

THE WALLACE COLLECTION ANNOUNCES ITS 2027 PROGRAMME

Antoine Watteau's visionary paintings and drawings, the historical and cultural significance of Asante gold regalia, and the relationship between Rembrandt and his son Titus all feature at the Wallace Collection in 2027.

WATTEAU: REVERIE AND REALISM

12 March–25 July 2027

Ticketed exhibition

French artist Antoine Watteau (1684–1721) is widely celebrated for his *fêtes galantes* or wistful scenes of lovers, actors and musicians idling in bucolic, dreamlike settings. Yet Watteau's art was also grounded in an earthy realism that stemmed from his Flemish origins and love of drawing directly from the subject.



This major exhibition explores the contradiction that lies at the heart of Watteau's vision by presenting his evocative paintings alongside the observational drawings that informed their making. It will present Watteau both in his historical context and also as a creative figure who transcended his time in forging a new style of painting that elevated visual and sensory qualities over narrative and moral content, anticipating later developments such as Impressionism and the Aesthetic movement.

The full repertoire of Watteau's subjects will be featured in the exhibition. Starting with his penetrating observations of contemporary life, the exhibition will then look at his *fêtes galantes*, before focusing on the artist's experiments with the nude and his enigmatic landscapes. The exhibition will also feature X-rays of some of his paintings to highlight his working process and the layered way in which he developed his compositions.

Director of Collections and Research, Dr Alison Smith, says: *"This exhibition looks at Watteau as both a painter of dream and reverie and as an artist whose work was deeply connected to the society in which he lived and worked. His novel approach to drawing and painting won him many admirers during his short life, including in Britain, and influenced the work of later artists, particularly Manet, Renoir and Monet, who all admired him."*

Dr Xavier Bray, Director of the Wallace Collection, says: *"Watteau's artistic innovations went beyond his invention of the fête galante; he was a sensitive and acute draughtsman who drew obsessively from life and mastered the trois crayons method. By exploring the breadth of Watteau's work, we hope visitors leave with a greater appreciation for the depths of this enigmatic talent."*

ASANTE: SACRED GOLD

12 April–22 August 2027

Free display

The Wallace Collection is famed for its Old Master paintings, French decorative arts, and arms and armour. Less well known, however, is a small group of gold regalia that is of profound spiritual, cultural and artistic importance to Asante, in present-day Ghana.

These objects were taken as part of an indemnity imposed on the Asante Kingdom by British forces during the Third Anglo-Asante War of 1873–74. They were sold to Garrard & Co., the Crown Jeweller in London, where they were acquired by collectors, including Sir Richard Wallace (1818–1890).

The gold regalia, which so captivated European audiences in the 19th century, were not only symbols of wealth and power, but also important marks of identity and belonging. They incorporate a rich cultural and spiritual vocabulary personified in human, animal and geometric forms influenced by Akan, Islamic and European designs.

With a striking golden head as the centrepiece, one of the largest historic gold objects from Africa outside Egypt, this display will investigate the deeper cultural significance of these pieces and explore their duality as trophies of war and the soul of the Asante.

This display has been produced by the Wallace Collection in collaboration with the Manhyia Palace Museum in Kumasi, Ghana.

Curator of Decorative Arts and co-curator of the display, Alexander Collins, says: *"This display invites us to look at the brilliance of these extraordinary gold regalia and to consider the lives, beliefs and histories they embody. While admired for their exceptional craftsmanship, these objects also bear witness to a painful history of colonial conflict and displacement. By presenting them within their full cultural context, we hope to encourage a deeper understanding not only of the complex journeys that brought them to the Wallace Collection, but also of their enduring significance to the Asante."*

Ivor Agyeman-Duah, Director of the Manhyia Palace Museum, says: *"These are pre-19th-century West African ancestral creations, demonstrating gold's malleability and everlasting value. Such a major public showing a century and a half after being taken speaks to their endurance, while asking necessary questions about their absence from their original home. Their nature is clear: they are signposts of a civilisation. The display with the Wallace Collection is therefore not only a memorial incarnate of the Third Anglo-Asante War of 1873–1874, but a sign of the survival of these sacred objects in the present."*

Dr Xavier Bray, Director of the Wallace Collection, says: *"This display has been shaped in collaboration with the Manhyia Palace Museum, placing the histories and perspectives of the Asante people at the centre of how these objects are understood. In combination with our own historical accounts and research, the display brings a renewed focus to these incredible objects."*



REMBRANDT AND TITUS: FATHER AND SON

8 October 2027–16 January 2028

Ticketed exhibition

For the first time, all of Rembrandt's portraits of his son Titus will be reunited and shown alongside the artist's finest self-portraits in a landmark collaboration with the Rijksmuseum.

The Wallace Collection's late portrait of Titus (c.1657) will be displayed alongside the others, tracing his progression from boyhood to adulthood and the story of their intertwined lives.

Titus was the only one of the four children Rembrandt (1606–1669) had with his beloved first wife, Saskia, to survive infancy. Saskia herself never saw her son grow up: she died only eight months after his birth, aged just 29. In the years that followed, Titus witnessed some of the most difficult chapters of his father's life and career. From an early age, he became increasingly involved in Rembrandt's professional and financial affairs, assisting him through bankruptcy and later helping to organise his business matters.



For Rembrandt, the sudden death of Titus in 1668 was a devastating blow. The young man, so affectionately rendered in numerous portraits, had become his chief support in adversity. Titus was only 26.

The exhibition will bring together more than 20 works Rembrandt made of himself and his son Titus, including *Self-Portrait with Two Circles* (1665–1669), on loan from English Heritage - one of Rembrandt's greatest and most celebrated works. It will also include a selection of Rembrandt's finest paintings and works on paper, on loan from the National Gallery in London, as well as the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, the Baltimore Museum of Art, and the Musée du Louvre in Paris.

The exhibition will travel to the Wallace Collection following its display at the Rijksmuseum.

Curator of Paintings and co-curator of the exhibition, Dr Lucy Davis, says: *"To witness Rembrandt and Titus looking out at one another is profoundly moving. Bringing these deeply personal portraits together offers a rare opportunity to trace the parent-child relationship across the course of Titus's short life. At the same time, Rembrandt's self-portraits invite us to consider Rembrandt not just as an artist of exceptional talent, but as a parent facing severe personal and professional difficulties."*

Dr Xavier Bray, Director of the Wallace Collection, says: *"This is a landmark exhibition for the Wallace Collection, which has arisen from our desire to explore the extraordinary relationship between Rembrandt and his son Titus. We are delighted that this vision has developed into our first major collaboration with the Rijksmuseum, which holds the world's greatest collections of works from Rembrandt's oeuvre."*

Taco Dibbits, General Director of the Rijksmuseum, says: *"The profound humanity of Rembrandt's paintings is a reflection of his uncanny ability to capture the emotions of the people he depicts. In Rembrandt and Titus: Father and Son, visitors will have an opportunity to experience the powerful bond between father and son through the lens of Rembrandt's paintings of his son and himself."*

Rembrandt and Titus: Father and Son is organised by the Wallace Collection in London and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

On the Wallace Collection's 2027 programme, Director Dr Xavier Bray says: *"Our 2027 programme reflects the diversity and richness of the Wallace Collection, offering the opportunity to encounter extraordinary works of art while continually discovering new stories and perspectives within them."*

"We will showcase new research into Watteau's creative process, highlight the cultural and spiritual histories of Asante gold and explore the profound relationship between father and son in Rembrandt's portraiture. Each show will demonstrate how we can still be surprised by works we thought we knew, as new research and revelations continue to deepen our understanding of the collection."

"Our partnerships with the Manhyia Palace Museum in Ghana and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam allow us to share collections, knowledge and expertise, broaden perspectives and deepen public engagement with these important and timeless works of art."

NOTES TO EDITORS

High resolution images can be downloaded here

- Jean-Antoine Watteau, *The Halt during the Chase*, about 1717-18 © The Wallace Collection
- Asante people, Ghana, *Trophy Head*, 18th or 19th century © The Wallace Collection
- Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, *Titus, the Artist's Son*, about 1657 © The Wallace Collection

As one of Britain's preeminent cultural institutions, the **Wallace Collection** is home to one of the most significant ensembles of fine and decorative arts in the world. Highlights include oil paintings from the 14th to the late 19th centuries by artists such as Titian, Velázquez, Rubens and Van Dyck; princely arms and armour; and one of the finest collections of 18th-century French paintings and decorative arts. Visitors can also enjoy superb medieval and Renaissance objects, including Limoges enamel, maiolica, glass and bronzes. Displayed at Hertford House, former home to Sir Richard and Lady Wallace, this outstanding collection is displayed in a manner designed to evoke the lives and tastes of its founders, creating a special ambiance that remains an essential part of its charm.

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