

The Kiss to be displayed at the National Gallery in 2013



The Scottish National Gallery will today unveil some major developments and ambitious plans for 2013, including the arrival on loan of Auguste Rodin's iconic sculpture *The Kiss*, and an exhibition of breath-taking landscapes by the nineteenth-century American painter Frederic Church.

The New Year will open with the traditional display of magnificent Turner watercolours, which are shown at the Gallery every year from 1 to 31 January. Bequeathed by the distinguished collector Henry Vaughan in 1899, the 38 works illustrate the full range of Turner's achievement, from his early wash drawings of the 1790s to colourful and atmospheric sketches of Continental Europe made in the 1830s and 1840s. In his will, Vaughan stipulated that the works should only be shown in January, when daylight is at its weakest, to prevent them from fading. This annual exhibition is now a key event in the Gallery's calendar.

Rodin's world-famous celebration of erotic love *The Kiss*, will arrive for a year-long display on 2 February. The magnificent, larger-than-life marble sculpture of two naked lovers, entwined in a passionate embrace, will be on loan from Tate in London.

Having first shown *The Kiss* to huge popular acclaim in 1898, Rodin was commissioned to make this second version, which was completed in 1904. It depicts the adulterous lovers Paolo Malatesta and Francesca da Rimini, who appear as characters in Dante's *The Divine Comedy*. Dante relates how the couple's passion grew as they read together the story of Lancelot and Guinevere (the book can just be seen in Paolo's hand), but

they were discovered and murdered by Francesca's outraged husband, Paolo's older brother Giancotto.

The story inspired many playwrights, composers and artists in the nineteenth century, and is the subject of a much-loved painting in the Gallery's collection, *Francesca da Rimini* (1837) by Sir William Dyce.

Three full-scale marble versions of *The Kiss* were made in Rodin's lifetime, and the sculptor also made smaller versions in plaster, terracotta and bronze. Such was allure of *The Kiss* that hundreds of bronze copies were produced by the Barbedienne foundry. As a result, this spectacular sculpture has become one of the most instantly recognised and best-loved works of art in the world.

Speaking of the loan, Michael Clarke, Director of the Scottish National Gallery, said: 'We are delighted that Rodin's great hymn to love is coming to Scotland. Rodin was a wonderfully gifted sculptor – technically brilliant, with an astonishing ability to model the human form with sensuous realism. *The Kiss* is rightly acknowledged as one of the greatest artistic evocations of desire ever created.'

At the beginning of February work will begin on the renovation of the Gallery's cupolas or glass roofing. This £1m energy-saving project, which has been funded by Scottish Government, will replace all of the existing single-glazed roof lights in the main floor of the Gallery with double-glazed panels, increasing energy efficiency and reducing running costs. It will also enable LED lighting to be installed, making further energy savings. Disruption will be kept to minimum: between 4 February and the end of July, there will be a series of temporary room closures to accommodate the work. The rest of the Gallery's main floor will remain open, along with the upper floors of Early Italian and Impressionist painting and the Scottish Collection in the lower wing. The project will also create the opportunity to update the Gallery's interior

decoration, which is more than 20 years old, and to install wi-fi throughout the main floor.



Through American Eyes: Frederic Church and the Landscape Oil Sketch, which will be on show from 11 May to 8 September, will celebrate the work of one of the greatest American landscape painters of the nineteenth century. Church (1826–1900) is renowned for his spectacular landscapes, which combine dramatic compositions with beautifully observed light effects. His particular fascination for stirring subjects, which celebrate the sublime view of nature, took Church to locations as distant as the Arctic Circle, Ecuador, Jordan, Jamaica and Bavaria.

Working out of doors and painting directly from nature, Church created oil sketches which could later be worked into large-scale studio landscapes. This exhibition will bring together some 25 of these remarkably fresh and spontaneous paintings, such as *Königsee, Bavaria*, 1868 and *The Iceberg*, painted in the waters off Labrador around 1875, which are a testament to the ambitious scope of Church's vision. The exhibition will also include paintings such as *Winter Twilight from Olana*, c.1871-72, and *Sunrise (The Rising Sun)*, 1862, which were executed close to Church's home in Hudson, New York, with its with magnificent views of the Hudson River and Catskill Mountains.



To illustrate the relationship of Church's oil sketches to his finished studio canvases, the exhibition will also include the greatest American landscape painting in Europe, *Niagara Falls, from the American Side*, 1867, which is in the Scottish National Gallery's own collection. This masterpiece, which measures more than two metres squared, was donated to the Gallery in 1887 by an ex-patriot Scot, John Stewart Kennedy, a

Lanarkshire-born emigrant entrepreneur who had amassed a substantial fortune in iron and coal.

The exhibition will reflect Church's pioneering and adventurous spirit and highlight the significance of his achievement: in a time before National Geographic and David Attenborough, Church's paintings of the Arctic, South America, Europe and the Middle East drew great crowds keen to see the visual wonders of the world beyond their reach.

Through American Eyes: Frederic Church and the Landscape Oil Sketch has been organised by the National Gallery, London, in partnership with and through major support from the Terra Foundation for American Art.



