

Bonhams Scottish Sale 15 & 16 April



The Scottish Sale which used to take place in the autumn has now permanently moved to spring and will take place at the Queen Street auction room next week.

It will include a painting of Tantallon Castle by Rev John Thomson of Duddingston estimated to fetch between £7,000 – £10,000.

Tantallon is famous as the seat of the 'Red Douglasses' who, as the Earls of Angus, were powerful figures in Scottish politics in the 15th and 16th century. The 6th Earl was particularly prominent. Married to Margaret Tudor, the widow of James IV of Scotland and sister of Henry VIII, he sparked a civil war in 1514/15 when he and his wife tried to smuggle her son, the infant James V, to England. Ten years later in 1525, the Earl seized control of the country and declared himself Chancellor. In 1528, James V, by now a man of 16, asserted his right to the throne and eventually chased Angus south of the border where he remained in exile until the King's death in 1542.

The Earls of Angus left Tantallon towards the end of the 16th century and the castle fell into ruin around 1650 after a ferocious 14 days siege by Oliver Cromwell during the Third English Civil War.

More recently, Tantallon hit the headlines when photographs published in national newspapers in 2009 appeared to show the ghostly figure of a man in a ruff. No rational explanation has been given for the apparition.

The Rev John Thompson was the minister of the Kirk at

Duddingston, then a village in the east of Edinburgh, from 1805 – 1840. A talented artist from boyhood, he was tutored informally by Alexander Nasmyth while a student in Edinburgh. After he became the Minister at Duddingston, Thomson set up a studio in the garden of the manse which he moved in 1825 to the upper floor of the newly built Duddingston Tower, known today as Thomson Tower. (Thomson called the tower, 'Edinburgh', so that when he wanted to work in peace, his staff could truthfully tell visitors that the Minister had gone to Edinburgh). Painting mainly from nature, Thomson was commercially and critically successful and in 1826 collaborated with William Turner to produce engravings for Walter Scott's *Provincial Antiquities and Picturesque Scenery of Scotland*.

Thomson's studio overlooked Duddingston Loch famous as the setting for Sir Henry Raeburn's painting, *The Skating Minister* – not Thomson himself but one of his colleagues, the Reverend Robert Walker.

All the major names in Scottish art are featured in the Scottish Sale which also includes a huge range of objects related to Scotland from highland dress, to silver and glass; from books and furniture to whisky and ceramics.

The sale will take place at Bonhams Edinburgh saleroom, 22 Queen Street, Edinburgh, EH2 1JJ over two days, 15 and 16 April.