Royal Academy of Arts
Press Release

Jean-Etienne Liotard
The Sackler Wing of Galleries
24 October 2015 – 31 January 2016

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This exhibition will be devoted to the idiosyncratic Swiss artist Jean-Etienne Liotard (1702-1789), who attained international recognition as one of the most highly accomplished portraitists of eighteenth-century Enlightenment Europe. *Jean-Etienne Liotard* will bring together over 70 works, providing a unique opportunity to view a wide selection of the artist's exceptional oeuvre in pastel, as well as oil paintings, drawings and miniatures from public and private collections in Europe and the UK, many of which have rarely been seen in public.

Born in Geneva, Liotard was a peripatetic and cosmopolitan artist who worked in Constantinople, major European capitals and several royal courts. He was a master of pastel that few could emulate, creating compellingly realistic portraits and capturing the fashions of the day on a variety of scales from miniatures to full-length portraits. Although Liotard gained a considerable reputation in his lifetime, he is little known today.

The exhibition will be arranged in six sections. **The Artist and his Family** will bring together a group of self-portraits, including *Self-portrait Laughing*, c. 1770 (Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva), as well as portraits of family members including his wife Marie Fargues and his eldest son, Jean-Etienne. Some of the self-portraits present Liotard in his distinctive Oriental guise of Turkish kaftan, long beard, and Moravian fur hat, which he adopted in Constantinople and for which he became well known earning him the sobriquet in London of 'The Turk'.

Orientalism will focus on Liotard's four-year sojourn in Constantinople. This was made possible by The Hon. William Ponsonby (the future Lord Bessborough), whom Liotard had met in Rome and who invited the artist to accompany him to the city in 1738. His time in the capital of the Turkish Empire not only provided him with his own Turkish 'brand', but also subject matter for works which were to contribute to the novel taste for Orientalism. It was there that he also undertook commissions from British and other European residents as well as making records of indigenous dress and customs. Highlights of the section will include *Laura Tarsi*, c. 1741 (Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge).

Liotard followed new markets for portraiture around Europe, commanding enviably high prices. He travelled to London on two occasions, 1753-55 and 1772-74, where he received numerous portrait commissions from members of **British Society**, including the royal family and in 1773 and 1774 he exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts. A central theme of his long career was his enduring associations with major British patrons and collectors who commissioned portraits from him when

they were passing through Paris and Geneva. Brilliantly executed, society portraits will include those of Sir Everard Fawkener and his wife, Harriet Churchill; the formidable Katherine Furness, Countess of Guilford; The Marchioness of Hartington; William Constable, friend of Jean-Jacques Rousseau; the great actor David Garrick; and the son of the 2nd Earl of Bute, Lord Mountstuart.

In 1743 in Vienna, on his return from Constantinople, which had included ten months at the Moldavian court at Jassy, Liotard received an introduction to Maria Theresa, the future Empress of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, establishing a relationship which would last over three decades. This resulted in a series of portraits of the family including one of the young *Archduchess Marie-Antoinette of Austria*, 1762 (Cabinet d'arts graphiques des Musées d'art et d'histoire, Geneva). A selection of these **Royal Portraits**, in delicately handled chalks, will be complemented by pastel portraits made of the French royal family in Paris, 1749-51, and of the British royal family, the result of a commission from Augusta, Princess of Wales in 1753.

In 1757 Liotard settled in Geneva where he found himself in demand for portraits of Genevan high society. Although some of these communicate the dominant Calvinist character of the city, with their soberly attired sitters, they celebrate the prosperous members of the city's professional elite. **Continental Society** portraits will include the pendant portraits of the banker *Isaac-Louis de Thelusson* and his wife *Julie de Thellusson-Ployard*, both 1760 (Museum Oskar Reinhart, Winterthur).

Although primarily known for his portraits, Liotard created a small number of **Still Lifes, Genre Scenes and *Trompe L'Oeil*** works. *Still-life: Tea Set*, c. 1770-83 (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles), will feature in this section alongside the *trompe l'oeil* painting showing a partial portrait of Maria Theresa of Austria, 1762-3 (Private Collection), which was discovered in 2014 and has never been seen in public before.

Jean-Etienne Liotard Biography

Jean-Etienne Liotard was born in Geneva in 1702 to French Huguenots who had fled to Geneva after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Between 1715 and 1720 Liotard served a four month apprenticeship with the Genevan miniaturist Daniel Gardelle (1679-1753). In 1723 he moved to Paris to be apprenticed to the miniaturist and engraver Jean-Baptiste Massé (1687-1767) for three years. In 1735 Liotard travelled to Italy and in Rome he was introduced to the Stuart court in exile, where he made portraits and miniatures including one of Bonnie Prince Charlie, the Young Pretender. He also met The Hon. William Ponsonby, who invited Liotard to accompany him to Constantinople. In 1743 he went to Vienna. He was resident in Paris from 1746-53. In 1756 he married Marie Fargues (1728-1782), the daughter of a French Huguenot merchant based in Amsterdam, and then established himself in Geneva from 1757. He returned to London in late 1772, receiving important commissions and exhibiting at the Royal Academy of Arts. From 1779 Liotard devoted much of his time to engraving and writing and from 1782 he concentrated on still-life compositions. Liotard died in Geneva in 1789.

Organisation

The exhibition has been organised by the National Galleries of Scotland and the Royal Academy of Arts. The exhibition is curated by Dr William Hauptman (Independent Art Historian), MaryAnne Stevens (Independent Art Historian) and Dr Christopher Baker, Director of the Scottish National

Portrait Gallery. The exhibition is under the patronage of His Excellency The Swiss Ambassador, Dr Dominik Furgler.

Exhibition Tour

Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh	4 July – 13 September 2015
Royal Academy of Arts, London	24 October 2015 – 31 January 2016

Catalogue

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue which will present important new research on the artist. This will include contributions by the three co-curators and also Duncan Bull, Marc Fehlmann, Neil Jeffares and Aileen Ribeiro.

Dates and Opening Hours

Open to public:	Saturday 24 October 2015 – Sunday 31 January 2016
	10am – 6pm daily (last admission 5.30pm)
Late night opening:	Fridays until 10pm (last admission 9.30pm)

Admission

£11.50 full price (£10 excluding Gift Aid donation); concessions available; children under 16 and Friends of the RA go free.

Tickets

Tickets for *Jean-Etienne Liotard* are available daily at the RA or online at www.royalacademy.org.uk. Group bookings: Groups of 10+ are asked to book in advance. Telephone 020 7300 8027 or email adultgroups@royalacademy.org.uk.

Images

Publicity images for *Jean-Etienne Liotard* can be obtained from Picselect, the Press Association's image service for press use. Please register at www.picselect.com and once registered go to the Royal Academy folder in the Arts section of Picselect.

Social Media

Join the discussion about the exhibition online at:
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About the Royal Academy of Arts

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