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SIGNATURE ART TRAIL

Priceless portraits, Russian treasures and woven icons are on show around the world. Lauren McGroder traces the aesthetic highlights of the season from stage, fashion and canvas.



FRAGONARD IN LOVE: SUITOR AND LIBERTINE

Musée du Luxembourg, Paris

The spirit of Cupid lingers in the air at Musée du Luxembourg, as it prepares for the opening of the first exhibition to analyse the elements of love and sensuality in Jean-Honoré Fragonard's body of work. This study of mid-18th-century art contextualises canvases that came to fruition during a time when the French elite joyously adopted libertinism and abandoned moral restraint. The rise of the boudoir and illustrated books dramatically shaped the artistic landscape in Europe and Fragonard was among its chief supporters. Of course, the work of this prolific painter is not all so overtly erotic, and the entire evolution of the artist is represented in this exhibition, culminating with a look at the final decade of his career in which he drew inspiration from antique poetry. Romantics can view the works from 16 September 2015 to 24 January 2016.

en.museeduluxembourg.fr

MASTERPIECES FROM THE HERMITAGE: THE LEGACY OF CATHERINE THE GREAT

National Gallery of Victoria

If you have longed to meander through the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, you can now do so sans the long-haul flight. Melbourne is paying tribute to the grand cultural treasure in an exclusive exhibition, showcasing works by Rembrandt, Rubens, Velazquez and Van Dyck, in what has been labelled the finest collection of Dutch and Flemish art to come to Australia. Of course, when recognising the Museum, its greatest patron must also be honoured, and the work sourced and commissioned by Catherine the Great during her 34-year reign of Russia certainly entitles her to this. In 1764 she commissioned the architect Yuri Velten to erect a two-storey building now referred to as the Small Hermitage to stand next to the Winter Palace, functioning as a place in which her prestigious company could gather and be entertained. You are now invited to do the same, until 8 November 2015.

www.ngv.vic.gov.au





GOYA: THE PORTRAITS

The National Gallery, London

As the darkening skies of the northern winter have many retreating for the comfort of the indoors, the enthralling work of Spain's most celebrated painter will infuse the National Gallery with a vividness only the portraits of Goya can achieve. This is the first exhibition to focus exclusively on the portraits, iconic for the way in which they seemingly lay bare the inner reflections of the sitter. Beginning with a focus on his early career, the study will trace Goya's life and work until his final years in France which he spent in Bordeaux and Paris, and it is a life that experienced both triumph and hardship, both evident in his body of work. Organised chronologically and thematically, over 50 portraits allow the viewer an insight into the artistic and psychological development of an artist that remains as relevant in death as in life.

www.nationalgallery.org.uk

DAVID JONES: VISION AND MEMORY

Pallant House Gallery, Sussex

Art enthusiasts would be wise to schedule their travels so as to be in West Sussex between 24 October 2015 and 21 February 2016 in order to witness 'David Jones: Vision and Memory'. The artist and poet was highly respected by his contemporaries, among whom TS Eliot can be counted. Working chiefly with watercolour, Jones explored the vast themes of war, after his time spent on the Western Front, and religion, after converting to Roman Catholicism in 1921. A collection of approximately 80 works from both public and private collections will examine habitual themes throughout Jones' work, forming the largest exhibition of his work in 20 years. The display runs simultaneously alongside 'The Animals of David Jones' at the Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft which will study the way in which animals are symbolic in Jones' woodcuts, carvings, drawings, woodblocks and oil paintings, some of which have never been viewed by the public.

www.pallant.org.uk



WOVEN GOLD: TAPESTRIES OF LOUIS XIV

J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

The glittering threads and intricate patterns of 17th- and 18th-century tapestries were the ultimate expression of power and wealth, and none imparted a greater sense of grandeur than those commissioned by Louis XIV. Now recognised as the symbol of absolute monarchy of the classical age, the Sun King reigned between 1643 and 1715, approaching the expansion of the arts and culture in France as determinedly as he did foreign borders. The marvellously opulent pieces that once adorned palace walls and outdoor courtyards in Paris will now lend their luxury to Los Angeles. The Getty, having secured a rare loan by the French State, will be the exclusive home to the collection of wall-hangings from 15 December 2015, evoking the spirit of the Sun King until 1 May 2016.

www.getty.edu



KING LEAR
Sydney Theatre Company

One of Australia's most respected and beloved actors, Geoffrey Rush, will bring his wealth of theatrical experience to Sydney Theatre Company's 2015 production of 'King Lear'. The Shakespearean tragedy will be directed by Neil Armfield, who, having collaborated with the lead actor for more than 30 years, forms half of a fantastic pairing. Rush's most recent performance with STC was in 1993 in David Marmet's 'Oleanna' making his return all the more significant for his interpretation of a character that contends with betrayal and the deteriorating mind. With costumes by Alice Babidge, a graduate of the National Institute of Dramatic Art and designer for productions like the Alice McCall show at the 2014 Melbourne Fashion Week, 'King Lear' is sure to be both visually and intellectually inspiring. The spectacle begins officially on 30 November 2015 and runs till 9 January 2016, with previews on 24 to 7 November.

www.sydneytheatre.com.au



JACQUELINE DE RIBES: THE ART OF STYLE
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The year of 1962 was rather exceptional for Jacqueline de Ribes, the French Countess born in 1929 with an impressively long list of credentials to her name. Although often referred to as an aristocrat, Jacqueline de Ribes is equally a designer, business woman, producer, philanthropist and style icon. It was for the latter that de Ribes was inducted into the International Best-Dressed List Hall of Fame in 1962, an honour roll established by New York publicist Eleanor Lambert. Decades later this honour would reveal itself as a mere hint at what this multi-talented woman would go on to achieve, the details of which become the subject of the Costume Institute's Fall 2015 exhibition, 'Jacqueline de Ribes: The Art of Style'. Suitably located in the Anna Wintour Costume Centre, the exhibition undertakes a close study of 60 haute-couture and ready-to-wear ensembles, primarily from de Ribes' personal archive. With pieces that range from 1959 to the present and showcase designers such as Giorgio Armani, Pierre Balmain, Roberto Cavalli and John Galiano, it is a fashion utopia. The exhibition begins on 19 November 2015 with 21 February 2016 being its final day.

www.metmuseum.org

For more exhibitions, shows and openings, visit
www.signaturemagazine.com.au/arts-spring-2015

Jacqueline de Ribes in her own design, 1983. Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Photograph by Victor Steinhilber, Steinhilber Photograph © 1983