

Press Release

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## MASTERPIECES BY VAN GOGH, MANET AND CÉZANNE BACK ON SHOW AS THE COURTAULD REOPENS AFTER MAJOR MODERNISATION PROJECT

Download press information and images: <https://bit.ly/3803s6V>

One of the UK's greatest art collections will have a magnificent new setting when The Courtauld, one of the world's leading centres for the study of art history, research and conservation, opens its historic central London gallery in **late 2021**. The reopening follows a major transformation to restore its grandeur and create state-of-the-art facilities, which is supported by £9.5 million from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and generous donations from foundations, individuals and other supporters.

In addition to the funding made possible by National Lottery players, who raise £30 million every week for good causes in the UK, The Courtauld would particularly like to thank the philanthropists Sir Leonard and Lady Blavatnik, and the Blavatnik Family Foundation, for their lead donation of £10 million to Courtauld Connects. The Blavatnik Fine Rooms will be a suite of six galleries showcasing some of the greatest works in The Courtauld's collection, ranging from the Renaissance to the 18th Century, and from paintings to decorative arts. The Courtauld's celebrated collection of works by Peter Paul Rubens will be one of the highlights of these displays. The generous gift received from the Blavatnik Family Foundation enabled their complete restoration, repair and refurbishment.

Masterpieces such as Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, Van Gogh's *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear* and the most significant collection of works by Cézanne in the UK will be presented in The Courtauld Gallery's spectacular Great Room, one of the largest spaces in Somerset House.

New and transformed galleries will be devoted to the Medieval and Early Renaissance collection, 20th Century art, and the Bloomsbury Group. New exhibition spaces will extend The Courtauld's celebrated programme of international loan exhibitions alongside smaller temporary projects. Overall, The Courtauld's collection will be completely redisplayed and newly interpreted.

The Courtauld would also like to acknowledge the generosity of LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton who have enabled the transformation of the historic Great Room, home to The Courtauld's collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces. The first phase of the ambitious Courtauld Connects capital project has also included the complete refurbishment of the teaching facilities within The Courtauld's world-leading Department of Conservation, including greatly increasing

their accessibility, which has been made possible thanks to a significant gift from The Linbury Trust.

Additional major support has been provided by the AKO Foundation (a charitable foundation established by Nicolai and Katja Tangen), Deborah Loeb Brice Foundation, Crankstart, The Garcia Family Foundation (U.K.) Limited, The Garfield Weston Foundation, Dr Martin and Susanne Halusa and the Oak Foundation. The Courtauld is most grateful to these visionary supporters, alongside others who are making this project and its related activities possible.

**The Lord Browne of Madingley**, Chairman of The Courtauld, said: "The opening of the Courtauld Gallery will be a cultural highlight of 2021, bringing our unique collection back to public display. It is the first step in a contemporary transformation of The Courtauld, at a time when we are more aware than ever of the contribution of the arts to our wellbeing and the economy. None of this would be possible without the visionary philanthropy of our donors and supporters, to whom we owe a significant debt of gratitude."

**Sir Leonard Blavatnik** said: "My wife and I are delighted to support the historic renovation of The Courtauld, including the Blavatnik Fine Rooms. We congratulate all those associated with the project, a unique addition to London and the world of the fine arts."

**Professor Deborah Swallow**, Märit Rausing Director of The Courtauld, said: "I am incredibly excited to be welcoming people back to The Courtauld Gallery in its Somerset House home later next year, for the first time since its closure in 2018. This will be a significant first step in the transformation of The Courtauld, enabling new and diverse audiences to discover our outstanding collection, whilst providing the best possible environment to study and research the history of art. It is an important milestone in our ongoing work to deliver our founder Samuel Courtauld's vision of making great art accessible to all."

**Stuart McLeod**, Director London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: "We are delighted to support the transformation of the historic Courtauld Gallery at Somerset House. Thanks to National Lottery players, one of the UK's greatest art collections will be brought to life through new displays and interpretation from late next year. As well as improving visitor accessibility, the funding will support a new Learning Centre that will enable people of all ages to engage with the masterpieces on display. In addition to the significant onsite developments, partnership working enabled by this National Lottery grant has seen artworks from The Courtauld's collection shared and displayed at institutions across the UK."

The development is the most significant in the history of The Courtauld, founded in 1932, and since it moved to the North Wing of Somerset House in 1989. Future ambitions include providing students and faculty with improved study and teaching facilities and unprecedented access to its collections and exhibitions, whilst giving the public greater insight into and access to The Courtauld's outstanding teaching and research.

## **MEDIA CONTACTS**

### **The Courtauld**

[www.courtauld.ac.uk/gallery/press](http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/gallery/press)  
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### **Additional supporting information**

#### **Covid-19 management**

The Courtauld has implemented COVID-secure measures on site to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all construction staff. It is working closely with the project team to minimise delays as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, though in an uncertain environment, these remain possible.

#### **Courtauld National Partnerships**

Alongside the physical transformation of the buildings, The Courtauld is also undertaking an innovative programme of activity to ensure that everyone has the chance to engage with and enjoy art. For more information, [click here](#).

#### **Further information about the transformation of The Courtauld Gallery**

Designed by Stirling Prize-winning architects Witherford Watson Mann, the Gallery redevelopment revitalises and opens up the magnificent buildings conceived by Sir William Chambers in the 1770s, celebrating their fascinating heritage. For more information, [click here](#).

#### **The Courtauld Connects project team**

The construction is being managed by Sir Robert McAlpine Special Projects. Nissen Richards Studio have been commissioned to work on gallery design, signage and wayfinding, alongside the architects.

## **THE COURTAULD**

Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN  
[www.courtauld.ac.uk](http://www.courtauld.ac.uk)

## **MEDIA MATERIALS**

Additional press materials, including high-resolution press images, are available to download via: <https://bit.ly/2K1maCO>

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Instagram [@Courtauld](#)  
Twitter [@TheCourtauld](#)  
YouTube [CourtauldInstitute](#)  
Facebook [@TheCourtauld](#)  
#TheCourtauld  
#courtauldconnects

## **COURTAULD ARTWORKS FOR VIRTUAL BACKGROUNDS**

Liven up the background of your daily Zoom or Teams meetings, with artworks from The Courtauld. [Download here](#)

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### About The Courtauld

The Courtauld works to advance how we see and understand the visual arts, as an internationally-renowned centre for the teaching, research of art history and a major public gallery. Founded by collectors and philanthropists in the 1930s, the organisation has been at the forefront of the study of art ever since, through advanced research and conservation practice, innovative teaching and research, the renowned collection and inspiring exhibitions of its gallery, and engaging and accessible activities, education and events.

The Courtauld cares for one of the greatest art collections in the UK, sharing these works with the public at The Courtauld Gallery in central London. The Gallery is most famous for its iconic Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces, such as Van Gogh's *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear* and Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*. It also showcases these alongside an internationally renowned collection of works from the Renaissance through to the present day.

Academically, The Courtauld faculty is the largest community of art historians and conservators in the UK, teaching and carrying out research on subjects from creativity in late Antiquity to contemporary digital artforms - with an increasingly global focus. An independent college of the University of London, The Courtauld offers a range of degree programmes from BA to PhD in the History of Art, curating and the conservation of easel and wall paintings. Its alumni are leaders and innovators in the arts, culture and business worlds, helping to shape the global agenda for the arts and creative industries.

Founded on the belief that everyone should have the opportunity to engage with art, The Courtauld works to increase understanding of the role played by art throughout history, in all societies and across all geographies – as well as being a champion for the importance of art in the present day. This could be through exhibitions offering a chance to look closely at world-famous works; accessible and expert short courses; events bringing art history research to new audiences; innovative school, family and community programmes; or taking a formal qualification. Our ambition is to transform access to art history education, by extending the horizons of what this is, and ensuring as many people as possible can benefit.

The Courtauld's permanent home in historic Somerset House – London's working arts centre - is currently closed for a major programme of renovation. Our students and academic staff are based near King's Cross.

The Courtauld is a registered charity and relies on generous philanthropic support to achieve its mission of advancing the understanding of the visual arts of the past and present across the world, through advanced research, innovative teaching, inspiring exhibitions, programmes and collections.

### About The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Using money raised by the National Lottery, we **Inspire, lead and resource** the UK's heritage to create **positive and lasting change** for people and communities, now and in the future. [www.heritagefund.org.uk](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk)

Follow @HeritageFundUK on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #NationalLotteryHeritageFund

### About the Blavatnik Family Foundation

The Blavatnik Family Foundation is an active supporter of world-renowned educational, scientific, cultural, and charitable institutions in the United States, the United Kingdom, Israel, Russia and throughout the world. The Foundation is headed by Sir Leonard Blavatnik,

a global industrialist and philanthropist and the founder and chairman of Access Industries, a privately held industrial group based in the U.S. with broad strategic interests. See more at [www.blavatnikfoundation.org](http://www.blavatnikfoundation.org).

#### **About The Garfield Weston Foundation**

The Garfield Weston Foundation is a family-founded charitable grant-making trust which has donated over £1 billion since being established in 1958, over half of that in the past ten years alone. In the most recent financial year the Foundation gave away over £88 million to over 2,200 charities across the UK. [www.garfieldweston.org](http://www.garfieldweston.org)

#### **About The Linbury Trust**

The Linbury Trust is an independent grant-making trust established in 1973 by Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover, and his wife Anya, Lady Sainsbury CBE. The Trust supports a wide variety of compelling and exciting projects across the world in the sectors of arts, heritage and culture; the environment; and social and community welfare. [www.linburytrust.org.uk](http://www.linburytrust.org.uk)