



THE PEOPLE AND PORTRAITS OF STANLEY SPENCER'S FINAL YEARS

AMY LIM

The Arts Society Fylde

Lowther Pavilion Theatre

12 March 2025 at 2.00pm

Not far from the attractive Buckinghamshire town of Marlow is Cookham, birthplace (and final resting place) of one of Britain's greatest twentieth century artists, Sir Stanley Spencer (1891-1959). Widely known both for his landscapes and highly individualistic religious studies, Spencer is perhaps less well known for his later portraits, the subject of today's lecture. Especially in his final decade, Spencer was in high demand as a commercial portrait painter. Dr Amy Lim visits the Arts Society Fylde for the first time and takes this later period of Spencer's artistic output as her theme, exploring his views on portraiture and the role it played in his life and work.

Spencer's religious works brought considerable controversy, both for the unusual approach to the depiction of religious themes and for setting sacred incidents in the setting of a familiar environment. *The Resurrection in Cookham Churchyard* (1927) (Tate) was described by *The Times* as "the most important picture painted by any English artist in the present century" and is said to be strongly influenced by Spencer's service in Macedonia in the First World War. His later years (he was knighted in 1958) are however the subject of today's lecture and Dr Lim promises that, through Spencer's paintings, we will meet many of the people around him, from friends and neighbours to figures of national importance.

DR AMY LIM

Dr Amy Lim is an art historian and curator, specialising in British fine and decorative arts from the seventeenth to twentieth centuries. She is curator of the Faringdon Collection at Buscot Park, Oxfordshire, and of the Stanley Spencer Gallery, Cookham, and a tutor at the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education.

Dr Lim was recently an exhibition researcher at Tate, contributing to *British Baroque: Power and Illusion* (2020) and 'Now You See Us: Women Artists in Britain, 1520-1920' (2024). Amy has degrees in History and Literature & Arts from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. She runs an online art dealership, and has published articles and essays on a variety of art-related topics from gothic garden monuments to female patronage



SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Kenneth People, *Stanley Spencer: a biography*, Collins, 1991

Andrew Causey, *Stanley Spencer: Art as a Mirror of Himself*, Lund Humphries, 2014

Illustrations:

Rachel Westropp, *Sir Stanley Spencer*, 1959, *The Stanley Spencer Gallery, Cookham*, by permission

Sir Stanley Spencer, photograph by Lady Ottoline Morrell, 1925, *National Portrait Gallery*, by permission