

Glasgow Boys masterpiece secured for the public

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The National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) and Glasgow City Council are delighted to announce their first ever joint acquisition, *In the Orchard*, a major work of art by Sir James Guthrie (1859-1930).

Image



James Guthrie's *In the Orchard*

This seminal work was secured for £637,500 with the help of £423,358 from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) and £62,983 from the Art Fund when it was auctioned at Sotheby's on 13 November 2012.

John Leighton, Director-General, National Galleries of Scotland commented: "Guthrie's *In the Orchard* is a key masterpiece in the story of Scottish art and, at a time when funding is obviously very scarce, it is entirely fitting that NGS and Glasgow City Council should join forces to acquire this iconic work for the public. We are immensely grateful to the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Art Fund for their rapid and very generous support which has allowed us to move

quickly to secure this extremely important work at auction."

Cllr Archie Graham, Deputy Leader of Glasgow City Council and Chair of Glasgow Life, said: "We're thrilled to have been able to save this masterpiece for both Glasgow and Scotland. As was recently seen with our record-breaking Glasgow Boys exhibition, the work of Guthrie and this remarkable group of artists has never been more popular. I'm very grateful that this partnership has secured this outstanding work, which the public will enjoy for generations to come. It will be an excellent addition to Glasgow's collections."

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the NHMF, said: "This is wonderful news. Guthrie's *In the Orchard* is universally acknowledged as one of the most powerful paintings of the Glasgow Boys Movement, which directed the course of modern art in 19th-century Britain. When news reached the National Heritage Memorial Fund just fourteen days ago that this seminal work was at risk, we were able to act extremely fast and pledge our support in record time to secure this important part of our heritage for future generations to enjoy."

Stephen Deuchar, Director of the Art Fund, said: "This is a captivating example of a Glasgow Boys painting which deserves to be part of the public collections in Scotland. We were delighted to hear of the success at auction for the National Galleries of Scotland and Glasgow Museums and are so pleased to have been able to contribute."

Guthrie's *In the Orchard* is one of the great masterpieces produced by the leading member of the Glasgow Boys, a loose-knit group of painters working at the end of the 19th century which included other such famous figures as E.A. Walton, George Henry and John Lavery. The group, who were initially rejected by the art establishment, shared broad artistic ideals of naturalism and much of their work was inspired by Glasgow's surrounding villages and countryside. Guthrie in particular continued to reflect 'realities' of everyday Scottish rural life throughout his work whilst other members of the group diversified.

In the Orchard enjoyed early international fame, it was first unveiled alongside Lavery's *Tennis Party* (Aberdeen Art Gallery) and Walton's *Day Dream* (Scottish National Gallery) and was declared as 'one of the most important works by Glasgow artists'. Exhibited in Glasgow (1887) and Edinburgh (1888), it achieved international fame at the Paris Salon (1889) and at the Munich international exhibition of 1890. Both Glasgow Museums and the National Galleries of Scotland have significant holdings of the Glasgow Boys work so it is highly appropriate that the painting should be shared between the two public institutions. It was also one

of the highlights of the recent highly successful exhibition *Pioneering Painters: The Glasgow Boys* shown at Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery, Glasgow and the Royal Academy, London 2010-11.

The painting will now be shared equally by the NGS and Glasgow Museums and, after being shown in both Edinburgh and Glasgow in 2012-13, be exhibited in each institution on a three year alternating basis.

Notes to editors

The Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art, helping museums to buy and show great art for everyone to enjoy. Over the past 5 years it has given £24m to help over 200 museums and galleries acquire works of art for their collections, from ancient sculpture and treasure hoards to Old Master paintings and contemporary commissions. It also supports a range of programmes which promote museums and their collections to wider audiences, including the national tour of the ARTIST ROOMS collection, the Art Fund Prize which rewards and celebrates Museum of the Year, and its Art Guide, a pioneering smartphone app offering the most comprehensive guide to seeing art across the UK. It is independently funded, the majority of its income coming from 95,000 members who, through the National Art Pass, enjoy free and discounted entry to over 200 museums, galleries and historic houses across the UK, as well as 50% off entry to major exhibitions.

Further information

National Galleries of Scotland press office: Patricia Convery, Head of Press and Marketing, on 0131 624 6325, email: pconvery@nationalgalleries.org.

Glasgow Life press office: James Doherty, Media Manager on 0141 287 5970, email: James.Doherty@glasgow.gov.uk.

Art Fund press office. Phone: 020 7225 4888, email: media@artfund.org. [Art Fund website](http://www.artfund.org).