

★ MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION ★

SPECIAL EXHIBITION  
**COST *of*  
REVOLUTION**

The Life and Death of an Irish Soldier

SEPTEMBER 28, 2019 - FEBRUARY 17, 2020



National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Felton Bequest, 1922

101 South Third Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106 • [www.amrevmuseum.org](http://www.amrevmuseum.org)



## EXHIBIT DESCRIPTION

*Cost of Revolution: The Life and Death of an Irish Soldier*, the Museum's first international loan exhibition, will use the remarkable story of Richard St. George, an Irish artist and officer in the British Army, as a window into understanding the transatlantic impact of the American Revolution. St. George survived a severe head wound at the Battle of Germantown, outside Philadelphia, but ultimately was killed by Irish Revolutionaries during the Irish Uprising and Revolution of 1798. The exhibition will bring together over 100 works of art and historical artifacts from Australia, Ireland, England, and the United States, including five portraits of St. George and his personal artwork, which document the physical and emotional trauma St. George sustained from the revolutions he fought against in America and Ireland.



Photo © National Gallery of Ireland

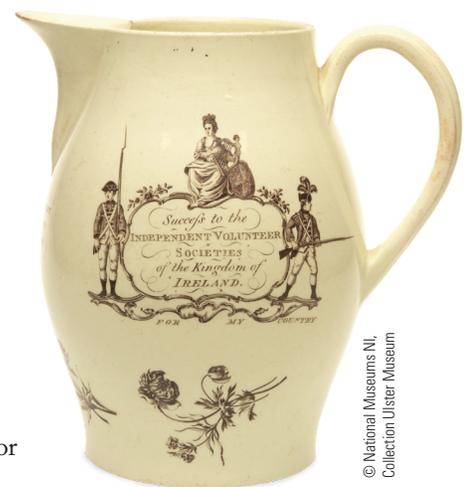
St. George opposed the rise of two revolutions, both of which are now celebrated as the foundations of modern democracy and republicanism in Ireland and the United States. Through an interdisciplinary treatment, combining elements of art history and military history, this exhibition highlights little-appreciated aspects of those revolutions,

like the attitudes of those who fought against them and their influence on contemporary art and literature. It also delivers a timely contemporary message, by serving as a reminder of the terrible personal cost of Revolutions for individuals caught up in them.

Richard St. George (1757-1798) devoted his life to defending the British Empire and a social order starkly threatened by revolutionary movements in America, France, and Ireland during the last quarter of the 1700s. As a member of the British Army, St. George crossed the Atlantic in 1776 to try and stop the growing American Revolution. He returned home to Ireland after surviving a severe head wound at the Battle of Germantown in 1777, but he never fully recovered from his trauma. St. George used art, produced by himself or his friends, to deal with

his physical and emotional pain, especially after the tragic death of his wife. In the 1790s, St. George became an outspoken critic of a growing Irish revolutionary movement which was inspired in part by the American and French revolutions. He sought to defend the British Empire and his position as a wealthy landlord, but St. George ultimately lost his life at the hands Irish Revolutionaries in 1798. *Cost of Revolution* will encourage visitors to discover the Age of Revolutions, when the ideals of republicanism and self-government swept through America and Europe bringing liberty to ordinary people, but also saw the release of violence and radicalism that shook western society. St. George's dramatic rise and fall, documented through art and artifacts from his life, is evidence of this period of great change.

The Museum of the American Revolution is uniquely connected to the story of Richard St. George for two reasons. First, the Museum is located in Philadelphia, the place where St. George received his life-changing head wound in 1777. Second, the Museum's predecessor



© National Museums NI, Collection Ulster Museum

organization, the Valley Forge Historical Society, acquired two detailed paintings of the battles of Paoli and Germantown in 1954 created by Italian artist Xavier Della Gatta in 1782. These two paintings are now in the collection of the Museum of the American Revolution. Historians of the American Revolution have long questioned how an artist who never set foot in America was able to paint both battle scenes with such detail and accuracy. One historian, Stephen Gilbert, theorized that Richard St. George, who is depicted in the Germantown scene, was the eyewitness informant who provided the battle details to the artist. New discoveries by the Museum's curators have confirmed Gilbert's theory and prompted this special exhibition. These two paintings are now even more valuable as rare primary visual documents of the Revolutionary War.

The exhibition will include one of the richest collections of artifacts documenting Irish history in the eighteenth century ever displayed in Philadelphia. It will include significant objects representing the movement for Irish Parliamentary independence in 1782 and the Irish Revolution of 1798. Some of the artifacts on display will be a green uniform coat of a United Irishmen Revolutionary of 1798, a shamrock-covered Irish political flag of the 1780s, and the original revolutionary oath of the famed Irish Revolutionary Wolfe Tone. These and other objects will expose the museum's visitors to the less-familiar story of the Irish Revolution of 1798 and

its connections to the American Revolution. Richard St. George's story, which bridged both revolutions, provides a unique entry point for connecting and comparing them.

The exhibition will also use St. George's story as a means of exploring the history of war veterans' experiences in the eighteenth century and assert a relationship between trauma and the rise of the Gothic and Romantic art and literary movements. St. George patronized the Gothic artist Henry Fuseli and inspired the poet Anna Seward. He incorporated elements of Fuseli's work into his own self portrait, a never-before exhibited watercolor that will be on display. His writings suggest that Gothic and Romantic themes resonated with his own ongoing hallucinations that resulted from his wartime head wound. By bridging military and art history, his story points to often-overlooked connections between the Age of Revolutions and Gothic and Romantic art and literature. At the same time, the story of St. George's ongoing struggle with the consequences of his head trauma has special relevance today as the increased survival rate of soldiers who suffer this kind of wound is changing military medicine and veterans' affairs.

The story that will be presented in *Cost of Revolution* is both personal and provocative.



St. George's life as a soldier and artist is well documented and visually rich. His dramatic life, often violent and uniquely illustrated by contemporary artwork, offers a compelling way to experience the dramatic changes and conflicts of the Revolutionary era through surviving objects. The exhibition's goal is not to make Richard St. George a hero or a villain. More importantly, the Museum will ask visitors, what can a life tell us about an era? And what was the personal, emotional and physical cost of the Revolutions that swept the Atlantic world from America to Ireland in the late eighteenth century.

*Cost of Revolution* will exhibit over 100 works of art and historical objects from some of the world's most distinguished public and private collections. Many of these pieces will be displayed in North America for the first time. The exhibition will be mounted in the Museum of the American Revolution's 5,000 sq. ft. special exhibitions gallery, conveniently located on the building's ground floor, and will be arranged chronologically to allow visitors to follow Richard St. George's personal journey.

A robust array of daily and special programs will enhance and extend the impact of *Cost of Revolution*. Museum

educators will engage visitors in formal and informal learning activities in the exhibition gallery and throughout the museum. The exhibition opening weekend coincides with the 242nd anniversary of the British occupation of Philadelphia and will be marked by the Museum's popular annual living history event, *Occupied Philadelphia*. This event brings nearly one hundred experienced living history interpreters to the Museum's Old City Philadelphia neighborhood, where they engage visitors while portraying British soldiers, camp followers, and civilians in scripted and spontaneous interpretive vignettes. The Museum's first *International Conference on the American Revolution*, presented in partnership with the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, will inaugurate the exhibition and bring together noted historians, writers, and curators from Ireland, Scotland, England, and the United States to discuss military, political, social, and artistic themes from the Age of Revolutions. During the exhibition run, the Museum will host lectures, living history programming, its popular "History After Hours" events, panel discussions, and hands-on workshops and demonstrations, including several programs exploring the thematic *Art & the Revolution*.



Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, Washington, D.C.



## EXHIBIT FACT SHEET

### IMPORTANT DATES

Press Preview	Thursday, September 26, 2019, 9am
Sponsor and Donor Preview	Thursday, September 26, 2019, 6pm
Partner Preview	Friday, September 27, 8 - 10am
Member Preview Weekend	Friday, September 27, 10am - 5pm Saturday, September 28, 2019, 9 - 11am
Public Opening	Saturday, September 28, 2019
Occupied Philadelphia	Saturday & Sunday, September 28 & 29, 2019
International Conference	Friday, October 3 - Sunday, October 5, 2019
Closing Weekend	Saturday, February 14 - Monday, February 17, 2020



### EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Discover the sharing of the ideals of republicanism and self-government between America, France, and Ireland during the second half of the 1700s (the “Age of Revolutions”) by realizing the connections between the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the Irish Uprising of 1798.
- Identify reasons why people opposed and supported revolutionary actions and ideas in the late-1700s by comparing the story of Richard St. George with those of his contemporaries in America and Europe.
- Realize the importance of art and material culture as evidence of historical decision-making, the social and political effects of war and revolutions, and cultural and personal changes (masculinity, psychology, and physical health) by closely-examining and interacting with art and material culture from Richard St. George’s life.
- Understand Philadelphia’s significance to the Age of Revolutions by learning about the Philadelphia Campaign of 1777, the transatlantic impact of the Declaration of Independence, and the city’s cultural connections with Ireland.

### AUDIENCE & REACH

The Museum anticipates that approximately 50,000 Museum visitors will experience *Cost of Revolution* during the run of the exhibit; and exposure for the sponsor will reach as many as 80,000 Museum visitors from September 2019 through February 2020.

Additional recognition for the “Title” and “Program” sponsors in advertising, digital marketing, and onsite promotion throughout the summer of 2019 and leading up to the exhibit opening will provide significant additional recognition for the sponsors. A media plan will be shared with the sponsors in advance of the marketing schedule.

*Cost of Revolution* audio tours will also be offered as an optional add-on for general admission visitors. The Museum anticipates that as many as 2,000 visitors will utilize the audio tour.

