

## **Pensthorpe to open new gallery space in partnership with Norfolk artist**

A new gallery space will open at Pensthorpe on Monday 25 May, in partnership with local artist Claire Frances Smith. Located in the park's former education building, the gallery will showcase artwork inspired by the Norfolk landscape in a relaxed, interiors-led setting.

Designed to feel welcoming and easy to explore, the space will present artwork in a way that's both accessible and easy to imagine in your own home.

As part of this development, Pensthorpe's education centre will be relocated and enhanced elsewhere on site over the summer months, with a focus on creating a more interactive and engaging learning experience for visitors and educational groups.

The gallery will feature Claire's original landscape paintings and giclée prints, inspired by the light and atmosphere of the Norfolk countryside, styled alongside carefully selected homewares.

Alongside the gallery, Claire will host seasonal painting workshops throughout the year, reflecting Pensthorpe's landscapes and wildlife and offering visitors the chance to explore their creativity in a hands-on way. The first workshop will take place on 30 June, with an *En Plein Air Masterclass* titled 'The View from the Fisherman's Hut', giving participants the opportunity to paint outdoors within the reserve.

Claire said:

"I've always been inspired by the landscapes around me, so being based at Pensthorpe feels like a natural fit. Their focus on nature and education really aligns with how I approach my work, and I wanted to create a space that feels relaxed and welcoming for everyone."

A Pensthorpe spokesperson added:

"We're always looking for ways to evolve what we offer our visitors, and this feels like a natural next step. The gallery will be free to enter, like our café and gift shop, adding something new to the overall experience. At the same time, our investment in a more interactive education space will help us continue to develop how people connect with and learn about nature."

-Ends-

## Notes to Editors

- Pensthorpe is a 700-acre family-friendly nature reserve located 11 miles inland from the North Norfolk coast.
- Interactive trails, seven bird hides and several charming boardwalks weave through the wilderness of the reserve and present an opportunity to get closer to native and migrating wildlife - over 1,200 different species have been recorded.
- A hidden gem for garden lovers, Pensthorpe is home to six spectacular gardens, including the Millennium Garden designed by world-renowned plantsman Piet Oudolf. Families enjoy wildlife-inspired eco play areas, including WildRootz, which are often hailed as some of the best in Norfolk. The reserve's serene environment offers unrivalled birdwatching opportunities and a unique way to connect with the natural world.
- With over 110,000 visitors a year and a recent Best Rural Attraction award, Pensthorpe has become a standout destination for all ages.
- The reserve is on the A1067, one mile from Fakenham and just over 20 miles from the city of Norwich.
- Entry prices fluctuate through the year. Adult tickets start from £10.95 and children from £9.95. Under 3s go free. Annual members receive free entry. Parking is free.
- Claire Frances Smith is a Norfolk-based artist known for landscape-inspired paintings, working primarily in oils. She has over 40 years of teaching experience and runs The Art Academy, where she teaches painting to a wide range of students.
- **The gallery opens on Monday 25th May and will be located in the former education building at Pensthorpe.**
- A programme of seasonal *En Plein Air* masterclasses will accompany the gallery launch, beginning with 'The View from the Fisherman's Hut' on 30 June (10am–3.30pm), followed by 'View Towards the Monet Style Bridge' on 7 July (10am–3.30pm). Both sessions will take place outdoors within the reserve, focusing on landscape painting techniques inspired by Pensthorpe's scenery.
- High-res images available on request
- [www.pensthorpe.com](http://www.pensthorpe.com), [www.clairefrancesmithfineart.co.uk](http://www.clairefrancesmithfineart.co.uk)
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