

# **G F Watts: England's Michelangelo**

## **20 June to 26 November 2017**

Watts Gallery

G F Watts: England's Michelangelo is a showcase of the artist's most important works from museum and private collections, brought together at Watts Gallery to celebrate the bicentenary of the great artist's birth.

This exhibition will draw attention to the wide range of topics Watts treated, from Symbolism, social realism and spirituality to portraiture, philanthropy and pictorial allegory. Highlights will include one of the nation's top ten favourite paintings — the iconic *Choosing* (1864), which portrays Watts's charismatic teenage muse, Ellen Terry — the vibrant *Jeanie Senior* (1857-58) and the emblematic *The Good Samaritan* (1850), gifted to the people of Manchester in honour of the great prison reformer Thomas Wright.

Watts's celebrated portraits of male contemporaries will be represented by such works as the Royal Academy's distinctive depiction of Lord Leighton (1888), adorned in his magnificent presidential robes, and the eccentric poet Algernon Swinburne (1867).

Other masterpieces — many of which have never before been exhibited at Watts Gallery — include the prime version of *Love and Life* (1884), given to the American people by Watts and displayed in the White House, and a newly discovered portrait of Marie Fox (early 1870s), Princess of Liechtenstein and adopted daughter of Watts's great patrons, Lord and Lady Holland.