



## **The Emperor, The Artist and The Collector**

**6 December 2021 – 17 July 2022**

To mark the 200-year anniversary of the death of Napoleon I, the Wallace Collection has opened a new free display which tells the story of the French painter Horace Vernet (1789–1863) and the 4th Marquess of Hertford's (1800–1870) shared passion for Emperor Napoleon I.

Bringing together works from across the Collection, *The Emperor, The Artist and The Collector* features many works personally acquired by the Marquess of Hertford and reunites them with a painting, *L'Embarquement des Pêcheurs*, originally owned by Lord Hertford, now in a private collection. This will be the first time in 150 years the piece has been seen together alongside other works collected by the Marquess, and the Wallace Collection is thankful to Mr Elan Jaglom for his support.

Richard Seymour-Conway, 4th Marquess of Hertford was known for his interest in eighteenth-century French art, yet he also collected works by contemporary French artists. He found in the works of Horace Vernet the perfect illustrations of his admiration for Napoleon.

Napoleon was considered by some a hero for creating an empire that encompassed much of Europe and for exporting the ideals of the Enlightenment beyond French borders. Others regarded him as a tyrant and dictator who placed his family and friends in positions of power and reintroduced slavery.

Horace Vernet, who received the Legion of Honour for serving briefly in the National Guard in 1814, was one of the first artists to create a series of nostalgic images of the Napoleonic era. He was favoured amongst nineteenth-century collectors for his skill in painting romantic battle scenes and depicting veterans of the Napoleonic army, their fate, and the nostalgia they may have experienced for the glories of war.



The 4th Marquess, who lived in Paris near Vernet's studio, acquired 46 paintings and eight watercolours by the artist with whom he seems to have been on friendly terms. However, 25 of these did not become part of the original Wallace bequest to the British nation in 1897. These works included *L'Embarquement des Pêcheurs*, currently in a private collection, and the four battle scenes and the portrait of Napoleon, now in the National Gallery, London.

*L'Embarquement des Pêcheurs* was sold at auction in 1913, and this special display reunites it with other works from Lord Hertford's collection.

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- Horace Vernet (1789–1863), *L'Embarquement des Pêcheurs (Le passeur) - Fishermen Embarking (The Smuggler)*, 1824, Private Collection
- Horace Vernet (1789–1863), *Napoleon's Tomb*, 1821, P575 © The Trustees of the Wallace Collection
- Horace Vernet (1789–1863), *Peace and war*, 1820, P598 © The Trustees of the Wallace Collection
- Horace Vernet (1789–1863), *The Dog of the Regiment Wounded*, 1819 P607 © The Trustees of the Wallace Collection
- Horace Vernet (1789–1863), *The Wounded Trumpeter*, 1819, P613 © The Trustees of the Wallace Collection
- Horace Vernet (1789–1863), *The Veteran at Home*, 1823, P582 © The Trustees of the Wallace Collection

## **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

### **About Horace Vernet (1789–1863)**

The grandson of Claude-Joseph Vernet (1714–1789) and the son of another eminent artist, Carle Vernet (1758–1836), Horace Vernet soon developed an extraordinary facility as a painter which he used to depict a wide range of subjects including scenes taken from literature, the Bible, contemporary Italy, North Africa and the Middle East. He is best known, however, for his many paintings celebrating French military prowess, including a series of large battle pieces for Versailles. Louis-Philippe, King of the French (1773–1850), who had first bought his work in 1817, favoured him with many commissions. Although he achieved notoriety when some of his paintings were rejected by the Paris Salon jury of 1822, allegedly because of their anti-Bourbon character, he received a number of honours from the restored Bourbon monarchy, including in 1828 the Directorship of the French Academy in Rome (which he retained until 1834).

### **About 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 fourteenth to the late nineteenth centuries by artists such as Titian, Velazquez, Rubens and Van Dyck; princely arms and armour; and one of the finest collections of eighteenth-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.

[www.wallacecollection.org](http://www.wallacecollection.org). The Wallace Collection is open daily, 10.00-17.00.

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## **FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES**

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