

02 May 2008

Anglo-Saxon coins, nineteenth century watercolours and contemporary etchings feature in new exhibitions

Exhibitions opening at The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge this month feature Anglo-Saxon coins and metalwork, nineteenth-century watercolours of rural Britain, and contemporary etchings by Christopher Le Brun.

Christopher Le Brun - Fifty Etchings 2005

20 May - 28 September
Shiba Gallery (Gallery 14)

Christopher Le Brun's first major etching project was the series *Fifty Etchings* published by Paragon Press in 1990. In 2004 he embarked on a second series, which is displayed in full in this exhibition. Made over the course of a year and employing an extraordinary variety of subtle etching techniques, the series revisits a wide range of subjects known from Le Brun's other work (like the painting *The Eye's Castle* recently acquired by the Fitzwilliam Museum, on display in Gallery 12), while also introducing new themes and motifs. The sequence is carefully constructed by the artist, shaping associations and memories of literature and music as well as art. Like the questing rider and travellers in the prints, the viewer is drawn into a metaphysical journey in search of meaning as well as beauty.

Anglo-Saxon Art in the Round

23 May - 7 September
Octagon Gallery (Gallery 10)

The period of the Conversion in the 7th-8th centuries was a vibrant time artistically, inspiring such treasures as the Lindisfarne Gospels, the Franks Casket and the famous High Crosses. Yet these give mere glimpses of a much larger body of lost art. New finds of coinage and ornamental metalwork of this period have provided us with an alternative source of images which are artistically and intellectually outstanding. This exhibition will show for the first time early Anglo-Saxon coins from the De Wit collection, recently purchased by the Fitzwilliam Museum with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Art Fund. These gold shillings and silver pennies display the most innovative range of pictorial and geometric designs drawn from Classical and Germanic sources. Despite the small scale, their bold images of people, animals, plants and geometric motifs are both rich in detail and sophisticated in concept. The exhibition will juxtapose them with contemporary ornamental metalwork drawn from other museums in the region.

Anglo-Saxon Art in the Round is accompanied by a programme of talks exploring the Anglo-Saxon world and a series of interactive handling sessions.

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Press | The Fitzwilliam Museum

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'The field calls me to labour':

Watercolours of nineteenth-century rural Britain by Robert Hills and his contemporaries

27 May - 7 September

Charrington Print Room (Gallery 16)

Although relatively unknown to audiences today, Robert Hills (1769-1844) was at the vanguard in promoting the appreciation of watercolour painting among British audiences at the beginning of the nineteenth century. His watercolours - often intimate and spontaneous 'snapshots' of nature and the countryside around him - are highly original, with a freshness of vision that offers a revealing glimpse into the lives of those who worked on the land. Drawn exclusively from the Museum's outstanding collection of British watercolours, they will be shown alongside the drawings and watercolours of contemporary artists such as James Ward, David Cox and Peter de Wint.

With support from Lowell Libson Ltd

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Details for publication:

The Fitzwilliam Museum, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RB

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:

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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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