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ROBILANT+VOENA REFLECTS ON NAPOLEON'S CULTURAL LEGACY IN LONDON

By Rachel Will | June 17, 2015



Baron Gerard studio - A detail of a Portrait of Napoleon, 1805, oil on canvas, 203 x 258 cm
(Courtesy of Robilant+Voena)

Though Napoleon Bonaparte was resoundingly defeated at the Battle of Waterloo, cultural institutions are taking the 200th anniversary of the event as an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on the great legacy of the emperor.

On June 18, the anniversary of the battle, Robilant+Voena will unveil the exhibition “Napoleon: Antiquity to Empire,” showcasing approximately 50 paintings, furniture, works of art, and objects that reference the period. The exhibition will be in parallel to “Bonaparte and the British” at the British Museum (until August 16) and “Waterloo at Windsor” at Windsor Castle (until January 2016), along with a modified continuation of the Robilant+Voena exhibition at Sperone Westwater Gallery in New York.

The works reflect a highly personal iconography inspired by the military and diplomatic achievements of Alexander the Great, Julius Cesar, and Justinian. By combining these relics with his own study of classical history, Napoleon created his own emblematic representations that influenced the art, architecture, and designers of the time. The Napoleonic era is well known for its cultural significance and has continued to inspire works in later periods.

Highlights of the exhibition include a life-size portrait of Napoleon in coronation robes by the studio of renowned painter Baron Gerard, along with portraits of Napoleon and his wife Josephine by Appiani, a marble bust with a laurel crown by Denis Chaudet, and an expansive portrait of the Mosselman family by Charles de Boisfremon.

The idea for the exhibition stemmed from Marco Voena, one-half of the founders of the gallery, who has long held interest in Napoleonic imagery. Several of the works on display come from his personal collection.

“Napoleon: Antiquity to Empire” will be on view June 18-July 30.