

Royal Collection paintings at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery



Two paintings from the Royal Collection, generously lent by Her Majesty The Queen, will be on show at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery this spring. The display of the two paintings – a spectacular full-length portrait of King Charles I painted by the Dutch master Daniel Mytens in 1628, and an enigmatic, late-sixteenth-century portrait of an unknown woman by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger – complements the exhibition *In Fine Style: The Art of Tudor and Stuart Fashion*, which opens at The Queen's Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh on 14 March and runs until 20 July.

Mytens's dazzling, brilliantly coloured portrait of Charles has been hung alongside the SNPG's portrait of James Hamilton, Duke of Hamilton, which Mytens painted a year after completing the image of the King – the first time that these two portraits have been shown together. Hamilton was a close advisor and friend to Charles I. The two men were similar in age and shared a passion for collecting art – Hamilton was the only Scottish noble whose collection rivalled the King's. In 1646 Charles appointed him as the first hereditary Keeper of the Palace of Holyroodhouse, a title retained to this day by the current Duke of Hamilton. However his relationship with the King could not hide the fact that he was a disastrous military leader: he was defeated and captured by Cromwell at the battle of Preston in 1648, and within six weeks of Charles I's execution he was put to death on the same scaffold. This display shows these two important figures and friends reunited through major portraits by the same artist.



Portrait of an Unknown Woman by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, is believed to depict a woman wearing masque costume. The masque, an Elizabethan form of court entertainment and revelry, which featured dance, music and complex allegories, was revitalised at the Stuart court by the masques produced by Inigo Jones and Ben Jonson, under the patronage of James VI and I's wife Anne of Denmark. Anne was responsible for commissioning and performing in the most sophisticated and extravagant productions that the court had ever seen. The portrait, which has never been on display in Scotland, shows the type of costumes worn in such displays, and now hangs alongside portraits of Queen Anne's Jester Tom Derry and the poet William Drummond of Hawthornden – works which explore the theme of culture and performance at the Stuart court.

The two loans from Royal Collection Trust will be shown at the Portrait Gallery as part of its exhibition Reformation to Revolution, which charts the evolving use and style of portraiture from a time of Catholic absolute monarchy in the mid-16th century, to the Protestant revolution at the end of the 17th century.

The loans coincide with the opening of In Fine Style at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, which explores the sumptuous costume of British monarchs and their court during the 16th and 17th centuries, through portraits in the Royal Collection.

Christopher Baker, Director of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, commented: "We are delighted that these major portraits have been generously lent to the Gallery, as they enable us to explore with wonderfully rich imagery key aspects of court life in the early seventeenth century."