

This space used to include a portrait of Anne Isted (1684-1763), who was an enslaver.

Isted's accumulated family wealth was built through the theft of land from indigenous people, theft of human life and labor, and the extraction of natural resources. She inherited, and then bequeathed to her nephew, an 1100-acre plantation in Jamaica, based on documents shared by the Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery. With that wealth, Isted or someone in her family commissioned her 1756 portrait by renowned artist Thomas Hudson, in which her means and status are further on display in the painting in her sumptuous dress and furnishings.

This gallery, a gallery full of portraits like Isted's, full of celebratory depictions of white Europeans and Euro-Americans whose wealth and status were built on the backs of people of color, reinforces white supremacy. This fall, we will deinstall these portraits, in order to begin our work of dismantling white supremacy in the Museum. The newly blank space, like so many of the absences throughout the Museum where works have been taken down and galleries closed, will allow us to begin to envision what our Museum could become, as we uplift the work and voices of BIPOC, instead of uplifting the images of their oppressors.

-ANDREA ROSEN, Curator

Absence

Seeing and Unseeing the Fleming's Collection