

## PRESS RELEASE

**Date of issue: 14th December 2011**

# OVER HALF THE NATION'S COLLECTION OF PAINTINGS NOW ONLINE

## THE PUBLIC HELPING TO CATALOGUE THE ART

**Your Paintings** is the first national online museum of all publicly owned oil paintings in the UK. It was launched in June of this year (2011) by the Public Catalogue Foundation (PCF) and the BBC. Today it has been announced that a further 40,000 paintings have been uploaded to the site since the launch, taking the total to 104,000 paintings, over half the national collection.

Among the latest painting images uploaded to the site are works by Thomas Brooks (RNLi Grace Darling Museum, Northumberland), Edgar Degas (The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham), Joshua Reynolds (The University of Aberdeen), Bridget Riley (Morley College, London), Peter Paul Rubens (National Trust, Saltram, Devon) and Henry Whiting's *Man Wrestling an Alligator* from Dingles Fairground Heritage Centre, a world-class collection of British fairground art from the 1880s to the 1980s. In total the works of over 23,000 artists can now be seen on the site.

**Your Paintings** is the world's most ambitious initiative to bring an entire nation's painting collection to the public online. The UK's collection is an estimated 200,000 oil paintings, held in 3,000 galleries, museums, libraries and public institutions, making it one of the largest and most diverse collections in the world.

**Your Paintings** is interactive and fully searchable by artist, collection and location, and is enriched with links to the BBC's formidable archive of TV, radio and online resources. It provides links to the collections themselves and encourages users to visit the paintings in person.

To make the site searchable by subject matter over 5,000 members of the public have already signed up as taggers, alongside curators and experts, participating in the enormous task of cataloguing the collection online. These Taggers have already entered over 1.3m tags into the system. Tagging, using the latest crowd-sourcing techniques, is revealing a fascinating new layer of rich, and ultimately shareable, data, that will allow searches for a huge range of subject matter across the website.

**Your Paintings** has recently been recognised at the 2011 British Interactive Media Awards (BIMA), winning first prize in the Arts and Culture category.

**Your Paintings** reached on average 125,000 unique monthly browsers, in the first three months after launch. (91,000 unique monthly browsers in the UK).

Mark Thompson, Director General, BBC, said "I am delighted that Your Paintings has reached this impressive milestone. The website that we have created in partnership with the Public Catalogue Foundation is an important commitment to the cultural sector and a significant example of how the BBC can help in the creation of a digital public space."

Andrew Ellis, Director, the Public Catalogue Foundation, said "Your Paintings is a worldwide showcase of the United Kingdom's paintings. The public are invited to play an important role in building and enhancing this website. By tagging what can be seen in each work, everyone can contribute to making Your Paintings a unique and rich learning resource."

### **Your Paintings**

[bbc.co.uk/yourpaintings](http://bbc.co.uk/yourpaintings)

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **About Your Paintings**

Your Paintings is a partnership project between the BBC and the Public Catalogue Foundation (PCF) to put the United Kingdom's entire collection of oil paintings online at [www.bbc.co.uk/yourpaintings](http://www.bbc.co.uk/yourpaintings). This website is emerging as a unique learning resource, showing not only photographs and information about each painting but also selected BBC TV archive footage and links to further information. The website was launched at the National Gallery in the summer of 2011. Currently, the site shows around 104,000 paintings from 1,400 collections.

In total, the national oil painting collection amounts to some 200,000 works, held in 3,000 galleries, museums, universities, hospitals and other public institutions from across the UK, making it one of the largest and most diverse collections of paintings in the world. The plan is for all these paintings to be online by the end of 2012.

With the help of crowd-sourcing technology pioneered by the Astrophysics Department at the University of Oxford to classify galaxies, and art historical input from the University of Glasgow, the public are being invited to go online and help classify or 'tag' the paintings catalogued by the PCF so that in due course the paintings can be searchable by subject matter. Paintings can be tagged by visiting <http://tagger.thepcf.org.uk/>

### **About the Public Catalogue Foundation**

The PCF is a registered charity. It was launched in 2003 to create a photographic record of all the oil paintings in public ownership in the United Kingdom. In addition to publishing its work online, the PCF is also publishing a series of printed catalogues.

The painstaking research to locate the paintings up and down the country and collate the data has been carried out by 50 researchers. Over 30 fine art photographers have been employed to take photographs of these paintings over the life of the project. London-based staff focus on fundraising, processing and editing the data that comes in from the field, and clearing copyright.

The PCF is funded principally by grants and donations. Under 20 per cent of its funding comes from the public sector. Whilst many hundreds of individuals and institutions have supported its work, the PCF's principal funders are Arts Council England, Christie's, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust, The Monument Trust, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and the Wolfson Foundation.

The PCF was founded by Dr Fred Hohler. Its Trustees are Charles Gregson (Chairman of the PCF), Robert Hiscox (Chairman of Hiscox plc), Menna McGregor (Clerk of the Mercers' company), Alex Morrison (Founder and Managing Director of Cogapp), Richard Roundell (Vice-Chairman of Christie's UK), Marc Sands (Director of Audiences and Media at Tate), Dr Charles Saumarez Smith (Chief Executive of the Royal Academy), Graham Southern (Founding Director of Blain Southern) and the artist Alison Watt. The Director is Andrew Ellis.

For more information go to [www.thepcf.org.uk](http://www.thepcf.org.uk)

## **About BBC Online**

BBC Online is BBC's portfolio of websites, available at [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk). It comprises ten Products – News, Sport, Weather, CBBC, CBeebies, Knowledge & Learning, Homepage, Search, TV & iPlayer and Radio & Music. In April 2011 it had 31.7 million unique browsers and was the fourth most popular website in the UK. It is the only UK-owned website in the UK top ten. Your Paintings is part of Knowledge & Learning.

The BBC creates partnerships with the arts sector that go beyond broadcast, from sharing expertise to widening public engagement in UK arts.