



F.C.B. Cadell, *Portrait of a Lady in Black*, c.1921
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art,
Bequeathed by Mr and Mrs G.D. Robinson, through The Art Fund 1988

PRESS VIEW: WEDNESDAY 19 OCTOBER 2011, 11.30AM – 1PM

The Scottish Colourist Series: FCB Cadell

22 October 2011 – 18 March 2012

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, 73 Belford Road, Edinburgh

Admission £7 / £5

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This autumn the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art will launch the first in an annual series of exhibitions devoted to the Scottish Colourists. *The Scottish Colourist Series: FCB Cadell* will be the first major retrospective of his work to be held in a public gallery in almost seventy years and will bring together almost 80 paintings, from collections across the UK, many of which have rarely, if ever, been shown in public before.

Francis Campbell Boileau Cadell (1883-1937) is one of the four artists popularly known as 'The Scottish Colourists', along with S. J. Peploe, J. D. Fergusson and G. L. Hunter. Cadell's work is perhaps the most elegant of the four: he is renowned for his stylish portrayals of Edinburgh

New Town interiors and the sophisticated society that occupied them; equally celebrated are his vibrantly coloured, daringly simplified still-lives of the 1920s, and his evocative landscapes of the island of Iona.

Cadell was born and grew up in Edinburgh. In 1898, at the age of sixteen, he moved to Paris, enrolled at the Académie Julian, returning to Edinburgh in 1902. Between 1902 and 1905 he divided his time between the French and Scottish capitals before moving to Munich in 1906. He enrolled at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste and returned to Edinburgh in 1908, where he lived for the rest of his life. A trip to Venice in 1910 proved a turning-point and a series of works made there, including *Florian's Café*, *Venice* and *St Mark's Square, Venice*, show how the city inspired a newly confident use of bright colour and a loosening of technique.

In the period immediately before the First World War and based in a grand studio in George St, Edinburgh, Cadell found inspiration in the city of his birth. 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. He developed a palette based on white, cream and black enlivened with highlights of bold colour, and applied with feathery, impressionist brushstrokes. Depictions of his studio and fashionable women within them, reveal an interest in Manet, Whistler, Lavery and Sargent, as can be seen in works such as *The White Room*, 1915, *Interior:130 George St*, c.1915 and *The Mantelpiece in Summer*, c.1914. Cadell's still-lives of this period are lively images based on the careful orchestration of objects including silver teapots, glasses, silhouettes and flowers.

Cadell was the youngest of The Scottish Colourists and was the only one to fight in the First World War. He served firstly with the Royal Scots and then with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. In 1916 he published the book *Jack and Tommy* containing witty, swiftly-executed drawings of army and navy life, but he rarely referred to the war in his work thereafter.

On his return to Edinburgh after demobilisation in 1919, Cadell moved to Ainslie Place in Edinburgh's fashionable New Town. His work underwent an abrupt and dramatic change, thought to have been encouraged by his new surroundings, by close collaboration with Peploe, an interest in the Art Deco movement and perhaps in response to the squalor of the trenches. Cadell furnished and decorated his impressive residence with style – painting his front door bright blue to annoy his neighbours - and often turned to his surroundings for subject matter. Works including *Interior: The Orange Blind*, c.1927 and *The Gold Chair*, c. 1921 are amongst his most celebrated paintings, depicting views from one room to another within his home. A new intensity of colour, tightness of composition and flatness of paint application developed in his work, which can be seen to best effect in his still-lives of this decade, in paintings such as *The Blue Fan* and *The Rose and the Lacquer Screen*, both of the early 1920s. After the war, Cadell was no longer attempting to capture images of fashionable society, but instead was concerned with an almost abstract concept of space and perspective, creating some of the most remarkable paintings in British art of the period.

Cadell first visited the island of Iona in the Scottish Hebrides in 1912. He returned to paint there, virtually every year until his death, often accompanied by Peploe. His paintings of Iona depict a wide range of features on the island, from the Abbey to the North End and views from the island over to neighbouring Mull. Cadell captured the quality of light created by the ever-changing weather conditions on Iona, which contrasts with the blazing Mediterranean sunshine he depicted when painting in the south of France, most significantly in *Cassis* in 1923 and 1924.

The steady waning of the art market from the late 1920s and the mounting debts incurred due to Cadell's lavish lifestyle saw him move home three times in the last decade of his life. As his personal circumstances declined so his official standing grew as he was elected a member of the Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Watercolour (RSW) in 1935 and the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA) in 1936. Ill health was finally diagnosed as cancer and he died in Edinburgh on 6 December 1937. A memorial exhibition was held at the RSA the following year and a retrospective exhibition was mounted at the National Gallery of Scotland in 1942, which toured to Glasgow Art Gallery.

This exhibition is the first devoted to Cadell's work in a public gallery since then and its catalogue is the first monograph to be published on him for over twenty years. The world-record price for a painting by Cadell sold at auction was achieved last year, reflecting a growing interest in his work. Highly sought after by collectors and popular with the general public, his work is represented in many public collections throughout the UK. This exhibition and the accompanying catalogue provide a timely re-assessment of Cadell's achievements.

The exhibition will be complimented by a display of some of the objects depicted in Cadell's paintings, including bowls, vases and a silver teapot, together with archival material such as letters and photographs.

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For further press information, please contact:

The National Galleries of Scotland Press Office on 0131 624 6247/ 325/ 332/ 314 email pressinfo@nationalgalleries.org

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Scottish Colourist Series of exhibitions will comprise:

F. C. B. Cadell	22 October 2011 – 18 March 2012
S. J. Peploe	October 2012 – March 2013 (exact dates tbc)
J. D. Fergusson	October 2013 – March 2014 (exact dates tbc)

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