

# Chelsea GIRL

A GROUP OF PAINTERS ARE TURNING THEIR  
BACKS ON THE EAST END AND FIGHTING  
FOR STUDIO SPACE IN THE OLD SCHOOL  
ARTIST'S COLONY OF CHELSEA.  
PHOEBE DICKINSON LEADS THE PACK OF  
'NEW TRADITIONALISTS'





Ten years ago only a very few working artists remained in the SW10 and SW3 postcodes of London's royal borough which had already been all but turned over to the bankers, oligarchs and developers. A small number of studio sitting tenancies remained and the fortunate canny few, who had purchased many years earlier, were now sitting on real estate gold dust. But gone were the days of a bohemian artist's colony that had defined aspects of the Kings Road and its surrounding streets for decades. What was once a vibrant melting pot for London's avant-garde was now just a playground for the super rich. And the only place to go, for any self respecting artist, was east.

However more recently a quiet revolution has been taking place and it looks like Chelsea may be getting some of its creative credentials back; as a new generation of artists seek to revive the area's bohemian ancestry.

Phoebe Dickinson is one such painter and she explains to us how she fought hard to get her coveted space in Chelsea's Worlds End. "To get my studio I went through a very long and drawn



out process. I rent my studio from the Chelsea and Kensington council and the application process is extremely long and tedious but I didn't give up!" she explains. "My space is in a row of six studios which lie above sheltered housing and the whole building is owned by the council. The other studio inhabitants range from a woman who is in her eighties or nineties to a man that makes very sexual sculptures to the young painter Thaddeus Ramos who is my neighbour here."

The appeal is obvious with its location, "It has everything I need very close to me on the Kings Road plus it has a lovely large North facing window," explains Phoebe but given her neo-traditionalist style it is also ideally situated for the type of clients her work attracts.

Studying at Charles Cecil in Florence, Phoebe's work is a credit to her formal training.

"I chose to study in Florence because at that time there weren't many art schools in England that actually taught how to paint properly. Florence was a very thorough and traditional training

in how to paint and draw figuratively which is what I wanted to do.” But there is a quirky flourish in what she does; particularly in her feminine drawings in pen and ink. Her studio is equally old-school but personalized to make it a room of her own.

“For me it was very important to make the studio me and decorate it in a cozy and interesting way. I have the dresser from our nursery in it and it is filled with all sorts of things from trinkets,



to paint mediums, varnishes and powders to natural things that I took a liking to...a nest, a miniature seahorse, a gnarly piece of wood,” explains Phoebe. “And above the dresser I have a collection of pallets my father has given to me over the years that he has bought at house sales across the country. One of the pallets is attributed to having been owned by Reynolds.”

Phoebe is currently working towards her second solo show which will be held at Blanchard, Core One, the Gasworks, Michael

Road, London, SW6 2AD from November 26th-30th and will also be featured at Gallery 27, 27 Cork Street, London from 29th of October until 1st of November.

Works by Phoebe from this feature along with other drawings, etchings and paintings are for sale at [EVERYTHINGinmystudio](#)

