

The Italian Connection – A New Exhibition opens on Saturday at the City Art Centre

Edinburgh's City Art Centre has a new exhibition opening tomorrow 7 September 2019, exploring the creative links between Scotland and Italy, which have remained strong for hundreds of years.



'Hymn to the Rose' (oil on canvas). John Duncan RSA, RSW.
PHOTO ©2019 John Preece

'The Italian Connection' celebrates the enduring bond between these two countries, looking at the continuing ability of art to transcend geographical borders – a topic which remains hugely relevant in the politics of the 21st century.

The new exhibition explores the many different ways Scottish artists have been influenced by Italy, and the significant contribution that Italians have made to visual arts in Scotland.

Curator Helen Scott gave us a brief insight into the exhibition which has over 40 works of art included in it.

From Saturday at the City Art Centre there is a lovely exhibition in the basement called The Italian Connection featuring a wide range of art from the city's collection. We spoke to Helen Scott curator pic.twitter.com/7HllwCErMP

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [September 5, 2019](#)



'Horse Head' (in bronze). Sir Eduardo Paolozzi RA, CBE PHOTO ©2019 John Preece

The display includes work by prominent artists such as Allan

Ramsay, E.A. Walton, F.C.B. Cadell, Joan Eardley, Eduardo Paolozzi and Elizabeth Blackadder.

Presenting a wide range of media and techniques from oil painting and drawing to printmaking and sculpture, the exhibition examines the journey of Scottish artists who travelled to Rome and Florence in the 18th and 19th centuries to advance their professional training and career prospects.

Throughout the 20th century this creative pilgrimage to the Mediterranean continued, with art students undertaking travelling scholarships and mature artists finding inspiration in the beautiful Italian landscape and culture. Some even settled there on a long-term basis, making Italy their permanent home.

This creative exchange of people and ideas also developed in the opposite direction, with Italian immigrant families making their homes all around Scotland.

Councillor Donald Wilson, Edinburgh's Convener of Culture and Communities said: "The bond Scotland shares with Italy stretches over centuries. Edinburgh has a huge number of first, second and third generation Italian-Scots residents and over the years the two cultures have become inseparable.



'Sir Walter Scott' (bronze). Sir John Steell RSA PHOTO ©2019 John Preece

"This enduring cultural influence is a joy to explore through these carefully curated pieces by artists who have been inspired by both countries. What a fantastic glimpse, yet again, into the City Art Centre's extensive and Nationally

Significant collections.”

Curator Dr Helen Scott said: “This exhibition has been a really exciting project to curate because of the sheer variety of artistic connections that have evolved over the years between Scotland and Italy.

“There are obvious links in terms of Scottish artists like Joan Eardley and Elizabeth Blackadder travelling abroad and depicting the Italian landscape, but there are also more subtle connections such as John Duncan finding inspiration in Italian Renaissance painting techniques or Stanley Cursitor exploring the Italian Futurist movement of the early 20th century.

“And Scottish art has also benefited enormously from the contributions of artists with Italian heritage, figures like Eduardo Paolozzi and Alberto Morrocco, whose parents emigrated from Italy to Scotland.

“It is also interesting to trace the long-established tradition of Scottish artists going to Italy to study, a practice which dates back hundreds of years and continues to have a major impact on the development of young artists through schemes like travelling scholarships.”



Collection Curator Dr. Helen Smith with Duncan's 'Hymn to the Rose'

"All of the artworks featured in the exhibition are part of the City's permanent collection of historic and contemporary Scottish art.

"The exhibition offers a unique perspective on that collection, and I hope it will give visitors an insight into the richness and diversity of the City's artistic treasures."

'The Italian Connection'

7 September 2019 – 24 May 2020

City Art Centre, 2 Market Street, Edinburgh EH1 1DE

Free admission