

# THE ART OF LIVING

MARIANKA SWAIN SHARES HER CAPITAL CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

## EXHIBITION ROYAL ACADEMY SUMMER EXHIBITION

Grayson Perry co-ordinates the 250th Summer Exhibition, and it's infused with his riotous *joie de vivre*: colourful, witty, bold and thoroughly inclusive.

Big-name contributions include Anish Kapoor's monumental sculpture *Symphony for a Beloved Daughter*, two impressive new photographic drawings by David Hockney, and Joana Vasconcelos's enormous textile *Royal Valkyrie*.

There's also political commentary – from Grenfell to a Banksy riff on UKIP – and a striking architectural display.

But perhaps most exciting is Perry's celebration of the event's democratic nature, best seen in Gallery III: bright-yellow walls jam-packed with work, including unknown but notably diverse voices.

Running parallel is exhibition *The Great Spectacle*, surveying 250 years of the Summer Exhibition – including its stuffy, establishment Victorian era. No such danger with Perry at the helm.

**Until August 19**  
**Royal Academy, Piccadilly W1J**  
**Adults £18, under-16s free**  
[www.royalacademy.org.uk](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk)



'Selfie with Political Causes', Grayson Perry



'Where Are My Glasses - Under (Green)', Ron Arad RA

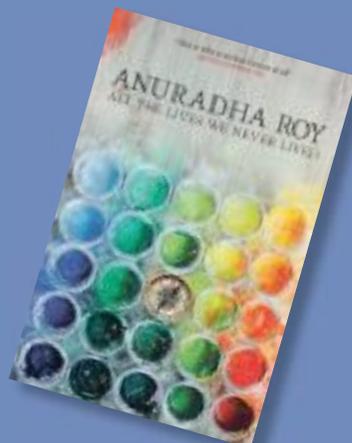


Gallery view of the 250th Summer Exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts

## COMMUTER CORNER

Anuradha Roy tackles big themes with lightness of touch. *All the Lives We Never Lived* (hardback £16.99, Kindle £9.99) mixes fiction and real history in its tale of a mother who abandons her son for life with the German painter Walter Spies. This empathetic novel also features the Second World War, Indian nationalism, and thoughtful reflections on art, beliefs and patriarchal power structures.

How are you livening up your commute?  
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## FILM OCEAN'S 8

Continuing Hollywood's long overdue (and still pretty minimal) gender rebalancing is Gary Ross and Olivia Milch's reboot of the popular *Ocean's* franchise.

This time around, our team of wily thieves – led by Sandra Bullock's recently paroled Debbie Ocean – is all-female, and their heist target is a \$150 million necklace worn at New York's glamorous Met Gala.

Ross, who also directs, isn't really in the same league as his super-smooth predecessor Steven Soderbergh, and a subplot involving an old flame

grows tedious. But the new female cast more than hold their own.

Bullock, here both impish and coolly ambitious, has great comic chemistry with the more deadpan Cate Blanchett, and there are fantastic turns from Rihanna, Helena Bonham Carter, Awkwafina, Mindy Kaling and Sarah Paulson.

However, Anne Hathaway just about walks off with the film as the 'mark': Daphne Kluger, a narcissistic celebrity starlet. It's a brilliantly knowing dissection of performative femininity, adding subversion to this fun summer romp.



## THEATRE TRANSLATIONS

Language is central to Brian Friel's exquisite masterpiece, illuminating nationality, identity, heritage and connection. Ian Rickson's gorgeous revival honours that by giving space to his text – words left hanging in the air.

Set in 1830s rural Ireland, a Gaelic-speaking 'hedge school' is about to be usurped by a new English school, and the British army has arrived to map the land and Anglicise place names.

Returning native Owen tries to mediate between locals – including his schoolmaster father – and his British employers, while a star-crossed romance points to the dream of Anglo-Irish harmony, before coming under threat.

Friel's rich text is in English, but represents Gaelic too – so everyone speaks the same language, yet can't understand one another. Written during the Troubles, there's resonance now with Northern Ireland's conflicts and Brexit border battles.

Colin Morgan confidently leads a pitch-perfect ensemble, with fine work from Ciarán Hinds, Seamus O'Hara, Adetomiwa Edun and Judith Roddy.

Rae Smith provides a detailed, loamy set – invaded by red uniforms – and Neil Austin elemental lighting. A tender and intimate epic. 🏠

**Until August 11**  
**National Theatre, South Bank SE1**  
**Tickets from £15**  
[www.nationaltheatre.org.uk](http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk)

