

Photo call Friday 24 April 2009, 11.30am



Robert Adam, *River Landscape with a Castle, Lake and Sailing Boat* 1782
National Gallery of Scotland.

**ROBERT ADAM'S LANDSCAPE FANTASIES:
WATERCOLOURS AND DRAWINGS FROM THE PERMANENT
COLLECTION**

25th April – 2nd August 2009

NATIONAL GALLERY COMPLEX, The Mound, Edinburgh, EH2 2EL

Admission Free

This spring the National Gallery of Scotland will reveal an undiscovered side to the work of Robert Adam (1728 – 1792), his landscape fantasies. Adam was a leading figure of the Scottish Enlightenment, and one of the most innovative architects in Britain in the eighteenth century, world renowned for his “Adam Style”. This exhibition is dedicated to his picturesque landscapes which were made towards the end of his life, purely for his own relaxation and enjoyment.

The watercolours on display feature magnificent castles perched perilously on towering mountain tops and steep cliff faces surrounded by gushing waterfalls, rivers and gorges. Adam's atmospheric landscapes are spectacularly lit, with dark heavy skies and long brooding shadows. Though imaginary, these Romantic views often take as their reference points the sublime landscape and alluring architecture of Adam's native Scotland.

Robert Adam was born in Kirkcaldy in 1728, and moved with his family to Edinburgh at a young age. He started his professional career working in his father's successful architectural practice in the capital. One of his first commissions was to undertake the building and rebuilding of the Highland forts after the conclusion of the Jacobite Rising of 1745. In 1754 Adam left Scotland for Italy on a modified Grand Tour, where he studied classical ruins and perfected his drawing skills. When he returned to Britain in 1758, he moved to London where he opened his own architectural practice. He quickly became *the* fashionable architect of the day and in 1761 was appointed Royal Architect to King George III. Adam's strength lay not only in designing grand buildings but also providing fantastic decorative schemes for their interiors and all the furnishings down to the smallest details.

Robert Adam's Landscape Fantasies will include over 30 watercolours, including his spectacular rendition of Cullen Castle. A number of early drawings by his sketching partners Paul Sandby and John Clerk of Eldin will also be on display. These works were never shown in Adam's lifetime, and this exhibition is a unique opportunity to see the private visions of one of the greatest architects of the eighteenth century.

For further information and images please contact the National Galleries of Scotland's press office on 0131 624 6325/6247/6314/6332 or pressinfo@nationalgalleries.org.

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