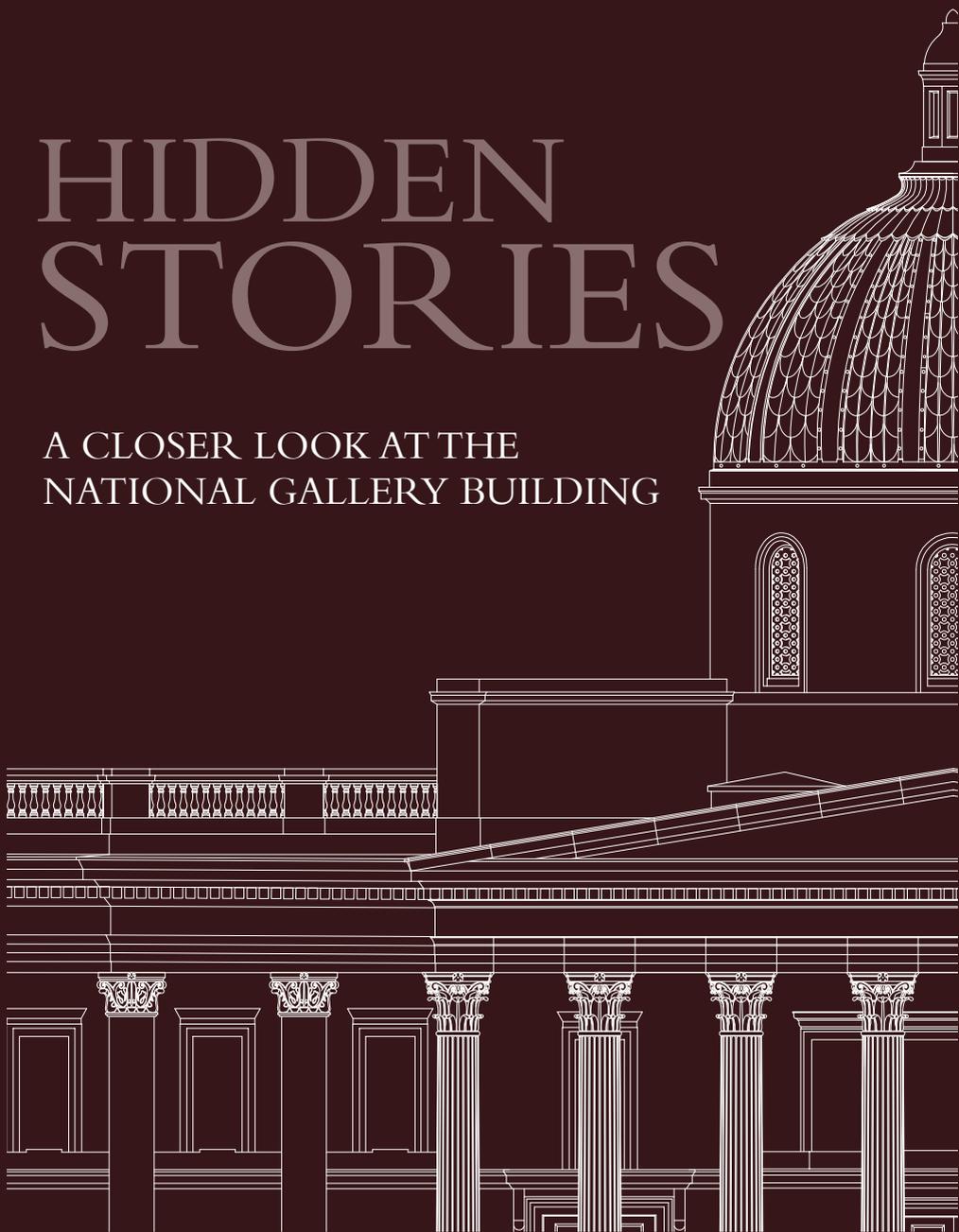


THE
NATIONAL
GALLERY

HIDDEN STORIES

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE
NATIONAL GALLERY BUILDING



THE NATIONAL GALLERY
WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1824,
OCCUPYING TWO SITES ON
PALL MALL BEFORE IT OPENED
TO THE PUBLIC IN ITS PRESENT
LOCATION ON 9 APRIL 1838.



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During the construction of the Trafalgar Square building, its architect, William Wilkins, recycled masonry and statuary from other projects. The sculptures on the Gallery's façade, for example, were originally designed for the Marble Arch in celebration of Britain's victories in the Napoleonic Wars; and columns from the recently demolished Carlton House were reworked to flank the east and west entrances. The statues of George Washington and James II were later additions, not arriving on the Gallery's lawns until the 20th century.

1. PORTICO



The wreath they are holding was designed to contain a bust of Wellington, but this was never installed. It was instead placed at the back of the Gallery overlooking the barracks yard that once occupied that site. Following the demolition of the barracks in the early 20th century, the bust was relocated inside the Gallery's staff entrance.

The relief above the Portico Entrance was originally intended for John Nash's Marble Arch, but was used for the Gallery instead when Nash encountered financial difficulties. Designed by Charles Rossi, it shows two young women symbolising Europe and Asia.



2. VICTORIES

Wilkins reworked eight statues from the Marble Arch for the front of his building. Two statues personifying Victory were placed either side of Rossi's relief in the Portico. Above what is now the Getty Entrance, a Victory, holding a laurel wreath, is accompanied by two statues of Winged Victory, whose weapons have been transformed into paintbrushes and palettes. A further Victory appears above the Gallery's West Entrance, accompanied by two female figures.

3. COLUMNS



To reduce costs, Wilkins was instructed to include columns from the recently demolished Carlton House, the former home of the Prince Regent. The columns had been left to lie in St James's Park and were no longer in a fit condition to be reused, but Wilkins did rework the bases and capitals for the columns that flank the east and west entrances to the Gallery.



4. STATUE OF JAMES II

The bronze statue of King James II in Roman attire is by the studio of sculptor and woodcarver Grinling Gibbons, who completed it in 1686. It was originally displayed outside Whitehall Palace and was moved several times before being placed on its current site on the west lawn of the National Gallery in 1948.

5. STATUE OF MINERVA



At the eastern end of the Gallery, overlooking the church of St Martin-in-the-Fields, is a statue of Minerva, goddess of wisdom. The statue was originally designed by the sculptor John Flaxman and was conceived as a seated figure of Britannia to appear on the Marble Arch brandishing a spear and shield. The shield was to bear the head of Lord Nelson to commemorate British victories

over France. Flaxman died in 1826 before the statue was finished, and the work was completed by his former pupil Edward Hodges Baily. When the statue was given to the National Gallery, Baily carried out alterations to turn Britannia into Minerva, notably chipping off the head of Nelson from Britannia's shield.

6. STATUE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON



The statue of George Washington on the National Gallery's east lawn is a bronze replica of the statue by the French 18th-century sculptor Jean-Antoine Houdon that stands in the State Capitol building in Richmond, Virginia. The replica statue was offered to the United Kingdom to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Commonwealth of Virginia. It was unveiled on 30 June 1921 at the eastern extremity of the

east lawn and was moved to its current central position in 1948 to create symmetry with the statue of James II on the west lawn [4].