

Agenda

The sharpest writing every Sunday for arts, science, politics and ideas



Agenda 2-7

- On my radar Ezra Collective drummer Femi Koleoso shares his cultural highlights
- John Niven on the magic of festive family traditions
- The grid Photographer Sayuri Ichida's portraits of her sister
- Interview Sleaford Mods vocalist Jason Williamson on on-stage anger

Critics 24-33

- Miranda Sawyer looks back on a year of going to gigs with her teenage daughter
- Review of the year Wendy Ide on film; Barbara Ellen on TV; Susannah Clapp on theatre; Sarah Crompton on dance; Fiona Maddocks on classical; Laura Cumming on art; Rowan Moore on architecture; Kitty Empire on pop; Simon Parkin on games; Miranda Sawyer on audio

Books 34-37

- John Self on the long afterlife of *So Long, See You Tomorrow* by William Maxwell
- The Sunday Poem Green by Josephine Balmer
- Killian Fox on *The Hollywood History of Art*, Christopher Frayling's look at big-screen painterly portraits
- Interview Olivia Ovenden speaks to Irish author Anne Enright

Loved & lost 8-23

- Celebrating the lives of some of those we lost in 2025. Marianne Faithfull, Diogo Jota, Dame Patricia Routledge, Martin Parr, Jane Goodall and more, remembered by those who knew them best



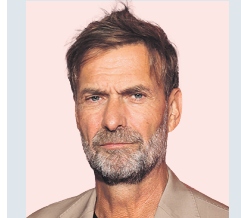
Puzzles & Television 38-47

- Everyman crossword, sudoku, chess, guess the picture, cinema connect, Lexipedia quiz, jumbo cryptic
- The week's television and radio highlights
- Sunday to Saturday's listings



Follow us on Instagram @ObsNewReview; email us at review@observer.co.uk

Contributors



Jürgen Klopp (p20) won the Premier League and the Champions League as the manager of Liverpool FC between 2015 and 2024.



Samuel West (p21) is an actor and theatre director. He appeared alongside his mother, Prunella Scales, in the film *Howards End*.



Dionne Warwick (p11) has won six Grammy awards. She has had 56 singles in the Billboard Hot 100, including *I Say a Little Prayer*.



Stephan Elliott (p13) is a film director. His film *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* won the prix du public at Cannes.



Stella Jean (p16) is the first black designer to have become a member of the Italian Fashion Chamber since its inception in 1958.



The big picture

Still and silent, with a riot of colour and pattern around them, the Argentinian couple from a bygone age

How long have they been sitting there in silence – he reading his morning newspaper, she lost in thought, gazing with a cryptic half-smile at the reflection in her coffee cup? The answer might be minutes, or decades. The stillness between them feels thick enough to cut with a knife, and yet behind this sedate breakfast scene lies a riot of colour and action: the floral wallpaper and wall hangings; the intensely patterned rug; a riot of maritime

activity in the painting overhead. It throws their silence, companionable or otherwise, into almost comically sharp relief. The couple in the image, which was taken by New York-based Spanish photographer Yolanda del Amo in 2007, are Edith and Juan. They were neighbours of a close friend of Del Amo's in Argentina, where she was living at the time – but their story was not what she wanted to tell, or not exactly.

"I don't consider them portraits per se," she says of the images in her new book, *Archipelago*, from which this is taken, "because they're not really talking about these people as they are 100% in real life." Rather, she worked with her subjects – positioning them in suggestive ways within their own homes, adding or subtracting details around them – to say something more general about relationships in 21st-century society and the distances between us.

Digital technology haunts the series: smartphones and laptops were becoming ubiquitous during the period from 2004 to 2014 when Del Amo was photographing it, and their atomising effect can be detected in many of the pictures. It's less of a factor here. Edith and Juan belong to a different era and you can imagine them occupying these same positions, with very little variation, decades earlier. As a result, their separation

from one another feels less pronounced, less hard-edged, than some of the others in the book. There is an ease between them, even if it is unspoken, as warm morning light floods the room. Meanwhile, above their heads, the frenzied maritime struggles rage on. **Killian Fox** *Archipelago* by Yolanda del Amo will be published by Kehrer Verlag on 14 January

On the cover: Roberta Flack in 1969, courtesy of Jack Robinson/Hulton Archive/Getty Images