

## John Murdoch, Hannah and Russel Kully Director of Art Collections



**JOHN MURDOCH**, the Hannah and Russel Kully Director of Art Collections, joined the Huntington in 2002. He is responsible for maintaining a world-class display in The Huntington's permanent galleries and on the grounds, supplemented by an interpretive program of special exhibitions, publications, and educational outreach. He also directs The Huntington's active participation in the international network of institutions that organize major exhibitions and engage in loans of art.

Since coming to The Huntington, Murdoch has secured several important acquisitions by gift and purchase, including Sir Joshua Reynolds' portrait of Samuel Johnson (1775), donated to The Huntington in 2006, and *Zenobia in Chains* (1859), a towering sculpture by American artist Harriet Hosmer, rediscovered in 2007. The major exhibitions organized under his supervision include "The Beauty of Life: William Morris and the Art of Design" (2003–04); "An Eye for Beauty: Collectors and the History of British Watercolor" (2004), with the Courtauld Institute; "Sensation and Sensibility: Viewing Gainsborough's 'Cottage Door'" (2006), which travelled to the Yale Center for British Art; "Constable's Great Landscapes: The Six-Foot Paintings" (2006), with Tate Britain and the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; and "Pressed in Time: American Prints 1905–1950" (2007–08).

From early 2003 Murdoch worked closely with architect Frederick Fisher to build the Lois and Robert F. Erburu Gallery, completed in 2005. This space had to meet a number of challenges—serving first as a temporary gallery for the European art collection, which includes several monumental works in various media, before housing part of the American art collection as an extension of the adjacent Virginia Steele Scott Gallery.

One of Murdoch's greatest achievements has been the Huntington Art Gallery's first major renovation since its construction in 1911, a two-year, \$20 million project that will be completed in May 2008 and includes the development of new and enhanced gallery spaces and displays of the European art collections.

Before coming to The Huntington, Murdoch served as director of the Courtauld Institute Gallery, London, where he won a Heritage Lottery Fund Grant for the redevelopment and reorganization of the museum. There he also oversaw a number of prominent exhibitions, including "Impressionism for Britain" (1994), "Frank Dobson, Sculptor" (1995), "William Chambers" (1996), "Roger Fry" (1999), and "Art on the Line" (2001). Earlier he was assistant director in charge of the collections at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Among many external roles, Murdoch has been a trustee of Dove Cottage and the Wordsworth Trust as well as of the William Morris Gallery in London. He also has served as a U.K. representative of the Comité International d'Histoire de l'Art.

His list of published works covers a broad range of topics and includes *Scott, Pictures and Painters* (1971); *George Eliot and Pre-Raphaelite Realism* (1973); *Byron* (1974); *British Watercolours* (1977); *David Cox* (1981); *The Discovery of the Lake District* (1984); *A Northern Arcadia* (1985); *Painters and the Derby China Works* (1987); *The Landscape of Labor: Transformations of the Georgic* (1990); *The Courtauld Family and its Money* (1994); *Seventeenth-Century Portrait Miniatures in the Collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum* (1997); *Architecture and Experience in Somerset House* (2001); and *Connoisseurship of Watercolor* (2004).

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