

TREASURES FROM THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS' COLLECTION TRAVEL TO AUSTRALIA FOR THE FIRST TIME

Genius and Ambition: The Royal Academy of Arts, London

Australia and Japan, March 2014 – April 2015

The Royal Academy of Arts announces the most significant touring exhibition of its Collection in its 246-year history. *Genius and Ambition: The Royal Academy of Arts, London* opens 2 March at Bendigo Art Gallery, Australia. Spanning 150 years of the Academy, the exhibition focusses on a key period of the RA Collection: the so-called 'long nineteenth century' from 1768-1918. Comprising 56 paintings, twenty drawings, nine prints, eight historic books, two photographs and two sculptures, the display will also tour to four venues in Japan, between August 2014 – April 2015.

Several works in the exhibition have never travelled outside of the UK before, including Sir Joshua Reynolds RA's *Theory* (1789-90), Sir Ernest Waterlow RA's *The Banks of the River Loing* (1903), and Agostino Carlini RA's *Bust of George III* (1773). Further highlights of the exhibition include JMW Turner RA's *Dolbadern Castle* (1800), John Constable RA's *Boat Passing a Lock* (1826), Henry Fuseli RA's *Thor battering the Midgard Serpent* (1790), Thomas Gainsborough RA's *Romantic Landscape with sheep at a spring* (c. 1783), John Singer Sargent RA's *Interior in Venice* (1899) and John William Waterhouse RA's *A mermaid* (1900). For the Australian leg of the tour, 30 additional works by Australian artists educated at the RA Schools, such as Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton, Margaret Preston and William Dobell, have been included.

Charles Saumarez Smith, Chief Executive of the Royal Academy said, '*The Royal Academy is delighted to be displaying some of the most important works from its Collection at the Bendigo Art Gallery, which has such a long track record of imaginative international exhibitions. Following the major redevelopment of the Academy, which is to double in size in time for its 250th anniversary in 2018, we will have increased space to put more of the treasures from the Collection on permanent display in London. Until then, this touring exhibition is a wonderful opportunity to share our renowned Collection with an international audience, and continues our commitment of making our Collection visible to as broad a public as possible.*'

Organisation

This exhibition has been organised by MaryAnne Stevens, former Director of Academic Affairs, Royal Academy of Arts; Helen Valentine, Curator of Paintings and Sculpture, Royal Academy of Arts; Karen Quinlan, Director, Bendigo Art Gallery, and Tansy Curtin, Curator, Bendigo Art Gallery.

Exhibition tour

Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Art, Japan: 1 August – 27 August 2014

Tokyo Fuji Museum of Art, Japan: 7 October – 30 November 2014

Shizuoka City Museum of Art, Japan: 9 December 2014 – 25 January 2015

Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, Nagoya, Japan: 3 February 2014 – 5 April 2015

Catalogue

A fully illustrated catalogue, with essays by Tansy Curtin, Nick Savage, MaryAnne Stevens, Helen Valentine and Annette Wickham, has been produced to accompany the exhibition tour. Delving into the history of the Academy and its Collections, from its foundation until the First World War, the publication covers the Academy's complex role in the history of art and the teaching of art in Britain and abroad. In addition to in-depth explorations of the Royal Academy, the Royal Academy Schools and the RA Library, the book also assesses the importance of the Academy for Australian artists, who travelled to London to study and exhibit at the Royal Academy of Arts.

Royal Academy Collection

The Royal Academy Collection focuses on British art and artists from the eighteenth century to the present day. It is a major resource for the history of British art. Highlights in the Collection include major works by Reynolds, Gainsborough, Turner, Constable, Alma-Tadema, Flaxman, Millais, Leighton, Waterhouse, Sargent, Spencer and Hockney. The Collection includes paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, architectural designs, historic books, archives, historic photographs and plaster casts. All newly elected Royal Academicians donate a work, known as a Diploma Work, to the Royal Academy's Collection.

About the Royal Academy of Arts

The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by George III in 1768. It has a unique position in being an independent, privately funded institution led by eminent artists and architects whose purpose is to be a clear, strong voice for art and artists. Its public programme promotes the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the visual arts through exhibitions, education and debate.

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