

CYNTHIA CORBETT GALLERY

Family Romance by Matt Smith

Based on a recent installation by the artist at Kensington Palace, and inspired by British royal wedding plates, each of these large meet platters commemorates a queer union.

Queer Family Romance subverts Freud's idea of family romance and uses object collection and collation to create substitute queer family romances using objects. Whitney Davis, Professor of History of Art at the University of California at Berkeley proposes that queer family romance uses collections of objects to come together to form substitute family groups. Davis suggests that this can work with the collector becoming either an inheritor – placing himself within a group of historical objects or queer biographies – or as a progenitor – creating new links between objects, famously in the case of Horace Walpole and the Walpole Cabinet in the V&A's collections.

This dinner service is in service to the fragile histories that have been so frequently and easily lost. A branch of my family tree, they are my inheritance.

Claude Cahun

Claude Cahun (1894 – 1954) was a French surrealist photographer, sculptor, and writer, best known as a writer and self-portraitist, who assumed a variety of performative personae. In her writing she consistently referred to herself as elle (she), [5] and this article follows her practice; but she also said that her actual gender was fluid. Cahun is most well known for her androgynous appearance, which challenged the strict gender roles of her time. During World War II, Cahun was also active as a resistance worker and propagandist.

Queen Anne and Lady Sarah

Queen Anne and Lady Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough, subjects of the recent film *The Favourite*.

Radcliffe Hall and Una Troubridge

Radcliffe Hall and Una Troubridge. Hall (1880 – 1943) was an English poet and author, best known for the novel *The Well of Loneliness*, a groundbreaking work in lesbian literature. In adulthood, Hall often went by the name John, rather than Marguerite.

Oscar Wilde and Alfred

Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas (Bosie). Douglas wrote several books of verse, some in a homoerotic Uranian genre. The phrase "The love that dare not speak its name" appears in one (Two Loves), though it is widely misattributed to Wilde. The two were lovers, and Alfred's father, the Marquess of Queensberry, accused Wilde of being a sodomite. It was Wilde's failed libel action against the Marquess of Queensbury that resulted in Wilde going to Reading Gaol.

Walt Whitman and Peter

Walt Whitman and Peter Doyle. The romance started in 1865 between the streetcar

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conductor and the poet and spanned the years of Whitman's residence in Washington, D.C, and continued nearly up through Whitman's death in Camden, in 1892.

Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby

Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby. Known as the ladies of Llangollen, Sarah and Eleanor eloped from Ireland in 1780 to escape impending marriages and set up home together in Wales. They became celebrities and guests included Byron, Shelley, Wellington and Wordsworth, the latter of whom wrote a sonnet about them.

Fanny and Stella.

Fanny and Stella. Thomas Ernest Boulton and Frederick William Park were Victorian cross-dressers known as Fanny and Stella. Both were gay men from upper-middle-class families, both enjoyed wearing women's clothes and both enjoyed taking part in theatrical performances—playing the women's roles when they did so.

Edward Carpenter and George Merrill.

Edward Carpenter and George Merrill. Edward Carpenter (1844 – 1929) was an English utopian socialist, poet, philosopher, anthologist, an early activist for gay rights. An early advocate of sexual liberation, he had an influence on both D. H. Lawrence and Sri Aurobindo, and inspired E. M. Forster's novel Maurice. He met George Merrill, a working-class man in 1891. Merrill was 22 years his junior, and the two remained partners for the rest of their lives, cohabiting from 1898.