

PHOTO-CALL / PRESS VIEW:
Friday 1 April, 2pm - 4pm
Duff House, Banff, AB45 3SX



CONSTABLE MASTERPIECE BOUND FOR BANFF

One of the best-loved paintings in the National Gallery of Scotland is to travel to the north east of Scotland for the first time this spring. *The Vale of Dedham* by John Constable (1777-1837) will be on show at Duff House in Banffshire, where it will be the focus of a special display from 1 April 2011.

Among the most celebrated of Constable's works, *The Vale of Dedham* secured the artist's election to the Royal Academy in London when it was first exhibited in 1828. A highly characteristic exploration of the beautiful Suffolk countryside where Constable grew up, the painting shows the dramatic landscape which had preoccupied him for over twenty years. The view follows the winding River Stour as it makes its way down the valley towards the church at Dedham village, where his father worked a watermill, and on to the estuary beyond. The composition was partially inspired by Claude Lorrain's *Hagar and the Angel* (painted in 1646 and now in the National Gallery, London), which Constable would have seen in the collection of his longstanding friend and patron, Sir George Beaumont.

The Vale of Dedham is the latest in a series of high-profile loans of masterpieces to Duff House, which highlight the commitment of the National Galleries to making its collection available to audiences across Scotland. Previous loans have included Botticelli's magnificent *The Virgin Adoring the Sleeping Christ Child*, Titian's *Venus Rising from the Sea* and most recently, Rembrandt's *A Woman in Bed*.

Since it was acquired by the Gallery in 1944, *The Vale of Dedham* has been a favourite with visitors and in particular with lovers of British art. This is the first time that this iconic painting will have been shown in the north east, where it will join other works from the

national collection - by artists such as Thomas Gainsborough (1727-88), George Romney (1734-1802) and Anne Redpath (1895-1965) - which have recently been placed on long-term display at Duff House. The first significant re-hang of the works on show at Duff House since 1995 has been prompted by plans for new displays in the refurbished Scottish National Portrait Gallery, which will re-open in November 2011. The inclusion of Redpath's *The Mantelpiece* (c.1947) reflects the results of a survey of local residents, undertaken in January 2010, which revealed an interest in seeing more modern works in the house.

Speaking of the arrival of *The Vale of Dedham*, Rachel Kennedy, General Manager of Duff House said, 'It's quite a coup for Duff House and the north east to receive this key work by such a well-known artist. Constable is a highly regarded British painter, and a household name familiar to many, so I hope people will come along and take a look.'

Dr Christian Tico Seifert, Senior Curator at the National Gallery of Scotland added, 'We're delighted that the recent changes to the displays at Duff House will be complemented by the loan of Constable's wonderful *Vale of Dedham*. Our continuing partnership with Duff House reflects a wider ambition to have a truly national reach, and to make the works in our care available to people across Scotland.'

Notes to Editors

Duff House was designed by William Adam in 1735, for Wiliam Duff, Lord Braco and later Earls and Dukes of Fife. This magnificent example of baroque architecture was re-opened in 1995 as a five-star country house and gallery, run in partnership by Aberdeenshire Council, Historic Scotland and the National Galleries of Scotland. From 1st April the house is open daily from 11am to 5pm.

Admission fees apply.

For more information contact:

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