



WADDESDON  
Rothschild Collections



## **Life-sized elephants, painterly images of beautiful roses, the kitchen where Queen Victoria sent her own chef to learn and unseen paintings by Gustave Moreau – Waddesdon announces its 2021 programme**

Emerging from the gloom of 2020, next year looks rosier. Not least because Waddesdon's 2021 season includes the second instalment of Nick Knight's *Roses from my Garden*, a series of superb large-scale still life images with echoes of artists like Brueghel and van Huysum, yet wholly contemporary, extended from 2020. Also, from February, the history and secrets of the Manor's kitchen and the people who worked in it will be revealed in a fascinating new display, while an exhibition of Gustave Moreau's watercolours that have not been seen in public for 115 years is sure to be a highlight of summer.

### **History of the Manor Kitchen**

**3 February – 7 March**

### **Manor Restaurant**

As a summer retreat from London and a magnificent setting for weekend house parties, Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild's Waddesdon was the last word in luxury and refinement, not least through what was served from its cellars and large kitchen. Guests included Queen Victoria and her son, the Prince of Wales (and future King Edward VII).

In 1891, just 24 staff ran the house, but this number would double when the Baron was entertaining and his French chef and Italian pastry-chef came down from London. Such was their artistry in the kitchen, that Queen Victoria sent her own chef to learn from Ferdinand's after her visit in 1890.

When the house was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1957, the Manor Kitchen was converted to a tearoom. However, this winter Waddesdon's old kitchen returns to its turn of the century appearance, with many of its fixtures and fittings still recognisable, including the serving hatch, tiled walls, ovens and extraction vent.

A photograph of the kitchen brigade, taken around 1900, is on display on the very table they are standing around, while the copper batterie de cuisine – bearing the Baron's and his sister Miss Alice's monogram - will give many enthusiastic cooks severe pot and pan envy. Each item on display helps to tell the stories of the Rothschilds' kitchen staff, and there are opportunities to dress up in authentic costumes and pose for selfies.

### **Elephant Family, in collaboration with CoExistence**

#### **Half Moon Walk, Waddesdon Grounds**

**16 January – 31 October**

A family of five Indian elephants – a tusker, matriarch, two male adolescents and a female calf will be found in Half Moon Walk in the Pleasure Grounds throughout the season. These portrait sculptures take their names from the real wild elephants living in the Nilgiri Hills of Tamil Nadu who modelled for them.

Brought to Waddesdon in collaboration with the CoExistence campaign, these life-sized elephant sculptures draw attention to the loss of biodiversity caused as humans encroach on wild spaces in the densely populated Indian subcontinent and across the world. Sculpted from sustainably grown dried Lantana Camara stalks wrapped over steel structures the elephants have been made by artist Shubhra Nayar and a collective of local artisans under the creative direction of conservationist Ruth Ganesh.

Placing these sculptures near the Aviary makes an important link with Waddesdon's own conservation story. Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild built the ornamental Aviary in the 1880s, and stocked it with rare and exotic species. Today the Aviary is one of Europe's smallest licensed zoos because of its important conservation work to support endangered species through a captive breeding programme. Many of the species of bird at Waddesdon are South East Asian in origin.

CoExistence will be marking the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in May 2021 with an exhibition of a further 125 elephants across London's Royal Parks.

### **Nick Knight: Roses from my Garden**

**13 February – 31 October**

#### **Coach House Gallery, the Stables**

British fashion photographer Nick Knight's constant desire to experiment and challenge his audience has led him to take up a new subject, the classic rose - but expressed in an entirely new way. The resulting series, *Roses from my Garden*, continues into 2021 with newly created images.

This growing body of work is inspired by Knight's fascination with nature in general, and more specifically with the rose as an enduring symbol of beauty. The series has roots in the work of 16th and 17th century still life painters like Jan Brueghel the Elder and Jan van Huysum.

Nick Knight cuts roses straight from his garden and arranges them, using only daylight to illuminate his subject. Photographed on an iPhone, the digital images are then enlarged and filtered through software that uses AI to infill the space between pixels. The resulting images are no longer photographs, but rather, digital representations of photographs.

## **Collecting Stories: Private Worlds to Public Spaces**

**24 March – 31 October**

**The Manor**

The Rothschilds were among the greatest collectors of the 19th century, seeking objects of the highest quality and with a keen sense of an item's historical importance. For as long as the Rothschilds have collected they have recorded their collections with catalogues, albums and photographs. The houses that they built, the interiors they created, and the magnificent collections within them became known internationally as the 'goût Rothschild.'

Sometimes these catalogues illustrated a private collection for distribution to friends and family; later on, they were commercially printed volumes of public collections. Along with archive material and photographs are shown Ferdinand's *Red Book*, a privately printed album illustrating the collection at Waddesdon, his cousin Alfred's equivalent for Halton House and other examples for five different Rothschild collectors and their houses in London, Paris, and Buckinghamshire.

## **Riesener Furniture and the Rothschilds**

**From April**

**The Manor**

In 2021 Waddesdon is celebrating the furniture of Jean-Henri Riesener, one of the greatest French cabinetmakers of all time. He was renowned for his brilliant marquetry and his sophisticated designs.

German-born but trained in Paris, Riesener became cabinetmaker of choice to the court of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette. His furniture was later prized by 19<sup>th</sup>-century collectors including George IV and the Rothschilds – and Waddesdon has no fewer than 11 pieces by him.

Visitors will be able to explore Riesener's work through a trail highlighting the furniture in the collection. This marks the end of a collaborative research project with the Wallace Collection and The Royal Collection Trust, which has produced the first major monograph on Riesener, based on the extensive collections of the three institutions. Also, in a first for the furniture world, there will be a dedicated website bringing his work together virtually, with digital animation allowing every detail of design and construction of to be explored and deconstructed.

## **Gustave Moreau: The Fables**

**12 June – 31 October**

**The Manor**

Widely regarded as one of the most brilliant, yet enigmatic, artists of the French Symbolist movement, Gustave Moreau (1826-98) is less well known in Britain than he deserves to be. This exhibition aims to change that, by displaying some of the most extraordinary works he ever made but have not been seen by the public for over a century.

In collaboration with Musée National Gustave Moreau, Paris, Waddesdon's summer exhibition will reveal for the first time since 1906, 34 watercolours created by Moreau between 1879 and 1885, on loan from a private collection.

They were part of a series, commissioned by the art collector Antony Roux, to illustrate the 17<sup>th</sup>-century *Fables* of Jean de La Fontaine (many of which derive from Aesop's *Fables*). Moreau made 64 works for the

series, which subsequently entered a Rothschild collection; however, a significant proportion was lost during the Nazi era. The surviving works have not been publicly exhibited for 115 years and they have only ever been published in black and white. Created at the height of the French 19<sup>th</sup>-century revival of watercolour, their variety of subject matter, technique and their colouristic effects, will be a revelation to visitors.

The *Fables* watercolours form the core of the display with additional loans from the Musée Gustave Moreau, where a version of this exhibition will open in February 2021.

### **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

**Waddesdon Manor** was built at the end of the 19th century by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild in the style of a French early 16th-century château. Baron Ferdinand was an inspired collector and the house was designed to showcase his exceptional collection of French 18th-century furniture, Sèvres porcelain, English portraits and other decorative arts. When Ferdinand died in 1898, he left Waddesdon to his sister, Alice. Upon her death the house passed to her great-nephew, James de Rothschild, who inherited a substantial part of his father Baron Edmond's great collection. In 1957, in order to ensure its future in perpetuity, Waddesdon was bequeathed to the National Trust. The Rothschild family continues to run Waddesdon through a family charitable trust under the chairmanship of Lord Rothschild. More at <https://waddesdon.org.uk/about-us/press/notes-for-editors/>

For more information on Waddesdon Manor and its exhibitions, visit [www.waddesdon.org.uk](http://www.waddesdon.org.uk), like WaddesdonManor on Facebook, follow @WaddesdonManor on Twitter and waddesdonmanor\_nt on Instagram.

### **HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES CAN BE DOWNLOADED BY CLICKING ON THIS LINK -**

**[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/rouyy0l3ma7d3fx/AACuJ02A\\_jR4xB3czFxrW4Sua?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/rouyy0l3ma7d3fx/AACuJ02A_jR4xB3czFxrW4Sua?dl=0)**

- Kitchen Staff about 1900 © Waddesdon Image Library
- Elephant sculpture © The Real Elephant Collective
- Nick Knight, *Saturday 12th October*, 2019 © Nick Knight Courtesy of the Artist and Albion Barn
- Jean-Henri Riesener, roll-top desk. Photo, Mike Fear © National Trust, Waddesdon Manor
- Gustave Moreau, *The Lion in Love*, 1879-1885 © Private Collection

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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