

# Constable painting accepted in lieu of tax by the National Galleries of Scotland



## ***RARE CONSTABLE PORTRAIT OWNED BY LUCIAN FREUD ACQUIRED FOR THE NATION THROUGH ACCEPTANCE IN LIEU SCHEME***

The National Galleries of Scotland is delighted to announce a remarkable acquisition which brings together two great artists from very different eras. Portrait of Laura Moubray, a fine early work by the English landscape painter John Constable (1776-1837), has entered the National Collection from the estate of the artist Lucian Freud (1922-2011) through the Government's Acceptance in Lieu (AIL) scheme.

Portrait of Laura Moubray is a fascinating addition to the Scottish National Gallery. Constable is believed to have painted only around 100 portraits during his early career, of which about 50 survive. The painting complements the Galleries' existing holdings of the artist's work: the major landscape *The Vale of Dedham* (1828) and the small, vigorously executed sketch *On the Stour* (1830).



Just as Constable's landscape paintings demonstrate a close focus on place and the changing face of nature, so his studies of people encourage an intimate view of an individual and something of their relationship with the artist. It was doubtless these qualities which attracted the celebrated painter Lucian Freud, who was a great admirer of Constable's portraits: 'I've always thought that it was completely loopy

for people to go on about portrait painters, English portrait painters, and not to have Constable among them!’

Freud was renowned as one of the most important and influential artists of the twentieth century. In 2008, his work *Benefits Supervisor Sleeping* (1995) fetched the highest price paid for a painting by a living artist. He is represented in the collection of the National Galleries of Scotland by a number of key works, which include *Two Men* (1988), an emotive portrait of two figures in repose.

The Scottish National Gallery was one of Freud’s favourite galleries and provides a fitting context for *Portrait of Laura Moubray* through its fine collection of English portraits; these include major works by Thomas Gainsborough, Sir Joshua Reynolds and Sir Thomas Lawrence. There is also a Scottish connection to the picture through the sitter’s husband, Robert Moubray of Cockairny and Otterston (1774-1848), and Deputy Lieutenant of Fifeshire.

Commenting on the acquisition, Director of the Scottish National Gallery, Michael Clarke, said, ‘We are absolutely thrilled to receive this charming and intriguing picture. Lucian Freud had a very discerning eye and now our public will also be able to appreciate the qualities Freud found in Constable’s rare and unusual portraits.’

The Acceptance in Lieu (AIL) scheme allows those who have an inheritance tax bill to gift significant items to the nation and satisfy more tax than by selling items on the open market. This also allows museums and galleries to increase their collections at no cost to them while the donor gets full market value. AIL is a reserved matter but “executive devolution” arrangements are in place to enable Scottish Ministers to deal with cases in which there is a Scottish Interest.

