

**ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS CELEBRATES HRH THE DUCHESS OF CORNWALL AS NEW PATRON OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY FRIENDS**

On Monday 16 October 2017, the Royal Academy of Arts will welcome Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall for the first time since her appointment as the new Patron of the Royal Academy Friends. The Duke of Edinburgh passed on the patronage in 2016 after almost forty years, having been patron since the scheme was founded in 1977.

Her Royal Highness will be hosted by Christopher Le Brun, President of the Royal Academy, and they will visit the Keeper's House, the home of the RA Friends, where The Duchess will meet Royal Academicians and well-known supporters.

To coincide with the visit, the Royal Academy will announce two new limited edition commemorative Friends memberships for its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary year in 2018 which will raise funds to continue to support the Academy's future. To mark the occasion, Her Royal Highness will be presented with the first 'RA250 Supporter Membership' along with an engraved medal based on Michelangelo's 'Taddei Tondo'. The Tondo is the most important work in the RA's Collection and the only marble relief by Michelangelo in the UK. It will be redisplayed in the new spaces in 2018.

**RA250 Friends Membership** is a one-year anniversary membership and, along with traditional Friends benefits, will include priority access to an opening of the New RA before it opens to the public, access to a bespoke 'Insider Series', an RA250 limited edition certificate and named recognition in the RA Magazine and on the RA website.

**RA250 Supporter Membership** is a two-year philanthropic anniversary membership which, in addition to the RA250 Friends benefits, will include named recognition on the walls of the New RA, priority access to a series of anniversary events throughout 2018, along with private tours of the RA Collections, an invitation to a unique RA250 lecture and private views of exhibitions.

Christopher Le Brun, President of the Royal Academy of Arts, said: "We are delighted to receive HRH The Duchess of Cornwall as the new Patron of our Royal Academy Friends. Her Royal Highness joins us at a high point in our history with Friends membership now at over 100,000. They provide vital support for all of the Academy's activities and continue to provide the largest single contribution to the RA's income, for which we are most grateful. We are very excited to reveal the new RA to them in 2018; our 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary year."

## **Notes to Editors**

### **About Friends of the RA**

The Friends of the RA is the Royal Academy's membership programme, founded on 1 January 1977 by Royal Academician and President of the RA, Sir Hugh Casson (1910 – 1999). Casson was President of the Royal Academy from 1976 to 1984 and he greatly rejuvenated the institution, above all as founder of the Friends with HRH The Duke of Edinburgh becoming its first Patron. Since it was founded, the Friends have contributed significantly to the RA, they contribute over a third of the RA's annual income. The Friends of the RA are governed by a Board of Directors and the current Chairman is Clive Humby. For further information visit: <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/friends-of-the-royal-academy>

### **Social Media**

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#RA250

### **About the Royal Academy of Arts**

The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by King George III in 1768. It has a unique position in being an independent, privately funded institution led by eminent artists and architects whose purpose is to be a clear, strong voice for art and artists. Its public programme promotes the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the visual arts and architecture through exhibitions, education and debate.

The RA is undergoing a transformative redevelopment which will be completed in time for its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018. Led by the internationally-acclaimed architect Sir David Chipperfield RA and supported by the National Lottery, the plans will link Burlington House on Piccadilly and Burlington Gardens for the first time, uniting the two-acre site. The redevelopment will also reveal the elements that make the RA unique, sharing with the public the historic treasures in its Collection, the work of its Academicians and the RA Schools, alongside its world-class exhibitions programme. For more information on the RA visit [www.royalacademy.org.uk/ra250#video](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk/ra250#video).

**For public information, please print: 020 7300 8090 or [www.royalacademy.org.uk](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk)**

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