



WADDESDON
Rothschild Collections

Summer Exhibition at Waddesdon Offers New Perspective on Eighteenth-Century Art and Celebrity

Waddesdon Manor presents *Fame and Friendship: Pope, Roubiliac, and the Portrait Bust in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, organised in collaboration with the Yale Center for British Art.

The show runs from 18 June – 26 October 2014.

The exhibition brings together paintings, sculptures and materials which convey Pope's celebrity status, highlighted by a series of eight busts by Louis François Roubiliac (1702-1762), the leading sculptor of the period, to explore questions of authorship, replication, and dissemination. It features loans from the Yale Center and other major collections including the British Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Louvre, the National Portrait Gallery and the British Library, as well as works from the collection at Waddesdon.

Frequently used in antiquity to represent and celebrate writers, the portrait bust became the most familiar way of lauding famous writers in the eighteenth century as the concept of authorship was being newly conceived. The signed and documented versions of Roubiliac's busts of Pope, which span the years from 1738 to 1760, are among the most fascinating and iconic images of the poet. These early versions of Roubiliac's bust are likely to have been made for Pope's close friends, serving to articulate those friendships that were so important to him. Further, the comparisons between these related versions, together with copies from the period in marble, plaster, and ceramic, provide a unique and unprecedented opportunity to understand the role of replication and repetition in eighteenth-century sculptural practice.

Complementing the sculptures of Pope are busts of other sitters with whom Pope's image was associated, reflecting the poet's place in a developing literary canon, as well as a selection of painted portraits of the poet by artists such as Jonathan Richardson the Elder, Jean-Baptiste van Loo, and Sir Godfrey Kneller. Alongside these works is a range of Pope's printed texts. With their subtle changes in typography and their carefully planned illustrations and ornamental features, these early editions



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were produced under the watchful eye of Pope himself and were the outcome of the poet's direct engagement with the materiality of the book and print.

The relationship between Pope's private persona and public fame was complex and ambiguous. Pope proved adept at managing the two while gradually establishing himself as an independent author, no longer dependent upon the support of noble patrons. Throughout his career, he astutely managed the presentation of his own image and reputation through both his published works and his portraits, especially those by Roubiliac.

Among the busts by Roubiliac is a terracotta model (ca. 1738) from the collection of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts in Birmingham, and four marble pieces that he carved between 1738 and 1741. These busts have been assembled from a number of locations: the Yale Center's collection; Temple Newsam House, Leeds Museums and Galleries; and the Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead (formerly in the possession of the eighteenth-century actor David Garrick). Another, from a private collection, was made for Pope's close friend, the brilliant young lawyer, William Murray, later first Earl of Mansfield, with whom the poet shared an enthusiasm for both the classics and the visual arts, particularly sculpture.

The exhibition includes a range of printed texts lent by the British Library, and material that illustrates the reception of Pope and his works in France, in keeping with Waddesdon's superb French collections.

Fame and Friendship: Pope, Roubiliac, and the Portrait Bust in Eighteenth-Century Britain is curated by Malcolm Baker, Distinguished Professor of the History of Art at the University of California, Riverside, and Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and Martina Droth, Organizing Curator at the Yale Center for British Art, and at Waddesdon Manor by Dr Juliet Carey, Senior Curator of Paintings, Sculpture and Works on Paper.

During the course of the exhibition, Yale University Press will be publishing *The Marble Index: Roubiliac and Sculptural Portraiture in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Malcolm Baker's study of the bust and the statue as genres.

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Notes to Editors:

Waddesdon Manor was built by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild at the end of the 19th century (1877 - 1891) to display his outstanding collection of art treasures and to entertain the fashionable world. It combines the highest quality 18th-century French decorative arts with magnificent English portraits and Dutch Old Master paintings with one of the finest Victorian gardens in Britain, famous for its parterre and ornate working Aviary. It was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1957 and is now managed by a family charitable trust under the chairmanship of Lord Rothschild. For more information, visit www.waddesdon.org.uk.