

STANLEY
SPENCER
GALLERY

STANLEY SPENCER & GARY BUNT

What a Dream

Stanley Spencer Gallery | Cookham | Berkshire

6 November 2026 – 21 March 2027

Press view details to be announced



Gary Bunt, *Tribute to Stanley Spencer*, 2021

Cookham, UK: This November, The Stanley Spencer Gallery brings together the work of **Gary Bunt** (1957–2025) and **Stanley Spencer** (1891–1959) for the first time in a new exhibition, *What a Dream*.

A largely self-taught painter, Gary Bunt is best known for his vibrant, joyful scenes of everyday British life, drawing on popular culture and folk traditions. While his style reflects influences such as Alfred Wallis and Winifred Nicholson, it was Stanley Spencer who most profoundly shaped his imagination.



Stanley Spencer, *Sarah Tubb and the Heavenly Visitors*, 1933

Bunt felt a strong affinity with Spencer, whose ability to fuse the sacred with the everyday resonated with his own work. Both artists approached the human condition with wonder and compassion, finding deep spirituality within ordinary life. Their paths, however, differed: Spencer's artistic vision formed early, rooted in his idyllic upbringing in the Berkshire village of Cookham while Bunt, who spent a happy childhood in Kent, came to painting more by chance, beginning his working life as a bricklayer before gradually turning to painting.



Gary Bunt, *Down the Garden Path*, 2025

For both, the English landscape was a place of encounter, where the sacred and the everyday merge. Their work centres on people and the search for meaning in daily life – whether in Bunt’s quietly universal scenes of a man and his dog, or in Spencer’s explorations of love, grief, and redemption.

In each artist’s work, humour and wonder coexist. Bunt’s imagined worlds – where a dog might fret about the Last Judgement or meet Vincent van Gogh in heaven – echo Spencer’s own ability to treat sacred subjects with both familiarity and depth.

When Gary Bunt was invited to exhibit at the Stanley Spencer Gallery, his response was immediate: “What a dream.” He began work on a series of paintings created especially for the exhibition. Those completed before his untimely death last year will be shown, alongside other works, including his *Tribute to Stanley Spencer*, painted in 2021.

The exhibition features 20 paintings, sculptures and sketches by Gary Bunt, alongside 15 works by Stanley Spencer including *Swan Upping* (1915 –19), on loan from Tate.

Notes to Editors

About Gary Bunt

Gary Bunt (1957–2025) was born in East Peckham and began painting in his mid-twenties after working as a bricklayer and labourer. Inspired by Stanley Spencer and other Modern British artists, he developed a distinctive, charming style with touches of humour and faith. He lived in East Sussex, worked from his garden studio, and became one of Britain's most popular painters before his death in 2025. Read more at garybuntart.com

About Stanley Spencer

Sir Stanley Spencer, CBE RA (30 June 1891 – 14 December 1959) attended the Slade School of Art and is well known for his visionary paintings depicting biblical scenes occurring in Cookham, the small village beside the River Thames, as well as his large paintings for the Sandham Memorial Chapel and the *Shipbuilding on the Clyde* series. Spencer's works often express his fervent if unconventional Christian faith. Some of Spencer's works originally provoked great shock and controversy. Nowadays, they still seem stylistic and experimental, while his nude paintings foreshadow the work of Lucian Freud.

About The Stanley Spencer Gallery

The Stanley Spencer Gallery is dedicated to the life experience and imaginative world of one of Britain's most talented artists. Its regular programme of summer and winter exhibitions promotes inspiration and enjoyment through expertly curated encounters with high quality art. Located in the heart of Cookham village, the Gallery is uniquely connected to Stanley Spencer's spiritual home and lifelong source of artistic inspiration. The Gallery is led and run by a community of volunteers who are passionate about the art they care for, the artist who created it, and the environment that inspired him throughout his life. Through their freely given talents, entrepreneurship, professionalism and collaborations, the Gallery remains creative, independent and self-funded, 60 years after its foundation. The Gallery is a Fully Accredited Museum under the scheme administered by Arts Council England.

Listings details

16 High Street, Cookham, Berkshire, SL6 9SJ

+44 (0)1628 531 092 | info@stanleypencer.org.uk

Open Thursday – Sunday 11am – 4:30pm Last entry: 4pm

Admission £9 (concessions available)

stanleypencer.org.uk



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Further press information from alison@alisonwrightpr.com | +44 (0)7814 796 930

Press images available for use with editorial coverage of the exhibition. Please contact alison@alisonwrightpr.com for high resolution images

GARY BUNT



Gary Bunt
Stanley Spencer Tribute Painting, 2021
Oil on canvas, 102 x 123 cm
© Estate of Gary Bunt



Gary Bunt
Down the Garden Path, 2025
Oil on canvas, 33 x 41cm
© Estate of Gary Bunt



Gary Bunt
If I get to Heaven, 2025
Oil on canvas, 38 x 46 cm
© Estate of Gary Bunt



Gary Bunt
The Pilgrims, 2025
 Oil on canvas, 61 x 71cm
 @ Estate of Gary Bunt



Gary Bunt
The Baptism, 2025
 Oil on canvas, 76 x 91cm
 @ Estate of Gary Bunt

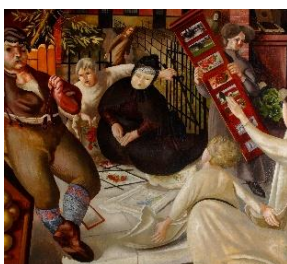
STANLEY SPENCER



Gary Bunt

Stanley Spencer
*Domestic Scenes,
 Neighbours*, 1936
 Oil on canvas, 95 x 70 cm
 Barbara Karmel Bequest, 1995

Courtesy Stanley Spencer Gallery
 ©Estate of Stanley Spencer/Bridgeman
 Images



Stanley Spencer
Sarah Tubb and the Heavenly Visitors, 1933
 Oil on canvas, 109 x 119 cm
 Barbara Karmel Bequest, 1995

Courtesy Stanley Spencer Gallery
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 Images



Stanley Spencer
Patricia at Cockmarsh, 1935
 Oil on canvas, 92 x 66 cm
 Purchased with the support of National
 Heritage Memorial Fund, Art Fund, Friends
 of the Stanley Spencer Gallery, and private
 donors, 2024

Courtesy Stanley Spencer Gallery
 © Estate Stanley Spencer/Bridgeman
 Images



Stanley Spencer
Roy, 1907
 Print, pen and ink on paper
 44 x 35 cm
 Acquired with assistance from the MGCV
 & A Purchase Grant Fund and the NACF
 (now Art Fund), 1993

Courtesy Stanley Spencer Gallery
 ©Estate Stanley Spencer/Bridgeman
 Images



Stanley Spencer
The Last Supper, 1920
 Oil on canvas, 113 x 145 cm
 Collection Stanley Spencer Gallery,
 acquired by public subscription 1962

Courtesy Stanley Spencer Gallery
 ©Estate Stanley Spencer/Bridgeman
 Images

Ends.