What's New February 2012

Visitors to the capital in February can experience a fantastic selection of new exhibitions, entertainment and much more. Take a look at this month's highlights from the London & Partners press team...

For more information on what's on in London go to visitlondon.com

Lucian Freud Portraits
Visit the National Portrait Gallery and see the works of Lucian Freud, spanning seven decades. Read more.....

The Lady from the Sea
Don't miss actress Joely Richardson at the Rose Theatre, starring in the Lady from the Sea. Read more.....

Saatchi Suite Gallery
Experience beautiful contemporary art in your own suite at the Hyatt Regency London - The Churchill. Read more.....

Attractions

Shark Reef Encounter
SEA LIFE London Aquarium, launches February half term 2012
Shark Reef Encounter is a positive celebration of Sharks featuring a shoal of over twenty magnificent creatures - including two impressive 2.8m long brown sharks and a group of sleek black tip reef Sharks. As guests enter the attraction they will step onto a 5m long glass walkway, and witness the unique spectacle of four species of sharks swimming inches beneath their feet. There is also a gigantic 19.6m by 12m pacific reef display with a dramatic shipwreck scene, and the Shark Academy area - with plenty of fun interactives telling fascinating shark stories. For more information contact Amy Williams on 020 7402 9966 / amy@freerange.eu

Tropical Extravaganza Festival
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 4 February - 4 March 2012
Celebrate all things bright, beautiful and tropical at the Tropical Extravaganza Festival, where exotic orchids, tropical flowers and foliage displays will dominate the Princess of Wales Conservatory. The theme for this year's festival is Forces of Nature, and how plants and fungi interact with the four forces of nature - earth, fire, wind, and water. Throughout the festival, there will be volunteer guides in the conservatory who will be on hand to answer questions on the displays and Kew's global work. For more information contact the press team on 020 8332 5607 / pr@kew.org

Reptiles Undercover
London Wetland Centre, 11 - 12 February 2012
Slither over to London Wetland Centre during half term and enter the fascinating world of reptiles. All weekend there will be crocodiles, snakes, turtles, lizards and many more animals for you to meet up
Find out more about these scaled-up cousins of the reptiles that live here at London Wetland Centre. Far from being scary monsters these shy animals often hide away, so this is a fantastic opportunity to see them up close. For more information contact Jamie Wyver on 0208 409 4412 / Jamie.Wyver@wwt.org.uk

**Imagine**  
Southbank Centre, 11 - 26 February 2012  
With over 50 ticketed and free events over two weeks, including concerts, plays, comedy and appearances by many of the UK's finest children's authors, it will be the biggest Imagine festival yet. For six days, between 13 - 19 February, children take over the running of Southbank Centre, from managing the cloakroom to selling programmes and making sure shows start on time. Festival themes include a celebration of Roald Dahl and an exploration of children in care in literature. Imagine truly takes over every corner of Southbank Centre, from the London Philharmonic Orchestra's performance of The Jungle Book in the Royal Festival Hall and an audience with the legendary Jacqueline Wilson to intimate, one-on-one performances of The Incredible Book Eating Boy. For more information contact Helena Zedig on 020 7921 0847 / helena.zedig@southbankcentre.co.uk

**Chinese New Year**  
National Maritime Museum, 18 February 2012  
Visit the museum for a celebration of Chinese New Year with a range of activities for all the family, culminating in a spectacular outdoor procession by River Cultures. There will be a flag-making workshop celebrating the Year of the Dragon, a workshop on tea cups and tea-pots (exploring Britain's obsession with tea), a drop-in gallery performance by Chinese seaman James Robson with Yellow Earth Theatre and a film screening of The Chinese Feast, a family comedy about a cooking contest. For more information contact Jenny Stewart on JStewart@rmg.co.uk

**Exhibitions**

**David Shrigley: Brain activity**  
Hayward Gallery, 1 February 2012 - 20 May 2012  
British artist David Shrigley is best known for his humorous drawings that make witty and wry observations on everyday life. Trained as a fine artist, his deliberately crude graphic style gives his work an immediate and accessible appeal, while simultaneously offering insightful commentary on the absurdities of human relationships. This exhibition will cover the full range of Shrigley's diverse practice. This extends far beyond drawing to include photography, books, sculpture, animation, painting and music. Spanning the upper galleries of the Hayward Gallery, the show will also include new artwork and site specific installations. For more information contact Helena Zedig on 020 7921 0847 / helena.zedig@southbankcentre.co.uk

**The Queen: Sixty Photographs for Sixty Years**  
Windsor Castle, 4 February 2012 - January 2013  
Sixty photographs of The Queen, including the work of leading press photographers of the past six decades, will go on display at Windsor Castle to celebrate Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee. The exhibition presents a portrait of The Queen's reign as captured in fleeting moments on both official occasions and at relaxed family gatherings. With the advent of photography, the boundaries between the officially approved and the spontaneously captured image of the monarch were irreversibly blurred. Today, through the reach of modern media, the image of Her Majesty is familiar to millions around the world. Most of the exhibition The Queen: Sixty Photographs for Sixty Years has been selected from photographs submitted by the Royal Rota photographic organisations. For more information contact the press office on 020 7839 1377 / press@royalcollection.org.uk

**Queen Elizabeth II by Cecil Beaton: A Diamond Jubilee Celebration**  
V & A Museum, 8 February - 22 April 2012  
To celebrate The Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the V&A is holding an exhibition of portraits of Her Majesty The Queen by photographer Cecil Beaton (1904-1980). It will explore Beaton's long relationship with Queen Elizabeth II, who was a teenage princess when she first sat for him in 1942. On display will be around 100 photographs of The Queen taken over three decades in her roles as princess, monarch and mother, including wartime photographs of Princess Elizabeth with her family, the official portraits of her Coronation Day, as well as tender images of The Queen with her young children. Archive film and radio footage will set the photographs within their original context and excerpts from Beaton's diaries and letters will reveal an insight into the working practice of a royal sitting. For more information contact 020 7942 2502 / press.office@vam.ac.uk
Yayoi Kusama
Tate Modern, 9 February - 5 June 2012
This exhibition will highlight Yayoi Kusama's moments of most intense innovation. Kusama is one of Japan's best-known living artists and since the 1940s she has developed an extensive body of work. From her earliest explorations of painting in provincial Japan to new unseen works, the exhibition will reveal a history of successive developments and daring advances, demonstrating why Kusama remains one of the most engaging practitioners today. For further information contact Duncan Holden on 020 7887 4939 / pressoffice@tate.org.uk

Lucian Freud Portraits
National Portrait Gallery, 9 February - 27 May 2012
The most ambitious exhibition of the work of Lucian Freud for ten years will showcase over 100 paintings and works on paper loaned from museums and private collections throughout the world. Lucian Freud Portraits is the result of many years’ planning by the Gallery in close partnership with the late Lucian Freud. Paintings of people were central to the work of Lucian Freud (1922-2011) and this exhibition will be the first to focus on his portraiture. The exhibition will be a countdown event for the London 2012 Festival - the culmination of the Cultural Olympiad. For more information contact Neil Evans on 020 7312 2452 / nevans@npg.org.uk

Picasso and Modern British Art
Tate Britain, 15 February - 15 July 2012
In February 2012 Tate Britain will stage the first exhibition to explore Pablo Picasso's lifelong connections with Britain. The exhibition will examine Picasso's evolving critical reputation here and British artists' responses to his work. The exhibition will explore Picasso's rise in Britain as a figure of both controversy and celebrity, tracing the ways in which his work was exhibited and collected here during his lifetime, and demonstrating that the British engagement with Picasso and his art was much deeper and more varied than generally has been appreciated. For more information contact Selina Jones on 020 7887 8732 / pressoffice@tate.org.uk

Mondrian || Nicholson: In Parallel
Courtauld Gallery, 16 February - 20 May 2012
The story of the creative relationship between the artists Piet Mondrian and Ben Nicholson is largely untold. Yet during the 1930s they were leading forces of avant-garde art in Europe. This exhibition will be the first to offer a comprehensive account of the parallel artistic paths charted by Mondrian and Nicholson during this remarkable decade. It will bring together an extraordinary group of paintings and reliefs to show how each artist was driven by a profound belief in the potential of abstract art to attain the highest aesthetic and spiritual power. For more information contact Jenni Lloyd on 01359 271085 / jenni@suebond.co.uk

Entertainment

Transatlantic Sessions
Royal Festival Hall, 6 February 2012
Long established among the jewels in the crown of Glasgow's Celtic Connections festival, Transatlantic Sessions return to Royal Festival Hall following a sold-out show here in January 2011. Led by supreme traditional-style fiddler Aly Bain and dobro legend Jerry Douglas, they continue to revisit shared roots and forge new common ground between today's finest Celtic and Americana musicians. Special guests this year include Jerry Douglas, Aly Bain, Danny Thompson, Tim O'Brien, Eddi Reader, Karen Matheson, plus more to be announced. As ever they are flanked by a crème-de-la-crème house band including Phil Cunningham, John Doyle, Russ Barenberg, Mike McGoldrick, John McCusker, James Mackintosh and Donald Shaw. For more information contact Helena Zedig on 020 7921 0847 / helena.zedig@southbankcentre.co.uk

Flamenco Festival London 2012
Sadler's Wells, Tuesday 7 - 19 February 2012
A treat for flamenco enthusiasts and newcomers alike, the ninth annual Flamenco Festival London at Sadler's Wells presents the world's finest flamenco dancers and musicians. This two week festival includes performances of flamenco in both its traditional and contemporary forms and features a special gala with performances by Carmen Cortés, Rafaela Carrerasco and Olga Pericet, being held on 11 and 12 February. Closing this year's Flamenco Festival London on 19 February is the famous cantaor José Mercé who returns to Sadler's Wells for the first time since 2003. The evening includes all of Mercé's biggest hits from a 15 year career that has seen him sell over half a million albums. For more information contact Rob James on 020 7863 8114 / Rob.James@sadlerswells.com
**Horrible Histories**  
Garrick Theatre, from 14 February 2012  
Experience history with the nasty bits left in! With blood, battles, murder and mayhem Horrible Histories explores stories from Roman, Tudor, Stuart, Georgian, Victorian and WW1 periods and features famous characters such as Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn, Guy Fawkes, Florence Nightingale and General Earl Haig. Enjoy an episode of Roman Mankychef and find out how to impress your guests with roast dormouse; is it easier to lose your heart or head to horrible Henry? Will Parliament escape gunpowder Guy? For more information contact Anna Arthur on 02078367660 / lana@arthurleone.com

**New York Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert Residence**  
The Barbican, 16 - 18 February 2012  
In the first half of 2012, two of the Barbican's International Associate ensembles come to the Centre for residencies: the New York Philharmonic's first residency takes place in February 2012, and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam's first residency follows in April-May 2012. These residencies involve symphonic and chamber music concerts, family events, new commissions, and educational and outreach work. They also allow the Barbican to take the music programme directly to communities in East London. For more information contact the Annikaisa Vainio on 020 7382 7090 / avainio@barbican.org.uk

**Joely Richardson stars in The Lady from the Sea**  
Rose Theatre, 23 February - 17 March 2012  
Joely Richardson stars as Ellida in Ibsen's The Lady from the Sea, at the Rose Theatre, Kingston next spring for a limited run. Golden Globe winner Joely Richardson has starred in seven series of US American TVs Nip/Tuck and, more recently, The Tudors. This production is directed by Stephen Unwin, artistic director of the Rose. He has been hailed by the national critics as an exceptional interpreter of Ibsen, having directed five Ibsen productions, including an award-winning Hedda Gabler at the Donmar Warehouse. For more information contact Doug Cowan on dougc@rosetheatrekingston.org

**Reverb**  
The Roundhouse, 24 February - 4 March 2011  
Contemporary classical has a new home at the Roundhouse. Celebrating a new generation of performers who have broken out of 'traditional' classical concerts, redefined the rules and shattered the boundaries, the Reverb line-up features Imogen Heap, London Contemporary Orchestra, Nonclassical and The Night Shift / Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. For more information contact Rachel Stroud on 020 7424 8452 / rachel.stroud@roundhouse.org.uk

**Shopping and Restaurants**

**Caponata’s Cannoli Pop-Up Counter**  
Caponata, 11 - 14 February 2012  
Authentic Sicilian restaurant in Camden, Caponata is hosting a Pop-Up Cannoli serving a range of the delicious traditional Sicilian pastries matched with local dessert wines. Originating in Palermo as a classic Carnival treat, cannoli are made up of irresistibly crunchy pastry curls (or scorze) filled with a rich and airy ricotta cream filling. The Cannoli Counter will be serving the Sicilian dolce all through the day, with cups of freshly roasted coffee using beans from Camden Coffee House located next door. During the evening, guests can enjoy a cannolo matched expertly with an Italian dessert wine, and to celebrate the Pop-Up Cannoli Counter, Caponata and sister venue The Forge, will be hosting a special evening of Cannoli, Cocktails & Casablanca. For more information contact Palm PR on 0207 871 6733 / liam@palm-pr.com

**Fancy Dress Carnival**  
Bavarian Beerhouse, 18 February 2012  
To bring the carnival spirit to London, Bavarian Beerhouse is organising a traditional carnival fancy dress party, featuring imaginative outfits, a DJ, dancing and a general atmosphere of boisterous fun. Fancy dress is a big part of the carnival in Cologne - every year, the city parade attracts millions of guests who celebrate and dance in the streets. In true Carnival spirit, guests at the Bavarian Beerhouse will be encouraged to dress as outrageously as possible for the night. Whether you’re a pirate, a cowboy or a little devil, all fancy dress will be welcome. The best costume will win a prize. For more information email marketing@bavarian-beerhouse.co.uk

**Hotels**
Limited Edition Saatchi Gallery Suite
Hyatt Regency London - The Churchill, 1 February - 30 April 2012
A must for art lovers! The Hyatt Regency London - The Churchill is opening its Limited Edition Saatchi Gallery Suite for guests to stay in and experience contemporary art unlike any other space in London. On entering this exclusive Regency Executive Suite, guests will sleep amongst a collection of Saatchi Gallery works. Some pieces will be interactive, whilst others may soothe guests to sleep. In addition, guests will be invited to write about their dreams, whilst staying in the Saatchi Gallery Suite, creating their own interactive experience. For art aficionados around the world or for those who are looking to enjoy a unique opportunity, this Limited Edition Suite, will be a must-do experience. For more information contact Henny Frazer on 020 7299 2080 / henny.frazer@hyatt.com