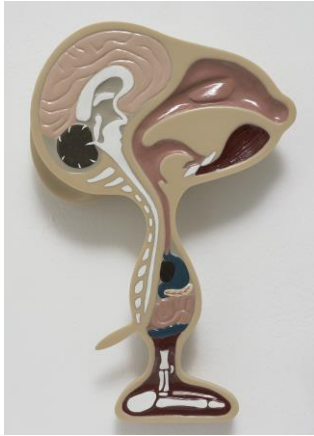


# PRESS RELEASE

**GOOD GRIEF, CHARLIE BROWN!**  
**CELEBRATING PEANUTS AND ITS CULTURAL LEGACY**  
25 October 2018 – 3 March 2019



**Snoopy, Charlie Brown and co. come to Somerset House in a cultural celebration of the world's most influential comic strip**

**EMBANKMENT GALLERIES, SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON**

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This autumn, Somerset House is very proud to present *GOOD GRIEF, CHARLIE BROWN! Celebrating Peanuts and its Cultural Legacy*. This landmark exhibition showcases the original drawings of the cartoon's creator Charles M. Schulz, alongside works inspired by Snoopy, Charlie Brown and the rest of the *Peanuts* gang, from some of today's most exciting artists and designers. *GOOD GRIEF, CHARLIE BROWN! Celebrating Peanuts and its Cultural Legacy* explores the impact of the most successful comic strip of all time on the contemporary cultural landscape, uncovering the social, political and philosophical complexities told through the four-panel comic strip that have spoken to scores of artists and designers in their own work.

In partnership with the Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center in Santa Rosa in Sonoma County, California, *GOOD GRIEF, CHARLIE BROWN! Celebrating Peanuts and its Cultural Legacy* features over 100 comic strips and personal artefacts from the Schulz Museum and contemporary works from contributors including: **Andy Holden, David Musgrave, Fiona Banner, François Curlet, KAWS, Ken Kagami, Lucas Price, Mark Drew, Mark Mulrone, Mel Brimfield, Mira Calix, Ryan Gander** and **Steven Claydon**.

As a generation of artists who grew up during the 'golden age' of *Peanuts* come to prominence today, its presence in the ideas and ambitions of contemporary media, from film and fashion to street art and sculpture, seems more powerful and meaningful than ever before.

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For the exhibition, Somerset House has unearthed existing work and commissioned new pieces from contemporary practitioners, all of which is influenced by *Peanuts*. These will sit alongside Schulz's original strips, rarely-seen in Europe, and together provide new perspectives on the comic masterpiece.

*Peanuts* has been widely acknowledged as one of the most popular and influential comic strips of all time. From 1950 to 2000, creator Charles M. Schulz produced 17,897 *Peanuts* strips, syndicated to over 2,600 newspapers in 75 countries and translated into 21 languages, totalling a readership of 355 million people.

For many, *Peanuts* became an important part of their daily lives and its cast of misfit characters – including everyone's favourite cartoon canine **Snoopy**, loveable loser **Charlie Brown**, blanket-toting philosopher **Linus**, bossy older sister **Lucy**, piano-playing **Schroeder** and sports-obsessed **Peppermint Patty** – continue to captivate audiences, young and old, around the world. Within their adultless society, their tangle of relationships mirror minutiae everyday realities, emulating the joys, anxieties and vulnerabilities of life.

Schulz's cast of children commented on topical issues, so much so that the comic has become a chronicle of the social and political climate in the latter half of the twentieth century. His strips also spoke to the soul, pondering age-old questions in the search for meaning in the small game of life. Indeed, *Peanuts* philosophies and aphorisms have become legend, from Lucy's "happiness is a warm puppy" to Charlie Brown's "I only dread one day at a time".

Schulz's strip penetrated culture so powerfully that it could help to change attitudes and his cartoon creations certainly provided perspectives not only beyond their years, but also ahead of their time.

The exhibition unpacks the panels that tackle topics such as feminism, faith, racial equality and existentialism.

Lucy embraced feminist ideals and Peppermint Patty proved that female athletes were just as capable as their male counterparts, in respect to Schulz's many friends in the field, such as Billie Jean King. 2018 also marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Franklin, the black character introduced into the predominantly white cast after the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

*GOOD GRIEF, CHARLIE BROWN! Celebrating Peanuts and its Cultural Legacy* shows how this struck a chord with an array of artists who have used *Peanuts* to unlock complex meaning in their own work.

Turner Prize nominee **Fiona Banner** invokes Snoopy the Flying Ace, in his battle with his nemesis the Red Baron, as a powerful commentary on the bitter futility of war, while artist and musician **Steven Claydon** looks to Pig Pen's cloud of dirt and flies to provide a metaphor for the cultural associations that mass around objects. Conceptual artist **Ryan Gander** picks apart the constituent elements of Linus's psyche to lay bare the strength of his vulnerabilities, and artist and musician **Andy Holden** asks for Charlie Brown's help to propose a new theory on how art operates after the end of art.

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*GOOD GRIEF, CHARLIE BROWN! Celebrating Peanuts and its Cultural Legacy* is curated by Somerset House's Senior Curator Claire Catterall, with the support of the Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center. Catterall said: "Schulz had a deep appreciation of and love for the arts and he poured this into *Peanuts*. Just look at Snoopy – he tirelessly read *War and Peace*, one word per day, and hoped himself to become a 'World Famous Author' with titles such as 'Snow White and the Seven Beagles', despite repeated rejections. Once, he even had his famous dog kennel wrapped by environmental artist Christo, a remarkable TARDIS-like building that also housed a Van Gogh.

"Schulz saw himself in Schroeder – the musical genius who poured everything into his work to the exclusion of much else. Although cloaked in humour, Schulz understood the artistic imperative – what it took to be a great artist – and we see this over and over again in the strip.

"We're told by his family that Schulz – or Sparky as they call him – would have been so happy and humbled by an exhibition where the world of arts and culture reference him and his own creations in response to the deep and enduring influence he has had on them."

The exhibition introduces Charles M. Schulz himself, looking at the lives and landscapes that shaped him and his strips. From melancholic Minnesota in the frigid Midwest to sunny Sonoma County in California, where Schulz based his studio for 42 years and the Schulz family built the Redwood Empire Ice Arena, complete with its 'Warm Puppy Café', Schulz himself can be seen throughout *Peanuts* and his experiences in these places enabled him to so perfectly convey the human condition and the state of society in his art.

It also explores his love of language and the 'line', a famous concept amongst cartoonists to express maximum emotion with the minimum amount of pen strokes on the page. In *Peanuts*, Schulz created a language of his own and helped compose some of the most commonly used phrases today. For instance, "Good Grief!", "Blockhead!", "Rats!", and "\*\*\*SIGH\*\*\*" are just a few of the expressions that Charles M. Schulz immortalised.

Japanese artist **Ken Kagami's** multiple and inventive interpretations of Snoopy and Charlie Brown in his 'Charpee' series replicate the ease and flow of Schulz's lines, albeit with rather fantastical results.

Delving even deeper into the creative process of comics, *GOOD GRIEF, CHARLIE BROWN! Celebrating Peanuts and its Cultural Legacy* features an interactive workshop space where visitors can collaborate with a contemporary artist and creatively contribute to a new visual interpretation of *Peanuts*, along with a series of other learning opportunities for all ages.

A special pop-up shop will also open in the exhibition, offering a range of unique products relating to *Peanuts*.

*GOOD GRIEF, CHARLIE BROWN! Celebrating Peanuts and its Cultural Legacy* is additionally supported by [Sonoma County Tourism](#), the tourism authority for Sonoma County, California, which Charles M. Schulz called his home for over 40 years.

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## FOR PRESS ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

[press@somerset-house.org.uk](mailto:press@somerset-house.org.uk)/0207 845 4624

### ADDITIONAL LISTINGS INFORMATION

**Address:** Somerset House, Strand, London, WC2R 1LA

**Transport:** Underground: Temple, Embankment / Rail:  
Charing Cross, Waterloo, Blackfriars

**Website:** [www.somerset-house.org.uk](http://www.somerset-house.org.uk)

**Somerset House Facebook:**

[www.facebook.com/SomersetHouse](http://www.facebook.com/SomersetHouse)

**Somerset House Twitter:** @SomersetHouse

**Somerset House Instagram:** @SomersetHouse

### ABOUT SOMERSET HOUSE

Inspiring contemporary culture

A unique part of the London cultural scene, Somerset House is an historic building where surprising and original work comes to life. From its 18th-century origins, Somerset House has been a centre for debate and discussion – an intellectual powerhouse for the nation. Somerset House is today a key cultural destination in London in which to experience a broad range of artistic activity, engage with artists, designers and makers and be a part of a major creative forum – an environment that is relaxed, welcoming, and inspirational to visit while providing a stimulating workplace for the cultural and creative industries.

Since its opening in 2000, Somerset House has built up a distinctive outdoor public programme including Skate, concerts, an open-air film season and a diverse range of temporary exhibitions throughout the site focusing on contemporary culture, with an extensive learning programme attached. In October 2016, Somerset House launched Somerset House Studios, a new experimental workspace connecting artists, makers and thinkers with audiences. The Studios provide a platform for new creative projects and collaboration, promoting work that pushes bold ideas, engages with urgent issues and pioneers new technologies. Somerset House is also one of the biggest community of creative organisations in London including The Courtauld Gallery and Institute of Art, King's College London Cultural Institute and over 100 other creative businesses. It currently attracts approximately 3.4 million visitors every year. [www.somerset-house.org.uk](http://www.somerset-house.org.uk)

### ABOUT THE CHARLES M. SCHULZ MUSEUM AND RESEARCH CENTER

The Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center is home to the world's largest collection of Peanuts comic strips. Opened in 2002, the Museum presents the work of Charles M. Schulz with exhibitions and programs that build an understanding of cartoon art, illustrate the scope of the artist's multi-faceted career, and celebrate the stories he communicated to a global audience. Across the street is Snoopy's Home Ice, designed and built by the Schulz family. Visitors can ice skate, enjoy the comfort of the Warm Puppy Café, and browse in Snoopy's Gallery and Gift Shop. Located in the heart of Sonoma County, California, the Museum is uniquely situated in a region known for world-class vineyards, magnificent redwoods, and beautiful ocean vistas. [www.schulzmuseum.org](http://www.schulzmuseum.org)

### ABOUT SONOMA COUNTY TOURISM

With more than 425 wineries, miles of rugged Pacific coastline, towering redwood forests, and its close proximity to San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, Sonoma County is a traveller's dream vacation spot in California. Sonoma County represents the best of Northern California – premium wine, farm-to-table dining, unique resorts and spas, and over 50 state and regional parks. Breathtaking Highway 1 delights visitors with crashing waves, sea lions and otters sunning on the beaches, and fantastic sunsets that colour the sky in brilliant hues. Tasting rooms in the world-class Sonoma wine region range from simple and rustic to elaborate wine castles. [www.sonomacounty.com](http://www.sonomacounty.com)