

New Cadell to go on display this week



The Scottish National Portrait Gallery has acquired a new Cadell which it will be putting on display this week. The painting is a self-portrait of the Scottish Colourist F C B Cadell and it was painted in 1914.

It was a highlight of the hugely successful retrospective exhibition of Cadell's work held in 2011-12 and has been purchased with a generous grant of £100,000 from the Art Fund and significant support from the Patrons of the National Galleries of Scotland.

It will be hung in the Gallery's Great Hall, to complement the current exhibition *Collecting Now*, which focuses on the Gallery's growing collection.

Like his fellow Colourists, J D Fergusson and S J Peploe, Francis Campbell Boileau Cadell (1883-1937) spent time living in Paris in the early years of the twentieth century and was influenced by direct contact with avant-garde artists working there. In the period immediately before the First World War Cadell was based in a grand studio in the centre of his home city, Edinburgh. He revelled in the northern light of the Scottish capital, the beauty of its architecture and the elegance of its inhabitants, making them the subject matter of his art.

This seminal self-portrait is an early, personal artistic manifesto. Following a trip to Venice in 1910, Cadell's handling of paint became looser and his use of colour bolder. He developed a palette based on white, cream and black, enlivened with highlights of strong colour, and applied with feathery, impressionist brushstrokes. The self-portrait was

rapidly and thinly painted so the texture and tone of the neutral ground is visible, creating a foil for the pulses of colour on the still life, palette and face.

In this bravura performance Cadell declares his allegiance to artists such as Whistler, Lavery, Sargent, and in particular Manet, placing himself in the line of descent within the European painterly tradition. The picture demonstrates his self-confidence and conviction in his chosen profession, and captures the qualities for which he became so well known – his charisma, affability and stylishness.

The year that the portrait was painted was of great significance to Cadell. He volunteered for active service immediately after war was declared in 1914, and spent the summer that year getting himself fit for battle. Here his palette is carried on his arm like a shield; there is the suggestion of brushes held in his right hand, but it could be a more martial object, like a rifle. He stands in front of one of his own richly coloured pictures, his brushes upright in a jug, his pipe clenched firmly between his teeth and his gaze directly engaging the viewer.

It seems particularly appropriate one hundred years after the portrait was painted, on the centenary of the outbreak of World War I, that the picture is acquired. It will make a very significant contribution not only to the early twentieth-century collection at the SNPG, but also to the Gallery's outstanding collection of Scottish artists' self-portraits, which includes examples by Peploe and Fergusson. This is the first portrait of Cadell to enter the Gallery's collection, and indeed the first work by Cadell's hand.

Speaking of the acquisition, Christopher Baker, Director of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery said: "The Cadell self-portrait is a major addition to the Gallery's collection, which we are confident will prove immensely popular. The artist is seen here at the height of his powers; he has

created a scintillating, defiant and celebratory image, a great statement about the pleasure and vocation of painting and a work that places Scottish achievement within a European setting. We are very grateful to the Art Fund and Patrons of the National Galleries, without whom this outstanding acquisition would not have been possible.”

Stephen Deuchar, Director of the Art Fund, said: “We are so pleased to be supporting the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in acquiring its first work by F C B Cadell, one of the most ambitious and important Scottish artists of his generation. It’s an arresting self-portrait, perfectly suited to the SNP’s collection, and promises to be hugely popular amongst visitors.”