

Oxford and Cambridge exchange masterpieces

Manet's *Portrait of Mademoiselle Claus* comes to Fitzwilliam & Poussin's painting *Extreme Unction* goes to Ashmolean

- René Magritte's surrealist masterpiece *Perspective II, Manet's Balcony* (1950) also on loan, offering 20th-century commentary on iconic Manet *The Balcony*

After a £7.83 million campaign to acquire Édouard Manet's magnificent *Portrait of Mademoiselle Claus* in 2012, the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford is now lending the painting to the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge as part of a nationwide tour.

The Ashmolean will in turn display Nicolas Poussin's moving masterpiece, *Extreme Unction* (c.1638-40), one of a series of paintings of the seven sacraments, bought by the Fitzwilliam in the same year. Both acquisitions were the result of major fund-raising campaigns, generously supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Art Fund and numerous other charities and private donors.

The *Portrait of Mademoiselle Claus* (1868) will be on display at the Fitzwilliam Museum from 18 September to 13 December 2015. It is Manet's first version of his famous painting *The Balcony* (1868-9, Musée d'Orsay, Paris), which was inspired by Francisco Goya's *Majas on a Balcony* painted in 1810 (Metropolitan Museum, New York).

The portrait's subject is Fanny Claus (1846-77), the closest friend of Manet's wife Suzanne Leenhoff. A concert violinist, Fanny was one of the artist's favourite sitters and a member of a close-knit group of friends who also provided him with models. She died of tuberculosis at the age of 30.

The acquisition of Manet's *Portrait of Mademoiselle Claus* was the most significant in the Ashmolean's history, supported with £5.9 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), and a grant of £850,000 from the Art Fund. The final £1,080,000 was contributed via grants and donations from trusts, foundations and private individuals.

The Fitzwilliam also has been generously lent *Perspective II, Manet's Balcony* (1950) by René Magritte (1898-1967) from the Museum of Fine Arts in Ghent.



Édouard Manet,
Portrait of Mademoiselle Claus,
1868

The Ashmolean Museum, University Oxford. Purchased by private treaty sale through Robert Holden Ltd, following a public appeal, and with the assistance of the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Art Fund, the Friends and Patrons of the Ashmolean, Manny & Brigitta Davidson and family, Mr & Mrs Geoffrey de Jager, Sir Harry & Lady Djanogly, Mr Philip Mould, the Rothschild Foundation, the Dr Mortimer & Theresa Sackler Foundation, Mr & Mrs Timothy Sanderson, the Staples Trust, Sir Adrian Swire, Mr & Mrs Bernard Taylor, Barrie & Deedee Wigmore, Mr & Mrs Brian Wilson, the J.L. Wine Charitable Trust, & the Woodward Charitable Trust, 2012



René Magritte,
Perspective II, Manet's Balcony,
1950

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By displaying Magritte's painting alongside Manet's preliminary version of *The Balcony*, the Fitzwilliam will show how the line of descent from Goya's original painting extended into the 20th century, with the twist in Magritte's painting that the sitters in Manet's, including Fanny Claus, are replaced by coffins.

Magritte's brand of surrealism made frequent references to other painters making art itself the subject of discussion. After he transformed Manet's painting, Magritte 'coffined' two other famous works by the French artists François Gérard (1770-1837) and Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825). Magritte intended his title to be a pun on the word 'perspective', which in French can also mean 'prospect' - here, presumably a reference to the inescapability of death - although he may also have meant it as a commentary on the stiffness of the sitters in Manet's original painting. Magritte himself felt unable to explain his intentions, claiming that whatever explanation he might give would make the painting 'no less mysterious'; the typically-narrow French balcony appeared to him simply as 'a suitable place to put coffins.'

Jane Munro, Keeper of Paintings, Drawings and Prints at the Fitzwilliam Museum, commented: "It is an enormous privilege to be able to display Manet's extraordinary portrait of Mademoiselle Claus in the context of the Fitzwilliam's own superb Impressionist collections, and in particular to be able to display it alongside Magritte's witty if macabre surrealist 'take' on Manet's original composition, *The Balcony*. Juxtaposing these works not only offers compelling evidence of the visual potency of Manet's original but also provides a fascinating insight as to how artists respond to, recycle and reinterpret the art of the past. Just as Manet reinvents Goya, Magritte allows us to see Manet from his 'perspective'."

The Portrait of Mademoiselle Claus and *Perspective II, Manet's Balcony* will be on display at the Fitzwilliam from 18 September until 13 December 2015 in the Museum's Impressionist gallery (Gallery 5).

- Ends -

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

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, 1 January and Good Friday.

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.

The Fitzwilliam is celebrating its 200th anniversary in 2016.
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