

Ian Rankin now on display at Scottish National Portrait Gallery



Alexander McCall Smith commissioned a portrait of crime writer Ian Rankin and he has presented it to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery where it can be viewed now. The painting is described as meticulous and thoughtful and was painted by Edinburgh-based Guy Kinder.

Kinder's insightful portrait depicts Rankin in a contemplative pose, in the surroundings of the Oxford Bar, the Edinburgh pub famously frequented by both his fictional creation, Inspector Rebus, and the author himself. The portrait was commissioned in 2013 by McCall Smith, the bestselling author and friend of Ian Rankin, and was first shown, to great acclaim, in the annual exhibition of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters in May of last year.

Following an unveiling at the SNPG earlier this evening, the portrait will join the Gallery's rich collection of portraits which celebrate the achievements of Scotland's great literary figures, from Burns and Scott to Stevenson and Barrie.

Born in Cardenden in Fife in 1960, Rankin graduated from the University of Edinburgh in 1982 and began writing books while working towards a PhD on modern Scottish fiction. His Rebus novels, the first of which was published in 1987, have been translated into 36 languages and are bestsellers across the world, winning Rankin numerous awards, including four Crime Writers' Association Dagger Awards, America's Edgar Award, Denmark's Palle Rosenkrantz Prize and the French Grand Prix du Roman Noir.

In 2009 the author was rewarded for his outstanding contribution to the cultural and social landscape of Edinburgh when he became the first recipient of the Edinburgh Award and was also appointed Deputy Lieutenant of Edinburgh. He has received honorary degrees from the universities of Abertay, St Andrews, Edinburgh, Hull and the Open University, and was awarded the OBE for services to literature in 2003.

The artist Guy Kinder was born in 1960 and studied drawing and painting at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art under the eminent Scottish artists Alberto Morrocco and David McClure. He ran a successful commercial gallery for many years and is an award-winning filmmaker. Kinder has painted throughout his career, undertaking commissions and taking part in exhibitions in London, Manchester, Edinburgh, Perth and Dundee. He now paints full-time from his Edinburgh studio, and specialises in portraiture.

Speaking of the painting, Christopher Baker, Director of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery said, 'This is a very welcome addition to the national collection – a powerful portrait of one of Scotland's greatest contemporary writers by a highly skilled local artist. It is also a most generous gift to the Gallery from a friend of both the painter and the sitter.'

Alexander McCall Smith added:- 'It gives me the greatest possible pleasure to present this portrait to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. I think that Guy Kinder has captured Rankin perfectly. Ian is a good and kind man and I think that this comes out in the portrait, while at the same time the artist has somehow managed to hint at the atmosphere of Ian's novels. The result, I think, is something of a triumph.'

Ian Rankin said:- 'I've only been painted a few times in my life, usually as a caricature to accompany a newspaper review of one of my books, so it was slightly unnerving to see how

well Guy Kinder had captured me. Of course, he found me in my natural habitat – the Oxford Bar – so I'm more at ease than in some situations. I like the painting a lot, but I do wonder what I was thinking at the time. Maybe my drink is just out of view...'