

ELEPHANT

Through the Looking Glass: Why Is Art Obsessed with Women and Windows?

A new exhibition showcases the way that centuries of artists have framed and reframed the image of a woman at a window. Words by Madeleine Pollard

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Dulwich Picture Gallery hosts a dance between freedom and containment this summer as it considers the enigmatic motif of the “woman in the window”. Ranging from ancient pottery to paintings from the Dutch Golden Age, as well as contemporary photography and sculpture, *Reframed: The Woman in the Window* gathers together 40 artworks to reveal how this enduring image has been made and remade over time. Themes of closure and claustrophobia nestle alongside excitement and escape, while voyeurism and longing are never far away, in an exhibition that casts new light on the act of looking.

“This show will allow visitors to discover why the ‘woman in the window’ has been so important to different cultures at different times,” says Jennifer Sliwka, curator at the south London gallery. “It will provide insight into the ways artists have taken up the device of the window as a kind of ‘portal’ between two realms: the real and the imagined, the sacred and the profane, between this life and the afterlife or between the public and the private.” Here are our highlights.