



ARTFUL

AT 22 JERMYN STREET

PICCADILLY

The Royal Academy is just around the corner from the hotel. The collection includes works by Reynolds, Gainsborough, Turner, Stanley Spencer and David Hockney. The Courtyard plays host to a monumental sculpture by Sir Anthony Caro, titled *Promenade*. The Academy's latest exhibition is *Byzantium 330 - 1433*, featuring icons (such as *Icon with the Virgin Psychosostria*), mosaics and other wonders from the vaults of Venice and collections across Russia and beyond, dating back to 330AD. This groundbreaking exhibition, a collaboration between the Royal Academy of Arts and the Benaki Museum in Athens, provides a grand-scale survey of 1,000 years of history, highlighting splendours of the Byzantine Empire. It incorporates over 300 objects. Some of the works have never been displayed in public before (*until March 22nd*).

The Academy is also exhibiting *Andrea Palladio: His Life and Legacy*. This is the first exhibition devoted to Palladio to be held in London for over 30 years and will celebrate the quincentenary of his birth. He was not only one of the greatest Italian architects; he was also a practitioner whose work has continued to resonate down 5 centuries. Active in Vicenza, Venice and the Veneto region, he crafted a new architectural language derived from classical sources yet shaped to fulfil the functional demands and aesthetic aspirations of his own age. Large-scale models, computer animations, original drawings, books and paintings will present the full range of this exceptional architect's output and his legacy, demonstrating why Palladio's name has been synonymous with architecture for 500 years (*until April 13*).

Not far away, don't forget to visit Spencer House, recognized as one of the most ambitious aristocratic town houses ever built in London. It's the city's only great 18th century private palace to survive intact. Apsley House, known as 'No 1 London', which was the London home of the first Duke of Wellington, is full of memorabilia of this great man, and his archrival Napoleon. Jay Jopling unveiled the second White Cube in Mason's Yard last year – built on the site of a former electricity substation. It was the first new freestanding building to be built in the area for more than 30 years. Jopling showcases blockbuster exhibitions simultaneously at both the St James's and East London galleries.

CORK STREET and BOND STREET

Galleries around the Cork Street area are always worth visiting. We strongly recommend you wander around there, looking at any exhibition that attracts your attention. There are good contemporary galleries worth seeing too, such as Alison Jacques, Sadie Coles HQ and the London outpost of the Gagosian Gallery.

TRAFALGAR SQUARE

Mayor of London Boris Johnson has announced the next two commissions to be placed on the 4th Plinth in the magnificence of Trafalgar Square. The winning artists are Anthony Gormley and Yinka Shonibare. Gormley's proposal *One and Other* will be looking for 2,400 members of the public to occupy the 4th Plinth 24 hours a day at a later date selected from registered applicants. Those selected can use their time on the plinth as they like – to demonstrate, to perform, or simply to reflect. They can take

anything with them, provided they can carry it without help, and they can do whatever they like – except fling themselves off (a safety net should ensure that nobody gets hurt). Shonibare proposes to make *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle*, a scale replica of Nelson's ship, HMS Victory, in a giant glass bottle. The magnificent sails will be produced in richly coloured and patterned textiles, which Shonibare buys from Brixton market in London. They are assumed to be African but in fact the fabric was inspired by Indonesian batik design, mass produced by the Dutch and sold to the colonies in West Africa. Shonibare says his piece will reflect the story of multiculturalism in London today, which began as a result of Nelson's victory at the Battle of Trafalgar. Their artworks will be installed after the current work, *Model for a Hotel 2007* by Thomas Schütte, has been taken down.

The permanent collection at the National Gallery is wide ranging, with works by all of the great Masters, showing one of the world's finest permanent collections of Western European paintings including all the greats : Piero della Francesca, Raphael, Titian, Veronese, Rembrandt, Velásquez – plus the Impressionists and Post Impressionists. The highlight is a truly magnificent collection of Medieval and Renaissance paintings in the Sainsbury Wing - worth visiting in its own right.

Until June 7th the Gallery is showing two Picasso exhibitions. One is *Picasso : Changing the Past*, exploring the ways he took up the artistic concerns of painters in the past and made audacious responses of his own. He was a passionate student of the grand tradition of European painting. Displaying some 60 works by the artist, visitors are invited to re-explore the Gallery's permanent collection in light of Picasso's fascination with the Old Masters. It is organised thematically, showing how Picasso repeatedly returned to the great subjects of European painting tradition, analyzing them as his personal style developed in myriad directions. Sections include self-portraits, the Spanish tradition of male portraiture, the female nude, still life, and the seated female figure. It culminates in a display of the artist's *Variations* where, late in life, Picasso made direct reference to masterpieces such as Velázquez's *Las Meninas* and Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'Herbe*, turning them into something else entirely.

The other complementary Picasso exhibition is *Picasso's Prints*, a display of 13 prints, expanding on many of the themes of the major exhibition, particularly his exciting 'variations' after the Masters. These remarkable prints contain echoes of much-admired pieces by Manet, David, Rembrandt and Cranach (two Rembrandt etchings are included in the exhibition for comparison). They show Picasso's extraordinary mastery of all print techniques from the traditional to the experimental. He had no formal training as a printmaker but began making prints early in his life. He continued to use the print media throughout his career, showing particular zeal in the 1930s and again during the final decade of his life.

Just around the corner is the National Portrait Gallery (which in now bathed in light for the first time as a result of floodlights being installed to mark its 150th anniversary). It's a type of rogues' gallery, exhibiting portraits of famous characters from all walks of life throughout the ages.

Just down the road, the ICA is a great place to absorb contemporary culture - be it art, film or performance.

THE STRAND

County Hall shows the UK's only permanent display of paintings, drawings, sculpture, furniture and graphics by this self-publicising surrealist master.

Just on the other side of the river, the Courtauld Institute Gallery is one of the finest small museums in the world. Visitors enjoy a remarkable art collection, including famous Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces, and an acclaimed programme of temporary exhibitions. *Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence : The Courtauld Wedding Chests* explores one of the most important and historically neglected art forms of Renaissance Florence: pairs of great chests, lavishly decorated with precious metals and elaborate paintings. These items – now generally called cassoni – were often the most expensive of a whole suite of decorative objects commissioned to celebrate marriage alliances between powerful families (*until 17 May*).

EMBANKMENT

In order to re-assert its importance in the London art scene, Tate Britain had a complete re-vamp not long ago. Reverting to its original function as the Gallery of British Art, Tate Britain (previously known as The Tate Gallery) is set on the Embankment and is highly recommended. The gallery also houses a collection of British paintings from the 16th century to the present, including favourites such as the Pre-Raphaelites and Blake. The Centenary Development is a major renovation of the building, funded in part by the National Lottery, which includes new galleries, a new entrance and more facilities.

WEST LONDON

The Victoria & Albert Museum in South Kensington is a must for art and antique lovers. This impressive Victorian building houses objects celebrating the philanthropy of the British Empire, from porcelain, tapestries and jewellery to sculptures from both the East and West.

The Serpentine Gallery is set within the splendour of Hyde Park, and has transcended its position as a one time Victorian tea pavilion built in Kensington Gardens in 1934, to become a museum of international stature. As well as having one of the loveliest settings in London, the gallery is a key venue and has great exhibitions of international contemporary artists.

SOHO and BLOOMSBURY

The British Empire is responsible for the vast collection of treasures in the British Museum. The neo-classical building has extraordinary attractions – among others, the Elgin Marbles and the Magna Carta. The Round Reading Room at the Museum is enclosed by a glass dome, built by one of the country's leading architects Sir Norman Foster, making it into the British Museum Great Court. It's a truly spectacular sight, creating an indoor / outdoor arena in which sculpture is displayed.

The Sainsbury African Galleries house a vast collection of African art and artifacts previously shown at the Museum of Mankind. The British Library is the nation's impressive copyright library and holds exhibitions, events and has an interactive gallery.

SOUTH LONDON and BANKSIDE

Tate Modern is currently showing *Rodchenko & Popova : Defining Constructivism*, an exhibition which explores the work of Alexander Rodchenko and Lyubov Popova between 1917 and 1929. Arguably two of the Russian avant-garde's most influential and important artists, they were integral to the stylistic and

theoretical underpinning of Russian Constructivism. With over 350 objects, this exhibition charts the evolution of their aesthetics from abstract painting to graphic design and includes their designs for cinema and theatre as well as numerous posters, books and costumes (*until May 17*).

Tate Modern is also exhibiting *Roni Horn aka Roni Horn*, the most significant overview of this American artist's work to date. Horn trained as a sculptor, but this exhibition shows the full range of her practice as a photographer, draughtsman, installation artist and writer. For the first time works are displayed in different media, including sculpture, early watercolours and vast new drawings, alongside Horn's photographic installations. From 1975 Horn began to make regular excursions to Iceland, its landscape and isolation acting as a central influence on her practice. There is also a display of Horn's books, many of which respond to the landscape and geology of Iceland (*until May 25th*).

Also showing *TH.2058*, the vision of French artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, who has installed 200 bunk beds where visitors can take shelter in her imagining of London under attack, 50 years into the future. The nightmare scenario is set against the sound of pouring rain and a haunting corrupted bossa nova melody from a solitary radio. Visitors will be able to watch snatches of science fiction movies such as *The Man Who Fell To Earth*, *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers* and *Planet Of The Apes* on a large LED screen, or choose to read from one of 20 classic science fiction titles. All this takes place under piercing lights, suggesting unseen surveillance in a kind of epic film set installation of modern sculptures grown wild (*until April 13th*).

Just behind the Tate Modern, there are a group of interesting galleries including f a projects, Ritter/Zamet and the Union Gallery.

The Design Museum is always worth visiting for design classics. Currently showing *Brit Insurance Designs of the Year 2009* (the design world's Oscars), they are the world's most interesting and forward looking designs, which have been nominated for the Awards by industry experts spanning 7 categories : architecture, fashion, furniture graphics, interactive, product and transport. There are 91 shortlisted designs on display and from these, a panel has decided the category winners. The finalists will go forward to vie for the 2009 Brit Insurance Design of the Year to be judged by a panel, chaired by Alan Yentob and including the designer and environmentalist Karen Blincoe and the architect Peter Cook.

NORTH LONDON

The Estorick Collection is a delightful gallery, prettily situated in leafy Highbury and Islington. It was built specifically to house a collection of modern Italian and Futurist 20th century art in a delightful setting – the museum is a testament to the political uses of the art of this century. It offers single themed exhibitions.

EAST LONDON

A favourite gallery is the Whitechapel, set in the cultural melting pot next to Brick Lane. The tranquility of this gallery space is always complemented by great shows. The Auditorium has the latest video and sound art, and sometimes hosts late talks and events, live music and poetry. Other galleries in the area include White Cube (qv White Cube in St James's also) is always worth seeing - showing the pick of contemporary artists from all over the world.

Round the corner Victoria Miro's gallery always has good exhibitions.

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ST JAMES'S LONDON SW1Y 6HL * Tel : +44 (0)20 7734 2353 * Fax : +44 (0)20 7734 0750 * e-mail : office@22jermyn.com
WWW.22JERMYN.COM