

Gallery acquires rare painting

25/09/2012

The final funds were raised through a £9,900 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) towards the purchase and a celebratory community education project.

Anne Killigrew worked at the royal court of King James II as Lady-in-Waiting to Queen Mary of Modena. Although she was born in London, Anne's family history is firmly rooted in Falmouth. Anne's grandfather, Sir Robert Killigrew, was Governor of Pendennis Castle and was succeeded by his eldest son Sir William after his death in 1567. Sir William's younger brother, Dr Henry Killigrew, was Anne's father and worked in London, first as chaplain to King Charles I and later as Master of the Savoy Hospital.

The painting, entitled *Venus Attired by the Three Graces*, dates back to the 1680s. It shows Venus, the goddess of love, being dressed by her attendants, the Three Graces, in a woodland scene with mythological creatures.

Anne Killigrew's exceptional qualities as an artist and a poet were highly praised in her lifetime and the poet John Dryden dedicated a poem to her in which he refers directly to this picture: 'Where nymphs of brightest form appear, / And shaggy satyrs standing near' (from *To the Pious Memory of the Accomplished Young Lady Mrs. Anne Killigrew Excellent In The Two Sister-Arts of Poesy And Painting: An Ode*).

The gallery raised £55,000 in total with the rest of the funding coming through Falmouth Town Council, grants from The Art Fund, MLA V&A Purchase Grant Fund, the Beecroft Bequest and donations from NADFAS, Constantine Arts Society and members of the public.

Art Gallery Director, Louise Connell, said: "This painting is extremely rare, being one of only three in existence by Anne Killigrew, and was painted shortly before she died of smallpox at the young age of 26. Another of Anne's paintings, a portrait of King James II, is owned by Her Majesty the Queen in the Royal Collection. We are absolutely delighted that we are able to house this important painting in Falmouth and would like to thank all of the funders and generous members of the public who have supported our fundraising campaign."

The grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund will support an impressive programme of activities to enable the local community to understand and appreciate the importance of the painting, the artist and the period during which she lived.

Commenting on the award, Head of HLF South West, Richard Bellamy, said: "We were delighted to be able to help Falmouth Art Gallery bring Anne Killigrew's unique painting to the town with which her family had such strong connections. The exciting programme of activities linked to the acquisition of the painting will provide local people of all ages with practical opportunities to gain an insight into the period during which the painting was created."

The painting will be on display in the permanent gallery until 12 November 2012 and will go back on display in January 2013. Falmouth Art Gallery is open Monday to Saturday 10 am – 5 pm including bank holidays. Admission is free.

Further information

Louise Connell on 01326 313 863, email: director@falmouthartgallery.com.