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JANE AUSTEN 200

Painting a fresh portrait of The Mysterious Miss Austen

2017 marks the 200th anniversary of the death of the universally admired author Jane Austen - and Hampshire is holding a year long series of events to celebrate her creativity and talent.

The centrepiece of the celebrations will be the exhibition *The Mysterious Miss Austen*, which opens on May 13, and runs until July 24, at The Gallery in Winchester Discovery Centre. At its heart are five portraits of Jane - all together under one roof for the very first time.

Presented in partnership with Jane Austen's House Museum, this landmark exhibition will explore Jane's life, work and her relationship to Hampshire. The county was not only Jane Austen's birthplace - as well as where you can visit her grave today - but its people, landscape and the society in which she moved provided inspiration for her novels, classics such as *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, *Mansfield Park* and *Sense and Sensibility*.

The exhibition will include around 80 items, including paintings, watercolours, prints, illustrations, manuscripts, letters, clothing and other objects - all generously loaned from private and public collections in the UK and abroad. But it is the five portraits that is already attracting the headlines.

The pencil and watercolour sketch of Jane by her sister Cassandra Austen (circa 1810) and the hollow cut silhouette by an unknown artist from circa 1810-15 will be familiar to many from their usual home in the National Portrait Gallery, London. However, the three other portraits, all from private collections, will probably not be known to visitors: one has not been seen in public for more than 40 years; and another is the 1869 James Andrews watercolour over pencil portrait of the author, made famous after her nephew's biography of his aunt, published in 1870.

Bringing a contemporary view, Grayson Perry's *Jane Austen in E17* ceramic vase (2009, Manchester City Art Gallery) is evidence of her lasting legacy and influence on the arts.

The Mysterious Miss Austen (<http://janeausten200.co.uk/event/mysterious-miss-austen>) at The Gallery in Winchester Discovery Centre runs from May 13 to July 24. Entrance is free.

For further information visit www.janeausten200.co.uk; and for all tourist information, visit www.visit-hampshire.co.uk.

Ends

All media enquiries:

www.visit-hampshire.co.uk/visitor-information/contact-us