

24 September 2019

The Wallace Collection to lend works for the first time

The Wallace Collection is delighted to announce that, for the first time in its 119 year history, it will loan works on a temporary basis. The Board of Trustees and the Director successfully applied to the Charity Commission for an Order which has granted the Wallace Collection the power to lend, a decision supported by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The Wallace Collection will now join other national museums in lending works from its collection, both within the UK and internationally.

Although the Wallace is traditionally considered to be a 'closed' collection, the terms of Lady Wallace's bequest do not expressly forbid lending or borrowing. Sir Richard Wallace himself loaned works extensively to other institutions in Paris and London, notably the Royal Academy and the Bethnal Green museum. The conclusion reached by the Trustees and the Director is that temporary loans would not be going against the bequest and this would be entirely in keeping with Sir Richard's desire to share great art with the widest possible audience.

As the Wallace Collection resides in Sir Richard Wallace's original home at Hertford House, Manchester Square, in central London, each loan request will be considered extremely carefully in order to minimise disturbance to its unique environment. Owing to these restrictions, the Wallace Collection will only enter into loan agreements under very special circumstances.

The decision to lend works on a temporary basis will enable the Wallace Collection to develop exciting new collaborations with museums across the UK and internationally, expanding public access to the museum's exceptional collection and encouraging new audiences to engage with its treasures. It will also provide exciting opportunities for scholarly research and enable the museum to remain a centre of curatorial excellence.

António Horta-Osório, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, says:

"This is a hugely significant moment in the history of the Wallace Collection and is the result of careful deliberations by the Board. Our successful programme of ground-breaking exhibitions, in which our own masterpieces are showcased alongside related treasures from elsewhere, can now be complemented by an ability to lend our works to other great collections. This allows us to develop new collaborations at home and internationally, and will mean that the treasures of the Wallace Collection will be shared with an even greater audience. It represents a new chapter in the museum's history and will ensure that the Wallace Collection continues to flourish and remains relevant for generations to come."

Dr Xavier Bray, Director of the Wallace Collection, says:

"I am thrilled we are announcing that the Wallace Collection will now be able to lend works of art. This is a transformative moment for the museum which will enable us to deepen our understanding of the Collection and play a wider role within the international art historical community. This is not a decision that has been taken lightly by the Board, mindful as we are that the Wallace Collection is loved by the public for being an intimate house museum. However, in order to share our collection with the widest possible audience we believe that it is the right next step for the Wallace Collection and we look forward to expanding our horizons in accordance with the scale of the museum."

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Notes to Editor

For further press information please contact Eleanor Nimmo on press@wallacecollection.org / 0207 563 9516

Opening hours

Open daily 10am-5pm.

Social Media

Join the conversation here:

Instagram: [@wallacemuseum](https://www.instagram.com/wallacemuseum)

Facebook: [@wallacecollection](https://www.facebook.com/wallacecollection)

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About the Wallace Collection

The Wallace Collection was formed by four generations of Marquesses of Hertford and by Sir Richard Wallace (the supposed illegitimate son of the fourth Marquess), between the 1780s and the 1880s. Since the 1870s the Collection has been housed in Hertford House one of the Hertford-Wallace residences and a Grade II listed building. The Collection was bequeathed to the British Nation by Lady Wallace in 1897. Hertford House and the freehold were acquired by the Government so that it could be transformed into a museum. The Wallace Collection opened to the public on 22 June 1900.

A Treasury Minute of 28 July 1897 appointed the first Board of Trustees to act on the authority of a Declaration of Trust dated 27 July 1899, however the current Board was created by the Museums and Galleries Act 1992 ("the 1992 Act"), which now specifies the Board's general function to maintain, exhibit and grant access to, and promote public understanding and enjoyment of, the Collection. Responsibility for Government financing of the Wallace Collection rests with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ("DCMS"), from whom the museum receives a Grant-in-Aid out of monies provided by Parliament. The museum is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by DCMS. It is a charity exempt from registration under the Charities Act 2011 and DCMS is its principal regulator.

The museum contains Old Master paintings, miniatures, sculpture, French furniture, porcelain and goldsmiths' work, European, African and Asian arms and armour, and medieval and Renaissance works of art. All are of the highest quality and of international importance. Its holdings of French eighteenth-century art, European princely arms and armour and Old Master paintings are recognised internationally as being outstanding.

Lady Wallace's bequest states that the collection 'shall be kept together unmixed with other objects of art'. This has traditionally been understood to mean that the Collection can neither acquire, nor can it deaccession, any work of art. By extension, this has also been understood to mean that the Wallace Collection cannot exhibit works from elsewhere alongside its own

collection nor lend to temporary exhibitions. As a result, the Wallace Collection has remained a closed collection since it opened in 1900.

In line with its strategic plan, Making Culture Matter, the Wallace Collection has committed to broadening and deepening public access to the works of art in its care. Similarly, this new right will help the Wallace Collection to become a truly National Museum, enabling the museum to grow and diversify audiences through loans and partnerships, in-keeping with the recommendations of the 2017 Mendoza Review of Museums in England.

To achieve this and to ensure that the museum can meet the recommendations of the 2017 Mendoza (Museums) Review, the Director and Trustees of the museum approached the Charity Commission, seeking an Order which would grant it the power to lend and borrow objects. In 2019, the Wallace Collection was granted an order under s105 Charities Act 2011 which authorises the Collection to borrow and lend objects, bringing it in line with other national museums.

www.wallacecollection.org

Image sheet



António Horta-Osório, Chairman of the Board of Trustees and Xavier Bray, Director, The Wallace Collection
Photo: Tom Mannion.





The Oval Drawing Room, The Wallace Collection.
Image © The Wallace Collection