

# Scottish National Gallery – The Art of Golf



The Scottish National Gallery is doing its bit to take part in the sporting celebrations taking place in Scotland this summer with *The Art of Golf: The Story of Scotland's National Sport*.

The exhibition will overlap with two important events: the Commonwealth Games, Glasgow (23 July – 3 August) and the Ryder Cup, Gleneagles (23 – 28 September), the biennial competition played between teams of professional golfers representing the United States and Europe. *The Art of Golf*, which opens on 12 July in Edinburgh, will explore golf as a subject of fascination for artists from the seventeenth century to the present day, with a particular emphasis on the emergence of the sport in Scotland.

*The Art of Golf* will bring together around 60 paintings and photographs – as well as a selection of historic golfing equipment – with works by artists such as Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669), Sir Henry Raeburn (1756-1823), Hendrick Avercamp (1585-1634) and Paul Sandby (1731-1809) illustrating the origins of the game. Other highlights will include Sir John Lavery's (1846-1951) beautiful 1920s paintings of the golf course at North Berwick, a coastal resort 25 miles east of Edinburgh, and colourful railway posters for popular destinations such as Gleneagles, which illustrate the boom in golfing tourism in the inter-war years. Stunning images of golf courses from Brora to the Isle of Harris by contemporary photographer Glyn Satterly and spectacular aerial shots by artist and aviator Patricia Macdonald will bring the exhibition up to present day.

The centrepiece of the show will be the greatest golfing

painting in the world, Charles Lees' famous 1847 masterpiece *The Golfers*. This commemorates a match played on the Old Course at the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, St Andrews, by Sir David Baird and Sir Ralph Anstruther, against Major Hugh Lyon Playfair and John Campbell of Saddell. It represents a veritable 'who's who' of Scottish golf at that time and was famously reproduced in a fine engraving which sold in great quantities. Lees (1800-80) made use of photography, at a time when it was in its infancy, to help him design the painting's overall composition. The image in question, taken by photography pioneers D O Hill & Robert Adamson, will be included in the show and Lees's preparatory drawings and oil sketches will also be displayed alongside the finished painting to offer visitors further insight into the creation of this great work. Impressions of *The Golfers* are now in many of the greatest golf clubhouses around the world. The painting is jointly owned by the National Galleries of Scotland and the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews.

Golf has been played in Scotland since at least the fifteenth century. Whilst its origins are obscure, it is undoubtedly close to the Netherlandish game of 'colf', which was played over rough ground or on frozen waterways, and involved hitting a ball to a target stick fixed in the ground or the ice. 'Colvers' playing on the frozen canals are seen in Dutch seventeenth-century paintings which form the earliest part of the show. In Scotland the game is often played over 'links' courses, originally rough common ground where the land meets the sea. The majority of Scotland's famous old courses, such as St Andrews or North Berwick, are links courses. In Edinburgh, the early links courses of Bruntsfield, Leith and Musselburgh are shown in works by Sandby and Raeburn.

Michael Clarke, Director of the Scottish National Gallery, said: "This show is designed to be fun and to bring together two publics, lovers of art and lovers of golf. Where better to do this than in this world-class gallery, with its great Old

master and Scottish paintings, which is situated in Scotland's beautiful capital city of Edinburgh, and through which so many golfers pass on their way to our internationally renowned courses."

Generous loans from a number of famous Scottish golf clubs, the British Golf Museum in St Andrews and private collectors have been secured for this exhibition.

*The Art of Golf* will be accompanied by a lavishly illustrated catalogue, with essays by Michael Clarke and Kenneth McConkey, Professor of Art History at the University of Northumbria at Newcastle. 72 pages, colour illustrations throughout, soft cover, priced £12.95.

**THE ART OF GOLF: THE STORY OF SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL SPORT**

12 July – 26 October 2014

SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY, The Mound, Edinburgh EH2 2EL

Admission £8 (£6)

Switchboard 0131 624 6200 | [nationalgalleries.org](http://nationalgalleries.org)

#ArtofGolf