

For Immediate release

Major artworks go into public ownership: Acceptance in Lieu report 2004/05

London, 21 July 2005 – An outstanding collection of art and heritage items worth £13 million was saved for the British public last year under the Acceptance in Lieu (AIL) scheme.

AIL is a tax scheme under which taxpayers can offer important works of art to public collections as a way of paying inheritance tax. It is managed on behalf of the government by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA).

Last year, 28 cases, comprising several hundred items, were accepted under the scheme. They range from an archive dating back to the twelfth century to a modern British surrealist painting. All of the objects will now go into public ownership and will be allocated to national and regional museums, historic houses and archival offices across the country. Many are revealed today for the first time, including:

- **Joshua Reynolds**, *Cupid and Psyche*: this rare example of Reynolds working in an Italian Baroque style is from the very end of his career and particularly important for the beauty of its drawing. Now it has transferred to public ownership it will be restored, before going on display at the Courtauld Institute Galleries. It settled tax worth £420,000.
- Three works by **William Blake**, including a pencil drawing of Isaac Newton, the only known preparatory study for possibly Blake's most famous work, which formed the basis for the giant sculpture in the courtyard of the new British Library by Sir Edward Paolozzi, who died this year.
- **Luis Melendez**, *Still Life with Lemons and Oranges*: an important work by one of Europe's greatest still life painters. The work settled over £1 million in tax and is only the third Melendez to go into UK public collections. It will be unveiled to the public at the National Gallery on 21 July.
- **Christopher Wood**: *Zebra and Parachute*: probably the last work that Wood painted before his suspected suicide 75 years ago. Rarely seen since it was

painted, it depicts the uncompleted Villa Savoye, a masterpiece of Corbusier and is one of the key images of English art from the inter-war years. Wood was a

heavy drug user, and the work inhabits the area between hallucination and illusion which is in stark contrast to his earlier work. It settled tax worth £245,000.

- An early **c18th Japanned cabinet**: A spectacular and extremely rare white coloured cabinet on a silvered stand, elaborately carved and in a remarkable state of preservation. It has been in a private collection in Gloucestershire for 300 years and has been allocated to the Holburne Museum, Bath. It settled £175,000 of tax.
- **Italian paintings from Longleat**: Francesco Granacci (1469/70-1543) *St Jerome in the Desert* and Bartolomeo di Giovanni (1475-1500/05) *Scenes from the Story of Alexander the Great* (two panels). These paintings are a rare survival of the English c19th taste for Italian religious paintings which still remain in the ornate domestic setting for which they were acquired. They satisfied tax of over £3 million. They have been offered for the Victoria and Albert museum which has agreed that they should remain in situ at Longleat where they have been for over 150 years.
- Eight major archives with papers from the time of Henry I (the **Battle Abbey Archive**) to the papers of the English poet **Kathleen Raine** who died in 2003.

Announcing the objects today, **MLA Chairman Mark Wood** said: "This year marks the fifth anniversary of MLA's management of the Acceptance in Lieu Scheme. In those five years, 140 offers, between them worth £140 million, have been completed resulting in many hundreds of items going to public collections. The range of objects is breathtaking, from an ancient Egyptian bronze to twentieth century political archives.

"Schemes such as this are absolutely essential if British museums are to retain their unique international status. There is a chronic shortage of funding for acquisitions in this country, and MLA urges DMCS and the Treasury to build on the good work of AIL in creating a more favourable tax regime to encourage individual and corporate giving."

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Press contact

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Print quality images of most of this year's objects can be downloaded free of charge from MLA's pixmedia folder: www.pixmedia.co.uk/25/folder/561

Notes to Editors

A detailed list of items acquired during 2004/05, including full case histories and the amount of tax satisfied, is given in the AIL Annual Report available at the MLA website

http://www.mla.gov.uk/documents/ail_report2005.pdf

MLA

MLA is the national development agency for museums, libraries and archives, advising the government on policy and priorities for the sector. MLA's roles are to provide strategic leadership, to act as a powerful advocate, to develop capacity and to promote innovation and change.

Acceptance in Lieu

The AIL scheme has been operating since 1947. It enables taxpayers to transfer important works of art and other important heritage objects into public ownership while paying Inheritance Tax, or one of its earlier forms. The taxpayer is given the full open market value of the item and the item becomes the property of the public museum, archive or library at no cost to itself.

Individuals offering objects under the Acceptance in Lieu Scheme have a legal right to remain anonymous. Few choose to be named.

The range of objects accepted under the scheme in recent years is wide, from an ancient Egyptian bronze, roman Antique statues, medieval manuscripts and ivory carvings, Chinese porcelain, Baroque sculptures (Giambologna), paintings by artist from Cimabue (late 13th century), through Bellini, Titian, Tintoretto, Carracci, Murillo, Van Dyke, Jan Steen, Cuyp, van Mieris, Canaletto, Guardi, Bellotto to many works of art created in the 20th century – Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Christopher Wood, Stanley Spencer, William Rothenstein, William Scott, Edward Baird, Henry Lamb and Nancy Sharp.

AIL is managed by Gerry McQuillan, Capital Taxes Manager at MLA.

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