EXHIBITION COSTS

The fee includes:

- Over 40 prints, drawings and objects from the Ashmolean Museum.
- Transport from and return to Oxford, within a 120 mile radius
- Object labels and interpretation panels
- Object preparation and condition reporting
- Tour co-ordination by the Ashmolean Museum Registrar’s Department
- The exhibition’s curator would be available for a lecture
- A selection of 5 images for use in the venue’s own press and publicity

The following items and costs will be covered by the venue, as they arise:

- ‘Nail to nail’ insurance
- Crating for the works, as required
- Transport from and return to Oxford, outside a 120 mile radius
- Courier expenses

If you would like further information about this exhibition please contact touring.exhibitions@ashmus.ox.ac.uk

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▲ John Savage, London Courtesan, etching
► John Russell, Lady Worsley, pastel on paper

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Painting Faces: The Art of Flattery explores the fascinating history of the art of ‘making-up’. Featuring over 40 drawings, prints and objects the exhibition focuses on eighteenth and nineteenth-century attitudes towards painting faces, and uncovers long-standing links between portraiture and cosmetics.

An introductory group of objects explores the history of cosmetics, including an extraordinary stone palette from Predynastic Egypt used to prepare green eye shadow over three-thousand years ago. A copy of the seventeenth-century Polygraphice by William Salmon (1644–1713) contains early European recipes for cosmetics and paints, and is displayed alongside a selection of the pigments mentioned. Carmine, for colouring the cheeks, and Prussian Blue, for streaking the veins, were used both on the face and the canvas. A Nishiki-e woodblock from Japan offers an intriguing glimpse into the differing painting practices found outside Europe, both in cosmetics and portraiture.

A selection of seventeenth-century prints from England and France explore European attitudes towards cosmetics and the fashions of the aristocracy. Patches, supposed to enhance the whiteness of the skin and useful for covering blemishes, were a sign of French sophistication. An engraving depicting Marie de Lorraine, Princess of Monaco and well known for her elegance, shows her sporting several. A contrasting engraving of a London Courtesan demonstrates how in England patches became increasingly associated with dubious morality, as they could be used to cover the sores resulting from venereal disease. Make-up became linked to deceit, and a selection of seventeenth-century Dutch vanitas works warn of the transience of beauty and the dangers of Pride.

Eighteenth-century portraits, by painters such as the fashionable miniaturist Richard Cosway (1742–1821), increasingly flattered their sitters, depicting rouged cheeks and dazzling white skin. Satirical prints by caricaturists such as James Gillray (1756–1815) and Thomas Rowlandson (1757–1827) poked fun at those who wore make-up or hoped to emerge from the painter’s hands ‘rosy, round and smiling’. Portraitists themselves, especially those of fashionable women, were criticised for artificially enhancing their sitters, and a more natural style of beauty came to be valued. Emma Hart, mistress of Lord Nelson and muse to George Romney, epitomised the natural look that the artist’s portraits. Lilly Langtry, model to Millais and Burne-Jones and praised for her flawless skin, became one of the first celebrities to endorse commercial cosmetics such as Lillie Powder for ‘Improving and Beautifying the Complexion.’

A final section including works by Dame Laura Knight (1877–1970), brings the exhibition into the twentieth century, where Hollywood’s influence has made make-up almost universally acceptable, and mass-marketed cosmetics such as eye-shadow ‘palettes’ retain the link between make-up and painting.