Success! World famous picture of Elizabeth I saved



The Armada Portrait of Elizabeth I, circa 1590 National Maritime Museum, London

The Armada Portrait of Elizabeth I is to be permanently housed at the Queen's House in Greenwich thanks to £7.4million from HLF plus £1.5m from a public appeal run by the Art Fund and Royal Museums Greenwich.

This investment enables the painting - one of the most iconic images in English history - to go into public ownership for the first time in its 425-year history.

[quote=Sir Peter Luff, HLF Chair]"National Lottery players have enabled us to secure a stunning piece of our national heritage for this perfect location."[/quote]

Stunning national heritage

Sir Peter Luff, HLF Chair, said: "HLF's grant of £7.4m was only possible thanks to National Lottery players. They have enabled us to secure a stunning piece of our national heritage for this perfect location and, very happily, in the year of the second Queen Elizabeth's 90th birthday too."

8,000 donations

The fundraising campaign prompted 8,000 donations in just 10 weeks, with every donation matched pound for pound, raising £1.5m in total. Additional contributions made by the Linbury Trust, the Garfield Weston Foundation and the Headley Trust took the total to £10.3m making this one of the most successful ever campaigns for a work of art.

The portrait, sold by descendants of Sir Francis Drake, commemorates the most famous conflict of Elizabeth's reign (1558–1603), the failed invasion of England by the Spanish Armada in summer 1588.

Sir Peter added: "The Armada portrait is a compelling historic icon, illustrating as it does a decisive conflict, inspiring female leadership, maritime power and the emergence of the Elizabethan 'Golden Age'."

Cupcakes to the rescue

Up and down the country people helped the appeal. Seven-year-old Christina Ryder, who attends Wakefield Girls' High School Junior School, started a fundraising campaign for the portrait by selling cupcakes iced with Elizabeth I faces, while wearing a magnificent costume inspired by the painting. St Paul's Girls' School in London held a bake sale in aid of the portrait.

Minister of State for Digital and Culture Matt Hancock said: "It has been fantastic to see the overwhelming generosity and support, particularly from National Lottery players, for bringing this famous painting into the public domain. I'm absolutely delighted that everyone will be able to enjoy this stunning portrait of Elizabeth I at its new home at the Queen's House in Greenwich, and I can't wait to go and see it."

New home in Queen's House

The portrait will be the centrepiece of the opening of the Queen's House this autumn on 11 October 2016. The painting will undergo a period of necessary conservation to restore its fragile painted surfaces in 2017, and will then be part of an exhibition programme and outreach activities.