Editorial: Britain's Best Museums and Galleries

10 to catch: what's on in December

News review by Samson Spanier

Market preview by Susan Moore: the Badminton cabinet at Christie's London

PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR: MIKHAIL PIOTROVSKY

Director of the past 12 years of the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, Mikhail Piotrovsky talks to Joanna Pitman about about the challenges of his job, outposts in Las Vegas and Mantua, the impact of money from Russia's billionaires and his plans for a museum of twentieth-century art.

MUSEUM OPENING, EXHIBITION, AND BOOK OF THE YEAR

Andrew Wilton visits the Liechtenstein Museum in Vienna, Christopher de Hamel reveals the scholarship of 'Illuminating the Renaissance: The Triumph of Flemish Manuscript Painting in Europe' at the Cottbus Museum and the Royal Academy, and Christian Rümelin praises Mark McDonald's The Print Collection of Ferdinand Columbus (1488-1539).

MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS IN 2004

The Madonna of the Pinks by Raphael is the Acquisition of the Year. Other major acquisitions include a 4th/5th-century BC Apollo and a missing leaf from the Sforza Book of Hours.

THE PEOPLE'S HERO

J F Millet's celebrated painting can be best understood in the rich context of Victorian depictions of firefighters, who first became popular heroes in the nineteenth century, as John A. Walker explains.

THE WORLD IN ST LOUIS

Phillip Prodger surveys the extraordinary range of art shown in the Palace of Fine Arts at the 1904 World's Fair, perhaps the last gasp of the great nineteenth-century salon exhibitions.

LANDSCAPES AND FAERY

In 1904 the Irish symbolist writer and artist Æ (George William Russell) held his first public exhibition of paintings, in Dublin. Diana Beale reconstructs its contents and assesses its importance.
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