

National Museum Wales acquires William Burges vase

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National Museum Wales acquires William Burges vase thanks to the support of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Art Fund and the Headley Trust.

Image



National Museum Wales

Victorian ceramic vase designed by William Burges, acquired by Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales

An important Victorian ceramic vase designed by architect William Burges is the most recent addition to Wales' national art collection. The vase was an integral part of one of the great masterpieces of Victorian architecture, one of a set of four designed by Burges in 1874 for the Third Marquess of Bute for the Summer Smoking Room at Cardiff Castle.

With the financial support of the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF), the Art Fund and the Headley Trust, Amgueddfa Cymru has been successful in purchasing the vase, which will be a highly significant addition to the museum's collection of Victorian design. It has been acquired after being subjected to a temporary Export Bar by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

Despite his national pre-eminence and his importance to Cardiff, to date Burges has been represented in Wales' national art collection by only a small number of objects. This vase will help rectify that by building a more representative picture of his practice and the range of his imagination. It will add to the story of how the art of design has developed in Wales, a field to which Burges made a unique and outstanding contribution.

The vase will be displayed prominently as a star item at National Museum Cardiff from spring 2016. The museum is also hoping to carry out further research on the vase with a view to trying to identify its manufacturer and decorator, and to use it to inspire creativity amongst young people through its educational programme.

UK Culture Minister, Ed Vaizey said: "William Burges was one of the UK's most important architectural designers, with a real influence on Cardiff's landscape so it's fantastic news that thanks to the export ban this historic vase will remain in Cardiff for everyone to enjoy."

Andrew Renton, Keeper of Art, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, added: "Cardiff is a key location for the understanding of Burges but, despite his prominent architectural legacy in the city, there are surprisingly few objects designed by him in Wales. We are delighted to have acquired this vase, thanks to the NHMF, the Art Fund and the Headley Trust. It will certainly have a major impact on how the Museum tells the story of Victorian design.

"Burges is probably best known in Wales for his work on Cardiff Castle and we hope to be able to work with them in promoting the story of the architect and his impact on design in Wales."

Sir Peter Luff, Chair of NHMF, said: "Whilst William Burges' career was short, he is considered one of the great Victorian art-architects. Burges designed this particular vase for display in Wales and so it is right that the National Heritage Memorial Fund was able to step in and secure its future in Cardiff."

According to Stephen Deuchar, Director of the Art Fund: "This striking vase by one of the most gifted and original architect-designers of the 19th century is an excellent acquisition for National Museum Wales. Given its strong local

significance, I am particularly pleased that the piece will remain in Wales.”

Entry to National Museum Cardiff is free, thanks to the support of the Welsh Government.

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales operates seven museums across Wales including National Museum Cardiff, St Fagans National History Museum, the National Roman Legion Museum, Big Pit National Coal Museum, the National Wool Museum, the National Slate Museum and the National Waterfront Museum.

Notes to editors

The vase has been purchased for £163,000, with the support of grants of £83,000 from the NHMF, £50,000 from the Art Fund and £10,000 from the Headley Trust.

The Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art, driven by the belief that everyone should have access to great art. In the past five years alone, the Art Fund has given £34m to help museums and galleries acquire works of art for their collections. It also helps museums share their collections with wider audiences by supporting a range of tours and exhibitions, including ARTIST ROOMS and the 2013-18 Aspire tour of Tate’s Constable’s Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows, and makes additional grants to support the training and professional development of curators.

The Art Fund is independently funded, with the core of its income provided by more than 117,000 members who receive the National Art Pass and enjoy free entry to over 230 museums, galleries and historic places across the UK, as well as 50% off entry to major exhibitions. In addition to grant-giving, the Art Fund’s support for museums includes the annual Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year (won by The Whitworth, Manchester, in 2015), a publications programme and a range of digital platforms including a website and the Art Guide app, promoting a network of over 650 museums and galleries across the country. More information is available at the [Art Fund website](#).

Further information

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