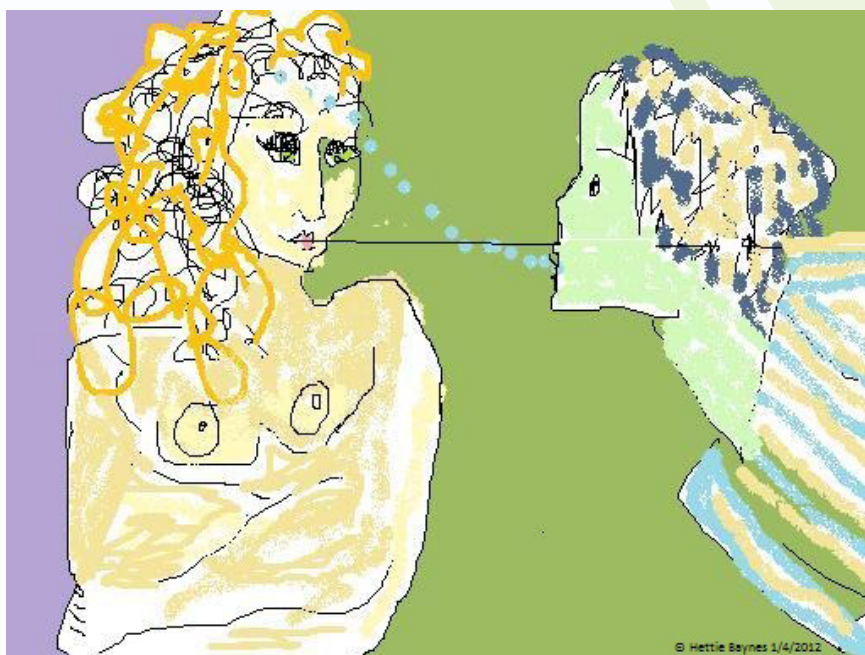
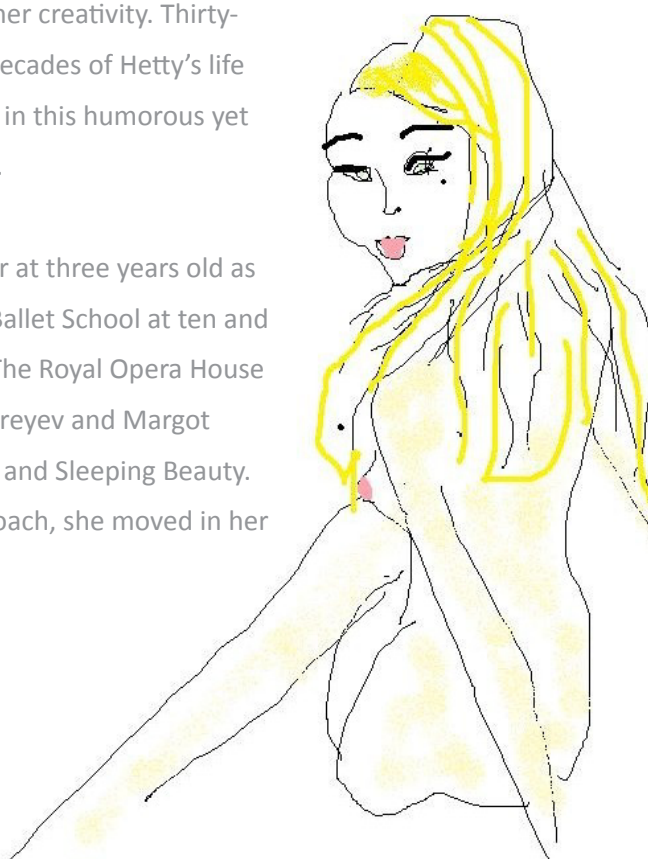


AN EXHIBITION BY HETTY BAYNES-RUSSELL  
at The Strand Gallery, 14th-24th November



In *Betsy and Blapsy - Life and Times*, her upcoming exhibition at the Strand Gallery in Covent Garden, the actress Hetty Baynes-Russell reveals a new side to her creativity. Thirty-five paintings take you through four decades of Hetty's life on stage, in film, radio and television, in this humorous yet personal, autobiographical exhibition.

Hetty Baynes-Russell began her career at three years old as a ballet prodigy, attending the Royal Ballet School at ten and dancing aged twelve on the stage at The Royal Opera House Covent Garden alongside Rudolph Nureyev and Margot Fonteyn in Nureyev's own *Nutcracker* and *Sleeping Beauty*. Trained by a National Theatre voice coach, she moved in her mid-teens from dance to acting.





Highlights of her stage career include starring in John Osborne's *Inadmissible Evidence* at The Royal Court Theatre, starring with Edward Fox in *The Philanthropist* at Wyndhams Theatre, starring as Lady Fidget in the first tour of *Country Wife*, playing in *Buglar Boy* at the Traverse Theatre in the Edinburgh Festival, and for her acclaimed comic performance as Ida alongside Maureen Lipman and Lionel Jeffries in *Theatre of Comedies'* *See*

*How They Run*. Hetty has had three Best Actress nominations: for her performance as Rita in Ibsen's *Little Eyolf* (Off-West End Awards), as Maddy in *Women Laughing* by Michael Wall at the Royal Exchange Manchester (Manchester Evening News Awards) and as Marilyn Monroe in *Anyone Can See I Love You* by Marilyn Bowering (Sony & Prix Italia Awards). Her most recent performance on stage was Shirley in *Revelations* by Steven Lowe at the Hampstead Theatre.

Hugh Grant and Oliver Reed are among the actors she performed with on radio, where she worked for three years in Radio Four's long-running drama *Citizens*. Her extensive television career began in her teens and includes acting with Sir John Gielgud in Agatha Christie's *Secret of the Seven Dials* for LWT, starring with Pauline Collins and Michael Gambon in *The Tropical Moon* over Dorking, starring as Hilda in Ken Russell's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, with Glenda Jackson in Ken Russell's *The Secret Life of Sir Arnold Bax* and starring as the wife of Stephen Fry in Simon Gray's *Old Flames*. Her period drama performances include the BBC's *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Dombey and Son*. Her most recent television work includes *Footballer's Wives* and playing the part of Verda Rowley in BBC's acclaimed series *The Hour* in 2011.

In 1992 she married the legendary film director, the late Ken Russell with whom she had a son. Ken and Hetty were brought together by shared passions for music, dance, choreography, drama and film, into a profound love affair. Hetty co-wrote with Ken on several projects including *Mrs Kirsch*, *Treasure Island*, *Mindbender* and *Alice in Russia Land* in which she starred as Alice. Hetty's Hollywood career also includes starring with Alan Bates and Jeremy Irons in the Paramount film *Nijinski* directed by Herbert Ross.

Hetty achieved a BA in Philosophy from Birkbeck College London University in 1990, and in her forties, while raising her son Rex, she went back into education, studying for a Fine Art degree at Central St. Martin's (2001). She is currently completing an MA in Creative Writing, again at Birkbeck, and has recently written a television comedy drama series, *Shut Up - Look Pretty*, in which she will act and direct.

Throughout her childhood Hetty used the visual arts as an outlet for her emotional responses to growing up in the media spotlight. "I have always had a sketchbook with me, I've been painting and drawing since



I was a child,” Hetty explains. She devised imaginary sides to her personality to measure her emotional well being. The two figures in the show’s title, ‘Betsy’ and ‘Blapsy’, were the characters Hetty identified herself with. They were her right side and her left side: Betsy (right) the extrovert: showy, sometimes taken to extremes, transforming into Blousey/ Bluesey; and then Blapsy (left) the introvert - spirtual, intuitive and contemplative, reshaping herself into Blobby when troubled and depressed. Hetty continued to paint using these characters during both the brightest periods of life – career success, her love affair with Ken Russell, her sense of humour - and the most challenging periods of her adulthood too, including anorexia, experiencing negative press and bereavement.

After studying at Central St Martins and using computer-aided techniques, Hetty developed her pictorial language to express the many different, often contradictory forces that shape an artist’s life: “the voices that speak to us, the emotions and inspirations that pull us one way, then another” She said. Her art is intensely personal, each image telling its own story while still forming part of a narrative whole.

*“Drawing these shapes and figures, giving them colour and space, expresses my life and the various turns it has taken: people and experiences, both internal and external, that have shaped it so far.”* Hetty Baynes-Russell.



## NOTES TO EDITORS

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1. Celebrity/VIP Launch Event. There is a celebrity attended launch event on 13th November with live performances. Please contact Jessica at Artsinform for the guest list and press invitations.
2. Dedication and Charity Fundraising: The exhibition is dedicated to the artist and designer Suzy Falkner, Hetty Baynes-Russell’s late sister. Part of the proceeds of the sale of the paintings will be given to charity.
4. Interviews: Hetty Baynes-Russell is available for interviews.

## PRESS CONTACT

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