

# At the Scottish National Gallery – new sculpture now on view



Lorenzo Bartolini's exceptional, life-sized marble portrait group *The Campbell Sisters Dancing a Waltz*, is now on show at the Scottish National Gallery, following its acquisition last summer.

An exceptionally beautiful nineteenth-century sculpture has gone on display at the Scottish National Gallery for the first time since its acquisition last summer. Lorenzo Bartolini's marble portrait group *The Campbell Sisters*, carved in Florence around 1821-22, was recently saved for the nation when it was bought jointly by the National Galleries of Scotland and Victoria & Albert Museum, London, with generous support from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Art Fund.

Adeline Amar from National Galleries of Scotland was helping to ensure that the sculpture was in tip top condition for us!













The Campbell Sisters





*The Campbell Sisters* will be on display at the Gallery until 2020. Thereafter it will be shown alternately at the V&A and Scottish National Gallery for a period of seven years, alternating with the display of Antonio Canova's sculpture *The Three Graces* (1815-17), which is also jointly owned by the two institutions.

We interviewed Aidan Weston-Lewis the Chief Curator at the Scottish National Gallery who has particular responsibility for the Italian and Spanish collections.

Mr Weston-Lewis told: "The Misses Campbell were the two youngest daughters of the Duke and Duchess of Argyll. There



were six Campbell children and it appears that Bartolini said that the older brother Walter commissioned the sculpture.”

It cost about £500 or so at the time so it is doubtful that their brother paid for the sculpture and Mr Weston-Lewis thinks someone else paid for it. It was then shipped to Inveraray Castle where it was installed in the dining room.

Although the sculpture was first offered to the gallery they were not in a position to buy it then and had to wait till it was auctioned and bought by someone who wanted to export it. At that point the expert advisors told the Minister of Culture to delay the export licence for about six months to allow time for the galleries to raise the money to buy it.

Lorenzo Bartolini (1777–1850) trained in Florence and Paris and became one of the leading European sculptors of his day. *The Campbell Sisters* is unusual in being a full-length, life-size group by an artist primarily known for his portrait busts, and it breaks away from traditional sculpted portrait conventions of the time. Bartolini was renowned for his outstanding technical accomplishment and gained many influential patrons and supporters, notably Napoleon. Among his eminent sitters were the poet Lord Byron, and the composers Franz Liszt and Gioacchino Rossini.

Michael Clarke, Director of the Scottish National Gallery, commented: “We are delighted to welcome the Campbell Sisters back to the Scottish National Gallery. This beautiful sculpture by Bartolini holds centre stage in our rooms devoted to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and looks absolutely stunning in this setting.”

Stephen Deuchar, director of the Art Fund, said: “It was such a coup for the V&A and the National Galleries of Scotland to acquire this important and beguiling work by Bartolini, and the Art Fund was delighted to lend support. It would have been hugely disappointing to see it disappear from the UK, and it

is excellent news that the work may now be enjoyed between its two homes in London and Edinburgh in perpetuity.”