

Unique Glasgow / Edinburgh partnership bears fruit

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Glasgow Boys' masterpiece *In the Orchard* on show following joint acquisition

Image



James Guthrie's *In the Orchard*

A masterpiece of Scottish art, which has been secured for the public in a unique partnership between the National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) and Glasgow City Council, has gone on display in Edinburgh today.

In the Orchard, a major work by Sir James Guthrie (1859-1930), which is the first painting to be jointly owned by the two institutions, was acquired at auction in November 2012 for £636,500, with generous assistance from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) and the Art Fund.

This outstanding painting, which was one of the stars of Glasgow Museums' hugely successful 2010 exhibition *Pioneering Painters: The Glasgow Boys*, will be on show at the Scottish National Gallery until the end of the year, before being shown at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum. It will be shared equally by the

NGS and Glasgow Museums, and exhibited at the two institutions alternately.

Helping to launch the new display today were Michael Clarke, Director, Scottish National Gallery; Ellen McAdam, Head of Museums and Collections, Glasgow Life; and Sarah Philp, Head of Programmes, the Art Fund.

Commenting, Michael Clarke said: "The NGS has made a number of important acquisitions with sister institutions over the last 20 years, but this collaboration with Glasgow is unprecedented, and wholly appropriate given the significance of this iconic painting to the story of Scottish art. Since 1999 we have been fortunate in securing a number of key paintings by the Glasgow Boys, and acquiring *In the Orchard* with Glasgow Museums will enhance our displays of their work still further, complementing the great collection held in Glasgow."

Councillor Archie Graham, the Chair of Glasgow Life and Depute Leader of Glasgow City Council, said: "This work was one of the star attractions at our record-breaking Glasgow Boys exhibition and we're delighted that it has been secured for both city and nation through this unique partnership. Kelvingrove is home to one of the finest collections of Glasgow Boys works and we look forward to this outstanding Guthrie's return in due course."

Born in Greenock, James Guthrie was a leading member of the Glasgow Boys, a loose-knit group of young, radical painters who began working together in the early 1880s. The members of the group, which included E A Walton, George Henry and John Lavery, shared broad artistic ideals of naturalism and a desire to challenge the perceived supremacy of the art establishment in Edinburgh.

Guthrie started work on *In the Orchard* in 1885, at the Berwickshire village of Cockburnspath, where he had been working in the open air with Walton. The painting, which shows two children gathering apples, was Guthrie's most challenging figure composition and took almost two years to complete.

Subverting convention, Guthrie used a very large canvas (measuring 152.5 x 178cm), a format normally reserved for grand history painting and highly unusual for such simple, rural subject matter. Moving away from the naturalism of his early masterpiece *A Hind's Daughter* (which was painted in 1883, and is also in the Scottish National Gallery's collection), Guthrie was developing a fascination with decorative pattern-making through deftly distributed touches of vibrant colour.

Following its unveiling in Glasgow in 1887, alongside Lavery's *Tennis Party* (Aberdeen Art Gallery) and Walton's *A Day Dream* (Scottish National Gallery), *In*

the Orchard enjoyed early international fame. The painting was shown at the Paris Salon of 1889 before being included in a group of Glasgow Boys works selected for the International Exhibition in Munich in 1890, which upstaged submissions by many of the European avant-garde. Following this sensational European debut for the Glasgow Boys, *In the Orchard* returned to Germany for a Berlin exhibition of 1893.

Recognised as 'one of the most important works by Glasgow artists' on its unveiling, *In the Orchard* proved to be a seminal work in the development of painting in Scotland. The acquisition by Glasgow Museums and the NGS is a fitting recognition of its special place in the history of Scottish art.

Notes to editors

Three exceptional Glasgow Boys paintings – *A Daydream* by Walton; Guthrie's *Miss Sowerby* (1882); and David Gauld's *St. Agnes* (1889-90) – were acquired by the Scottish National Gallery in 1999 with the generous assistance of The Art Fund. These were followed by two more acquisitions of first-rank works, again assisted by The Art Fund of Walton's *The Herd Boy* (1886) and *A Cabbage Garden* (1877) by Arthur Melville, in 2007.

The Art Fund is the national fundraising charity, helping museums to buy and show great art. Over the past 5 years they have given over £26m to help museums and galleries acquire works of art for their collections and placed hundreds of gifts and bequests, from ancient sculpture and treasure hoards to Old Master paintings and contemporary commissions. They also help museums share their collections with wider audiences through supporting a range of tours and exhibitions, including the national tour of the Artist Rooms collection and the 2013-2014 tours of Grayson Perry's tapestries *The Vanity of Small Differences* and Jeremy Deller's *English Magic*, the British Council commission for the 2013 Venice Biennale. Their support for museums extends to the Art Guide app – the comprehensive guide to seeing art across the UK, promoting a network of over 650 museums and galleries throughout the country, and the £100,000 Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year – an annual celebration of the best of UK museums, won in 2013 by William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow. They are independently funded, the majority of our income coming from over 100,000 members who, through the National Art Pass, enjoy free entry to over 220 hundred museums, galleries and historic houses across the UK, as well as 50% off entry to major exhibitions. More information about the Art Fund and the National Art Pass can be found at the [Art Fund website](#).

Further information

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