

Gallery staff curated digital exhibition presents unique perspectives of Edinburgh through the ages

As galleries in Edinburgh and across the UK remain dark due to the ongoing pandemic, a new digital exhibition has opened providing a welcome cultural illumination. Presented by [Museums & Galleries Edinburgh](#), 'Edinburgh: Our City' features 22 works from the City's Collection of Scottish art which is housed in the City Art Centre and widely recognised as being one the finest in the country.

[The exhibition](#) offers audiences a chance to explore Edinburgh, a city steeped in history as captured by some of Scotland's most celebrated artists through the centuries including – John Wilson Ewbank (c.1799–1847), Edwin George Lucas (1911–1990), William Crozier (1893–1930), Maggie Milne (b.1957) and Wilhelmina Barns-Graham (1912–2004).





Demolition of Crown Hotel – DM Sutherland and Leith Races – William Reed.

The new digital show is curated by Margaret Findlay, Learning & Public Programmes Manager with Museums & Galleries Edinburgh and features works selected by members of the Front of House Team, who have chosen their personal favourites. David McLean (Lost Edinburgh) has also selected a featured work in the show as a guest choice.

With galleries closed, staff furloughed and physical exhibitions temporarily suspended, 'Edinburgh: Our City' offers audiences the opportunity to escape momentarily, to explore the collection and Edinburgh's historic streets, landmark moments and ongoing transition.

From the execution of Deacon Brodie to the simple pleasure of enjoying a pint in a pub (The Athletic Arms) with friends and from the signing of the National Covenant in Greyfriars Kirkyard to forgotten childhood memories spent staring out of the window from Sighthill's demolished tower blocks – through the works of some of Scotland's finest artists.

Margaret Findlay, Learning and Public Programmes Manager, said: "At the moment, while our venues are closed, we have been looking at new and exciting ways to engage the public with our collections and as such, we have moved our very diverse public programme online. In the midst of the current crisis, we are learning the value of digital engagement and it has given us the opportunity to think in new ways to reach new audiences.

"We are mindful how much our visitors love to see paintings from our collection depicting Old Edinburgh, so it was a perfect opportunity to curate a digital exhibition on this subject, also involving our valued Front of House team who are currently furloughed. 'Edinburgh: Our City' harnesses the rich stories in our paintings with the tales and memories our colleagues have to tell. I am also delighted to feature a guest choice by David McLean."





Johnston Terrace and Castle Wynd Unknown artist and Window at Sighthill. – D Provan

Speaking on their personal selections for the show, team members said; Patrick Vaughan, Retail and Reception Assistant on his chosen work (Window View at Sighthill, Edinburgh by Donald Provan) said: "I spent 6 years of my life gazing out of this window (my bedroom to be exact).

"The artist has caught everything that I remember from this view, so with one simple picture there are a large number of memories invoked. The subtle greyness encapsulates all that is endearing about this exhibit. Many pictures of Edinburgh show a vibrancy of colour and show iconic landmarks, which makes this picture unusual."

Margaret Lowrey, Visitor Assistant on her chosen work (The Pub, by Alberto Morrocco) said: "For me Edinburgh is about

people and memories. There was a very similar pub near my first flat. A friend used to knock on my window after a Hibs match and we'd go for a pint.

“This was nearly 40 years ago and Leith pubs were not designed for ladies. There was a tiny little cubby beside the bar where women (my granny would have disapproved) could drink. We called it the confessional. There was no ladies loo so I had to run home when necessary!”





Creech's Bookshop – Fettes Douglas and View from the Mound, Edinburgh, Looking West c.1929 – William Crozier 1893–1930 (Museums and Galleries Edinburgh)

Lynn Fulton, Visitor Assistant commenting on her chosen work

(View from the Mound, Edinburgh, Looking West, William Crozier) said: "Painted 100 years ago, this painting has a timeless quality that resonates with today's 'lockdown'. Before Covid this view would be busy, with people marvelling at the views while meandering their way up to the castle. One year later, during a snowy January, this iconic setting is quiet and deserted."

Roz Third, Visitor & Monument Assistant commenting on her chosen work (The Execution of Deacon Brodie and George Smith by Alexander Hay Ritchie) said: "There is no question that Edinburgh's history is full of interesting people. Deacon Brodie was just one of them. Cabinet-maker and pillar of the community by day, burglar looking to fund his gambling habit by night, he was the inspiration for Robert Louis Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

"After a highly publicized trial, he became somewhat of a celebrity. This painting shows how the crowds would have gathered for his execution along with accomplice George Smith."

['Edinburgh: Our City'](#) is now open and runs until July 2021 via Art UK's Curations strand.

Museums & Galleries Edinburgh venues remain temporarily closed due to the ongoing pandemic but for a wonderful selection of online events, podcasts and virtual tours from the collection please visit www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk

Top image – Signing of National Covenant by Sir William Allan