

25 April 2008

Theatrical performance, art workshops and family trails at The Fitzwilliam Museum for Museums and Galleries Month 2008

This May, The Fitzwilliam Museum is celebrating Museums and Galleries Month 2008 with a special programme of events and activities for all ages throughout the month.

Museums in the East of England are marking the approach of the 2008 Olympics with a festival of exciting events, many on a Chinese theme. With special displays, theatre, workshops, music, talks by experts, storytelling and gallery trails, there's something for everyone at The Fitzwilliam Museum this month as 'East meets East'.

The exhibition *Made for Export: Chinese Nineteenth Century Flower Drawings* (to 11 May) presents a selection of the Museum's Chinese flower watercolours, created for the nineteenth century export market. These delicately executed watercolours depict a wide variety of flowers including orchids, lilies and magnolias, and an array of wildlife including ducks, dragonflies and butterflies. Also on display will be a world-class selection of Qing Imperial jades from the Museum's collection, carved during the reign of the Emperor Qianlong (r.1736-96). Some of the pieces bear poems composed by the Emperor himself, emphasising the important status of jade in Chinese art and culture.

Also on offer at the Fitzwilliam during MGM 08 are a number of exciting events for all ages, including theatre performance for families, hands-on workshops and talks; many events are free. Children and families can make a dancing dragon, hear tales of kings and empires, or take a 'flying visit' around the museum with a new trail that hunts down the various winged creatures hiding around the galleries. Visitors can also try their hand at creating Chinese calligraphy and, to conclude the month, the acclaimed theatre company Indefinite Articles will perform 'The Dragon's Pearl' - a dramatic retelling of an ancient Chinese folktale about a boy, a pearl and a magical dragon, using paper, oil, shadows and a vat of blue ink - suitable for accompanied children aged 4 and over.

There will also be the chance to learn the art of botanical drawing, experience a 'multi-sensory' approach to paintings through taste, scent and music, hear a harpsichord recital, learn about Ancient Egyptian burial customs as part of the 'Art in Context' series of talks by experts, or simply enjoy looking at and talking about art in one of the Museum's relaxed 'ArtSpeak' sessions.

For more information about Museums and Galleries Month 2008 at The Fitzwilliam Museum, visit <http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/whatson/mgm/>. A free MGM 08 leaflet is also available from the Museum and other local venues.

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.../ Further information

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Museums and Galleries Month 2008

1 May - 31 May 2008

Further information from:

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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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