

# A WOMAN'S PLACE...

Knole in Sevenoaks cannot be inherited by a woman, thanks to Thomas Sackville who acquired it in 1605. His will stipulated that the estate can only pass through the male line...

📍 Vicky Hales-Dutton 📍 © National Trust Ciaran McCrickard; © Lindsay Seers & Keith Sargent

**D**espite being the only child of 3rd Baron Sackville, poor Vita Sackville-West fell foul to this and the controversial novelist was barred from inheriting in 1928 because of her gender, or as she put it, "a technical fault over which we have no control".

It seems that Vita was one of many women who lived and worked there, contributing to the house's spirit and history without owning it. Unlike Vita, however, the majority were unknown. That's changing, thanks to A Woman's Place, an installation that shines a light on the lives of these faceless women via six artworks by contemporary artists, including 2017 Turner Prize winner Lubaina Himid. These explore themes of love, betrayal, class, gender and inheritance.

Directed and curated by Lucy Day and Eliza Gluckman, A Woman's Place forms part of the National Trust's Women and Power programme of events and exhibitions to commemorate the centenary of the Representation of the People Act that gave voting rights to some women in 1918.

Lucy Day says: "The responses by these six inspiring artists, in media ranging from website to sculpture and sound across this fascinating site, provide a space to pause and reflect on the historic – and current – fight for equality in this anniversary year."

Hannah Kay, Knole's General Manager, adds: "It is a pleasure and a privilege to host such a pioneering project at Knole."

A Woman's Place runs until 4th November 2018. Normal admission to Knole applies with National Trust members going free.

• Visit [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/knole](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/knole) for details of admission prices and opening hours.

## The artworks

**ALICE MAY WILLIAMS – By The Accident Of Your Birth.** Inspired by Vita's devastation when Knole passed to her cousin Eddy, this 25-minute video explores how society's expectations shape lives, based on background and genetics. Ironically, both flouted traditional gender roles through cross-dressing and same-sex relationships, regaining some control of their lives despite the 'accident' of their birth.



**LUBAINA HIMID – Collars and Cuffs and Flag for Grace.** Fixed to drainpipes around Stone Court, eight portraits and motifs recognise the lives of women including 17th century laundress Grace Robinson. Lubaina's Flag for Grace is a red, white and blue African-inspired print that flies from the Gatehouse Tower flagpole until November.

**CJ MAHONY – Still Life, Still Waiting.** A stained glass panel depicts the Gatehouse Tower in the hands of women who care for Knole but can never own it, flanked by louvered panel screens and latex rubber drapes. The work deliberately covers a portrait of Thomas Sackville who laid down the rules of inheritance.



**EMILY SPEED – Innards.** This working fountain in the Orangery depicts a dressing table highlighting the complex relationships between flamenco dancer 'Pepita', daughter Victoria Sackville-West and granddaughter Vita during private moments of self-care.

**MELANIE WILSON – Women of Record.** In theatre-maker Melanie Wilson's powerful audio drama, actors read excerpts from the 17th century letters of Knole ladies Anne Clifford and Frances Cranfield, interspersed with first-person recordings from contemporary women.



**LINDSAY SEERS – 2052 selves, a biography.** Released in four episodes, Lindsay's digital 'book' [www.2052selves.com](http://www.2052selves.com) focuses on the passionate relationship between Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf, who dedicated her novel Orlando to Vita. Visitors can view this before, during or after a visit to Knole.