



Date: 21/05/2024

For use: 28/05/2024

Conversations en Plein Air, Charlotte Hodes

Exhibition opens at Inverness Museum & Art Gallery

1st June 20th - July 2024

A new exhibition by internationally renowned UK artist, Charlotte Hodes, opens at Inverness Museum & Art Gallery this weekend. *Conversations en Plein Air* (Conversations in the Open Air) invites us to a joyful, colourful and poetic picnic. The theme of the picnic has many art historical references from the French fête galante paintings of Watteau and Lancret to Manet. Charlotte Hodes combines these references with contemporary ones, such as the problem of throw-away packaging and the recently ubiquitous face masks. Underlying the theme of the picnic is the subtext of women making contact, whether by mobile phone, paper airplane or megaphone to communicate with each other from afar. Depicted on plates, cups and bottles, they appear marooned on small islands, with each piece of chinaware like a stepping stone.

The presence of masks and the distance between the characters are reminders of the recent pandemic that brutally transformed our social interactions. Our appreciation of meeting and socialising in the outdoors changed dramatically during Covid lockdowns and once larger gatherings were permitted, picnicking became a socially-distanced and restorative means of meeting with family and friends. This new series of vases, paper-cuts and tableware draws us into the conversation as though sitting together on the picnic blanket.

Charlotte Hodes' practice bridges the fine and decorative arts. Trained as a painter, she has used ready-made ceramic ware as a canvas since the 1990s. She carries over collage and printing processes to the field of ceramics, influenced by her study of the archive of historic transfers from the Spode factory in Stoke on Trent.

Charlotte Hodes said 'The overriding theme of the exhibition is that of the picnic, in which women from different times and spaces are depicted 'en plein air' in a random casual manner in a fragmented patterned landscape. The concept of the picnic as a shared outdoors activity is a pertinent metaphor for our experience during the Covid-19 pandemic, where the changed relationship of the indoors as a claustrophobic, constraining space was alleviated by the limited time that one was permitted to be outdoors.'



Cathy Shankland, Visual Arts Programme Curator at IMAG said, 'We hope this joyful, yet thought-provoking exhibition will resonate with our visitors as summer approaches and thoughts turn to the appeal of the great outdoors. After the isolation of the lockdown years it celebrates the pleasures of getting together to eat al fresco - a much-needed boost for our health and wellbeing!'

The exhibition runs until 20th July at Inverness Museum & Art Gallery

Adapted from an exhibition first shown at Musée Ariana, Geneva.

~ENDS~

For further information contact:

[Insert name, job title, contact number(s)]

Additional information for Editors:

- [Insert any additional information which may assist and/or support the press release]