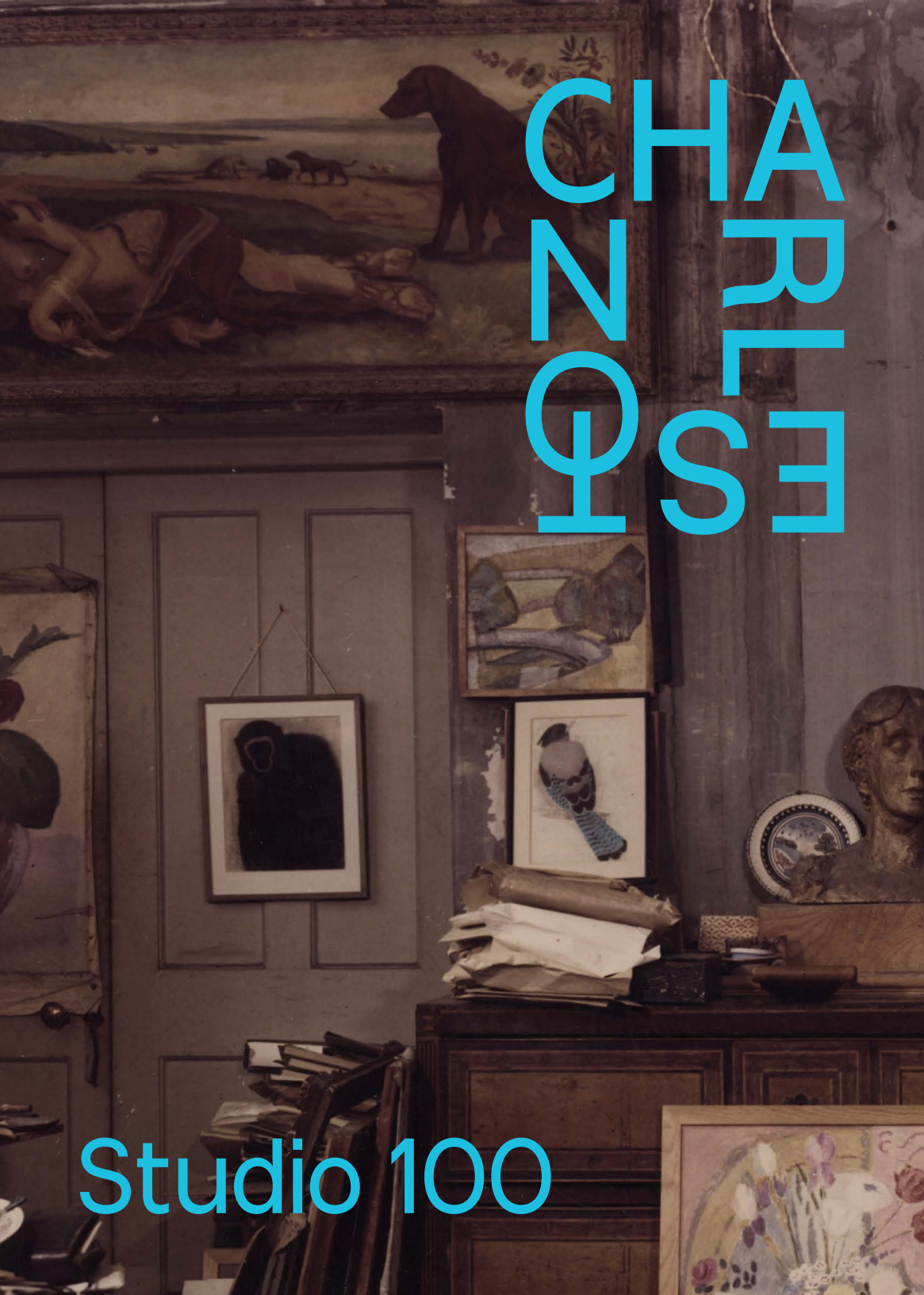

CHARLES
Studio 100



Studio 100

A century after artists Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and Roger Fry created the studio at Charleston, we are launching a major fundraising campaign to safeguard this remarkable space for another 100 years.

Described by The New York Times as "one of history's most enduring and significant spaces...that not only changed the way we live but also changed the way we see places," the studio remains a powerful testament to the Bloomsbury group's radical vision of art, life and domestic creativity.

> "Really the humblest architectural effort you can imagine, for the great object is to have as much room and spend as little money as possible."
>
> — Roger Fry

The studio was never built to the same structural standards as the main house. It now needs our care and attention.

Between 12 November 2026 and 11 April 2027, the studio's collection will form the centrepiece of a major Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant exhibition at Tate Britain. This provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to carry out vital conservation work.

The total cost of the work will be £470,000. We are delighted to have secured funding from Arts Council England and in-kind support from Tate. We are now asking for your help to raise the remaining £250,000.

Image, left: Duncan Grant in the studio, c.1970, photograph: Derry Moore

The studio

In 1925, Vanessa Bell and Roger Fry stood in what had been a chicken run at Charleston, using a broken tape measure to plan what would become one of the most important creative spaces in the world. The studio they built would go on to transform life at Charleston.

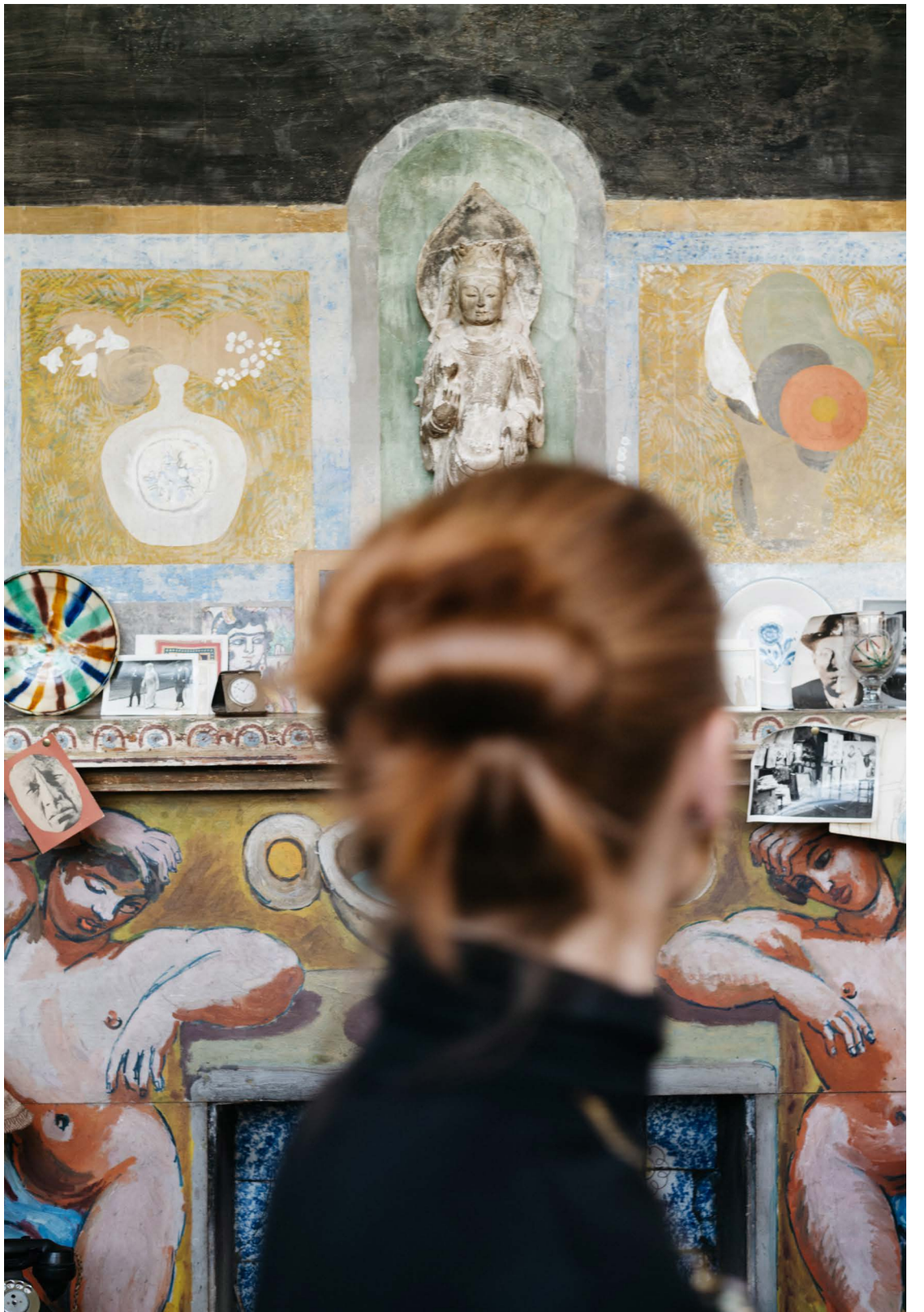
Soon after it was completed, Bell wrote to Fry:

> "It is a perfect place to work in, as besides having a very good and even light it is curiously quiet and removed from all the noises of the house and garden…"

Today, the studio remains much as it was – a unique glimpse into the everyday life and work of the artists who used it. It is filled with painted furniture, decorated tiles, busts, vases, fairground figures, family portraits and fabrics – all showing how art and everyday life were closely connected here.

Even the fireplace, painted by Grant and lined with hand-decorated tiles, still has drawing pins holding sketches, photos, invitations and children's drawings – a reminder of years of creativity and family life.

Image, right: The studio, 2023; photograph: Lewis Ronald



Securing the future of the studio

The studio was never built to last, and its simple construction has made it more vulnerable over time.

Recent surveys by specialists Tobit Curteis Associates and Vallis & Hall – experts in historic buildings and wall paintings – have confirmed that work is needed to stop water entering the building due to wear and tear to the exterior. The time has come for a new phase of careful conservation. We will:

Studio's exterior

- Replace and repair missing and broken roof tiles
- Repair window and door frames, gutters and downpipes; removing toxic lead paint and repainting with traditional environmentally friendly paint
- Repoint lost wall mortar

Studio's interior

- Conserve painted wall surfaces created by Bell and Grant
- Repair the wooden floor
- Restore the wooden ceiling panels
- Restore the flint wall in the adjoining Folly Garden
- Replace outdated environmental control systems
- Install new sun blinds and infrared window film to reduce light and heat damage

Image, right: The studio, 2021; photograph: Lewis Ronald



Be part of the next 100 years

While we undertake this conservation, we will also increase access and remove the studio from fossil fuels. To reduce environmental impact and improve energy efficiency, we will replace the existing oil heating system with a more sustainable electric alternative. This transition is an important step in improving Charleston's impact on the enviroment.

We are also working to improve access. Upgraded Wi-Fi will allow visitors to use a free digital guide using the Bloomberg Connects app, offering deeper insight into the studio and its history. A new children's guide will help younger visitors explore the house and studio in a fun and engaging way, and a short film about the restoration will be shown in the Welcome Room, sharing the story of this remarkable space with all who visit.

If you would like more information about the project, or to make a donation please contact:

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Email: n.hepburn@charleston.org.uk

charleston.org.uk

The Charleston Trust (Bloomsbury in Sussex) | Registered charity number: 1107313
Patron: Her Majesty The Queen | President: Virginia Nicholson | Vice Presidents: Kim Jones OBE and Sigrid Rausing | Chair: Dame Pippa Harris DBE | Director: Nathaniel Hepburn MBE

Image, left: The studio, 2023; photography: Lee Robbins
Front cover: The studio, c.1980; photography: Belinda Parsons

