

News Release from the University of Cambridge

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New Director appointed for the Fitzwilliam Museum

The University of Cambridge has appointed a new Director to succeed Timothy Potts at the Fitzwilliam Museum.

Tim Knox is currently Director of the Sir John Soane's Museum in London where he has been since 2005. During his time there he masterminded the restoration of the two houses, Nos. 12 and 14 Lincoln's Inn Fields, which flank Soane's original Museum at No. 13. The ambitious OUTFITS (Opening up the Soane) project, which has involved raising over £7 million, is now fully planned and financed, and ready to move into its second phase, the first having provided a new exhibition gallery, new conservation studios and a new museum shop.

Tim Knox studied History of Art at the Courtauld Institute of Art. He was appointed Assistant Curator at the Royal Institute of British Architects Drawings Collection in 1989. In 1995 he moved to the National Trust as its Architectural Historian, becoming Head Curator in 2002. He was much involved with the restoration of the gardens at Stowe in Buckinghamshire, and championed the acquisition of the Workhouse in Southwell, Nottinghamshire, Tyntesfield in Somerset, and the restoration of the Darnley Mausoleum in Cobham Park, Kent.

The Fitzwilliam Museum has enjoyed record breaking visitor numbers in recent years, with exhibitions including *Vermeer's Women* and *The Search for Immortality: Tomb Treasures of Han China* drawing tens of thousands of extra visits to these and the permanent collections.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, said: "Tim Knox has a tremendous reputation as a museum director, who has shown at the Soane Museum a sensitivity to the legacy of the founder coupled with a creative vision. I am delighted that he will bring these abilities to bear at the Fitzwilliam."

Professor Martin Daunton, Chair of the Fitzwilliam Museum Syndicate, said: "The Fitzwilliam Museum is looking ahead to its bicentenary in 2016, and I am confident that Tim Knox will take us forward into our third century with respect for the past and enthusiasm for the future. The Fitzwilliam Museum is one of the world's greatest university museums that works with the other major collections in Cambridge and with the academic departments to make a significant contribution to the wider region. We look forward to working with Tim Knox."

Dr Jennifer Barnes, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Chair of the General Board Museums Committee, said: "The University of Cambridge Museums are delighted with this appointment and look forward to welcoming Tim Knox to Cambridge. The museums are committed, through their designation by the Arts Council as a Major Partner Museum, to developing their distinctive regional and national identity. Tim will play a crucial role in the Museums achieving this."

Tim Knox said: "I am pleased and proud to be appointed the next Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. It is a huge honour to be asked to look after this great institution, and I look forward to working with its staff to build on the success and prestige of this unique treasury. The Fitzwilliam Museum, and the other collections of the University of

Cambridge, play an important role in the cultural enrichment of the University, the City of Cambridge and its surrounding area, and indeed of the nation as a whole.”

Tim Knox is due to start his new role in April.

Photo credit: Caroline Djanogly

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Notes for Editors

1. With over half a million objects in its collection, **The Fitzwilliam Museum** has been described as ‘one of the great treasure houses of Britain’ and ‘arguably the finest small museum in Europe’. Located in the heart of Cambridge, it is one of the most prominent buildings in the cityscape, with its monumental neoclassic facade and columns. It is just a short walk away from the city centre and the River Cam. The Museum was founded in 1816 by the 7th Viscount Fitzwilliam of Merrion who bequeathed his collections of paintings, prints, music, manuscripts and books to the University of Cambridge.

The Museum building was opened to the public in 1848 and since then the Fitzwilliam has continued to grow. Today the Museum has one of the finest collections of paintings, drawings and prints in Britain, with well-known works by Rubens, Poussin, Titian, Veronese, Constable, Monet and Picasso, to name but a few. It is also known for its remarkable collections from the ancient world, with artefacts from Egypt, Greece, Rome, Cyprus and the Near East. Throughout the Museum there are significant collections of East Asian art, Chinese, Japanese and Korean; breath-taking illuminated manuscripts and outstanding collections of pottery, porcelain, glass, sculpture and coins.

The Fitzwilliam Museum is recognised as one of the nation’s most significant University Museums. Its collections are formally designated as being of national and international importance under the Arts Council’s Designation Scheme. It is the lead partner in the University of Cambridge Museums’ Connecting Collections programme, one of 16 museum services to have been awarded Major Partner Museum funding by the Arts Council earlier this year.

Above all, the Fitzwilliam Museum is the principal museum of the University of Cambridge and plays a key role in academic research, learning at all levels and wider community engagement. Admission to the Museum’s collections and exhibitions is free for everyone to enjoy.

2. **Sir John Soane’s Museum** is the idiosyncratic house-museum of the great Neo-Classical architect Sir John Soane (1753 – 1837) and still displays his collection of antiquities, furniture, models and paintings in the same state in which they were left at the time of his death as well as preserving over 30,000 architectural drawings and a fine Library.