

PRESS RELEASE

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Oil Paintings from Aberdeen go Online for the First Time Public Invited to Tag Paintings to Help Build a National Online Catalogue

The Public Catalogue Foundation (PCF), in partnership with the BBC, today announced that all oil paintings in public ownership in Aberdeen have been added to the **Your Paintings** website for the nation to enjoy. **Your Paintings** is a project to create a complete online catalogue of every oil painting in the national collection, at www.bbc.co.uk/yourpaintings

Paintings by Cadell, Hogarth, Landseer, Léger, Monet, Peplow, Reynolds and Spencer are among the 3,300 paintings in Aberdeen that can now be seen on **Your Paintings**. Nine collections across the city are involved in this ground-breaking national project to reveal paintings that are both on display and in store across the country.

Major collections such as those at Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums, Robert Gordon University and the University of Aberdeen are featured alongside smaller collections including The Gordon Highlanders Museum and Aberdeen Grammar School. Together their paintings provide a unique insight into the history and artistic heritage of Aberdeen.

To help the BBC and PCF identify and catalogue what can be seen in each painting, the public is being invited to **'tag'** the nation's paintings. Tagging is fun, easy and you don't need to be an art expert to do it. The results will allow future users of the Your Paintings website to find paintings of subjects that interest them. **Your Paintings Tagger** is at <http://tagger.thepcf.org.uk>

Quotes

John Edwards, Head of Collections, Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums, said: “I am delighted that works from Aberdeen Art Galleries & Museums collections will be added to the Your Paintings website. Our goal is to open the door to new and established audiences so that our wonderful artworks are shared amongst as wide a community as possible. Your Paintings will not only allow greater access to our collections but enable people to explore, comment on and compare Aberdeen's artworks with those of other collections.”

Jane Kidd, Curator, Robert Gordon University, said: “Robert Gordon University was very pleased to be invited to take part in the PCF project. Because of the scale of the project, our collection can now become more fully a part of the common heritage of the UK. Once that happens, we can't foretell what may happen in terms of knowledge exchanged, but we do know that all our artists, living and dead, will be happy to know that even their stored and half-forgotten work can be seen by everyone at last.”

Neil Curtis, Senior Curator, The University of Aberdeen, said: “We have been delighted to participate in the PCF project. It has helped to highlight the richness of the university collections, improving access for everyone and enhancing our records. I am also delighted that discovering links between collections is now a matter of a single search rather than a major research project.”

Nicholas Serota, Director, Tate, said: “The Your Paintings website is an important undertaking that will reveal the depth and breadth of the nation's collections of paintings, many of them published online for the first time. Through ambitious collaboration between organisations across the UK this bold project complements our ambition to connect audiences with art in an immediate way online, something we will take for granted in the future.”

Andrew Ellis, Director, the Public Catalogue Foundation, said: “No country has ever embarked on such a monumental project to showcase its entire painting collection online. Working with collections and individuals all over the UK, this project will reveal to the world the UK's extraordinary holding of oil paintings.”

Roly Keating, Director of Archive Content, BBC, said: “Our partnership with the PCF encapsulates so many of the BBC's ambitions, both as a public service broadcaster and key supporter of the UK arts sector. Your Paintings will be a hugely valuable learning resource for our audience and demonstrates the power of working with partners to open up the nation's cultural resources.”

Press Images

Press images of the paintings below are available from Katie Carder at katie.carder@thepcf.org.uk

or on 020 7395 0338



Reynolds, Joshua 1723–1792
Dr James Beattie (1735–1803) 1773
Oil on canvas 122 x 155cm
The University of Aberdeen

In 1807, after a 20-year fight by British and African activists, Britain finally banned the slave trade. Slavery was still permitted in British territories, but planters could not import new slaves from Africa. Many North East Scots joined the fight to abolish the slave trade. In 1770 Dr James Beattie, a philosopher at Marischal College, became one of the first public figures to argue that slavery was morally wrong.

Collection contact: Shona Elliott
(museums@abdn.ac.uk)



Innes, Callum b.1962
Exposed Painting: Dioaxazene Mauve, Violet, Scheveningen Black 2004
© the artist
Oil on canvas 122 x 117cm
Art & Heritage Collections, Robert Gordon University

Callum Innes is one of the best known contemporary graduates of Gray's School of art having been nominated for the Turner Prize which was won that year by Damien Hirst. His work is well-known internationally. Unlike most conventional paintings, this, and the others in the series, was made by painting geometric colour fields over each other, selectively removing parts of some and adding others.



Brueghel the younger, Pieter
1564/1565–1637/1638
The Faithless Shepherd
Oil on panel 74 x 105cm
Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums

This is one of three versions of this subject by Brueghel and was presented in 1977 by Mrs Alice Hay of Seaton whose ancestor, Lord Hay of Seaton, it is believed, was given the painting by the Duke of Wellington. The subject of this painting is taken from the New Testament, the Gospel of St John, Chapter 10, where Christ says: "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep."



John, Augustus Edwin 1878–1961
The Blue Pool 1911
© the artist's estate/Bridgeman Art Library
Oil on panel 30 x 50cm
Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums

Augustus John was a leading figure in the British art scene prior to the First World War. He gained a reputation as a reactionary to the art establishment and led a bohemian lifestyle, enjoying an extended family of women and children who often served as his models. In *The Blue Pool* the model is Dorothy McNeill, who became John's lifelong companion and his major inspiration. The setting for the scene is one of Dorset's beauty spots, where a lake occupies the site of an old clay pit. John has truthfully rendered the vividness of the turquoise water - the brilliant colour being caused by the diffraction of light from clay particles suspended in the lake.



Cumming, William Skeoch 1864–1929
A Gordon Highlander in the Afghan War 1881
Oil on canvas 28 x 19cm
The Gordon Highlanders Museum

The Gordon Highlanders is one of the great names in Scottish history and one of the most celebrated regiments of the British Army. The men endured extremes of climate in Afghanistan, from winter in the mountains around Kabul to the summer heat of the march to Kandahar in August 1880. Many writers of the time comment on the physical strength and toughness of the men of the 92nd. They seemed to have coped with the difficulties of the campaign better than most. Their legacy lives on through the current serving soldiers of The Highlanders, 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

Collection contact: Jesper Ericsson
(01224 311200)



Landseer, Edwin Henry 1802–1873
Flood in the Highlands
Oil on canvas 177 x 312cm
Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums

Sir Edwin Landseer's paintings told stories, bore moral messages, contained pathos and homely sentiment. He took a cottage deep in the Highlands in Glenfeshie and when Queen Victoria and Prince Albert leased Balmoral as a royal residence, Landseer became a frequent visitor, instructing the young Queen in drawing and etching. This painting was inspired by a real incident, a sudden flash flood that devastated the valleys at the foot of the Cairngorms and Monadhliath mountains on 3–4 August 1829. Landseer has piled incident upon incident in a pyramidal arrangement in order to convey the mounting terror and confusion of the villagers as the water rises beneath them. The painting has been described as a Highland version of Noah's ark.

Notes to Editors

About Your Paintings

Your Paintings is a partnership project between the BBC and the Public Catalogue Foundation (PCF) to put the United Kingdom's entire collection of oil paintings online at www.bbc.co.uk/yourpaintings. This website is emerging as a unique learning resource, showing not only photographs and information about each painting but also selected BBC TV archive footage and links to further information. The website was launched at the National Gallery in the summer of 2011. Currently, the site shows around 104,000 paintings from 1,400 collections.

In total, the national oil painting collection amounts to some 200,000 works, held in 3,000 galleries, museums, universities, hospitals and other public institutions from across the UK, making it one of the largest and most diverse collections of paintings in the world. The plan is for all these paintings to be online by the end of 2012.

With the help of crowd-sourcing technology pioneered by the Astrophysics Department at the University of Oxford to classify galaxies, and art historical input from the University of Glasgow, the public are being invited to go online and help classify or 'tag' the paintings catalogued by the PCF so that in due course the paintings can be searchable by subject matter. Paintings can be tagged by visiting <http://tagger.thepcf.org.uk/>

About the Public Catalogue Foundation

The PCF is a registered charity. It was launched in 2003 to create a photographic record of all the oil paintings in public ownership in the United Kingdom. In addition to publishing its work online, the PCF is also publishing a series of printed catalogues.

The painstaking research to locate the paintings up and down the country and collate the data has been carried out by 50 researchers. Over 30 fine art photographers have been employed to take photographs of these paintings over the life of the project. London-based staff focus on fundraising, processing and editing the data that comes in from the field, and clearing copyright.

The PCF is funded principally by grants and donations. Under 20 per cent of its funding comes from the public sector. Whilst many hundreds of individuals and institutions have supported its work, the PCF's principal funders are Arts Council England, Christie's, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust, The Monument Trust, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and the Wolfson Foundation.

The PCF was founded by Dr Fred Hohler. Its Trustees are Charles Gregson (Chairman of the PCF), Robert Hiscox (Chairman of Hiscox plc), Menna McGregor (Clerk of the Mercers' company), Alex Morrison (Founder and Managing Managing Director of Cogapp), Richard Roundell (Vice-Chairman of Christie's UK), Marc Sands (Director of Audiences and Media at Tate), Dr Charles Saumarez Smith (Chief Executive of the Royal Academy), Graham Southern (Founding Director of Blain Southern) and the artist Alison Watt. The Director is Andrew Ellis.

For more information go to www.thepcf.org.uk

About BBC Online

BBC Online is BBC's portfolio of websites, available at bbc.co.uk. It comprises ten Products – News, Sport, Weather, CBBC, CBeebies, Knowledge & Learning, Homepage, Search, TV & iPlayer and Radio & Music. In April 2011, it had 31.7 million unique browsers and was the fourth most popular website in the UK. It is the only UK-owned website in the UK top ten. Your Paintings is part of Knowledge & Learning.

The BBC creates partnerships with the arts sector that go beyond broadcast, from sharing expertise to widening public engagement in UK arts.

Media Enquiries

For the Public Catalogue Foundation and for press images contact Katie Carder on 020 7395 0338.