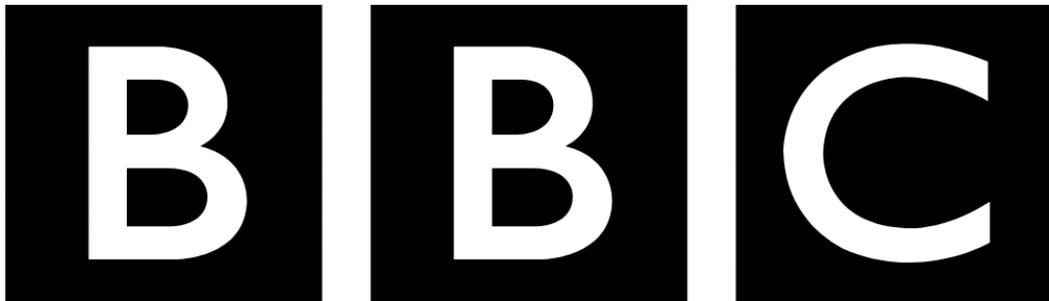


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Bid to keep Joseph Wright masterpiece in Britain fails

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Image caption

The J. Paul Getty announced its intention to buy *Two Boys with a Bladder* in June

A work by renowned 18th Century artist Joseph Wright has been sold to a US gallery after a ban on its export ended without a British buyer being found.

In October the government blocked the sale of *Two Boys with a Bladder* to in a bid to keep it in the country.

Arts Minister Helen Whately had said it was "of paramount importance" that the painting did not go abroad.

But Arts Council England said there was "no expression of interest" in raising the £3.5m needed to keep it in the UK.

In June, the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles **announced its had agreed to buy the lost masterpiece** from a private collection.

The work, which dates from 1769, **was rediscovered last year when it came up for sale**, having been privately owned since shortly after it was painted.



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Image caption

Born in Derby in 1734, Joseph Wright's paintings are displayed across the world

Joseph Wright of Derby is considered one of the most important artists of the British Enlightenment and is known for his paintings of candle-lit scenes as well as scientific and industrial subjects.

Born in 1734, he trained in London but produced most of his work in Derby and, as such, was the first major English painter based outside the capital.

Arts Council England said: "No offer to purchase the painting had been made and we were not aware of any serious intention to raise funds. An export licence was therefore issued."

A spokesman for the J. Paul Getty Museum said: "We look forward to sharing this spectacular painting with our visitors."