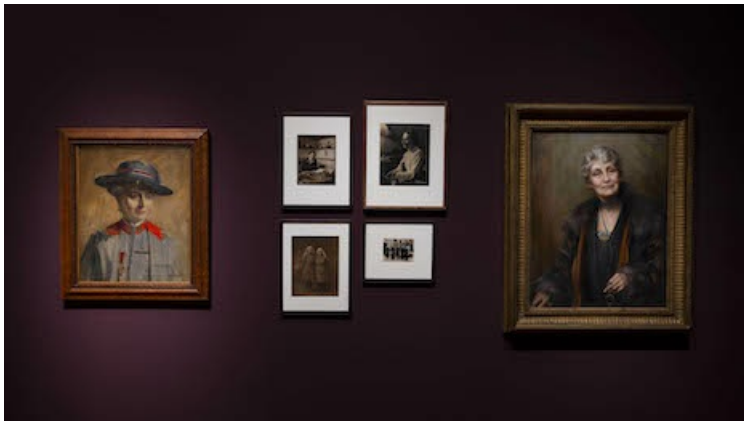


HOME FURNISHINGS

Farrow & Ball frame National Portrait Gallery's reopening in rich pigments

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The company has contributed to the painting off of the canvas, giving the portraits a greater sense of belonging with more fitting shades behind them. Image credit: David Pary/ National Portrait Gallery

By ZACH JAMES

British wall covering maker Farrow & Ball has partnered with a historic museum for renovations that frame the center's highly-anticipated return.

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London's National Portrait Gallery reopened on June 22 with a bit of help from a bevy of partners, the luxury interior innovator included. Giving works a greater sense of belonging by placing a set of premium shades on the walls behind them, Farrow & Ball now showcases restorations, highlighting its own off-canvas contributions in a new campaign.

"Following our very successful collaboration with the Natural History Museum, it was a huge honor to be approached by the National Portrait Gallery early on in their three-year refurbishment to look at colors for their walls," Joa Studholme, color curator at Farrow & Ball, London

"It felt like the natural fit a long-established British brand being used in a British treasure," she continued. "The carefully balanced colors in the Farrow & Ball palette offer infinite possibilities to create different atmospheres but still allow the art to take center stage."

A more fitting foundation

As announced in November 2019, the National Portrait Gallery closed for comprehensive renovations, titled "Inspiring People," in late June 2020, only opening its doors to the public once again recently.

It represents the largest and longest redevelopment in the museum's 127 years of operation, only rivaled by the exhibition moving into the building's St. Martin's Place address in 1896.

As a relatively small part of the improvements, which included creating an entirely new entrance, reopening the long-closed East Wing, establishing an educational center within the premises and upgrading all gallery spaces, Farrow & Ball was brought into the fold to liven and grant a signature touch to the historically significant grounds.

Ms. Studholme takes visitors through the company's proud contributions to the facility revamp

The work of Ms. Studholme and many others is available to see now throughout many rooms within the establishment, bringing in seven shades.

"The hallways are kept deliberately neutral using Cornforth White to compliment the marble from the historic staircase and this also means that the eye is drawn to the stronger colors in the galleries which immediately feel more intriguing," she said.

"This leads up to the slightly stronger and warmer Dove Tale in the Statesman's corridor which in turn leads to this gallery painted in Charleston Gray, a darker tone of Dove Tale, where incidentally there are many works from the Bloomsbury group," she stated. "This technique of layering colors from the same family is so easy to employ at home."

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Cornforth White, Dove Tale and Charleston Gray are all neutral tones, the final two on the list the most somber of all, denoting taupes and light leathers.

Among others of the same persuasion are Ammonite and Light Gray, with the prior being in an off-white vein, with tannish notes, and the latter one of the darkest of the neutral shades, a low-key yellowish brown.

"The Victorian Pioneers room and the photography space are both painted in deeply saturated Green Smoke in order not to break the gallery into too many small spaces," Ms. Studholme explains

"They complement the War Rooms across the corridor which are painted in rich Brinjal," she claims. "The use of both these colors takes inspiration from the tones used in the fabulous portrait of the Bronte sisters."

Uniquely, Green Smoke and Brinjal are the most colorful and expressive pigments on display. The former is aptly named; a darker green with specks of light shining through, brightening the full picture. The latter is a beautiful dark crimson, most fitting for the War Rooms; it enhances the artwork on top of it.

Commitment to the arts

Farrow & Ball's partnership with the Londonian historical landmark is just the latest of its collaborative efforts within the world of art and the creative industry's exhibitions.

Announced in April 2023, the label granted support to the Muse National Picasso-Paris, giving new legs to the work of the commemorative display's namesake ([see story](#)). Presenting the fruit of the late artist on the 50-year anniversary of his death, one might expect a more somber palette but is instead met with one more in line with the

creative's efforts.

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While the wall decor company may have excursions into the overarching art world, its main business is in the home. In a recent webinar held by the label's ambassador Patrick O'Donnell, he proclaimed the shifting tides of the interior design market, moving into entirely new trends of popping colors, the return of wallpaper and painted patterns ([see story](#)).

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