

May 2017

Fitzwilliam Museum acquires newly discovered Gérôme portrait and announces its highest visitor figures on record for 2016

To commemorate its bicentenary year in 2016, the Fitzwilliam Museum has acquired a newly discovered portrait by Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904). Gérôme is one of the most important French painters of the 19th century, yet his work is only represented in six British public collections to date.

The picture had remained in the artist's collection until his death in 1904 and was thought lost, until its reappearance at auction in France in 2013. Recent cleaning has confirmed it as a masterpiece, and in unusually fine condition.

The dramatic full-length 'swagger-portrait' is of Claude-Armand Gérôme, (1827-50) the artist's younger brother, depicted as a student in his uniform from the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris. This was a very personal work of the artist, and from the early prime of his career. It is a virtuoso example of his skills as a portraitist, and was one of the works that consolidated Gérôme's reputation.

Exhibited at the 1848 Salon in Paris, the portrait earned Gérôme a Second Class medal, helping to consolidate his standing as one of the foremost artists of his time. His brother, Claude-Armand would tragically die of meningitis two years later. This masterpiece has now taken its place in the Impressionist Gallery and is a major addition to the Fitzwilliam's permanent collection.

The Fitzwilliam's bicentenary year in 2016 saw the highest visitor figures on record for the museum, with 437,105 people enjoying the special exhibitions COLOUR and Death on the Nile and taking part in the programme of birthday events throughout the year. In August the Fitzwilliam revealed its successful bid to raise the £1.2 million needed to save an important pair of *pietre dure* Roman cabinets for the nation. No other pair of Roman hardstone cabinets exist in a public collection in the UK.



Portrait of Claude-Armand Gérôme Jean-Léon Gérôme, c. 1848 © Fitzwilliam Museum

Press | The Fitzwilliam Museum

The Friends of the Fitzwilliam have also announced their successful fundraising campaign to return Admiral Russell's Frame - a spectacular carved giltwood mirror frame, home to Cambridgeshire.

The campaign launched last December, raised the £345,000 required for the historic frame to become part of the permanent collection. It was originally commissioned to hang in Chippenham Park Estate, Cambridgeshire, to commemorate the important naval victories of Admiral Edward Russell, Earl of Orford (1653-1727).

During the bicentenary year the museum acquired a total of £2.5 million of successful birthday acquisitions for their permanent collection.

The acquisition of the Portrait of Claude-Armand Gérôme was made possible through the generosity of The Art Fund and a number of other generous foundations and individuals. More details can be found on our website.

<http://bit.ly/2rldWvz>

The foremost expert on Gérôme and Musée d'Orsay's Senior Curator for Sculpture, Edouard Papet, will contextualise this significant 19th century artist and his intimate works in a special evening event at the Fitzwilliam on Friday 30th June 2017.

<http://bit.ly/2sn4Qx0>

-Ends-

Notes to editors:

For all enquires please contact the Fitzwilliam Museum Press Office: +44 (0) 1223 332941 | press@fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk



17th century Roman pietre dure cabinet one of a pair from the estate of Castle Howard Yorkshire © Sotheby's



Admiral Russell's Frame © Fitzwilliam Museum

About the Fitzwilliam Museum

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 coins, Asian arts, ceramics and other applied 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

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, Good Friday

Art Fund

Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art. In the past five years alone Art Fund has given £34 million to help museums and galleries acquire works of art for their collections. It also helps museums share their collections with wider audiences by supporting a range of tours and exhibitions, including ARTIST ROOMS and the 2013-18 Aspire tour of Tate's Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows by John Constable, and makes additional grants to support the training and professional development of curators.

Art Fund is independently funded, with the core of its income provided by 122,000 members who receive the National Art Pass and enjoy free entry to over 230 museums, galleries and historic places across the UK, as well as 50% off entry to major exhibitions. In addition to grant-giving, Art Fund's support for museums includes the annual Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year (won by The Whitworth, Manchester, in 2015), a publications programme and a range of digital platforms.

Find out more about Art Fund and the National Art Pass at www.artfund.org/

For further information please contact Madeline Adeane, Press Relations Manager, madeane@artfund.org / 0207 225 4804.

Business Partners

The Museum is supported by our Business Partners during 2017; TTP Group plc, ACE Cultural Tours, Hewitsons LLP, and Sotheby's.