



Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Master Hare*, 1788-1789, oil on canvas. ©RMN, Paris, Louvre Museum.

Musée
des
beaux
arts
BORDEAUX

A British Year at the museum!

Press Release

A British Year at the museum!

Until the reopening of national museums– October, 17th 2021
Bordeaux Museum and Gallery of Fine Arts

Under the umbrella name A British year at the museum!, Bordeaux Museum of Fine Arts (Musée des Beaux-Arts) presents two exhibitions: British Stories at the museum and Absolutely Bizarre! at the Gallery. The two shows will honour British painting, which remains largely unknown in France, while also celebrating the historic bonds that have linked Great Britain and Aquitaine for centuries.

The Bordeaux Museum of Fine Arts is one of the finest museums in the region for the quality of its British art collection, comprising paintings, drawings, prints and sculptures, seldom represented in public collections in France. This body collected from various sources (legacies, purchases, long-term loans, etc.), largely composed of portraits and history paintings, includes works by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Sir Thomas Lawrence, not to mention artists more rarely found in France such as Benjamin West, John Martin and Johann Zoffany.

Seldom does the public have the opportunity to admire these treasures in one viewing. The event *A British year!*, to be held at the Bordeaux Museum and Gallery of Fine Arts, is an occasion to redress this oversight with two major exhibitions. One will offer an incredible setting for the interaction between the fine art museum's collections and the British masterpieces on exceptional loan by the Louvre. The second, just as incredible, will pay homage to the excellent Bristol School of Artists (1800-1840), with the loan of over sixty artworks (paintings and drawings) by Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery, a partner of the Louvre project, plus exceptional loans from the Tate Britain in London, the Victoria Art Gallery in Bath and the Louvre in Paris.

Exhibition organised by the City of Bordeaux with the exceptional collaboration of the Louvre Museum



British Stories

Conversations between the Louvre Museum and Bordeaux Museum of Fine Arts

Until the reopening of national museums –September, 19th
2021

Museum of Fine Arts

The British art collections held by the Bordeaux Museum of Fine Arts form a coherent corpus of thirty paintings, drawings, prints and sculptures. This exhibition divided into sections is an occasion to admire them all and compare them with works loaned by the Louvre, the prestigious partner to this *British year!*

A significant portion of the exhibition is dedicated to portraiture, a genre in which British painters excelled in the 16th century. In the 17th century, Flemish painter Anthony van Dyck was invited to stay at the Court of Charles I of England during the last decade of his career, a period that was a pivotal moment in the development of European portrait art whose conventions van Dyck reinvented (*Modello of the Double Portrait of the Palatine Princes Charles Louis I and Prince Rupert, the king's nephew*, Museum of Fine Arts, Bordeaux). Among his most famous heirs we can mention Sir Joshua Reynolds, represented by his celebrated '*Master Hare*' (Louvre) and other compelling portraits (*Portrait of Richard Robinson, Archbishop of Armagh*, Museum of Fine Arts, Bordeaux). This survey of British portraiture culminates with the *Portrait of John Hunter* by Sir Thomas Lawrence (Museum of Fine Arts, Bordeaux). In the history painting genre, the exhibition gives a special place to artists under-represented in French public collections, namely James Ward, with his superb *Baptism of Christ* (Louvre), Benjamin West (*Phaeton asking Apollo to Drive the Sun Chariot* (Louvre) and Johann Zoffany (*The Triumph of Venus and Venus and Adonis* (Museum of Fine Arts, Bordeaux). Interestingly, the typically British genre, the conversation piece, is also represented along with landscape, dominated by the dramatic canvas by John Martin, *Macbeth* (Museum of Fine Arts, Bordeaux).

The Museum of Fine Arts and its close partner the Louvre look forward to taking you on a fascinating journey of paintings from across the Channel, on an itinerary through the most significant works of art by generations of innovative, inquisitive and daring artists.



Allan Ramsay

Portrait of Countess Elisabeth de Salisbury (1721-1776), 1769
Oil on canvas © Bordeaux, Bordeaux Museum of Fine Arts.

Absolutely Bizarre!

*Strange tales from the Bristol School of Artists
(1800–1840)*

June, 10th 2021 – October, 17th 2021

Gallery of Fine Arts

Both located in the south-west of their respective countries and sharing a history as colonial ports, Bordeaux and Bristol were twinned over 70 years ago. While the two cities have pursued numerous exchanges over the years, the Bristol School of Artists, which has gone largely unexamined in France, has never been celebrated to date this side of the English Channel.

This exhibition then promises the first collective showing, in France, of the singular artistic phenomenon that was the Bristol School. The School was an independent artistic movement, but even more so an informal group of artists, mostly portraitists and enthusiasts including critics, patrons and writers, a reflection of the artistic realities observed in the first half of the 19th century. From sketching parties in the Bristol countryside to gatherings in the homes of the various members, the unity of the group was well cemented during the period 1820-1830. The Bristol School explored and indeed revived a wide range of genres: paintings of city life and genre scenes, seen through the prism of the social transformations of the time; landscapes, inventing a highly original form of idyllic and suburban views, and fantastic art, tackled with a hitherto unseen passion. From 1800 to 1840, Bristol was a breeding ground for high-value talent who, in the case of some, would earn a reputation as far as London and to the point of influencing the development of artistic creativity in the British capital. Artists we can cite include Edward Bird (1772-1819), Francis Danby (1793-1861), Edward Villiers Ripplingille (1798-1859), Samuel Colman (1780-1845), Samuel Jackson (1794-1869), Rolinda Sharples (1793-1838) – a female artist who enjoyed a brilliant career to the point of earning a living from her craft - and William James Müller (1812-1845). Müller, who produced a gripping painting recording the riots that erupted in Bristol in 1831, will be shown for the first time alongside a well-known contemporary, William Turner whose powerful watercolours depicting the English Houses of Parliament on fire, an incident that happened three years later, will be on show to admire.

The Museum of Fine Arts will receive around 80 artworks most of which are on loan from the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery (65 watercolour and oil paintings), shown alongside several loans from the Victoria Art Gallery in Bath, the Tate Britain in London and the Louvre in Paris.

The show will be punctuated by entertaining and educational exhibits along the visitor journey, including a presentation of the tools required and the steps involved in producing a watercolour painting; a game area where visitors can play a round of *Painters' Pursuit*,

a board game about British culture, and a reading area stocked with British publications, in English and in French, for adults and children.



Francis Danby
A Scene in Leigh Woods, 1822
Oil on canvas © Bristol Museum & Art Gallery

About the British Season

PUBLICATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

These two exhibitions will be accompanied by three scientific publications, including a catalogue for the exhibition *Absolutely Bizarre!* You might also be interested in the international colloquium on *Portrait Art in English Painting (1750-1900)* co-organised by the universities of Toulouse and Bordeaux in collaboration with the Bordeaux Museum of Fine Arts, running in June, 30 and July, 1,2, 2021.

A programme of concerts, organised in partnership with the Nouvelle-Aquitaine PSEMD (Dance and Music Teacher Training School), talks, themed tours and educational projects held as part of the *Le musée sort de ses murs* [The museum goes beyond its walls] contribute to making this *British Year* a rare occasion to understand the culture of our British friends and admire this wealth in a complex geopolitical context. Bordeaux Mériadeck Library will also be one of our season partners, hosting numerous events on its premises in connection with exploring English literature.

Exhibitions curated by:

Sophie Barthélémy, director of the Bordeaux Museum of Fine Arts

Sandra Buratti-Hasan, deputy director of Bordeaux Museum of Fine Arts, conservator of the 19th and 20th century Collections

Guillaume Faroult, conservator of French 18th century and British and American art, Louvre.and, for *Absolutely Bizarre!*, Jenny Gaschke of the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery.

Exhibition edition: under the scientific direction of Guillaume Faroult. Translation : Benjamin Aguilar Laguierce, 9h05 International.

Exhibition design: Sandrine Iratçabal, Atelier SIGMAS, Bordeaux.

Lighting: Géraud Périole.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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Across from the museum:

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33000 Bordeaux
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- Schedule

Open everyday except
Tuesdays and Bank
holidays. Open on July
14th and August 15th.
From 11am to 6pm.

- Access

by tramway: Line A or B
- Stops: Palais de Justice or Hôtel de Ville
Car parks: Mériadeck or Saint-Christoly

- Admission

Admissions to *British Stories* and
Collections: 5€, concession: 3€

Temporary exhibition:

7€, concession: 4€

Admissions to *Absolutely Bizarre !, British
Stories* and Collections:
Full price 7 €, concession: 4 €

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