



# 'E. A. Hornel: From Camera to Canvas' coming to City Art Centre in November

Running from 7 November 2020 – 14 March 2021 the City Art Centre and the National Trust for Scotland will present, E. A. Hornel: From Camera to Canvas. This will be is the first major exhibition of the work of Scottish artist Edward Atkinson Hornel (1864–1933) for over 35 years, and will re-evaluate his paintings in light of his extensive photographic collection.

This comprehensive collection is housed at Broughton House in Kirkcudbright (Hornel's home 1901–33), which is cared for by the National Trust for Scotland. It includes c.1,700 photographs used by Hornel to create his paintings. He collected these from friends and contacts, purchased them commercially and took or posed them himself, both at home in Scotland and while travelling in Japan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

These photographs were crucial to the development of Hornel's artistic technique. E. A. Hornel: From Camera to Canvas shows that from 1890, the influence of photography can be seen in almost every facet of the artist's painting. It provided him with access to people, places and networks. It helped him build a visual library from which he could refresh his memory and take inspiration.

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Ceylon Water Pots, E. A. Hornel, 1907–09, oil on canvas,  
National Trust for Scotland
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A girl in Sri Lanka carrying a water jar, attributed to E. A. Hornel, 1907, glass plate negative, National Trust for Scotland

Hornel not only chose his subject matter based on his photographs, but copied figures, poses and imagery directly from photograph to painting.

Stylistically, too, photography was significant. The vertical composition of the Yokohama shashin prints that Hornel collected is mirrored in the composition of a number of his paintings. He would paint full scenes and then crop them down, as if taking a snapshot of the most visually appealing area. Against the frenzied, blurred backgrounds of his paintings, the faces and hands stand out, painted with almost photographic veracity.

The exploration of Hornel's photographic collection in *From Camera to Canvas* also reveals a more challenging hinterland to his paintings. While his photographs of Scottish girls (accompanied by their mothers and chaperoned by his sister, Elizabeth) are discomfiting to a modern eye, some of those he took of girls and young women in Sri Lanka and Japan appear intimate or intrusive.

Also problematic – although hardly atypical for the time – were his attitudes as a westerner abroad experiencing 'the other'. In Sri Lanka, his photographs ignore any nuance of identity among his subjects or, indeed, any sense of individual identity at all. The photographs Hornel collected in Japan reflect his aim to find a land of stereotypical Japanese motifs, without reflecting the rapidly modernising reality.

Even the girls in Kirkcudbright were 'othered' by him to fit an innocent, rural ideal.



A Kirkcudbright girl in a black dress facing away from the

camera, attributed to E. A. Hornel, c.1906–07, glass plate negative, National Trust for Scotland

E. A. Hornel: From Camera to Canvas features photographs and paintings from Broughton House, as well as paintings from the City Art Centre's Scottish art collection. The exhibition is part of the Trust's Morton Photography Project – supported by the Morton Charitable Trust – and is included in the Japan-UK Season of Culture 2019-2020.

Ben Reiss, curator for the National Trust for Scotland's Morton Photography Project said: "We are very lucky, in looking at Hornel's work, to have such an incredible insight into the pivotal way that he used photography to create his paintings. Our collections at Broughton House are unique and this exhibition gives us an opportunity to share these much more widely.

"Exhibiting Hornel's paintings and photographs together will let the public see, perhaps for the first time, Hornel's artistic process and attitudes, as he worked to create the idealised images which sold so well."

Councillor Donald Wilson, Edinburgh's Convener of Culture and Communities said: "From Camera to Canvas will be a fantastic addition to our exhibitions at the recently reopened City Art Centre this Autumn. Combining his works from our Scottish art collection with those held at Broughton House, the exhibition is taking a fresh look at Hornel's paintings alongside his extensive photographic collection.

"We are proud to host the first major exhibition of EA Hornel's work for over 35 years, and perhaps bringing his paintings to many visitors for the first time.

"The City Art Centre is one of the most accessible places in Edinburgh for art lovers and home to Edinburgh's art collection, and we are delighted to be welcoming visitors back. I'd like to reassure people that we continue to take

measures to ensure the safety of visitors and our staff.”



A Japanese woman playing a shamisen, attributed to Tamamura Kōzaburō, before 1921, Yokohama shashin print, National Trust for Scotland



A Japanese musician playing a shamisen, E. A. Hornel, c.1921–25, oil on canvas, National Trust for Scotland

In keeping with Government advice in order to protect and maintain the safety of our visitors and staff, the City Art Centre has introduced a range of new safety measures and procedures throughout the venue, including a one way system, installation of screens at reception, hand sanitiser stations, extra barriers and signage and staff will of course be wearing coverings while offering visitors a very warm, socially distanced welcome.

Visitors are asked to wear face coverings and to pre-book free tickets for allocated time slots in advance via [edinburghmuseums.org.uk](http://edinburghmuseums.org.uk)

E. A. Hornel: From Camera to Canvas opens on Saturday 7 November 2020, and runs until 14 March 2021. Admission is free, pre-booking essential.

*The exhibition is accompanied by a varied programme of public events and activities, including tours, lectures and creative workshops. All events must be booked in advance. To book please visit [www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk](http://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk)*