

KIMBELL ART MUSEUM ACQUIRES FERDINAND GEORG WALDMÜLLER'S RARELY-BEFORE-SEEN PAINTING
DOG GUARDING A BASKET OF GRAPES

The first work by an Austrian artist in the museum's collection of 350 masterpieces, *Dog Guarding a Basket of Grapes* exemplifies the artist's refined painting technique



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 27, 2022, FORT WORTH, TX—The Kimbell Art Museum has acquired *Dog Guarding a Basket of Grapes*, an impressive painting by Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller, one of the most important and innovative Austrian artists of the 19th century. Merging several genres, *Dog Guarding a Basket of Grapes* (1836) demonstrates Waldmüller's mastery of animal portraiture, still life and landscape, as well as his uncanny ability to capture diverse textures and surfaces, such as the downy fur of the watchdog, the varicolored hues of the grapes and the dusky atmosphere of the background. *Dog Guarding a Basket of Grapes* will be unveiled on August 26 at the Kimbell, installed with the permanent collection in the museum's iconic Louis I. Kahn Building.

"When making acquisitions, we focus on works of outstanding merit and aesthetic quality," said Eric M. Lee, director of the Kimbell Art Museum. "We're proud to welcome this remarkable painting into our collection — the first work by an Austrian artist at the Kimbell — and to share it with the public for the first time in more than 50 years."

In meticulous brushstrokes, Waldmüller creates a reverential rendering of the Viennese countryside while adding levity with the comic inclusion of the watchdog of the vineyard. A splendid view down the hills to the belltower of the parish church of Heiligenstadt, the Danube River and mountains in the distance helps to identify the setting as a recognizable wine-growing district of present-day Döbling on the outskirts of Vienna, where Beethoven lived for a period in 1802 to cope with his hearing loss. The painting's balanced composition of circular and pyramidal groupings is complimented by Waldmüller's command of perspective, as showcased by the foreshortened knife and clods of rich soil, as well as his understanding of light as a way to delicately reveal each form and the variation of material, from metal and wicker to fruit and fur.

"Waldmüller is one of the most important artists of his day, but his paintings are rare outside Austria and Germany," said George Shackelford, deputy director of the Kimbell. "*Dog Guarding a Basket of Grapes* not only adds a spectacular still life to the collection—it also comes with a strong dose of charm, and even humor. Who can resist the painter's portrayal of what must have been a very lively pup?"

An early practitioner of plein-air painting, Waldmüller produced commanding landscapes of the Austrian countryside and the majestic oaks outside Vienna. His mastery of flower painting was unrivaled. A professor of the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, he influenced a generation of artists with his uncompromising conviction that direct observation and truthful depiction of nature is the foundation for creating art.

In Waldmüller's later years, he preferred to paint "Sittenbilder," scenes of everyday life in the Austrian countryside, extolling the virtues of family and simple pleasures while discretely alluding to social concerns such as poverty and exclusion. After his death, Waldmüller's work was neglected, in part because of his writings criticizing the Viennese Academy, but by 1900 interest in his work was restored, especially due to the originality and wide repertoire of his paintings and his progressive ideas about art and art education.

SUPPORT

The Kimbell is supported in part by Arts Fort Worth, the Texas Commission on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. Promotional support is provided by American Airlines, NBC5 and PaperCity.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Admission to the museum's permanent collection is always free. Admission is half-price all day on Tuesdays and after 5 p.m. on Fridays.

The Kimbell Art Museum is open Tuesdays through Thursdays and Saturdays, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Fridays, noon–8 p.m.; Sundays, noon–5 p.m.; closed Mondays, New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving and Christmas. For general information, call 817-332-8451.

ABOUT THE KIMBELL ART MUSEUM

The Kimbell Art Museum, owned and operated by the Kimbell Art Foundation, is internationally renowned for both its collections and its architecture. The Kimbell's collections range in period from antiquity to the

20th century and include European masterpieces by artists such as Fra Angelico, Michelangelo, Caravaggio, Bernini, Velázquez, Vigée Le Brun, Monet, Cézanne, Picasso and Matisse; important collections of Egyptian and classical antiquities; and the art of Asia, Africa and the Ancient Americas.

The museum's 1972 building, designed by the American architect Louis I. Kahn, is widely regarded as one of the outstanding architectural achievements of the modern era. A second building, designed by Italian architect Renzo Piano, opened in 2013 and now provides space for special exhibitions, dedicated classrooms and a 289-seat auditorium with excellent acoustics for music. For more information, visit kimbellart.org.

IMAGE

Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller (Austrian, 1793–1865), *Dog Guarding a Basket of Grapes*, 1836. Oil on canvas, 25½ x 31½ in. (64 x 80 cm). Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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