

03 February 2011

# Treasures of the Hapsburgs: Fitzwilliam to host only UK showing of precious Imperial collection

## Splendour & Power: Imperial Treasures from Vienna

16 August 2011 to 8 January 2012

- Fitzwilliam to host only UK showing of extraordinary decorative arts from Vienna
- Opulent collection from the Imperial Treasury of the Hapsburg Emperors
- Showcases artworks, jewellery, vessels and precious objects never before shown in Britain

From Summer 2011, visitors to the Fitzwilliam Museum can experience a stunning collection of precious decorative arts never before seen in the UK – the treasures of the Hapsburg Emperors.

This unique selection of beautifully crafted jewellery, vessels and other objects made from gems, precious metals and stones will be coming to the Fitzwilliam Museum from the renowned 'Kunstammer' collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. This is the first time that audiences in Britain will be able to view these extraordinary objects, as the collection has never before been loaned on this scale.

The exhibition's focus is upon artworks from the Late Renaissance and Mannerist period – the heyday of treasuries and 'cabinets of curiosities' – as well as from the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Baroque period. Many of the works on display belonged to Emperor Rudolph II – Holy Roman Emperor 1576 –1612 – and Empress Maria Theresa, the only female Hapsburg ruler and the last of the House.

Giving a rare glimpse into the opulent world of the Hapsburg emperors, the exhibition will feature:

- Exquisite jewellery, from necklaces, pendants and lockets to rings and *enseignes*, complemented by pre-eminent examples of medieval and Renaissance jewellery
- Intricate portrait cameos, many of which bear the likenesses of the Hapsburgs sovereigns crafted in the style of ancient Roman imperial portraits
- Ornate goldwork, vessels and coffers, including a bowl featuring embedded Roman coins, and a serpentine tankard

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Gold ewer from the toilette set for Emperor Franz I, made by Anton Matthias Domanek (Domanöck) Vienna, c. 1750



Reclining Venus with Cupid attributed to Giovanni Ambrogio Miseroni Milan or Prague, c. 1600/1610



Portrait medallion of Emperor Charles V Northern Italy, c. 1535/1540, ivory capsule c.1600

Press Release | The Fitzwilliam Museum

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- Stonework, carving and sculpture, with precious objects crafted from agate, jasper, rock-crystal and lapis lazuli, including a cup made from rhinoceros horn and a Chinese jade bowl
- An intricate 15<sup>th</sup>-century enamel model depicting the Annunciation from the Fitzwilliam's own collection which was once kept in the Imperial Treasury, and will now be reunited with these other Hapsburg treasures for the first time since the 1860s.



Nautilus cup  
made by Ulrich I. Ment  
Augsburg, c. 1624/1628

With its roots in the medieval family treasure of the House of Hapsburg, the collection that is today contained within the Kunstkammer was once safeguarded in the Imperial Treasury in Vienna. These objects, almost all of which are unique creations, were designed to demonstrate the incredible wealth, power and glory of the Hapsburg dynasty, and only visitors of noble birth - such as princes of neighbouring countries or diplomatic delegations - were permitted to enter the treasure trove. Now, audiences to this landmark exhibition can follow in their footsteps and experience the opulence and grandeur of this glittering collection for themselves.

Dr Timothy Potts, Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, said: "The Fitzwilliam is delighted to welcome this superb collection to Cambridge for its first and only UK showing. Widely regarded as the most important collection of its kind anywhere in the world, the Vienna Kunstkammer provides a fascinating insight into how European princely collections have evolved, from medieval troves of relics to the 'cabinets of curiosities' of the Renaissance and Early Baroque, eventually giving birth to the modern-day museum."



Heart-shaped pendant containing  
locks of hair of Empress Maria Theresa  
Vienna, late 18th century

*All images © Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna*



Casket of gold filigree and diamonds  
Goa (India), middle of the 17th century  
(casket); late 17th or first third of the 18th  
century (diamond setting)

- ENDS /...Notes to Editors -

## Details for publication:

### Splendour & Power: Imperial Treasures from Vienna

16 August 2011 to 8 January 2012

The Fitzwilliam Museum, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RB

OPEN: Tuesday - Saturday: 10.00 - 17.00

Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays: 12.00 - 17.00

Christmas and New Year closure: 24, 25, 26 and 31 December 2011 & 1 January 2012

ADMISSION FREE

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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 21<sup>st</sup> 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. Free admission.

[www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk](http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk)

**The Kunsthistorisches Museum**

The Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna numbers among the most important European museum buildings constructed during the 19th century. The monumental structure, built at the behest of Emperor Franz Joseph I as part of his expansion of the city in 1858, was intended to both unite and appropriately represent the artistic treasures that had been collected by the Hapsburgs over the centuries. The collections of the Museum are amongst the most important and spectacular in the world. The 16th century Kunst- und Wunderkammer (art and treasure chambers) of Archduke Ferdinand and of Emperor Rudolph II, together with the baroque collections of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm form the nucleus of the Museum's magnificent collections, in which the taste and artistic preferences of these and other connoisseurs of the Imperial Family are still discernible today, conveying a sense of the Imperial glory of the art-loving Hapsburg dynasty. The Museum's collections range from Ancient Egyptian and Greek and Roman Antiquities to the Collections of Medieval Art to the splendid Renaissance and Baroque Collections. In all, the museum is divided into eight different collections, some of which are housed in the Hofburg and in Schönbrunn Palace.

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