

# INFORMATION ABOUT FLIES

## What are the flies?

The flies in the display are native to and widespread in England and Wales, known commonly as bluebottles. Their Latin name is *Calliphora vomitoria*.

## How many flies are there in the space?

There are about 50,000 flies in the gallery at any one time. They are mostly located in the central room, but do also migrate to the surrounding gallery spaces.

## Where do the flies come from?

The flies are native to the UK and have been supplied to us by WormsDirect, a UK-based company, who source and deliver the pupae to us.

## Do the flies bite?

No. The bluebottle flies are examples of non-biting dipterans.

## Do the flies carry any diseases?

It is very unlikely that these flies carry any diseases, as they were bred in a hygienic environment and have hatched in the hygienic environment of the gallery. They stay inside the space for the duration of their life cycle. We recommend that you wash your hands after visiting the exhibition.

## How are the flies fed?

Bluebottle flies thrive on organic compounds. Their only source of food in the gallery is a mixture of sugar and water, which enables them to grow to adulthood and ensures a hygienic environment.

## How do you take care of them?

We take the health and happiness of these insects seriously. The flies are fed as prescribed for optimal health and they are checked regularly to ensure that they are active and happy. We have constant access to advice and treatments, if necessary.

## Do the flies live through their natural life cycle?

Yes. The flies hatch in the space and live through their natural life cycle, which is between two to three weeks.

The exhibition you are about to enter contains live flies. Steps have been taken by the Serpentine Galleries, with advice and assistance from specialists, to ensure the utmost care of the flies included in this installation.

**Please see overleaf for more information.**

