

Press release: The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host, by John Martin, at risk of leaving the UK

Arts Minister Michael Ellis has placed a temporary export bar on The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host, by the British artist John Martin (1789-1854), to provide an opportunity to keep it in the country.

The watercolour is at risk of being exported from the UK unless a buyer can be found to match the asking price of £1,509,102.

The drawing illustrates the Biblical story (Exodus 14) of Moses releasing the waters of the Red Sea, after they had miraculously parted to allow the fleeing Israelites to cross, thereby drowning the pursuing Egyptian army.

Employing a panoramic composition to magnificent effect, Martin plays with the scale of the figures and the scenery to maximise the epic nature of the drama. The emotional force of this scene of deliverance and retribution is heightened by a blood red sunset below a sweeping black sky.

Although Martin is best known for his spectacular oil paintings and mezzotints (a tonal print technique that was ideally suited to capturing his bold use of light and shade for dramatic effect) illustrating John Milton's Paradise Lost and the Bible, he also created a series of framed 'exhibition watercolours', which in scale and visual impact were intended to compete for attention and patronage with oil paintings.

Martin's mezzotints of Biblical subjects, such as The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host published in 1833, were hugely popular and influential with admirers including Charles Dickens and the Bronte sisters who grew up with them on the walls of their father's parsonage.

Martin's large-scale watercolour treatment of the same subject from three years later was intended to capitalise on his popular success, and The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host demonstrates his bold use of the medium in the eye-catching brightness of the colours, with the tonal range expanded through extensive use of black pigment, bodycolour, and gum arabic.

Martin's artistic reputation did not endure – despite the influence he played in shaping the epic scale and grandeur of Biblical and historical epics in films by directors like Cecil B. DeMille – as his standing suffered from the disapproval of the art critic John Ruskin and the artist's focus later in his life shifted to planning ambitious engineering schemes to deliver clean water and an efficient sewage system to London.

The subsequent and enduring shift in taste away from the use of watercolour for grandiose narrative subjects, allied to a longstanding critical downplaying of the significance of the medium to British art, meant that

Martin's stature as a watercolourist was long overlooked, until interest in his work began to revive in the early 1950s.

Martin's importance is now more widely recognised and celebrated, and the ambition, boldness and grandeur of *The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host* exemplifies his unique contribution to British watercolour history.

Arts Minister Michael Ellis said:

This incredibly dramatic picture captures the imaginative and apocalyptic subjects for which Martin is best known.

I hope it can remain in the UK, where it can be admired and studied for many years to come.

The decision to defer the export licence follows a recommendation by the [Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest \(RCEWA\)](#), administered by The Arts Council.

RCEWA member Lowell Libson said:

Working in watercolour played a significant part in Martin's art throughout his career although he is now best remembered for his exhibition works in oil. *The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host* not only demonstrates Martin's mastery of the medium but underlines how he employed it to achieve emotional and dramatic effects of a subtlety which were impossible in his larger scale oil paintings. *The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host* numbers amongst the greatest of Martin's watercolours.

The RCEWA made its recommendation on the grounds of the picture's outstanding significance in the reassessment of John Martin – the most popular artist of his day, dismissed by the art establishment and ignored for almost a century – whose influence on the development of epic, visionary landscape painting, both in Britain and in America, is now widely acknowledged.

The decision on the export licence application for the picture will be deferred until 21 May. This may be extended until 21 September if a serious intention to raise funds to purchase it is made at the recommended price of £1,509,102.

Organisations or individuals interested in purchasing the picture should contact the RCEWA on 0845 300 6200.

An image of the picture can be downloaded via our [flickr site](#).

ENDS

For media information contact: Yasmin Kaye, Senior Communications Officer,

Notes to editors

1. Details of the picture are as follows: Watercolour by John Martin (1789-1854), The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host, signed and dated: 'J. Martin/1836' (lower right). Pencil and watercolour with gum arabic heightened with body colour and with scratching out; 23 x 33 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (584 x 857 mm).
2. Provenance: (Probably) J.E. Jesse, by 1876; with Agnew's, London; with Leger & Son, London, by September 1954, sold in or after 1958 to George Goyder; Sotheby's, London, 11 July 1991, lot 192, where purchased by private owner (sold for world auction record price for watercolour by this artist £107,800); Christie's, London, 3 July 2012, lot 139 (est. £300,000-500,000, sold for £758,050, also world auction record).
3. The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest is an independent body, serviced by The Arts Council, which advises the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on whether a cultural object, intended for export, is of national importance under specified criteria.
4. The Arts Council champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. It supports a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. www.artscouncil.org.uk.

[News story: Emergency Services Network reaches new milestone](#)



This is a significant milestone for the project which will provide emergency services with a new cutting-edge communication system.

Engineers performed the test on 8 February between an EE mobile mast site in Bristol and a location in Basingstoke. This is the first time Motorola

Solutions' software has linked together with the live EE mobile phone network and demonstrated prioritisation of emergency services communications on a public network.

Minister for Policing and the Fire Service Nick Hurd said:

This is a complex project which will provide the emergency services with the most advanced communications system of its kind anywhere in the world – which is why successful tests like these are an excellent achievement.

Members of the public are already seeing some of the incidental benefits of the project like its improvement of the 4G mobile network – 90 per cent of the UK is now covered.

Other progress in the delivery of ESN includes:

- the introduction of handheld devices – 130 have now been produced for testing
- the first new rapid response vehicle has been tested and more are currently in production
- Transport for London has now laid 'leaky feeder' cables in almost 100km of tunnels out of a total of 420km in the London Underground
- there have already been over 100 genuine 999 calls received through masts in place due to ESN where there was previously no coverage, demonstrating the ability of ESN to help save lives even before the roll out is complete

More information on the [programme](#).

Published 22 February 2018

[News story: Over 10,000 refugees resettled in the UK under flagship scheme](#)

The latest quarterly Home Office immigration statistics today (22 February) show that 10,538 refugees have been resettled on the VPRS, one of the largest global resettlement programmes, since it began.

The VPRS is just one of the routes by which the UK is helping to resettle refugees. In 2017, a total of 6,212 people were resettled in the UK – a 19% increase on 2016 – with 4,832 of these people coming through the VPRS. 539

people arrived under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) which will resettle up to 3,000 at-risk children and their families from the Middle East and North Africa region by 2020.

The latest figures take the total number of children that the UK has provided asylum or an alternative form of protection to since the start of 2010 to 28,000.

Earlier this week, the Home Secretary Amber Rudd visited a refugee camp in Lebanon, meeting families who have fled the war in Syria and speaking to officials from the UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, who work closely with the Home Office to resettle families to the UK.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

As a country we can be proud that we are over half way towards honouring our commitment of resettling 20,000 of the most vulnerable refugees who have fled Syria by 2020 so they can rebuild their lives here in safety. Nearly half are children and more people are arriving every month.

This week I went to Lebanon to see for myself the human impact of the Syrian conflict and talk to refugees about the challenges they face. I met a family who is due to be resettled in the UK and heard first hand how important the resettlement scheme is and how it helps individuals, who have fled danger and conflict, to rebuild their lives.

We are welcoming and supporting some of the most vulnerable refugees and I am grateful to all of the local authorities, charities and other organisations that have made it possible.

The VPRS is a joint scheme between the Home Office, the Department for International Development and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The UK works closely with UNHCR, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the UN Migration Agency and partners on the VPRS to provide life-saving solutions for the refugees most in need of protection, including people requiring urgent medical treatment, survivors of violence and torture, and women and children at risk.

Gonzalo Vargas Llosa, UNHCR's UK Representative said:

The UK has embarked on an impressive upscaling of the VPRS in a short period, setting in place structures to welcome highly vulnerable refugees and allowing them to gradually stand on their own feet again.

Collaboration between the central Government, local and devolved

authorities and service providers has been commendable. I've been up and down the country meeting refugee families and local communities, and the strong support for this programme and refugee integration generally is something the UK should be proud of.

IOM facilitates the pre-departure health assessments, cultural orientation and the travel for refugees to the UK. IOM also supports national and local governments to develop integration programmes as part of a holistic migration management strategy.

Dipti Pardeshi, IOM UK Chief of Mission said:

The UK has achieved a significant milestone for the VPRS by resettling over half of the 20,000 committed to be resettled by 2020. The generosity and welcome shown by the UK government and the British people to those resettled is commendable.

Today, less than one per cent of refugees worldwide have been resettled and the need continues to be dire. Resettlement cannot be viewed as a one-off effort. Countries must step up to resettle more refugees and to view this as part of a holistic process to help vulnerable refugees rebuild their lives.

The UK's resettlement schemes are just one of the ways the Government is supporting vulnerable children and adults who have fled danger and conflict. The UK remains the second largest donor in humanitarian assistance and has pledged £2.46 billion in UK aid to Syria and the neighbouring countries, its largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis.

Since 2012, across Syria and the region, the UK has provided over 26 million food rations, over 9.8 million relief packages and over 10.3 million medical consultations and over 8.3 million vaccines.

[News story: VMD web and switchboard services will be unavailable from 16:00, 23 February to 8:00, 26 February](#)



The following online application services will be unavailable:

- Special Import Certificates
- Special Treatment Certificates

You should obtain an import certificate in advance if you think you will need to import/use an imported medicine during this period. In urgent cases you may purchase and use an imported veterinary medicine prior to obtaining a certificate from the VMD. This is a special dispensation which only applies to the VMD online system during this maintenance period. You should obtain an import certificate retrospectively as soon as possible.

- Research Import Certificates
- Export Certificates
- Microchip Adverse Event Reporting
- Animal Adverse Reaction Reporting
- Human Adverse Reaction Reporting

The following online information service will be unavailable:

- Product Information Database

Also, we will not be able to receive phone calls through the switchboard or via direct dial.

The systems should be operational again on from 8:00 Monday 26 February.

The VMD apologises for any inconvenience.

Published 22 February 2018

[News story: Women in innovation: award holders celebrate global success](#)

2016 Women in Innovation competition winners.

Some of the UK's top female innovators are seeing their ideas and aspirations come to life following their participation in Innovate UK's [women in innovation competition](#).

This awarded 15 female entrepreneurs £50,000 each and a tailored package of mentoring and business support. It is part of our effort to boost the support available for women in business.

Since receiving the funding and guidance, the female entrepreneurs have enjoyed a successful year.

Forbes highlights up-and-coming talent

Natwilai Utoomprukporn, founder of [GetTriK](#), was named on this year's [Forbes Europe Industry list](#), which recognises young entrepreneurs developing the most innovative products, methods and materials.

GetTriK's Natwilai Utoomprukporn, shot for the Women in Innovation awards publication.

Natwilai describes GetTriK as 'Google Maps for large structure inspection'. It uses drones to create 3D models of structures, reducing construction time and cost.

Since the Innovate UK award, GetTriK has hired 3 additional team members and secured a further £300,000 of funding through us.

Aeropowder's Elena Dieckmann pictured for the Women in Innovation photography book.

Also on the Forbes list was Elena Dieckmann, as one of the 30 notable social entrepreneurs under 30 years old. Elena co-founded [Aeropowder](#), which is developing new, innovative uses for waste feathers produced by the poultry industry.

Global recognition for Shakardokht Jafari

Shakardokht Jafari received a scientific award for successful women of Afghanistan this year.

Shakar is the founder of [Trueinvivo](#), which has just finished research for a system that uses glass beads to measure radiation levels in cancer patients. The research was published in the European Journal of Medical Physics, Physica Medica.

Trueinvivo also attracted its first investor and hired 4 additional staff.

Trueinvivo's Shakardokht Jafari. This picture was taken for the Women in Innovation photography book.

Continued support for women in business

Innovate UK is committed to supporting diversity in innovation.

Ahead of International Women's Day, on 7 March 2018 we will hold a showcase event in London to inspire and encourage even more women in business.

Women in innovation award holders will participate in a panel discussion, plus there will be networking opportunities and a product showcase.