

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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Information Update

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ART FROM BRITAIN'S FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART IN 1989

WASHINGTON, DC, February 1, 1989 - A selection from the finest works in Britain's Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge will be shown at the National Gallery of Art in the exhibition, Treasures from the Fitzwilliam Museum: The Increase of Learning and Other Great Objects. More than 160 objects will be on view, including paintings by Titian, Guercino, Rubens, Hals, Van Dyck, Hogarth, Delacroix, Renoir, and Degas, and drawings by Rembrandt, Annibale Carracci, Tiepolo, William Blake, Puvis de Chavannes, and Modigliani. A selection of illuminated manuscripts, ceramics, coins and medals, bronzes, and decorative arts will also be shown. The exhibition, organized by the Fitzwilliam and the National Gallery, will be displayed in the National Gallery's East Building, March 19 through June 18, 1989. The exhibition and its national tour are made possible by Philip Morris Companies Inc.

"The Fitzwilliam Museum is perhaps Britain's pre-eminent small museum," said J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery of Art. "Like the British Museum, the Fitzwilliam addresses the history of culture in terms of the visual forms it has assumed, but it does so from the highly selective point of view of the collector-connoisseur. Works of art have been added to the museum's collection not only for the art historical information they reveal but for their beauty, excellent quality, and rarity."

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The Fitzwilliam Museum was founded in 1816 by Richard, Viscount Fitzwilliam of Merrion, with a bequest to the University of Cambridge of prints, pictures, books, and manuscripts, "for the purpose of promoting the Increase of Learning and the other great Objects of that Noble Foundation." (The subtitle of the exhibition was taken from the preamble to the viscount's will.)

During its 172-year history the museum has grown to fulfill Viscount Fitzwilliam's initial vision. Enlarged by other bequests and gifts and by discriminating purchases, the Fitzwilliam reflects, in works of art and archaeology, the humane interests that are pursued in a great university. Over the years, diverse and significant purchases made in the tenure of two important scholar-directors of the Fitzwilliam, S. C. Cockerell and Michael Jaffé, have further enriched the collections so that the museum's holdings represent almost every medium and epoch in the history of art.

"The collection of the Fitzwilliam Museum is justly noted for the diversity, as well as the quality, of the art it embraces," said Hamish Maxwell, chairman and chief executive officer, Philip Morris Companies Inc. "By sponsoring the first United States tour of selections from the collection, Philip Morris hopes to bring the distinctive philosophy of the Fitzwilliam to the American public."

Among the outstanding paintings that will be presented in Treasures from the Fitzwilliam Museum are Titian's late masterpiece, Tarquin and Lucretia, Annibale Carracci's Magdalene in a Landscape, Guardi's Ridotto, Batoni's The Earl of Northampton, Van Dyck's Archbishop Laud, Hogarth's Before and After, Joseph Wright of Derby's Richard Fitzwilliam, Delacroix's Odalisque, Ford Madox-Brown's Last of England, and Renoir's Place Clichy.

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The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue written by the staff of the Fitzwilliam Museum. Professor Sydney J. Freedberg, chief curator emeritus, and Beverly Louise Brown, guest curator of southern baroque painting, have coordinated the exhibition at the National Gallery of Art.

After leaving the National Gallery of Art, the exhibition will be presented at the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas (July 15 - Oct. 8, 1989), the National Academy of Design in New York (Nov. 5, 1989 - Jan. 28, 1990), High Museum of Art in Atlanta (Feb. 20 - May 6, 1990), and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (June 21 - Sept. 9, 1990).

Philip Morris Companies Inc. began support of the arts in 1958. Since then, the company has developed one of the most comprehensive corporate cultural programs. Through its broad spectrum of sponsorship, Philip Morris promotes contemporary and minority visual and performing arts, as well as major international exhibitions and tours. Treasures from the Fitzwilliam Museum is the second exhibition to be supported by Philip Morris at the National Gallery; the first was The Age of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent in 1987.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION about the exhibition, please contact Deborah Ziska or Jennie Barbour, National Gallery of Art, (202) 842-6353. For information about Philip Morris Companies Inc. and its support of the exhibition, please contact Betsy Ennis, Arts and Communications Counselors, (212) 715-1540.