

# CLAUDE LORRAIN

THE ENCHANTED LANDSCAPE

6 Oct 2011–8 Jan 2012



**PRESS  
INFORMATION**

**ASHMOLEAN**

MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

# CONTENTS



Introduction

Exhibition Highlights

Curator's Biographies

The Städel Museum, Frankfurt



Supporters, Tickets, Catalogue and Events

The Ashmolean Museum

European Prints & Drawings at the Ashmolean



Related Galleries

Oxfordshire's Enchanted Landscape

Contact Details

## INTRODUCTION



Detail from *Landscape with the Judgement of Paris*, 1633  
© Trustees of the ninth Duke of Buccleuch's Chattels Fund

Claude Lorraine's contemporaries praised him as a "natural painter" above all else. No one before him had painted the majesty of trees or the magic of the morning and evening light in the countryside with such breathtaking poetry. His themes are often literary and his compositions theatrical but his response to nature is conveyed with such overwhelming feeling that the artifice is concealed and we are transported effortlessly back into a Romantic landscape of ancient ruins and river valleys. This mastery of natural effects was based upon drawings made during frequent walks along the River Tiber and elsewhere in the Roman Campagna. These include several of the freshest studies of the natural world in existence. Claude was not an academic artist and his approach was eccentric. His habit of reworking his preparatory studies has resulted in a number of drawings which are sometimes perplexing. Claude was one of the great innovators although the enormous reputation which he once enjoyed as a classic painter and the influence of his work on generations of landscape artists has made this less obvious than it was in his lifetime. This is true, above all, in Britain. Much British parkland has been laid out in the manner of his paintings and many country houses are well stocked with his original paintings and copies. Two-thirds of his paintings were, at one time, in Britain and even today, when much has been sold abroad, over 40% of his drawings remain in the British Museum. As a result he has become one of the best known of great artists, but the least understood. This exhibition will enable visitors to see him again with fresh eyes.

## CLAUDE'S LIFE

Claude Gellée (or Claude Lorraine, as he is generally known) was born in Champagne in the Duchy of Lorraine, France, son of Jean Gellée and Anne (or Idatte) Padose, the 3rd of seven children. According to the inscription on his tombstone he was born in 1600, but this date conflicts with evidence of a number of early documents which suggest he may have been born in 1604–5. His family seems to have been modestly prosperous. Joachim von Sandrart, his first biographer, tells us that he was trained as a pastry-cook after a false start at school, and subsequently went to Rome, like many pastry-cooks from Lorraine, to look for work. There, after some initial difficulty, he entered the service of the landscape painter Agostino Tassi, eventually becoming his pupil and assistant. According to his second biographer, Filippo

# CLAUDE LORRAIN

THE ENCHANTED LANDSCAPE



*Portrait of Claude*  
possibly a self-portrait, used as a  
frontispiece to the *Liber Veritatis*  
© British Museum

Baldinucci, Claude left Lorraine before his twelfth birthday, following the death of his parents, and settled for about a year in Fribourg-en-Bresgau with his elder brother, Jean, a maker of intarsia in wood, from whom he learned the rudiments of drawing ornament. At the end of this period, he moved to Rome in the company of a lace-merchant, to whom he was related. A birthdate of 1604–5 would locate his arrival in Rome in 1617–18. He lived at first on a small income from Lorraine, probably his inheritance, until it was cut off by the impact of foreign wars. He then transferred to Naples where, according to Baldinucci, he worked for about two years with the landscape painter Goffredo Wals, a German artist who does not appear in Sandrart's account. In April 1625 he returned to Lorraine and entered into an agreement with Claude Deruet to work as his assistant for one year. The contract (which survives) expired on 1 October 1626. According to Baldinucci, he was chiefly engaged in assisting Deruet with the decoration of the Carmelite church near Nancy 'for a year or more' and returned to Rome at Easter 1627.

Following his return, he painted a number of murals in Roman palaces and began to make a name for himself by painting port scenes and landscapes for Romans and foreigners. At an uncertain date, possibly in 1633–4, in company with a number of other landscape artists, he supplied a series of paintings for Philip IV's new palace of Buen Retiro near Madrid. At about the same time, he came to the attention of Urban VIII, beginning a long career as a painter to successive popes, cardinals and princes. Urban commissioned four known paintings from Claude, one of which shows the harbour at Santa Marinella which Claude visited for the purpose of studying the site.

As Claude explained to Baldinucci, the forgeries which his work inspired while he was working for the King of Spain prompted him to compile a record of his work, his *Liber Veritatis*, a 'book of truth', for the sake of authenticating his paintings. The contents of the book, which have been disbound but survive intact in the British Museum, are not only the best source of information about Claude's paintings but a unique record of a 17th-century artist's work. In 1650 he adopted Agnese, an abandoned child, born in 1653 of unknown parents, who remained with him until his death. Jean Gellée, Claude's nephew, entered the artist's household in 1662. A second nephew, Joseph, arrived in the late 1670s. In February 1663, severely ill, Claude made his will, adding a codicil in 1670 and two more in 1682. He died in the house in the Via del Babuino on 23 November 1682 and was buried in the church of SS Trinità dei Monti.

## EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS



### *Landscape with the Judgement of Paris, 1633*

Oil on canvas, 970 x 1220 mm, inscribed: *CLAVDIO. IELLE INV. 1633*

© Trustees of the ninth Duke of Buccleuch's Chattels Fund / Photography by John McKenzie

Claude was the first artist to specialise in painting 'pairs'. Approximately half his paintings were made as companion pieces, the earliest of which are these compositions from 1633. *Landscape with the Judgement of Paris* is Claude's first painting with a mythological subject. It represents the moment, very familiar in art, when the shepherd Paris awards a golden apple to Venus in a competition with Juno and Minerva to decide who is the fairest of the three. As a painter of landscapes, the story of the shepherd was well chosen to appeal to Claude but he was not known as a painter of nude figures

which he introduced very rarely into his compositions. The goddesses have been put in a position where they are lit by a shaft of sunlight entering the scene from a space on the right between Paris and the viewer. The same light catches the temple in the background, set against a dark mass of trees, and spreads a golden haze over the distant landscape. The temple is based on the temple of the Sibyl at Tivoli where Claude was working at this time.



### *Coast View, 1633*

Oil on canvas, 970 x 1220 mm, inscribed: *CLAVDIO GELLÉ INV. ROMAE. 1633;* and in lower left: *CLAVDIO [... ]LE INV[... ]RO[...]*

© Trustees of the ninth Duke of Buccleuch's Chattels Fund / Photography by John McKenzie

This is the earliest known of Claude's many coastal or harbour scenes, set out like a stage with ships and buildings flanking an expansive view of the sea in the centre. Fifteen of the first forty-three items in the *Liber Veritatis*, dating from c.1633 to 1638, are compositions of this type, each incorporating a number of ancient and modern buildings in different combinations. These are all genre scenes in which porters and sailors mingle with merchants and townspeople on the quayside or on the shore. While it anticipates one of the major themes in Claude's art, this painting also looks back to the port scenes of Agostino Tassi and

Paul Bril. This particular scene represents a boat-yard with a galley in dry-dock and a supply of timber in the foreground. Both the galley and the tree alongside the shelter in which the galley has been docked were painted over the architecture and may have been the result of second thoughts. The remains on the shore which include a relief with two figures and fragments of columns, recall the architectural debris which, in Claude's time, littered the banks of the River Tiber in Rome. The companion picture, *Landscape with the Judgement of Paris* (above), is lit by a similarly low sun, hidden by the trees, which shines from the opposite direction. The bright, cool colours of the coast scene suggest it is a sunrise. The warm light in the other painting would be more appropriate for evening. These are the earliest known pendants in Claude's art, the first of many based on contrasting themes and opposing times of day.



### ***Dido and Aeneas at Carthage, 1676***

Oil on canvas, 1200 x 1492 mm, signed on a stone at bottom centre: *AENEAS ET DIDO CLAVDIO I. V. F. [“In Urbe Fecit”] ROMAE 1676*; and on a cargo bundle borne by a man beneath the triumphal arch: *CLAVDIO 1675 ROMA*

© **Kunsthalle, Hamburg**

In 1676, Claude finished his last painted harbour scene - *Dido and Aeneas at Carthage* - which he had begun the previous year, the only such scene he executed after 1650. In the right foreground, in front of a mighty columned portico partially in ruins, stands Dido, queen of Carthage, Aeneas, who has fled from Troy, his son Ascanius (or Julius) and a number of other figures who may be of significance but have not been identified. Dido points to the harbour with its sailing ships and smaller boats, and to a high-domed temple on the left. From there

the viewer's gaze wanders rightward again across the water to the monumental triumphal arch and round crenelated tower, before finally gliding into the spatial depths, to the city and the mountains beyond.



### ***Ascanius Shooting the Stag of Sylvia, 1682***

Oil on canvas, 1200 x 1500 mm, inscribed: *CLAVDIO. I. V. F. A ROMAE 1682 Come. Ascanio. saetta il. Cervo di Silvia figliuola di Tirro lib. 7. Vig. and CLAVDIO ROM*

© **Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford**

The titles which Claude inscribed on several of his paintings identify subjects which would otherwise be difficult to pin down. This hunting scene, as Claude carefully noted on the canvas, is taken from Book VII of Virgil's *Aeneid*. The painting was commissioned by Prince Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna as a companion to *Dido and Aeneas at Carthage*, a painting completed six years earlier. Despite the lapse of time which separates the two, they were probably planned, from the start, as a pair. The buildings on the right side of *Dido and Aeneas at Carthage* match the columns on the left side of *Ascanius* while the light enters

from the right in the former and from the left in the latter. Both illustrate subjects from the *Aeneid* and both include the figure of Ascanius. According to a fanciful tradition, the Colonna were descended from Ascanius through the Julian clan. These links probably determined the choice of a subject from the life of Ascanius but the particular episodes were presumably chiefly dictated by Claude's need to find a port scene and a landscape to constitute a pair. An inscription, once visible on the back of the canvas, read: "Picture for the most illustrious and excellent Constable Colonna, 5 October 1681." In the painting, everything has been suffused with an air of fantasy. The hunters are impossibly elongated – Ascanius, in particular, is absurdly top-heavy - but even they are overwhelmed by the vast landscape, lit by a silvery sky, which arches over them and recedes far back into the blue, snow-capped hills. Despite the signature and inscription which normally would have been added when the picture had been completed, the sky, sea, river and the hills on the right appear to be unfinished. It was Claude's last painting and was probably still on the easel when he died on 23 November 1682.



*Landscape with Psyche Outside the Palace of Cupid, c.1664*

Oil on canvas, 871 x 1513 mm, NG6471

© National Gallery, London

The poetic title by which this painting is known, *The Enchanted Castle*, dates only from the time of an engraving by Vivares and Woollett, published in 1782. It was then believed to represent Armida abandoned by Rinaldo. Baldinucci, however, described it as a picture of "Psyche by the seashore" and this is now universally accepted as the correct subject. Psyche's tale appears first in the *Golden Ass*, a novel by the ancient writer Apuleius, which includes a long digression

on the story of Cupid's love for Psyche and her quest to find him after he had abandoned her. The sober pile of the castle against the pale sky gives a melancholic character to the scene. *The Landscape with Psyche* was painted in c.1664 for Prince Onofrio Colonna, Claude's most important patron in his last years. In c.1666, Claude completed a pendant, *Landscape with Psyche saved from Drowning*, now in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne.

Claude's paintings not only inspired collectors, artists and landscape designers, but also extended to the Romantic poets.

*You know the Enchanted Castle, - it doth stand  
Upon a rock, on the border of a Lake,  
Nested in trees, which all do seem to shake  
From some old magic-like Urganda 's Sword.  
O Phoebus! that I had thy sacred word  
To show this Castle, in fair dreaming wise,  
Unto my friend, while sick and ill he lies!*

from Keats's *Epistle to John Hamilton Reynolds*, 1818  
Posthumous & Fugitive Poems



***Landscape with Christ appearing to Mary Magdalene, 1681***

Oil on canvas, 845 x 1410 mm, signed bottom left: *CLAUDIO I. V.F. ROMAE 168[1]* (the last digit is indistinct)

© **Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main**

Claude Lorrain executed this painting and its companion piece, *St Philip Baptizing the Eunuch*, between 1678 and 1681 for Cardinal Fabrizio Spada. Following service as papal nuncio in Savoy and Paris, Spada had recently been appointed cardinal and returned to Rome. The special charm of this painting lies

in the treatment of the light. A harmonious blend of green, brown and blue creates the delicately shimmering, slightly misty early light of a beautiful clear day. The rising sun is behind the hill on the left. The atmosphere generated by the light not only indicates the time of day, but also serves as an expression of what has come to pass – Mary Magdalene's realisation of faith.

The elongated figures are especially conspicuous here, even if they have their counterparts in other paintings of Claude's late period. In the Frankfurt painting they were considered so disturbing that they were overpainted and shortened in the nineteenth century. It was only in the 1980s that they were restored to their original form. Claude employed the elongation as a means of intensifying the mood. It brings about an aura of unreality alluding to an abstract content above and beyond the visible depiction. This is particularly true of the figure of Christ in his mythical blue garment.



***Landscape with Christ appearing to St Mary Magdalene***

Black chalk with pen, brown ink and brown wash on white paper, heightened with white body colour, 191 x 252 mm, inscribed on the verso: *quadro facto per leminno et / et Revermo sigre il sigr / Cardinale Spada A Roma / 1681*; and to the left: *Claudio IVF*; numbered twice: 194

© **British Museum**

This copy in the *Liber Veritatis* has been compressed to fit the different format of the page but is otherwise an accurate record of the details of the *Noli Me Tangere* now in the Städel, Frankfurt. The city walls are prominent in the background. On the right, Mary of Cleophas and Mary Salome approach the gate and the angel is visible at the entrance to the tomb. Claude has introduced a tall tree dividing the composition asymmetrically, a device which he used with great

frequency in the background of his paintings. This was the second last drawing inserted by Claude into the *Liber*. His hand was not so firm as it had been but it remains a beautifully expressive image, conveying the pathos and mystery of the narrative in an elegiac landscape through contrasting effects of light and shadow.





*The Square Tower*  
Etching, 193 x 140 mm  
© Kunstsammlungen  
der Veste Coburg



## The 'Fireworks' series

*The Square Tower in  
Flames*

Etching, 195 x 139 mm  
© Staatliche Museen zu  
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett



*Atlas Supporting the World*  
Etching and drypoint, 194 x  
138 mm. WA1855.541.2  
© Ashmolean Museum,  
University of Oxford



*The Round Tower with  
Exploding Fireworks*

Etching, 195 x 136 mm  
© Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Kupferstichkabinett



*The Equestrian Statue is  
Guided to the Palazzo di  
Spagna*  
Etching, 194 x 137 mm  
© Kunstsammlungen der  
Veste Coburg

In Baroque Rome, public celebrations were an integral part of the representation of state. In early February 1637, elaborate public festivities lasting several days took place on a number of prominent squares in Rome. The occasion was the election of the Hapsburg successor to the throne, Ferdinand III of Hungary (who was soon to become Holy Roman Emperor), as "King of the Romans". The Spanish ambassador to the Vatican hosted the celebration

on the Piazza di Spagna directly in front of his residence. He was a patron of the arts and in the second half of the 1630s he acted as an intermediary in the process by which Claude received important commissions from the Spanish royal court. It is plausible that he also commissioned Claude to document the festivities in printed (publishable) images.

On Sunday 1 February a 'festival machine', 16 metres high, was erected on the square. It consisted of a splendidly marbled quatrefoil-shaped base surrounded by four wine-spouting fountains, topped by shield-bearing lions and a kneeling Atlas carrying the world on his back. At nightfall, the façade of the Palazzo di Spagna was illuminated with coloured torches, drums and trumpets sounded and – to the crackling and flashing of fireworks – the terrestrial globe on the back of Atlas opened up to reveal a celestial globe with gleaming stars. The festivities continued over the course of the week.

Claude captured the splendour of the displays in a highly unusual series of etchings, executed within an extremely brief space of time. Considering the precision with which they depict the "machines" and their transformations, he is likely to have used drawings no longer extant, possibly mere schematic sketches. The etching technique lent itself well to both rapid production and the adequate illustration of the sensational events.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### **Dr Jon Whiteley, Exhibition Curator and Senior Assistant Keeper of Western Art, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford**

Jon Whiteley has been Assistant Keeper of Western Art at the Ashmolean Museum since 1977, specialising in French and British paintings and drawings. His publications include "Ingres" (1976), "Sixteenth-Century French Ornament Drawings in the Ashmolean" (1996) and a complete catalogue of French Drawings in the Ashmolean (2000). He curated the exhibition of *Claude Lorrain: Drawings from the Collections of the British Museum and the Ashmolean Museum* held at the Ashmolean and British Museum in 1998 and is at present preparing a catalogue of the later French paintings in the Ashmolean.

### **Dr Martin Sonnabend, Exhibition Curator and Curator for Prints and Drawings until 1750, Department of Prints and Drawings, Städel Museum, Frankfurt**

Martin Sonnabend studied History of Art at the Universities of Cologne, Münster and Hamburg and wrote his doctoral thesis on the French sculptor Antoine-Louis Barye (1795–1875). Between 1987–1989 he worked as assistant at the Liebighaus Skulpturensammlung in Frankfurt and has been a curator in the Department of Prints and Drawings at the Städel Museum since 1989. He has curated exhibitions on Jacques Callot, Rembrandt's etchings, prints by Dürer, and drawings by Michelangelo.

## STÄDEL MUSEUM FRANKFURT



Established by the banker and businessman Johann Friedrich Städel as a foundation under civil law in 1815, the Städel Museum is the oldest and most prominent museum foundation in Germany. Its collections comprise 2,900 paintings, 600 sculptures, 500 photographs and more than 100,000 prints and drawings, ranging over 700 years of European art history, from the late Middle Ages to the present day. The Städel holds a programme of internationally acclaimed special exhibitions and a varied education programme for the community and wider regions. The museum is currently undergoing a major redevelopment project to build a new 3000 square-metre building for exhibitions and the permanent collections of modern and contemporary art. CLAUDE LORRAIN: THE ENCHANTED LANDSCAPE will tour to the Städel Museum from 3 February–6 May 2012.

## SUPPORTERS

The Ashmolean gratefully acknowledges the following supporters of the exhibition:

Colnaghi  
Johnny van Haeften Ltd  
Galerie Sanct Lucas  
Moretti  
Robilant + Voena

The Friends of the Ashmolean

### FRIENDS OF THE ASHMOLEAN

The Friends of the Ashmolean play an active and important role in the Museum. Members are entitled to free entry to exhibitions and a wide variety of activities are organised throughout the year. Since the foundation of the Friends in 1969 they have donated over £1 million to the Museum. Visit [www.ashmolean.org/support/friends](http://www.ashmolean.org/support/friends).



## TICKETS

£9/£7 (including gift aid) available at the Museum or online (from September):  
[www.ashmolean.org/exhibitions/tickets](http://www.ashmolean.org/exhibitions/tickets)



## CATALOGUE

CLAUDE LORRAIN: THE ENCHANTED LANDSCAPE is published by The Ashmolean Museum and features essays by Dr Jon Whiteley, Dr Martin Sonnabend and Dr Christian Rümelin. The catalogue can be purchased in the Ashmolean Shop or online at: [www.ashmolean.org/shop](http://www.ashmolean.org/shop). Paperback Price: £25 (£20 with an exhibition ticket - offer available through the Ashmolean Shop only)



## EVENTS

The Ashmolean Museum will host a diverse programme of events in association with CLAUDE LORRAIN: THE ENCHANTED LANDSCAPE, featuring lectures, talks and tours, garden excursions and workshops, family friendly activities, special performances and evening events. For more information visit [www.ashmolean.org/events](http://www.ashmolean.org/events)

## ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM



The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, was founded in 1683. It is Britain's oldest public museum and possibly the oldest museum in the world. In 2009 it reopened following a 10-month period of closure and a £61 million redevelopment. The new Ashmolean building, designed by award-winning architect Rick Mather, has received universal acclaim and numerous awards. It houses 39 new galleries, including the new special exhibition galleries, a dedicated Education Centre, state-of-the-art conservation studios, and Oxford's first roof-top restaurant. Although completely invisible behind Charles Cockerell's neo-classical façade, the Rick Mather building has provided the Museum with 100% more display space and the facilities to launch a major exhibitions programme. The Ashmolean received more than 1.2 million visitors in the first year since it reopened. Admission to the Museum is free.

## EUROPEAN PRINTS & DRAWINGS



*Early Morning*, 1825  
Samuel Palmer

The Ashmolean's Western Art Print Room houses one of the finest collections of European prints and drawings in Britain. It includes approximately 25,000 drawings and 250,000 prints from the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. It is open to members of the public, students and visiting scholars alike, for the study and enjoyment of the collections. Amongst the highlights are drawings and prints by Claude Lorrain, the world's finest group of drawings by Raphael, works on paper by Rembrandt, Dürer, Guercino, Watteau and Cézanne; English drawings and watercolours by JMW Turner and Samuel Palmer; the Pissarro family archive and John Ruskin's teaching collections. For more information please visit:  
[www.ashmolean.org/westernart/printroom](http://www.ashmolean.org/westernart/printroom)

## RELATED GALLERIES

Amongst the Museum's permanent collections on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, visitors will be able to see paintings and works of art by Claude's contemporaries and to explore the history of collecting in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

BAROQUE ART (46) - Works by Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck

EUROPEAN ART (44) - Works by Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough and Thomas Lawrence

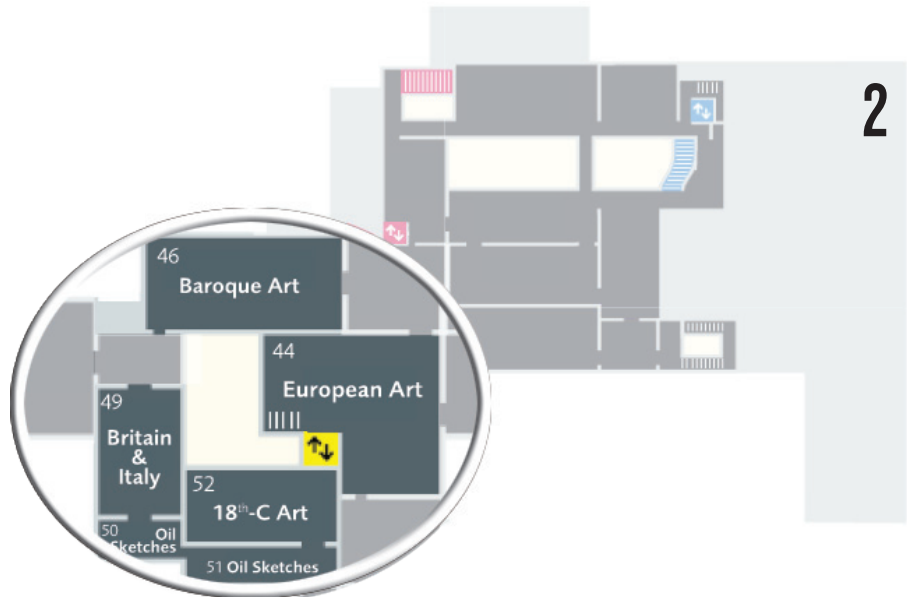
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ART (52) - Works by Johan Zoffany and William Hogarth

OIL SKETCHES (50–51) - Works by John Constable, Giovanni Costa and Frederic Leighton

BRITAIN & ITALY (46) - Works by Antonio Canaletto, Goffredo Wals and Giovanni Paolo Pannini



*The Deposition*, c.1619  
Sir Anthony van Dyck  
BAROQUE GALLERY (46)



*The Vale of Dedham from Langham*, 1832  
John Constable  
OIL SKETCHES (50–51)



*Earl Harcourt, his Wife and Brother*, 1780–81  
Sir Joshua Reynolds  
EUROPEAN ART (44)

## OXFORDSHIRE'S ENCHANTED LANDSCAPE

The 18th-century English landscape movement celebrated the beauty of nature. Many of the ideas for this movement were generated by the scenes of the Grand Tour of Europe and inspired by the views of Italy, as captured by Claude Lorrain. The following landscape gardens, designed by William Kent (1685–1748), Henry Hoare (1705–1785), and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716–1783), bring Claude's art to life.

### ROUSHAM HOUSE **Bicester, Oxfordshire OX25 4QU**

Rousham and its landscape garden should be a place of pilgrimage for students of the work of William Kent (1685–1748). Rousham represents the first phase of English landscape design and remains almost as Kent left it, one of the few gardens of this date to have escaped alteration, with many features which delighted eighteenth century visitors to Rousham still in situ, such as the ponds and cascades in Venus's Vale, the Cold Bath, and seven arched Praeneste, Townsend's Building, the Temple of the Mill, and a ruin known as the 'Eyecatcher'. The Gardens are open daily, from 10–4.30 pm.  
[www.rousham.org](http://www.rousham.org)



### BLenheim PALACE **Woodstock, Oxford OX20 1PP**

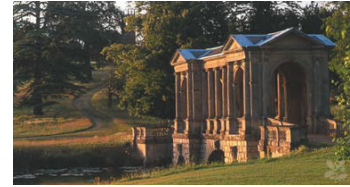
Blenheim Palace is home to the 11th Duke and Duchess of Marlborough and the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill. Set in 2100 acres of beautiful parkland landscaped by Capability Brown (1716–1783), the most eminent landscape architect of the 18th century, the magnificent Palace is surrounded by sweeping lawns, formal gardens and the great Lake. Blenheim Palace is a unique example of English Baroque architecture. The parkland features the Grand Bridge, the Column of Victory, the temple of Diana and the Duke's gardens. Walks of between 45 minutes and 1 1/2 hours allow you to fully appreciate the beauty of the Palace within its awe-inspiring setting. The Park is open daily from 9–4.45pm (last admission).  
[www.blenheimpalace.com](http://www.blenheimpalace.com)



## FURTHER AFIELD

### STOWE Buckingham MK18 5DQ

One of the most remarkable creations of Georgian England, the scale, grandeur and beauty of Stowe has inspired writers, philosophers, artists, politicians and members of the public from the 18th century to the present day. The gardens were designed by William Kent and then later Capability Brown. Now owned by the National Trust, they present the development of garden design in 18th-century England and include over 40 temples and monuments, gracing an inspiring backdrop of lakes and valleys with an endless variety of walks and trails. The park is open daily. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-stowegardens](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-stowegardens)



### COMPTON VERNEY Warwickshire CV35 9HZ

Compton Verney, the award-winning art gallery in Warwickshire, is set in more than 120 acres of Grade 2\* listed classical parkland, landscaped by Capability Brown. Although the original estate was split up and sold a century ago, the 'pleasure grounds' still clearly reflect the sweeping grassland, ornamental lakes and Cedars of Lebanon for which Brown is famous. Open Tues–Sun & Bank Holiday Mondays 11–5pm [www.comptonverney.org.uk](http://www.comptonverney.org.uk)



### STOURHEAD Near Mere, Wiltshire BA12 6QD

Stourhead garden was created by Henry Hoare in the 1740s. The River Stour was dammed to form a great lake, around which Hoare laid out a landscape garden to entrance his guests with stunning views and pacify them with serene walking pleasure. As the garden developed, he added classical features, such as the Temple of Flora, the Pantheon, the Temple of Apollo and Gothic ruins to enhance the series of splendid and unexpected vistas. Such was the accomplishment of this wondrous garden that Henry Hoare became known as 'Henry the Magnificent'. Stourhead is the same today, a self-contained and timeless masterpiece. The Gardens are open daily, 9–6pm. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/stourhead](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/stourhead)



## CONTACT DETAILS

**Susie Gault | Press & Publicity Manager**

susie.gault@ashmus.ox.ac.uk | +44 (0)1865 288 298

**Claire Parris | Ashmolean Press Office**

claire.parris@ashmus.ox.ac.uk | +44 (0)1865 278 178

**Ashmolean Museum**

University of Oxford  
Beaumont Street  
Oxford OX1 2PH

[www.ashmolean.org](http://www.ashmolean.org)

**Switchboard:** +44 (0)1865 278 000

**Open:** Tues–Sun  
Bank Holiday Mondays } 10am–6pm  
New Year's Day

**Closed:** Mondays  
24, 25 & 26 December

**Admission:** Free