

ISSN: 2514-0612

Journal homepage: <http://briefencounters-journal.co.uk/BE>

Vanessa Bell's Creation of Charleston's Attic Studio and its Influence on her Later Paintings

Author(s): Diana Wilkins

Email: dianaw902@googlemail.com

Source: *Brief Encounters*, Vol. 3 No. 1 (March 2019), pp. 48-63.

URL: <http://briefencounters-journal.co.uk/BE/article/view/135>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24134/be.v3i1.135>

© Diana Wilkins

License (open-access): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. No warranty, express or implied, is given. Nor is any representation made that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The publisher shall not be liable for any actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Brief Encounters is an open access journal that supports the dissemination of knowledge to a global readership. All articles are free to read and accessible to all with no registration required. For more information please visit our journal homepage: <http://briefencounters-journal.co.uk/BE>.

In association with

Vanessa Bell's Creation of Charleston's Attic Studio and its Influence on her Later Paintings

Diana Wilkins

Introduction

From 1916 to 1978, Charleston was home to members of the Bloomsbury Group of artists and writers. At the heart of its changing mix of residents and visitors were the painters Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant. They formed an artistic partnership that was strongly influenced by Post-Impressionism and embraced ceramics, textile design and interior decoration. Charleston is an example of their collaborative artwork, with painting and decoration across furniture, walls and doors. Bell's artistic reputation has fluctuated with changing tastes, and although her home was opened as a museum in 1986, she has often been overshadowed by Grant and by her sister, Virginia Woolf.¹ However, Bell's standing has undergone something of a recovery, and in 2017 the Dulwich Picture Gallery held the first 'full-scale museum exhibition with catalogue devoted solely to Vanessa Bell's work'.² The re-emergence of Bell as an artist in her own right, valued for her portraiture and early experimental work, has coincided with a major investment programme at Charleston which saw the opening of three contemporary galleries in 2018. This paper considers how understanding the history of the studio which Bell created in 1939 illuminates the later part of her career and makes the case for treating the room as part of Charleston's museum space.

Bell's Studio Use

Bell's career began when art education had only recently opened to women and it was rare for a woman to pursue a career as a professional artist.³ She trained at the Royal Academy Schools (1901-1904) and

¹ Grace Brockington, 'A "Lavender Talent" or "The Most Important Woman Painter in Europe"? Reassessing Vanessa Bell', *Art History*, 36 (2013), 129-153.

² Ian Dejardin, 'Preface', in *Vanessa Bell*, ed. by Sarah Milroy and Ian Dejardin (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2017), pp. 19-22 (p. 20).

³ Amy Bluett, "'Striving after excellence": Victorian Women and the "Fight for Arts Training"', *International Women's Day Series*, Royal Academy Schools Website, 4 March 2015 <<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/striving-after-excellence-victorian>> [accessed 30 October 2017].

went on to produce ‘almost a thousand pictures’ and hundreds of drawings during a fifty-five-year career.⁴ As a committed professional, Bell continually sought working space, and painted at home, on holiday, and in barns and bedrooms, as well as dedicated studios.⁵ Some well-known pieces were painted under the most temporary circumstances. For example, her portrait of the artist *Roger Fry* (1912, National Portrait Gallery, London) was painted during a short holiday on the Isle of Wight.⁶ By 1916, Bell was living at Wissett Lodge in Suffolk and working in conditions that were far from luxurious. In a letter to Fry, she reported, ‘I have now turned a bedroom here into a studio, as I found it rather difficult to work in the barn, which is nearly always too cold’.⁷ Twenty-five years later, Bell was still painting in outbuildings, and finishing panels for the Berwick church murals in a local barn. However, she avoided working *en plein air* since she was disturbed by bad weather and hay fever which made ‘it almost impossible to work out of doors’.⁸

Studios, particularly ones in the home, were valuable for female artists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, since they allowed women to fulfil social, domestic and professional roles simultaneously.⁹ Although Bell’s relative independence allowed her to step outside such boundaries, a home workspace had practical advantages for her. This was especially true during the First World War, when Bell was living at Charleston full-time and using its rooms (and, later, a hut in the garden), for painting. In 1925, Bell helped Fry plan a purpose-built studio at Charleston which she shared with Grant for many years.¹⁰ Why, when this large modern studio space was available, were three more studios added in 1939? In examining the reasons for the change, this paper focuses on primary evidence of photographs, plans, and first-hand accounts in Vanessa Bell’s letters. Her direct involvement with the

⁴ Peter Stansky and William Abrahams, *Journey to the Frontier: Julian Bell and John Cornforth: Their Lives in the 1930s* (London: Constable, 1966), p. 14.

⁵ Richard Shone, *The Art of Bloomsbury: Roger Fry, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1999), pp. 278-282.

⁶ Vanessa Bell, *Letter to Clive Bell*, 16 January 1912, Niton, The Charleston Papers, c.1865-1964, The Keep, Brighton, University of Sussex Collection, fol. SxMs56/1/25.

⁷ Vanessa Bell, *Letter to Roger Fry*, June 1916, Wissett Lodge, Suffolk, Tate Gallery Archive, London, cited in Regina Marler (ed.), *Selected Letters of Vanessa Bell* (London: Moyer Bell, 1998), p. 200.

⁸ Bell, *Letter to Roger Fry*, p. 200.

⁹ Stephanie Cassidy, ‘Claiming Their Place in the Academy’, *Journal of the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era*, 2.2 (2003), 237-239.

¹⁰ Roger Fry, *Letter to Helen Anrep*, 18 April 1925, cited in Quentin Bell and Virginia Nicholson, *Charleston: A Bloomsbury House & Garden* (London: Frances Lincoln Ltd., 2004), p. 66.

conception and design of the studios is evident from the letters and the fact that only her name appears on the plans and contract. The findings contrast with her son Quentin Bell's account, in which his mother plays a passive role and her reclusiveness is identified as a key motivation for creating the attic studio.¹¹

Why was the Attic Studio Built?

Quentin suggested that the attic studio was built because visitors to the existing studio disturbed the artists' work. He described guests who 'dropped in' and 'utterly wrecked a morning's work', prompting his mother and Grant to disappear to the 'very top of the house'.¹² The episode occurred around 1925, but Quentin linked it with the later creation of Vanessa's attic studio, recalling that:

[a] point came, in 1939, when the sociability of the studio drove Vanessa, who was in some ways a reclusive person, into hiding. It was decided that she should have a studio of her own. This was made at the top of the house in what had formerly been a bedroom.¹³

Vanessa Bell's letters record her desire to concentrate on her work without the demands of household management, which fell upon her more than the other artists. Bell wrote that while painting:

I was driven distracted first by Grace who came in to ask what she should bake when I thought [we] had been as clear as a pike-staff, then by Mrs S who wanted a bit of rag as a bandage then again because she thought I [might] pay the washing book — I was so infuriated that I seriously considered locking the door & telling them that I cannot be interrupted.¹⁴

However, Bell's letters suggest that there were further reasons for increasing the studio space at Charleston, including the fact that by 1939, Charleston was home to four creative personalities. As well as Bell and Grant, two of Bell's children were working there: Quentin as a ceramicist, and Angelica Garnett as a painter and weaver. To accommodate them, Vanessa wrote that 'we are making some changes [...] to make the house more comfortable and give us all more room to work'.¹⁵

Nevertheless, the most important factor in the creation of the attic studio was the approach of the Second World War, and Bell's letters are filled with anxiety about the prospect of conflict. Since

¹¹ Bell and Nicholson, *Charleston*, p. 79.

¹² Bell and Nicholson, *Charleston*, p. 79.

¹³ Bell and Nicholson, *Charleston*, p. 79.

¹⁴ Vanessa Bell, *Letter to Duncan Grant*, 31 March 1942, Charleston, Tate Gallery Archive, London, Letters from Vanessa Bell to Duncan Grant, 1909-57, fol. TGA 20078/1/44/219. Grace Higgens was Charleston's housekeeper for fifty years.

¹⁵ Vanessa Bell, *Letter to Ling Su-Hua*, 13 June 1939, Charleston, New York Public Library, New York, Berg Collection, cited in Marler, *Selected Letters*, p. 456.

Charleston was considered safer than London, family members sought refuge there and Bell set about a major reconfiguration of Charleston to accommodate them. Her estranged husband, Clive Bell, was given four rooms, while Vanessa moved her bedroom downstairs next to the ground floor studio to create a convenient live-work space. The changes placed Bell's new bedroom between the existing studio and the troublesome domestic areas, increasing the degree of separation between the two.¹⁶ The alterations are described in two previously unpublished building plans: an initial plan dated February 1939, followed by a final version in April 1939.

Initial Plan

The initial plan contains the changes described, plus the striking addition of a large new studio on the south-western corner of the ground-floor (Figure 1). The new studio would have been nearly square (27 feet x 28 feet) and connected to the existing studio by a 'covered way', suggesting a continuing pattern of shared working between artists. The layout would have further increased the separation between the studios and the kitchen. Despite the plan's advantages, Bell thought it unaffordable. Writing to her husband, she said:

I've had the estimates from Powells [architects]. They came to less than Mr Welling thought -- £1015 instead of £1500. But it still seemed too much (it included a new studio). We considered every possible plan and at last decided it might be best to turn Q.'s [Quentin's] potting shed into a studio, also turn your top attic into a studio & the present woodshed into a potting shed for Q. thus having three studios without much building, instead of one large extra one. This should limit the cost to £820-50.¹⁷

¹⁶ Darren Clarke (Curator, Charleston Trust), personal communication to author, September 2017.

¹⁷ Vanessa Bell, *Letter to Clive Bell*, 11 April 1939, Charleston, The Charleston Papers, The Keep Brighton, University of Sussex Collection, SxMs56, box 8, fol. VBCB302.

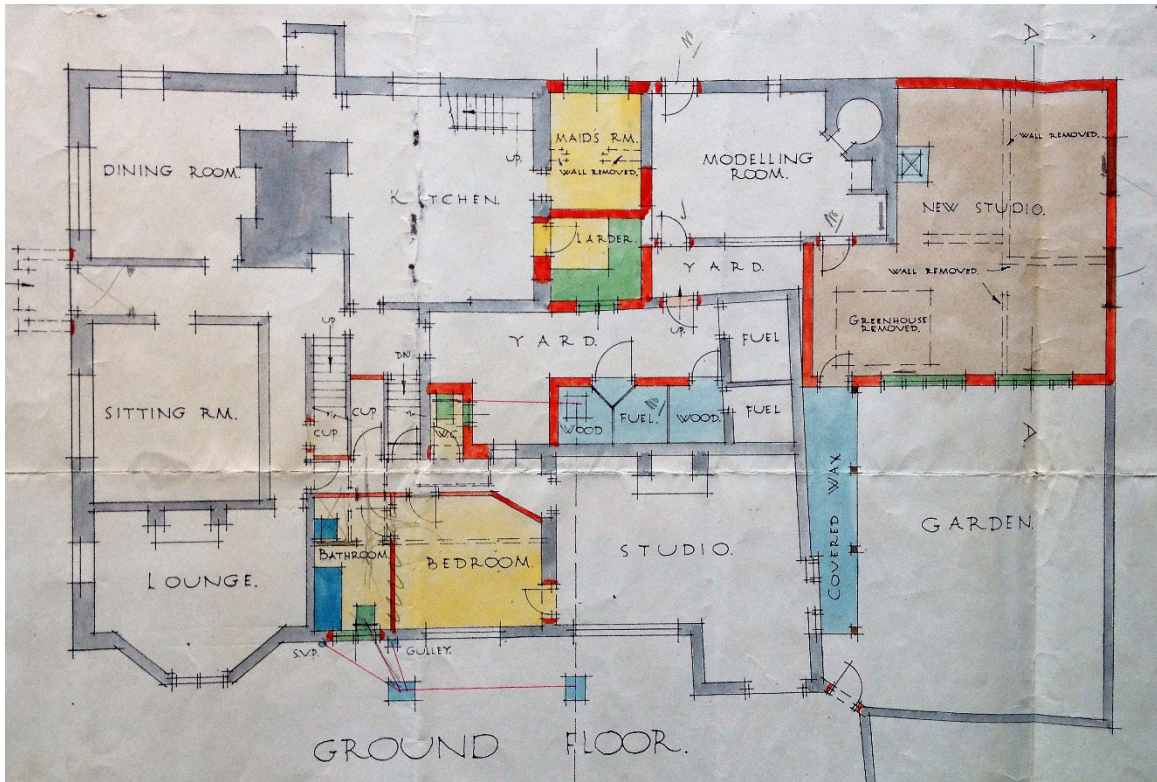


Fig. 1: Proposed ground floor studio (top right). Powell Architects, *Extract from Proposed Plans for Ground Floor Charleston Farm, February 1939, plan CHA/E/146, 58 x 73 cm, ink on paper, Charleston, Sussex. © Charleston Trust.*

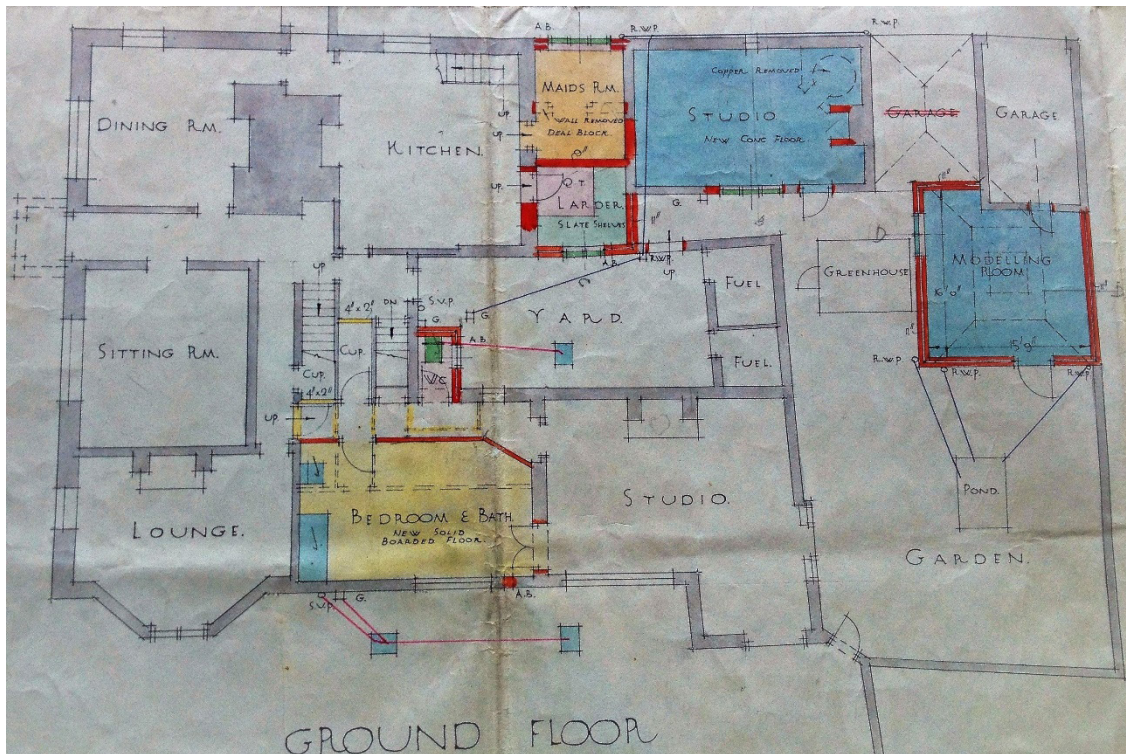


Fig. 2: Quentin's studio and modelling room (top right), Vanessa's new bedroom (bottom left). Powell Architects, *Extract from Revised Plans for Ground Floor Charleston Farm, April 1939, plan CHA/E/147, 48 x 70 cm, ink on paper, Charleston, Sussex. © Charleston Trust.*

Final Plan

The final plan shows Quentin's studio and modelling room on the ground floor (Figure 2). On the second floor, a guest bedroom was made smaller to accommodate a new attic studio and anteroom (Figures 3 and 4). The studio's entrance was up steep stairs, round a tight corner under a beam, and through the anteroom. Once inside, five new windows faced north providing stable light for painting. The attic studio was less than a third of the area of the one in the initial plan (12 feet x 18 feet compared with 27 feet x 28 feet), but still reasonably spacious. The main drawback was the narrow entrance and sharp turn which made it difficult to move large paintings. As a result, Bell sometimes used the downstairs studio or barns for portraits and larger works.¹⁸ Nevertheless, she occupied the attic studio for the rest of her career, from her early sixties until near her death at eighty-one.

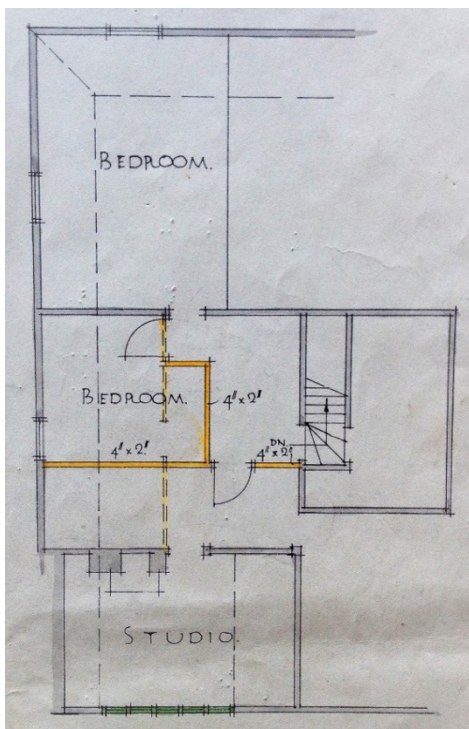


Fig. 3: Attic studio (bottom left). Powell Architects, *Extract from Revised Plans for Second Floor Charleston Farm*, April 1939, plan CHA/E/147, 48 x 70 cm, ink on paper, Charleston, Sussex. © Charleston Trust.



Fig. 4: Inspecting building work in attic studio. Anon., *Vanessa Bell, Angelica Bell, Duncan Grant*, c.1939, photograph CHA/PH/270, 21.5 x 16.5 cm, Charleston, Sussex. © Charleston Trust.

¹⁸ Richard Shone, *Bloomsbury Portraits: Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and Their Circle* (London: Phaidon Press, 1993), p. 172.

Influence of the Studio's Physical Features of Bell's Paintings

During Bell's working life, the attic studio was filled with artist's tools, including a large mirror for self-portraits, an easel, and stacks of paintings (Figures 5 and 6). Clearly a professional space, the studio was also a personal one. Bell customised the room by decorating the studio door with flowers and a sweeping red curve, possibly representing a curtain. She decorated the lintel was with her trademark circles, while the frame bears 'S' and 'V' shaped pencil marks of incomplete designs (Figures 7a-b). A female figure, possibly by Angelica Bell, is portrayed on a cupboard door (Figure 7c and right of Figure 5). The light, flowing style is similar to the 'dancing nymph' that Angelica painted on the cupboard door in Charleston's spare room in 1936.¹⁹



Fig. 5: Anne Olivier Bell, *Vanessa Bell's Studio* [East Wall], 1959, photograph, 7.9 x 7.9 cm, Charleston, Sussex. © Charleston Trust.

¹⁹ Bell and Nicholson, *Charleston*, pp. 120-121.

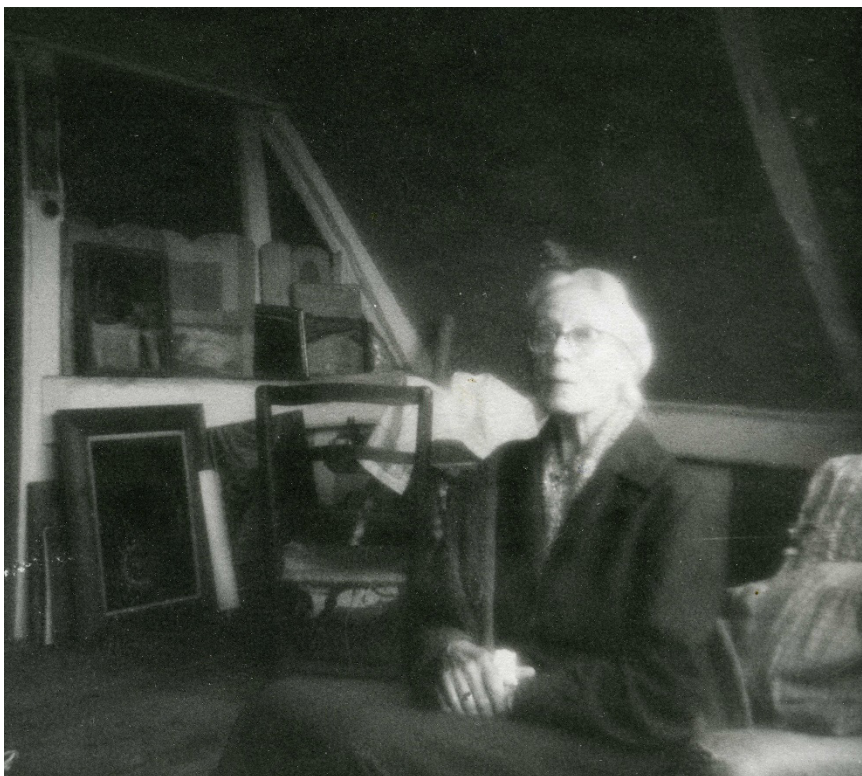


Fig. 6: Anne Olivier Bell, *Portrait of Vanessa Bell*, 1959, photograph, 7.9 x 7.9 cm, Charleston, Sussex. © Charleston Trust.



Fig. 7: Decorations in attic studio. Vanessa Bell (a) *Studio Door*, 1939, 177 x 81 cm, oil on wood, (b) *S-shaped Design on Studio Door Frame*, 1939, 44 x 9 cm, pencil on wood; and [Angelica Garnett] (c) *Female Figure on Cupboard Door*, c. 1939, dimensions unknown, oil on wood, Charleston, Sussex. © Charleston Trust. Photos: Diana Wilkins, 2017.

The studio provided Bell with an opportunity to concentrate on her painting without being cut off from the world. Her granddaughter, Henrietta Garnett, wrote that '[b]eing with her, alone in the upper studio, was sometimes like looking at life from the height of a campanile tower'.²⁰ Bell captured the studio's sweeping view in her paintings, which now provide a record of how the landscape has changed. *Looking North, Charleston* (undated, private collection) shows the large trees that once sheltered the house. These are now gone, while the trees north of the garden wall are more abundant, but otherwise the scene is much the same.

Several of Bell's still life paintings juxtapose the exterior landscape with the interior world of the studio. Bell employed this contrast in an early painting *Apples: 46 Gordon Square* (1908, Charleston Trust, Sussex) which shows a plate of apples by a window with a view of a square below. More than four decades later an echo of this composition with its high viewpoint can be found in *Still Life by the Studio Window* (Figure 8). In the later picture, a plaster head stands in front of a window and draws the eye away to the surrounding countryside. Its classical features contrast with the English landscape, while the frame of the studio window marks the boundary between the attic and the open air. A vase of wilting flowers by the bust evokes the shortness of life versus the longevity of culture.



Fig. 8: Vanessa Bell, *Still Life by the Studio Window*, c. 1950, oil on canvas, 68 x 61 cm, Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums, Aberdeen. © 1961 Estate of Vanessa Bell, courtesy Henrietta Garnett. Photo: Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums.

²⁰ Quentin Bell, Angelica Garnett, Henrietta Garnett and Richard Shone, *Charleston Past and Present* (London: Hogarth Press, 1987), p. 159.

Christopher Reed made a strong case for the complexity and allusive power of another painting from the attic studio, *Still Life of Flowers in a Jug* (Figure 9). Reed highlighted the contrast between the three-dimensional form of the jug and the flat surface of the photograph in front.²¹ The photograph, thought to be of Bell's late mother, lies in front of living flowers creating a touching *memento mori*. Reed also noted the apparently 'abstract' white diagonal line behind the jug. Photographs show that this line is a literal representation of the sloping white beam in the studio (top right, Figure 6), which also appears in *Self Portrait* (c. 1952, private collection). Careful reading of the layers of allusion and reality thus illuminates the subtleties of these later paintings.



Fig. 9: Vanessa Bell, *Still Life of Flowers in a Jug*, 1948-50, 50.8 x 40.6 cm, oil on canvas, private collection of Bannon & Barnabas McHenry. © 1961 Estate of Vanessa Bell, courtesy Henrietta Garnett. Photo: Julie Magura, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art.

The studio was also a space for Bell to represent herself as a professional artist. In *Self Portrait* (c. 1952), Bell depicted herself offset from the picture's centre, leaning round the canvas to glimpse her reflection

²¹ Christopher Reed, *Bloomsbury Rooms* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 25-26.

in the mirror, her weight borne by her elbow. She is surrounded by the products of her creative life: the armchair is covered with her fabric design, a painting leans against the wall, and the white beam of the studio rises above.²² In *The Artist in her Studio* (1952, private collection), Bell showed herself painting in front of the easel, grasping her brushes, with the studio windows in the background.²³ In both self-portraits, Bell blurred her face in a way that resists the gaze; a technique she used frequently during her early experimental period.²⁴ By representing herself as a working artist, she continued to challenge earlier stereotypes of a studio as a place of solely male creativity.²⁵ Bell produced other powerful portraits during the attic studio period including that of her brother-in-law *Leonard Sidney Woolf* (1940, National Portrait Gallery, London) and a late *Self-Portrait* (Figure 10). These late portraits share an honesty and psychological insight that is far from the sentimentality sometimes attributed to Bell.²⁶



Fig. 10: Vanessa Bell, *Self Portrait*, c.1958, CHA/P/64, 45 x 37 cm, oil on canvas Charleston, Sussex. © 1961 Estate of Vanessa Bell, courtesy Henrietta Grant. Photo: Charleston Trust.

²² Richard Shone, 'Vanessa Bell's Late Self-Portraits', in *Vanessa Bell*, ed. by Sarah Milroy and Ian Dejardin (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2017), pp. 179-183 (p. 179).

²³ Bell and Nicholson, *Charleston*, p.79.

²⁴ See Frances Spalding, 'Vanessa, Virginia and the Modern Portrait', in *Vanessa Bell*, ed. by Sarah Milroy and Ian Dejardin (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2017), pp. 65-71 (p. 68).

²⁵ Mary Bergstein, "'The Artist in His Studio': Photography, Art, and the Masculine Mystique', *Oxford Art Journal*, 18.2 (1995), 45-58.

²⁶ Regina Marler, *Bloomsbury Pie: The Making of the Bloomsbury Boom* (London: Virago, 1997), pp. 44-50; Shone, *Bloomsbury Portraits*, p. 244.

Reception of Bell's Late Style

Writing of his mother's old age, Quentin Bell said that she 'had a tendency then to go off into a kind of sentimental world of flowers and children. She loved her grandchildren too much, and it wasn't good for her painting'.²⁷ Some of Bell's paintings appear to fit Quentin's characterisation, however, the quality of the late works described in the previous section is striking. They have an obvious interest and compositional strength that mean they can stand comparison with her earlier work. It is therefore worth considering the negative reception of Bell's later paintings in detail.

By the late 1930s, Bell and Grant's art had fallen out of fashion, largely because their decorative approach stood in contrast to the sleek lines of the International Style. Regina Marler gave an extended account of the reception of Bell's late work and described it as a 'thorny issue'.²⁸ Bell's supporter, Sir Kenneth Clark, said her work demonstrated 'some of the adverse effects of middle-age', while critics applied epithets such as 'tentative', 'boring' and 'pathetic'.²⁹

However, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, tastes began to change. Bell's experimental paintings from before the First World War were valued for reflecting the impact of Post-Impressionism in Britain, culminating in the 2017 Dulwich Picture Gallery exhibition devoted to her work. Given that Bell's early career has been rehabilitated, what accounts for the continuing obscurity of Bell's late work? One reason may be the question of what the viewer expects from an artist's late style. Edward Said suggested that rather than 'reconciliation and serenity', late style may involve dissolution and 'isolation'.³⁰ Richard Shone suggested that following the death of her son, Julian, in 1937, and her sister, Virginia, in 1941, the attic studio may have provided Bell with a space to reflect and 'to confront herself'.³¹ Commentators have detected a sense of resignation in some of Bell's late work, of which she was sometimes conscious. In the last year of her life, Bell noted that her work memorialised the passing of a generation, writing 'I am sitting in my studio and round me are portraits of Janie, Dorothy, Oliver Strachey, Peter's sister Dora, all dead

²⁷ Bell and Nicholson, *Charleston*, p. 79.

²⁸ Marler, *Bloomsbury Pie*, pp. 44-50.

²⁹ Marler, *Bloomsbury Pie*, pp. 44-50; Brockington, "'Lavender Talent'", p.130.

³⁰ Edward Said, 'Thoughts on Late Style', *London Review of Books*, 26.15, 5 August 2004 <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/v26/n15/edward-said/thoughts-on-late-style>> [accessed 14 January 2019], pp. 3-7.

³¹ Shone, 'Vanessa Bell's Late Self-Portraits', p. 179.

within the last few weeks'.³² Said argued that, while an audience may find such attributes disturbing, they can be productive features in a work of art.³³

Jade French has noted the lack of analysis of the late work of Modernist women. Where coverage exists, it often emphasises reclusiveness and perceived haughtiness.³⁴ These themes are also apparent in commentary on Bell, particularly where her appearance and personality are treated as relevant to the examination of her art. For example, Grant's portrait *Vanessa Bell* (1942, Tate Gallery, London) has been described as 'monarchal'.³⁵ A self-portrait is said to show Bell 'in middle age, lugubriously unadorned', and her 'extant self-portraits [as] all sounding a chord that is both resolute and withdrawn'.³⁶ While biographical readings have weight, it is arguable that they can obscure the strength of some of Bell's late work. In fact, her paintings of the 1950s demonstrate many of the elements that commentators found interesting in her experimental phase, such as the interior and exterior juxtapositions and the blurred unknowable portraits.

Studio's Afterlife

After Bell's death, the attic studio was left untouched, and while it 'was by no means a shrine', Grant did not like people going there unaccompanied.³⁷ Later, the studio and its anteroom were used for art historical research, and it was 'cleared' during the restoration of the house in the 1980s.³⁸ After Charleston opened to the public in 1986, small groups were shown around. More recently, the studio has become a curatorial space and archive used to catalogue the Angelica Garnett Gift of drawings and paintings. Now that cataloguing is complete, there is an opportunity to restore the studio to its previous state by moving the archive to Charleston's new buildings and returning items from elsewhere in the house. It is too early to say whether funds and practical considerations will allow this, but there are a number of

³² Vanessa Bell, *Letter to Anne Olivier Bell*, 16 May 1960, Charleston, Archive of Prof Quentin Bell and Anne Olivier Bell, cited in Marler, *Selected Letters*, p. 550.

³³ Said, 'Thoughts on Late Style', pp. 3-7.

³⁴ Jade French, 'Modernism, Women and Feminism', *Modernist Podcast*, [podcast] n.d. <<https://modernistpodcast.org/episode-one/>> [accessed 30 October 2017].

³⁵ Shone, *The Art of Bloomsbury*, p. 236.

³⁶ Shone, *The Art of Bloomsbury*, p. 236.

³⁷ Shone, 'Vanessa Bell's Late Self-Portraits', p. 181.

³⁸ Bell and Nicholson, *Charleston*, p. 79.

factors in its favour. For example, the room is in reasonable condition and structurally unaltered. There is also considerable evidence of how the studio was arranged during Bell's lifetime and the room retains the original decorations and some of the furnishings. In the future, the attic could be used as a 'semi-precious space' for visitors and writers-in-residence, or for operational purposes (as is the case for Charleston's kitchen).³⁹ Visits could be limited to specialist tours with additional access provided through video and photography.

Conclusion

Of the dozens of working spaces that Bell used, only the ground floor and attic studios at Charleston remain in something like the condition they were in during Bell's lifetime. Bell had originally intended to build a larger, more accessible studio. However, plans and letters show that she shaped the attic studio to her needs in response to the constraints of cost and practicality, undercutting the idea that its creation was solely due to her reclusiveness. Bell used the attic studio for the last twenty years of her career and reflected its physical features in her paintings. She used the intimate atmosphere to produce thoughtful still-lives, self-portraits showing herself as a professional artist, and affectionate portraits of her grandchildren. Despite the strength of some of these paintings, the narrative of Bell's withdrawal has affected the assessment of Bell's late work, which is due a re-evaluation accompanied by a balanced discussion of her later years. Returning the attic studio to an accessible museum space would contribute to this process. Although it will remain a store for the foreseeable future, the studio continues to be protected and 'will always be considered part of the historic house museum'.⁴⁰

³⁹ Alistair Burtenshaw (former Director, Charleston Trust), personal communication to author, 8 August 2017.

⁴⁰ Darren Clarke, private correspondence with author, 6 November 2018.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

The Keep, Brighton:

University of Sussex Collection, The Charleston Papers c.1865-1964

Tate Gallery Archive, London:

Letters from Vanessa Bell to Duncan Grant 1909-57, TGA 20078/1/44/219

Secondary Sources

Bell, Quentin, and Virginia Nicholson, *Charleston: A Bloomsbury House & Garden* (London: Frances Lincoln Ltd., 2004)

Bell, Quentin, Angelica Garnett, Henrietta Garnett and Richard Shone, *Charleston Past and Present* (London: Hogarth Press, 1987)

Bergstein, Mary, "'The Artist in His Studio': Photography, Art, and the Masculine Mystique", *Oxford Art Journal*, 18.2 (1995), 45-58

Bluett, Amy, "'Striving after excellence": Victorian Women and the Fight for Arts Training', *International Women's Day Series*, Royal Academy Schools Website, 4 March 2015 <<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/striving-after-excellence-victorian>> [accessed 30 October 2017]

Brockington, Grace, 'A "Lavender Talent" or "The Most Important Woman Painter in Europe"? Reassessing Vanessa Bell', *Art History*, 36 (2013), 129-153

Cassidy, Stephanie, 'Claiming Their Place in the Academy', *Journal of the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era*, 2.2 (2003), 237-239

Dejardin, Ian 'Preface', in *Vanessa Bell*, ed. by Sarah Milroy and Ian Dejardin (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2017), pp. 19-22

French, Jade, 'Modernism, Women and Feminism', *Modernist Podcast*, n.d. <<https://modernistpodcast.org/episode-one/>> [accessed 30 October 2017]

Marler, Regina (ed.), *Selected Letters of Vanessa Bell* (London: Moyer Bell, 1998)

———, *Bloomsbury Pie: The Making of the Bloomsbury Boom* (London: Virago, 1997)

Milroy, Sarah, and Ian Dejardin (eds.), *Vanessa Bell* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2017)

Reed, Christopher, *Bloomsbury Rooms* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004)

Said, Edward, 'Thoughts on Late Style', *London Review of Books*, 26.15, 5 August 2004 <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/v26/n15/edward-said/thoughts-on-late-style>> [accessed 14 January 2019], pp. 3-7.

Shone, Richard, 'Vanessa Bell's Late Self-Portraits', in *Vanessa Bell*, ed. by Sarah Milroy and Ian Dejardin (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2017), pp. 179-183

———, *The Art of Bloomsbury: Roger Fry, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1999)

———, *Bloomsbury Portraits: Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and Their Circle* (London: Phaidon Press, 1993)

Spalding, Frances, 'Vanessa, Virginia and the Modern Portrait', in *Vanessa Bell*, ed. by Sarah Milroy and Ian Dejardin (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2017), pp. 65-71

Stansky, Peter, and William Abrahams, *Journey to the Frontier: Julian Bell and John Cornforth: Their Lives in the 1930s* (London: Constable, 1966)

List of Illustrations

Figure 1: Powell Architects, *Extract from Proposed Plans for Ground Floor Charleston Farm*, February 1939, plan CHA/E/146, 58 x 73 cm, ink on paper, Charleston, Sussex. © Charleston Trust

Figure 2: Powell Architects, *Extract from Revised Plans for Ground Floor Charleston Farm*, April 1939, plan CHA/E/147, 48 x 70 cm, ink on paper, Charleston, Sussex. © Charleston Trust

Figure 3: Powell Architects, *Extract from Revised Plans for Second Floor Charleston Farm*, April 1939, plan CHA/E/147, 48 x 70 cm, ink on paper, Charleston, Sussex,. © Charleston Trust

Figure 4: Anon., *Vanessa Bell, Angelica Bell, Duncan Grant*, c.1939, photograph CHA/PH/270, 21.5 x 16.5 cm, Charleston, Sussex. © Charleston Trust

Figure 5: Anne Olivier Bell, *Vanessa Bell's Studio [East Wall]*, 1959, photograph, 7.9 x 7.9 cm, Charleston, Sussex. © Charleston Trust

Figure 6: Anne Olivier Bell, *Portrait of Vanessa Bell*, 1959, photograph, 7.9 x 7.9 cm, Charleston, Sussex. © Charleston Trust

Figure 7: Decorations in attic studio - Vanessa Bell, (a) *Studio Door*, 1939, 177 x 81 cm, oil on wood and (b) *S-shaped Design on Studio Door Frame*, 1939, 44 x 9 cm, pencil on wood; and Angelica Garnett?, (c) *Female Figure on Cupboard Door*, ca. 1939, dimensions unknown, oil on wood, Charleston, Sussex. Photos: Diana Wilkins, 2017

Figure 8: Vanessa Bell, *Still Life by the Studio Window*, c. 1950, oil on canvas, 68 x 61 cm, Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums, Aberdeen. © 1961 Estate of Vanessa Bell, courtesy Henrietta Garnett. Photo: Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums

Figure 9: Vanessa Bell, *Still Life of Flowers in a Jug*, 1948-50, 50.8 x 40.6 cm, oil on canvas, private collection of Bannon & Barnabas McHenry. © 1961 Estate of Vanessa Bell, courtesy Henrietta Garnett. Photo: Julie Magura, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art

Figure 10: Vanessa Bell, *Self Portrait*, c.1958, CHA/P/64, 45 x 37 cm, oil on canvas Charleston, Sussex. © 1961 Estate of Vanessa Bell, courtesy Henrietta Grant. Photo: Charleston Trust