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## BRIAN SEWELL

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For immediate release

**Described as ‘Britain’s most famous and controversial art critic’, Brian Sewell is as well known for his acerbic wit and scathing critiques as those whose work he reviews. Discover more about his life by watching his truly insightful video stories, told in his own unique style, at Web of Stories.**

*Evening Standard* art critic Brian Sewell (born 15 July 1931) is widely known not only for his art criticism but also for his headline-grabbing outspoken views. In recent years, he has courted controversy as he disparages the work of much-revered modern artists such as Damien Hirst, Banksy and David Hockney, and has frequently insulted the general public for their views on art.

Born the illegitimate son of the composer Peter Warlock, who died seven months before he was born, Sewell grew up in Kensington, London. After graduating from Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London where he was tutored by Anthony Blunt, who became a close friend, he worked at Christie’s auction house, specialising in Old Master paintings and drawings. In 1984, he became art critic for the *Evening Standard* and has won numerous awards for his journalism. Although he appeared on BBC Radio 4 in the early 1990s, it was not until the late 1990s that he became a household figure through his television appearances on programmes such as *Have I Got News For You?* and *Brian Sewell’s Grand Tour*.

In this series of breathtakingly honest recordings, Sewell recounts memories from his early years, including his family life, sexuality and his struggle to fit in at school: ‘One of the things I learned very quickly was not to show off, as they put it. It wasn’t showing off, that’s the point, it was just things to me that seemed perfectly natural, and I wouldn’t shut up

*about... Yes, I was bullied quite a lot... I didn’t know how to fight back.’*

He also remembers his first introduction to galleries and museums, which led to his all-consuming lifelong fascination with art: ‘I know scientists will say this isn’t possible, but I do not remember a time when I was not interested in looking at pictures. We would go to the National Gallery and my mother... she would say, I want you to go into that room and find me a picture that you really like... and you come and find me... and tell me why you like it.’

Sewell believes everyone has the ability to be an art critic: ‘You go to the National Gallery, for example. You don’t look at every picture, you look at the picture that in some way communicates with you, and you spend a little time... You ask yourself what is the subject?... What is the story?... Slowly, you will get an idea not only of how different painters paint, but how French painting is different from Italian... It’s a repeat experience... I am constantly surprised at how much I still learn.’

These truly captivating recordings can be watched as a number of short video clips. All Web of Stories videos are easy to share with friends and colleagues, and may be embedded into personal blogs and websites.

<http://www.webofstories.com/people/brian.sewell/1>

## NOTES FOR EDITORS ABOUT WEB OF STORIES

Everyone has a story to tell. Over time many stories become forgotten, but now Web of Stories offers members of the public the chance to tell their stories for future generations to enjoy. The project is built on the belief that we all have wonderful stories to share, and have family and friends whose tales we would like to hear.

Web of Stories began as an archive of life stories told by some of the great scientists, writers and artists of our time. As the number of stories grew, it became obvious that some were on related topics and that a web was slowly being created of connected stories.

We welcome anyone to come and talk about virtually anything they like. Just like our famous speakers, we hope you will record your stories for others to enjoy.

## CONTACT

For more information on Web of Stories or any of our videos please contact the Press Desk on +44(0)20 7323 0323 or [press@webofstories.com](mailto:press@webofstories.com)

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