

ART GALLERY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA PRESENTS
GREAT COLLECTIONS OF THE WORLD

PRINCELY TREASURES

European Masterpieces 1600 – 1800 from the Victoria and Albert Museum

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23 September 2011

***Princely Treasures* from the Victoria and Albert Museum opens exclusively in Perth**

Doors will open tomorrow (24 September 2011) on the much anticipated *Princely Treasures: European Masterpieces 1600 – 1800 from the Victoria and Albert Museum*.

This first class international show from one of the world's greatest museums is set to inspire and delight, offering Western Australians a rare opportunity to experience these European masterpieces on their doorstep.

Showing exclusively at the Art Gallery of Western Australia, this significant and highly visual collection includes painting and sculpture, ceramics and glass, metalwork and furniture, textiles and tapestries, personal adornment and dress, armoury, prints and drawing.

Many of the 90 artworks and objects are coming to Australia for the first time and were originally acquired by Europeans of power, wealth and taste between 1600 and 1800.

Made by Europe's finest artists and craftsmen, and using precious materials from around the world, these masterpieces originate from all corners of the continent – from Britain and France, Italy and Germany, Russia and Spain, Austria and Belgium, Holland and Sweden.

Princely Treasures is the second exhibition in the Art Gallery of Western Australia's *Great Collections of the World* series and runs until 9 January 2012. It is also one of the highlights of the Commonwealth Festival (23 - 30 October 2011) which takes place alongside CHOGM.

Deputy Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, Dr Beth McKillop, said the UK museum was delighted to bring *Princely Treasures: European Masterpieces 1600 – 1800 from the Victoria and Albert Museum* to Perth – its first visit to Australian shores.

"It's very exciting to see the collection here in Australia at its new home for the next few months, the Art Gallery of Western Australia.

"All of the objects are treasured by the museum and while we miss having them at home in London, we are thrilled to have this unique opportunity to share them with the people of Western Australia.

“Our conservators Anna Fletcher and Charlotte Hubbard have been working tirelessly with the fantastic team at the Art Gallery of Western Australia to get the exhibition ready for its official opening today.

“The team at AGWA have presented the show beautifully. It is a sheer delight to behold.

“I hope everyone will enjoy these luxurious works while they are here and wish the Art Gallery of Western Australia every success with the show,” she said.

Director of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Dr Stefano Carboni, said Perth was fortunate to be hosting such a prestigious collection from one of the world’s leading arts institutions.

“It is an honour to have such treasures from the Victoria and Albert Museum in our State Gallery. Artworks such as these are rarely seen in Australia.

“I encourage everyone - all Western Australians - to take this fantastic opportunity and come to experience the beauty and richness of these stunning works and historical objects while we are lucky enough to have them on our shores,” Dr Carboni said.

The *Princely Treasures* exhibition is to be presented in five different themes, encapsulating important aspects of courtly life in Europe at that time.

Princely Patronage presents the key figures who were the great patrons of the arts in Europe between 1600 and 1800, and some of the most sophisticated objects that circulated around European courts.

Power and Glory explores how representations of war were used to decorate objects commissioned for courtly use, from armour and weapons to tapestries and paintings.

Religious Splendour reveals the nature of objects made for worship, commissioned by secular or ecclesiastical patrons for public or private devotional use.

Display in the Interior presents furniture, textiles and ceramics made for use in the home, either for decorative or social purposes.

Fashion and Personal Adornment reveals the care and attention aristocratic men and women took to dress in fashionable style from head to toe.

Visitors will also be able to purchase a richly illustrated book of the *Princely Treasures* exhibition, produced by V&A Publishing.

The Victoria and Albert Museum is the world’s leading museum of art and design with collections unrivalled in their scope and diversity. It was established in 1852 to make works of art available to members of the public and to inspire British designers and manufacturers. Today, the Victoria and Albert Museum collections, which span over 2000 years of human creativity in virtually every medium and from many parts of the world, continue to intrigue, inspire and inform. For more information go to www.vam.ac.uk

Princely Treasures is presented by the Art Gallery of Western Australia in partnership with Eventscorp and is one of a series of international art exhibitions planned for Perth. It follows on the heels of the first *Great Collections of the World* series – *Peggy Guggenheim: A Collection in Venice* which featured at the Art Gallery of WA from 9 October 2010 to 31 January 2011. The next show in the series, *Picasso to Warhol: Twelve Modern Masters* from the world famous Museum of Modern Art in New York, opens on 16 June 2012.

Tickets to *Princely Treasures: European Masterpieces 1600 – 1800 from the Victoria and Albert Museum* are available through Ticketek or at the Art Gallery of WA: Adults \$20, Concession \$16, Children (5 - 16 years) \$12, Children under 5 free, Family Ticket (2 adults + 2 children) \$50, Grab a Group (4 adults) \$65, Multi-entry pass (individual unlimited entry) \$55.

For information about functions and venue hire, please contact Jessica Drowley on 9492 6771 or functions@artgallery.wa.gov.au and for school and group bookings, please contact Sue Way on 9492 6644 or educate@artgallery.wa.gov.au.

For more information go to www.greatcollections.com.au

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Exhibition organised by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.