

# THE PRESENCE OF ABSENCE

Four very different artists explore space, memory, loss and connection.

Thursday 24 September – Sunday 4 October 2026  
The Regency Townhouse, Brighton and Hove



## Press Release

An upholsterer, a contemporary surrealist, a painter and a photographer will come together for a two-week interactive exhibition at Brighton's Regency Townhouse in September 2026.

"Your absence is a presence. Who knew an empty space could take up so much room."

*Jacqueline Simon Gunn*

It began with an empty chair; that holds the narrative of those who once sat in it and the comfort or pain that represents; that the absence of someone is as real and as meaningful as their presence. At the heart of this exhibition are 4 vintage chairs; a collaboration between Frances Bloomfield and Emily Beaumont. The chairs will explore the concepts of memory, healing, secrets and retreat.

"A chair replaces the presence of someone by holding their absence."

*Doris Salcedo*

The exhibition has been created to explore the impact of an individual presence, the spaces created where someone or something used to be.

"Influenced by Jean-Paul Sartre's study on Being and Nothingness, we wanted to explore the concept that absence is a very real and substantial being."

*Frances Bloomfield*



**Jo Hathaway's** work on memory and reflection bring colour and light and the internal, abstract experience of the theme; **Nick Bowman's** photographs each tell their own story of light, nature and the impact of revelation and obscurity, alongside additional work by **Frances Bloomfield** and **Emily Beaumont**.

The exhibition invites you to be part of the visual conversation between the artists, about how to interpret individual experiences of the past, present and future through the space we leave behind and the memories it holds of us – whether it involves happiness, sadness, joy, loss, beauty, grief or hope. Viewers are encouraged to be actively involved by discovering secrets concealed around the space and by leaving their own memories and experiences which will become part of the exhibition.

“What we are trying to do is to explore how everyday objects can directly impact on our lives and help us to navigate our future and consider the huge gaps that we all leave behind, no matter who or where we are.”

*Emily Beaumont*

#### THE ARTISTS:

Emily Beaumont, Upholsterer [emilybooupholstery.co.uk](http://emilybooupholstery.co.uk)

Frances Bloomfield, Contemporary Surrealist [francesbloomfield.com](http://francesbloomfield.com)

Jo Hathaway, Painter [johathaway.com](http://johathaway.com)

Nick Bowman, Photographer [@iamnotabene](https://www.instagram.com/iamnotabene)

Find out more about the artists: [johathaway.com/about-the-artists](http://johathaway.com/about-the-artists)

#### VENUE:

The Regency Townhouse [rth.org.uk](http://rth.org.uk) is a rare example of an original historic townhouse and the perfect 'domestic' setting for this exhibition. The building is a metaphor all its own, holding the lives, memories and possibilities of life, palpable absences, the spirits of those who walked and sat and wandered to the sea before us, and those lives that are now and to come.

There will be a range of events around the show, including:

- Private View Thursday 24 September 6-9 pm
- Wine Tasting from Bask Thursday 1st October 7-9pm
- Film screening Friday 2 October 6-9pm

#### AND:

Jo Hathaway is creating a 'Book of Words' a collection of writings that explore the theme.

Nick Bowman will be including a photographic installation 'We are not a number' in the exhibition.

