

Lord Arthur Savile's Crime

21 January – 21 March 2026
17 Savile Row W1S

Opening Wednesday 21 January, 6-8pm



The second exhibition in our new galleries on Savile Row is a group show inspired by Oscar Wilde's novella, *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*. Wilde's story, with its eclectic cast of characters situated in acidly etched London, is the stimulus for an exhibition of works of various scales and mediums. Our building was initially built as an arts club in 1870, recalling a period of intimate exhibitions and society gatherings that Wilde fictionalised within the milieu of Mayfair. The restored gallery reflects the neighbourhood's artistic lineage, and the artists participating in the *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* exhibition sit with the shadows of those exhibited in the area since the founding of the Royal Academy in the late eighteenth century.

Set within spaces that once hosted similar salons, with a scenography that responds to that maximalist aesthetic, the exhibition *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* reimagines the relationship these sites hold to art, social behaviour and the potential drama of narrative. The works presented engage with a satire that reflects staged human behaviour as a contemporary response to Wilde's fervent and monstrous Mayfair.

Lord Arthur Savile's Crime is a humorous period piece, written in London in 1891, full of evocative descriptions of the interiors and streets of London and its comically sketched denizens. Writing with pastiche, the prose features a 'medley of people' and gently mocks the morals and melodrama of the protagonist, his peers and the social obligations of Victorian high society. The plot follows farcical duties committed in the name of love: failed attempts at murder in the ironic pursuit of a fulfilled and honourable life that expose themes of morality, the obsessive nature of superstition and the triviality of social standing. Wilde's decadent characters are interspersed with 'pretty little' curiosities – the elusive skill of the cheiromantist, a poisonous silver *bonbonnière* and an exploding French timepiece – absurd lavish objects whose pretence at luxury whilst insinuating danger makes further commodity parody of the nineteenth-century Wilde seeks to describe.

The emphasis on performative and staged behaviour in the Wildean world mirrors how we continue to be observed, judged and satirised in a contemporary society, every bit as hypocritical and self-conscious as that of 1890. In our current age of anxiety, similarly polished projections of the self continue to conceal alternative private or primal impulses, and our dependence on the observation of others remains absolute.

Artists include Lisa Brice, Cecily Brown, Gillian Carnegie, Guglielmo Castelli, Xinyi Cheng, Monster Chetwynd, William N. Copley, Andrew Cranston, Somaya Critchlow, John Currin, Iris van Dongen, Nicole Eisenman, Urs Fischer, Aaron Gilbert, Maggi Hambling, Anthea Hamilton, Kati Heck, Sophie von Hellermann, Donna Huddleston, Ernst Yohji Jaeger, Chantal Joffe, Jamian Juliano-Villani, Sanya Kantarovsky, Pierre Klossowski, Marcus Leotaud, Hilary Lloyd, Sarah Lucas, Jonathan Lyndon Chase, Tala Madani, Diego Marcon, Helen Marten, Sam McKinniss, Lily McMenamy, Alexandra Metcalf, Yu Nishimura, Paul Noble, Paulina Olowska, Laura Owens, Celia Paul, Elizabeth Peyton, Jessy Razafimandimby, Wilhelm Sasnal, Caragh Thuring, Ambera Wellmann, Nicole Wermers, TJ Wilcox, Joseph Yaeger, Arisa Yoshioka.