Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales



The series of works by Piper – the mid-20th century neo-romantic artist – has been purchased from a private individual with links to Wales, thanks to the generous support of the Heritage Lottery Fund (£472,900), the Derek Williams Trust (£350,000) and the Art Fund (£80,000).

Much of the collection, including nine further works given to Amgueddfa Cymru as a gift, will be on display at National Museum Cardiff from Saturday, 22 February 2014 as part of a new exhibition inspired by Wales' Celtic past, folklore and landscape. The title for the exhibition - *Wales Visitation: Poetry, Romanticism and Myth in Art Imagined* - has been inspired by a poem by the American writer, Allen Ginsberg, which he wrote while visiting the Black Mountains in 1967. It is made up from works from the museum's collection which explore modern and contemporary forms of Romanticism. Featured artists include David Jones, Richard Long, Graham Sutherland, Clare Woods and of course John Piper - one of the most versatile British artists of the 20th century.

Piper's contribution to the show is the newly acquired collection of works worth £974,000 - an outstanding group of views of Snowdonia. The mountains of North Wales provided a key source of inspiration to Piper from the early 1940s to the mid-1950s, during which time he rented two cottages in the Snowdonia area. Using these as a base, he travelled round this landscape capturing the complex, semi-abstract forms and rich colours of the mountains.

The art works by Piper were first shown at the museum in 2012, when they were privately owned, and then toured to

Oriel y Parc in Pembrokeshire and the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester. The exhibition was seen by 67,000 people across the three venues.

David Anderson, Director General, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales said: “The success of the exhibition of works by John Piper in 2012 confirmed to us how popular the artist is to the people of Wales, and therefore how important it is to add to the representation of his work in the national collection.

“Thanks to the extremely generous contributions of the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Derek Williams Trust and the Art Fund, we have been able to do just that. Worth around £1m, we couldn’t even consider purchasing these works alone.

“Thank you also to the team at the Colwinston Charitable Trust for their continuing support of the display of contemporary collections at National Museum Cardiff.”

Commenting on the grant award, Jennifer Stewart, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Wales, said:
“This is a very exciting acquisition for National Museum Wales and we are delighted to be able to support it. This popular artist and his works have a strong connection to Wales and these acquired paintings play an important part in interpreting and reflecting our diverse landscapes. Snowdonia is one of our national heritage jewels and is beautifully portrayed in John Piper’s pieces. We look forward to seeing them displayed around Wales and used in new and exciting ways so that people can learn more about heritage.”

John Thomas-Ferrand, Deputy Chair of Derek Williams Trust, with which the museum has enjoyed a unique relationship for over 20 years added: "Our support for this acquisition was unequivocal in that it continues the thread of John Piper's work running through the original collection of Derek Williams of which there were 24 including A Ruined House and Capel Curig.

“The artist was highly regarded by Derek and the Trustees are delighted to have been able to help the National Museum to further expand its holding in this way, particularly of an artist with such strong links to Wales."

Stephen Deuchar, director of the Art Fund, said: “National Museum Wales, a key centre for the art of John Piper, is the most fitting home for a collection of works revealing the artist’s varied and invigorating image of Wales. We are really pleased to be helping the museum make this nationally important acquisition.”

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

Further information

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