variety of contexts. The case studies presented cut across an array of art historical periods and disciplines, but speak to a range of shared curatorial needs and interests.

The event coincides with a major project at Gainsborough's House, entitled 'The Painting Room', in which research is being carried out to gain a better understanding of how Thomas Gainsborough and other eighteenth century British artists practiced their profession in a domestic setting. The project will culminate with a major exhibition at Gainsborough's House, in which a 'Painting Room' will be recreated.

The day will begin with an introduction from Mark Bills, Director of Gainsborough's House, in which this project will be introduced. Some of the other curatorial challenges faced by the House, which are particularly pertinent to the seminar's theme will be discussed. Attendees will be taken on a guided tour of Gainsborough's House and given a special behind the scenes access to a property adjoining the historic site, which forms a crucial part of a capital project to expand the gallery's visitor experience.

Programmed by Mark Bills, Director, and Peter Moore, Research Curator, at Gainsborough's House in collaboration with Martin Myrone, Lead Curator pre-1900 British Art, Tate, this seminar is open to curators, academics and researchers who have a professional interest in British art. To reserve your place, and request travel funds from the British Art Network to support your attendance, please contact [Helen Woodfield](#), Network Coordinator for British Art, Tate.