

Press release

12 September 2013

Masterpieces: Art and East Anglia exhibition to inaugurate the new Sainsbury Centre galleries

A major exhibition of more than 250 objects and works of art inspired by, or produced in, East Anglia is to mark the unveiling of the refurbished galleries of the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts in Norwich. The design by Foster + Partners has improved access to the Grade II-listed building, creating a new East Gallery alongside the main collection for the reserve collection, and transforming existing spaces downstairs into a new suite of galleries for special exhibitions. Highlighting the flexibility of the original design, the project is the third time that the building has been reconfigured to meet changing needs.

The East Gallery provides a flexible display space so that for the first time the Centre's principal floor is dedicated to the Sainsbury Collection. This space offers a new way of experiencing and interpreting the works of art, ceramics and ancient artefacts, with objects grouped together in flexible, changing displays, accompanied by the latest research by scholars from across the Sainsbury Institute for Art. Objects from the collection will move between the East Gallery and Living Area. In addition, new blinds are being installed to reconnect the East Gallery with the landscape.

Visitor spaces are consolidated close to the entrance, where there is a new information desk and shop and a refurbished café. Downstairs, the previous shop has been reconfigured as a lobby for a series of environmentally-controlled exhibition spaces. The new galleries extend into the Crescent Wing, incorporating the area that previously housed the reserve collection. The galleries can function as black box spaces to accommodate film and immersive installations, and their state-of-the-art lighting and ventilation systems meet the high technical requirements of international touring exhibitions.

The exhibition, Masterpieces: Art and East Anglia, opens to the public on 14 September 2013 and runs until 24 February 2014.

Notes to editors:

- The Sainsbury Collection, gifted by Sir Robert and Lady Lisa Sainsbury to the University in 1973, includes the most important collection of ceramics by Hans Coper, the largest public collection of early works by Francis Bacon in Northern Europe, multiple works by artists such as Henry Moore, Giacometti, Picasso, Jacob Epstein and Lucie Rie, all of which are displayed alongside material both ancient and modern from across the globe.
- Masterpieces: Art and East Anglia presents over 250 objects that the region has inspired, produced and collected, as well as treasures that have long been associated with the area, loaned by over sixty major public and private collections including the Royal Collection, the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the National Gallery. The extraordinarily diverse selection of masterworks will range from paintings, sculpture, architecture, ceramics, glass and jewellery to photography, graphic design, fashion and costume, product and textile design. The juxtapositions promise to be spectacular: a flint handaxe worked at least

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700,000 years ago will sit alongside an ironstone pebble from the same Norfolk beach carved into a reclining figure by Henry Moore in 1930; striking pre-war posters and prints will hang in galleries with works by John Sell Cotman and John Constable; a masterly Thomas Gainsborough family portrait will be shown alongside haunting images of Edwardian fishermen by Olive Edis; sculptures by Barbara Hepworth and Elisabeth Frink will be interspersed with sculptural works from the Classical, Medieval and Renaissance periods; Ana Maria Pacheco's mythical party in a gigantic boat will be moored in the East Gallery, while the iconic Lotus 72 sports car takes up pole position in the West End.

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