

Exhibition of Rarely Displayed Paintings will Explore the Significance of the Castle in British Art from the Seventeenth Century to the Present

Student-Curated Installation is Part of the Center's Annual Art in Focus Initiative

NEW HAVEN, CT (April 3, 2017)—Opening April 7, 2017, the Yale Center for British Art will present *Art in Focus: The British Castle—A Symbol in Stone*, an exhibition examining the history, architectural development, and literary associations of the castle, both real and imagined, in British art. Part of the Center's *Art in Focus* exhibition series—an annual program offering hands-on curatorial experience to Yale undergraduates—the exhibition will feature nearly thirty paintings from the Center's renowned collection, many of which are rarely shown. Dating from the seventeenth century to the present, the paintings will be displayed in a dense salon-style hang in the striking, recently refurbished, Long Gallery. Highlights include a small preparatory oil sketch of John Constable's (1776–1837) masterpiece *Hadleigh Castle, The Mouth of the Thames—Morning after a Stormy Night* (1829), permanently on display in the Center's fourth-floor galleries, as well as John Martin's (1789–1854) *The Bard* (ca. 1817), based on the poem by the English poet and scholar Thomas Gray (1716–1771), and romantic portrayals of castle ruins by Richard Wilson (1714–1782) and Henry Pether (ca. 1801–1880). The exhibition will remain on view through August 6, 2017. A brochure by the same name, written by the students, will be available in the Long Gallery, and student-led tours of the exhibition will be offered during the display.



The castle is a symbol replete with meaning in British culture, capturing the imagination of artists and writers, and often serving as the setting for landscape paintings and depictions of literary scenes. As the physical seat of power, castles were seen as an emblem of government; as the residence of aristocratic families, they were an image of social continuity and domesticity; as great bastions, they became badges of resistance in times of peril; and as ruins, they served as reminders of times past and potent bearers of legend and folklore. These associations have been remarkably consistent throughout British history. Today, hundreds of medieval castles dot the English landscape—most are now ruins, but some are still inhabited by aristocratic families or serve as government buildings.



“More than any other building type, the story of the castle's rise and fall encapsulates the history of English society,” said David Frazier Lewis, Postdoctoral Research Associate at

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the Center and organizer of this exhibition. “I am delighted to work with such a talented group of students to delve deeper into the Yale Center for British Art’s remarkable collection, and examine anew this important monument of British culture. The *Art in Focus* initiative is an essential part of this institution’s educational mission, and I look forward to seeing how this experience can help our students flourish into successful creative professionals.”



Art in Focus: The British Castle—A Symbol in Stone will shed new light on the many interpretations of the castle in art and its symbolic role in British life. Central to the exhibition are depictions of Windsor Castle, the largest and oldest inhabited castle in the world and home to the British monarch; Corfe Castle, whose ruins after the English Civil War remain a symbol of modern democracy and the will of the people; and Dover Castle, which served as a stronghold against French invasion prior to the Norman Conquest through the Second World War. Paintings on display will include Wilson’s serenely imperturbable *Dover* (1746–1747), Sir Augustus Callcott’s atmospheric painting of Windsor Castle shrouded in fog, and John Inigo Richard’s moody portrayal of Corfe. Joseph Wright of Derby’s *Cottage on Fire at Night* (1785–1793) and Sebastian Pether’s *Moonlight River Scene* (1840) both show dramatically lit imaginary castles and serve as reminders of the importance of these structures in the romantic imagination.



This exhibition and accompanying brochure are generously supported by the Marlene Burston Fund and the Dr. Carolyn M. Kaelin Memorial Fund.

ABOUT THE *ART IN FOCUS* INITIATIVE

Now in its tenth year, *Art in Focus* is an annual initiative for the Yale Center for British Art’s Student Guide Program, providing undergraduates at Yale University with curatorial experience and an introduction to all aspects of exhibition practice. Student curators select objects for exhibition, write text panels and object labels, and make decisions about installation under the supervision of Center curators and staff. In researching and presenting this exhibition, the students have been guided by David Frazer Lewis, Postdoctoral Research Associate; Linda Friedlander, Senior Curator of Education; and Jaime Ursic, Assistant Curator of Education. The student curators are Irene Chung, BR ’17; Zoe Dobuler, TC ’17; Julia Fleming-Dresser, TD ’19; Claire Goldsmith, ES ’18; Caroline Kanner, JE ’18; Daniel Leibovic, TC ’17; Catherine Liu, ES ’18; and Nicholas Stewart, JE ’18.



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ABOUT THE YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART

The Yale Center for British Art houses the largest collection of British art outside the United Kingdom. Presented to the university by Paul Mellon (Yale College, Class of 1929), the collection reflects the development of British art and culture from the Elizabethan period onward. The Center's collections include more than 2,000 paintings, 250 sculptures, 20,000 drawings and watercolors, 40,000 prints, and 35,000 rare books and manuscripts. More than 40,000 volumes supporting research in British art and related fields are available in the Center's library. In May 2016, the Center reopened to the public following the completion of a multiyear conservation project of its iconic Louis I. Kahn building.



Visit the Center online at britishart.yale.edu.

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