

Autumn 2015 exhibitions at the Fitzwilliam Museum

Ronald Searle: 'Obsessed with drawing'

13 October 2015 – 31 January 2016

Ronald Searle (1920–2011) is among Britain's most popular and celebrated graphic satirists.

Born in Cambridge, Searle is best known as the inventor of the fictional girls' school St. Trinian's (1948) and for his collaborations on Geoffrey Willans' Molesworth series (1953–58). However, as this exhibition shows, he had a long and productive career across a range of different genres.

Searle worked as a war artist, but also made drawings for book and magazine illustration, travel reportage, theatre, film, medals and political caricature. Fuelled by visits to the Fitzwilliam Museum during his formative years, he had keen sense of his own place in the history of caricature – a selection of work by the caricaturists he most admired will be on display in a complementary exhibition *Cradled in Caricature: Visual humour in satirical prints and drawings*.

This exhibition is drawn from a recent gift of the artist's work, generously presented to the Museum by his children in 2014.

An associated exhibition *Coming Home: Ronald Searle and Cambridge School of Art*, curated by Professor Martin Salisbury, will run concurrently at Anglia Ruskin University's Ruskin Gallery from 13 October – 19 November. www.anglia.ac.uk/ruskingallery.

Cradled in Caricature: Visual humour in satirical prints and drawings

13 October 2015 – 31 January 2016

This exhibition looks at the methods used by British artists from James Gillray to Glen Baxter to amuse and entertain, ranging from the simple exaggeration of facial features and burlesque comedy, to more complicated word-play and ironic literary allusions. Often the intention was to raise a laugh, but in some cases humour is merged with satire to convey a more serious message or moral lesson on the dangers of excess. Works in the show are drawn from the Fitzwilliam's collection with key loans from Andrew Edmunds and Benjamin Lemer.



Ronald Searle (1920–2011),
Cat lecturing in an art gallery, 1998
© The Estate of Ronald Searle



Ronald Searle (1920–2011),
Molesworth, 1999 (detail)
© The Estate of Ronald Searle



James Gillray (1757–1815),
A Sphere, projecting against a plane, 1792
© The Fitzwilliam Museum

Following Hercules: The story of classical art

25 September - 6 December

Hercules is one of the best loved heroes from ancient Greece. Known in antiquity for completing twelve tasks or 'labours' that confirmed his status as a god, Hercules is today tasked with one more – to show visitors to the Fitzwilliam how sculptures made in the Mediterranean millennia ago came to define western art. Hercules inhabits each of the forty objects on display, which range from exquisite miniatures and Renaissance prints, drawings and paintings, to Wedgwood cameos and a giant polystyrene statue. The result is an arresting visual experience of differing scales, styles and material, which gives ongoing meaning to the 'classical'.

Continuing exhibition:

Watercolour - Elements of nature

To 27 September 2015

The collection of watercolours in the Fitzwilliam Museum is one of the finest in the world.

Rarely exhibited and in superb condition, the works on show highlight the extraordinary versatility of the medium, showing how it was used from the Middle Ages onwards to illuminate manuscripts, paint delicate likenesses, accurately record botanical detail and to capture fleeting moments of nature. Drawn exclusively from the Fitzwilliam's outstanding collections, the exhibition will include miniatures by Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver, botanical drawings by Pierre-Joseph Redouté, as well as a series of superb landscape watercolours by John Constable, Peter de Wint, John Sell Cotman, Samuel Palmer, J. M. Whistler, John Singer Sargent, Paul Cézanne, Camille Pissarro and Paul Nash.

It is complemented by an exhibition in the Shiba Gallery of watercolours by J.M.W. Turner, many given to the Museum by his greatest champion, John Ruskin.

- Ends -

For further information and images contact the Marketing and Press Office:
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Notes to editors - overleaf



Matthew Darbyshire,
Untitled Hercules figurine, 2015
(ed 1 of 10), Cork, 200 x 80 x 80mm,
Courtesy of the artist and
Herald St, London



J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851),
Venice, storm at sunset, 1840.
© The Fitzwilliam Museum



John Ruskin (1819-1900),
In the Pass at Killiecrankie, 1857
© The Fitzwilliam Museum

The Fitzwilliam Museum, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RB

FREE ADMISSION

OPEN: Tuesday - Saturday: 10.00 - 17.00
Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays: 12.00 - 17.00
CLOSED: 24-26 & 31 December and 1 January

Founded in 1816 the Fitzwilliam Museum is the principal museum of the University of Cambridge and lead partner for the University of Cambridge Museums (UCM) Major Partner Museum programme, funded by The Arts Council. The Fitzwilliam's collections explore world history and art from antiquity to the present day. It houses over half a million objects from ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman artefacts, to medieval illuminated manuscripts, masterpiece paintings from the Renaissance to the 21st century, world class prints and drawings, and outstanding collections of applied arts, ceramics, coins, and Asian arts. The Fitzwilliam presents a wide ranging public programme of major exhibitions, events and education activities, and is an internationally recognised institute of learning, research and conservation. www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

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