

23 October 2007

Private Pleasures

Illuminated Manuscripts from Persia to Paris

23 October 2007 to 6 January 2008

Offering a rare and intimate glimpse of the treasures in a personal collection, a new exhibition opening today at the Fitzwilliam Museum celebrates the unique beauty of illuminated manuscripts across chronological, geographic and cultural boundaries.

Private Pleasures: Illuminated Manuscripts from Persia to Paris reveals the personal manuscript collection of Denys Spittle (1920-2003), who was born in Cambridge, came to read Architecture at Pembroke College in 1939 and subsequently became a life member of the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum. The twenty-five exhibits represent literary and artistic traditions which flourished from the tenth to the twentieth century, and are here on public display for the first time. The exhibition features masterpieces as diverse as Nizami's Persian *Khamza*, a Byzantine Gospelbook, a Parisian history of the French kings, a Bruges Book of Hours, the popular English Brut Chronicle, an Ottoman Qu'ran and a Venetian copy of Cicero.

Dr Stella Panayotova, Keeper of Manuscripts and Printed Books at the Fitzwilliam Museum and the curator of *Private Pleasures*, said "This exhibition celebrates the passion for medieval manuscripts, the pleasure of collecting them and the excitement of sharing them with others. We are delighted to have the opportunity to display this selection of treasures from so personal a collection."

Private Pleasures: Illuminated Manuscripts from Persia to Paris is accompanied by a lavishly illustrated catalogue, available in the Fitzwilliam Museum's Courtyard Shop for £14.95.

Meet the Goths - a workshop for adults on 23 November - offers the opportunity to visit the exhibition with calligrapher Penny Price, study a Gothic script and try your hand at calligraphy. For further details and booking contact the Fitzwilliam Museum Education Department on 01223 332904 or email fitzmuseum-education@lists.cam.ac.uk.

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Exhibition details for publication:

Private Pleasures Illuminated Manuscripts from Persia to Paris

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Octagon Gallery (Gallery 10)
The Fitzwilliam Museum, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RB

Press | The Fitzwilliam Museum

Trumpington Street
Cambridge CB2 1RB
England

Telephone 01223 332900
Facsimile 01223 332923
www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

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OPEN: Tuesday - Saturday: 10.00 - 17.00
Sunday: 12.00 - 17.00
CLOSED: Mondays, 24-26 & 31 December and 1 January

ADMISSION FREE

Further information and images from:

Marketing and Press Office
The Fitzwilliam Museum, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RB
Telephone: +44 (0)1223 332941/332900; FAX: +44 (0)1223 332923
Email: fitzmuseum-press@lists.cam.ac.uk

Notes for Editors

The Fitzwilliam Museum

The Fitzwilliam Museum houses the University of Cambridge's art collection and is a public museum and art gallery with an international reputation. More than half a million objects and works of art are held in five curatorial departments: Antiquities, Applied Arts, Coins and Medals, Manuscripts and Printed Books and Paintings, Drawings and Prints.

The Fitzwilliam's treasures range from Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiquities to the arts of the 21st century and include masterpieces by Titian, Canaletto, Stubbs, Constable, Monet, Renoir and Picasso, one of the world's foremost Rembrandt print collections, Handel music manuscripts and the famous Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, one of the most significant collections of Korean ceramics outside South-East Asia, medieval illuminated manuscripts and outstanding collections of pottery, porcelain and medieval coins.

The Fitzwilliam Museum welcomes over 300,000 visitors a year, offers a wide-ranging programme of temporary exhibitions and events, and has an award-winning Education Service. The Museum is open Tuesday - Saturday: 10.00 - 17.00, Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays: 12.00 - 17.00. Admission to the permanent collections and to temporary exhibitions is FREE. Website: www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

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