



PRESS RELEASE
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TATE BRITAIN

EDWARD BURNE-JONES

24 October 2018 – 24 February 2019

Open daily 10.00 – 18.00

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This autumn, Tate Britain will present the first major Burne-Jones retrospective to be held in London for over 40 years. Renowned for otherworldly depictions of beauty inspired by myth, legend and the Bible, Edward Burne-Jones (1833–98) was a pioneer of the symbolist movement and the only Pre-Raphaelite to achieve world-wide recognition in his lifetime. This ambitious and wide-ranging exhibition will bring together over 150 works in different media including painting, stained glass and tapestry, reasserting him as one of the most influential British artists of the 19th century.

Edward Burne-Jones will chart his rise from an outsider of British art to one of the great artists of the European *fin de siècle*. Burne-Jones rejected Victorian industrial ideals, offering an enchanted parallel universe inhabited by beautiful and melancholy beings. The exhibition will bring together all the major works from across his four-decade career, depicting Arthurian knights, Classical heroes and Biblical angels. Spectacular large-scale paintings like *Love among the Ruins* 1870-73 and *The Wheel of Fortune* 1883 will show his international impact, including at the 1889 Exposition Universelle when he emerged on the world stage as the leading light of symbolist art. Two rooms dedicated to the artist's most famous narrative cycles will be shown together for the first time. These huge canvases are among his finest and best-loved works, telling the action-packed story of Perseus and the dreamlike fairy tale of Sleeping Beauty.

Burne-Jones's lack of formal training in fine art allowed him to develop a distinct and highly idiosyncratic approach to painting that bridged the fine and decorative arts. The exhibition will open with a focus on his early career, highlighting his work as a church decorator. Striking examples of stained glass such as *The Good Shepherd* 1857-61 will be presented alongside *The Adoration of the Magi* 1861, a large-scale altarpiece created for the church of St Paul's in Brighton. Considered one of the greatest draughtsmen of the 19th century, Burne-Jones's remarkable drawings such as *Desiderium* 1873 will also be showcased to demonstrate his sensitive and personal response to Renaissance Old Masters.

Familiar faces populate Burne-Jones's otherwise imaginary worlds, drawn from the artist's intimate circle of family and friends. Several of these figures will feature in a section of the exhibition highlighting Burne-Jones's unique approach to portraiture. His paintings of *Amy Gaskell* 1893 and *Lady Windsor* 1893-95 stand in contrast to the fashionable society portraits of the day, presenting idealised likenesses with stark minimal compositions and a restrained colour palette.

Tate Britain will also explore the key role of the decorative arts in Burne-Jones's career, including his long working relationship with William Morris. Both men were committed to social reform and intended their collaborative work to reach a broad audience through beauty of design and execution. The dazzling *Graham Piano* 1879-80 will be displayed alongside embroideries, illustrated books and spectacular large-scale tapestries like *The Arming and Departure of the Knights of the Round Table on the Quest for the Holy Grail* 1890-1894 and *Adoration of the Magi* 1894.

Edward Burne-Jones will be curated by Alison Smith, Chief Curator, National Portrait Gallery and Tim Batchelor, Assistant Curator, Tate Britain. The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue from Tate Publishing and a programme of talks and events in the gallery.

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