

Hide and Seek: Drawings by Eileen Cooper RA

29 May – 23 August 2015

The John Madejski Fine Rooms

London 9 April 2015: In May 2015, the Royal Academy of Arts will present the largest exhibition of drawings by Eileen Cooper RA to date spanning almost 40 years of her career. Whilst Cooper is best known for her richly coloured and expressive paintings and prints, *Hide and Seek* will present rarely-seen drawings made in a variety of media including charcoal, pencil, pastel and ink, exploring the themes of play, family, childhood and womanhood.

Throughout her career, Cooper's work has contained a strong autobiographical element and this is reflected in her early drawings such as *Bathing*, 1987. Sometimes described as a 'magical realist' Cooper creates work with a poetic and distinctive vision; a sense of freedom of movement is explored in the *Trapeze* series, while the notion of play and games can be seen particularly in *Treehouse II*, 1990. The themes of sexuality, birth and motherhood, which were considered ground-breaking at the times these works were produced, are presented in these early works and recur throughout the exhibition.

The exhibition will display to the public for the first time a collection of 10 drawings which Eileen Cooper has gifted to the Royal Academy. Produced in 2001, these 'gift works' feature Cooper's trademark female figures, fleshed out in charcoal and ink. The fluidity and rawness of the charcoal combines with Cooper's delicate imagery to produce drawings that are simultaneously bold and tender. She says 'I believe that the act of drawing lays bare my working methods, enabling me to explore and celebrate the visual clues latent in these works'.

Eileen Cooper has strong ties to both the Royal Academy and the RA Schools. She became a Royal Academician in 2000 and was elected as the Keeper of the Royal Academy in 2010, the first woman in this role since the Academy began in 1768. Born in 1953 in Glossop, Derbyshire, Cooper studied at Goldsmiths College from 1971-1974 and was taught by fellow Royal Academicians Michael Craig Martin and Albert Irvin. She went on to study at the Royal College of Art and by the 1980s was exhibiting widely. Cooper is strongly committed to a part-time teaching career at the RA Schools, in addition to Central St Martins and the Royal College of Art. Footage of the creation of several new works in her studio will be available to view in the exhibition and online to coincide with this celebration of 40 years of her drawings.

Notes to Editors:

About the Exhibition

Hide and Seek: Drawings by Eileen Cooper RA is part of the Tennant Gallery series of exhibitions, dedicated to works on paper. The programme runs throughout the year and focuses on the work of Royal Academicians past and present, the history of the RA, and its Collection.

Publication

The exhibition coincides with the publication of a monograph on the work of Eileen Cooper RA, written by Martin Gayford and Sara Lee. *Eileen Cooper: Between the Lines*, published by the Royal Academy of Arts, is available online at shop.royalacademy.org.uk and from the RA shop in hardcover priced at £30 (£27 to readers of the RA Magazine). A gallery guide will also be available, containing an essay by Anna McNay.

Images

Publicity images for *Hide and Seek: Drawings by Eileen Cooper RA* can be obtained from Picselect, the Press Association's image service for press use. Please register at www.picselect.com and once registered go to the Royal Academy of Arts folder in the Arts section of Picselect.

Opening Hours

29 May – 23 August 2015

Wednesday–Friday, 10am–4pm

Saturday and Sunday, 10am–6pm

Closed Monday and Tuesday

Admission

Complimentary entry with a valid Royal Academy exhibition ticket, or £3 General Admission ticket. Friends of the RA and Under 16s go free.

Related Events

For information or to book, visit royalacademy.org.uk/events or telephone 020 7300 5839.

Eileen Cooper RA: Drawn from the Imagination

Monday 8 June

Eileen Cooper RA discusses the role of drawing in her practice with art writer Anna McNay and why she considers it to be neither just a preliminary or secondary art form. The event will follow with a book signing of *Eileen Cooper: Between the Lines*.

Reynolds Room, 1–2pm: Free (seats must be reserved online or by telephone; unclaimed seats will be released at 1pm that day)

Tour with Eileen Cooper RA: *Hide and Seek* Explained

Monday 15 June

Join Eileen Cooper RA for a guided tour of her exhibition *Hide and Seek*, and a unique opportunity to discuss her work. This event concludes with the opportunity to join Eileen Cooper RA for an informal group discussion over refreshments.

Tennant Gallery, 1–2.30pm; £12 adult/ £6 concessions. The maximum capacity for this event is 25 people. Pre-booking essential.

Social Media

Sign up to Royal Academy of Arts social media channels.

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N.B. Photography is allowed in this exhibition

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