

Tissot's 'Quiet' goes on display at Ulster Museum thanks to NHMF funding

05 October 2021

A striking painting by French artist James Tissot has been acquired by National Museums NI thanks to a £90,000 grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund along with donations from the Art Fund and Department for Communities.

Significant acquisition for Ulster Museum

The striking family portrait is now on display at the Ulster Museum as part of a new exhibition 'Tissot's Mysterious Irish Muse: New Acquisitions'.

The exhibition tells the story behind *Quiet's* subject, Kathleen Newton, who was the inspiration for some of Tissot's most famous paintings and often celebrated by the painter for her Irish heritage. She also features in Tissot's Mavoureen (Irish for 'my beloved') and La Belle Irlandaise (the beautiful Irish girl).

The acquisition of *Quiet* significantly strengthens the Ulster Museum's collection of major 19th century European paintings and is the only Tissot work in a public collection in Northern Ireland.

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The mysterious Irish muse

Kathleen Newton's unconventional life as a 19th century woman is of enduring interest today. Born in Agra, India, to Irish parents, her story involves an arranged marriage, single motherhood and life in London as Tissot's mistress and muse. Despite the challenges they faced by society at the time, Tissot and Newton remained dedicated to one another, as her prominence in his work suggests.

Tissot was best-known for his depictions of leisured life and fashionable female costume and painted the work in the sunlit garden of his house in St. John's

Wood, London. *Quiet* depicts Kathleen as an elegant young woman, looking up from her book with an air of self-confidence and independence, her niece at her side.

NHMF funding protects another treasure

Dr Simon Thurley CBE, Chair, The National Heritage Memorial Fund said: “We are delighted to have supported the acquisition of James Tissot’s *Quiet* with a grant of £90,000.

“The National Heritage Memorial Fund exists to safeguard some of our finest heritage at risk of loss and, thanks to our support, *Quiet* and the fascinating story behind its subject Kathleen Newtown will be preserved for Ulster Museum visitors to explore for years to come. It joins the many hundreds of important and much-loved treasures that can be seen and enjoyed across the UK thanks to the National Heritage Memorial Fund.”

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Kathryn Thomson, Chief Executive of National Museums NI, said: “New acquisitions keep our collections alive and encourage us to look at familiar work with fresh eyes. We look forward to welcoming the public to view Tissot’s *Quiet* on display at Ulster Museum. It’s a magnificent piece of art that captures the character of an interesting Irish woman and is sure to captivate viewers.”

See the painting

Quiet is now on display at the Ulster Museum. Admission is free but visitors are recommended to [book their tickets in advance](#).