



Art in Scotland

Great cities, spectacular museums

12–19 May 2023 (MJ 719)

8 days • £2,470

Expert speaker: Christopher Baker

Well-stocked and enjoyable galleries, many recently renewed, all welcoming.

Art from around the world, with Scottish painting a highlight.

A clutch of the most handsome cities in Britain, particularly good for Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian architecture.

Train travel between cities.

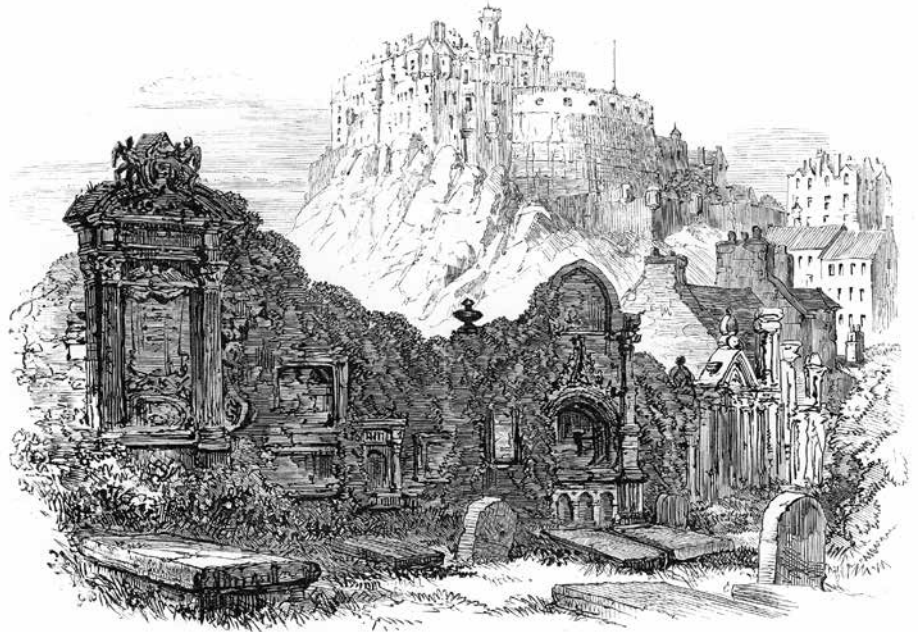
The Burrell Collection emerged in 2022 from six years of radical refurbishment. Those who knew it before might wonder how improvement is possible, but the consensus is that one of the best of the world's boutique art galleries has just got better.

The new-ish V&A Dundee also beckons, its hulking ship-like form on the historic waterfront making it architecturally the most striking art museum in Britain. Aberdeen Art Gallery was joint winner of the Museum of the Year award in 2020, after major remodelling, while it's not long since the McManus Art Gallery and Museum, also in Dundee, underwent a thorough makeover.

There's a theme emerging here. And so far there has been no mention of Glasgow and Edinburgh. Scotland's two biggest cities are internationally known for their cultural life and collections of historic and contemporary art.

There are artworks from around the world, but Scottish art may come as a revelation. Some names will be familiar – Allan Ramsay, Gavin Hamilton, Henry Raeburn, David Wilkie, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, John Bellamy; you have probably heard of the Glasgow Boys and Scottish Colourists, if not often seen their works; many others may be unknown to you, and you will wonder why.

All four cities are among the most handsome in Britain, while the beauty of Edinburgh places it among a select global few. A medieval quarter tumbles down from the hilltop castle and smooths into an extensive grid of ultra-elegant Georgian architecture on more even land below. Glasgow was for a while the second city in the British Isles and reached its peak in the age of trade, manufacturing and empire. The granite city of Aberdeen was flourishing long before the recent oil boom, and Dundee was a major port with civic and commercial buildings to match.



Edinburgh Castle from Greyfriars cemetery, wood engraving c. 1890.

We recommend that you consider staying extra nights before and/or after the tour to see more of the glories of Glasgow and Edinburgh than the itinerary can accommodate.

Itinerary

Day 1: Glasgow. The tour starts at 2.15pm – you choose whether at the hotel or at Central Station. Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, opened 1901, is housed in red sandstone splendour exuding the self-confidence of the second city of the Empire. The holdings are extensive and wide-ranging, the painting collection internationally significant with major works by Rembrandt, Van Gogh and Salvador Dali, a good selection of French Impressionists and dazzling displays of the Glasgow Boys and the Scottish Colourists. First of two nights in Glasgow.

Day 2: Glasgow environs. A day in countryside outside Glasgow begins at Pollok House, a Palladian mansion that possesses fine Spanish paintings as well as works by Scottish painters such as Raeburn and Guthrie. The Burrell Collection is a short walk away, a wonderfully eclectic collection including Chinese ceramics, French Impressionists, medieval stained glass, global textiles, etc. that was assembled by shipowner Sir William Burrell in the early 20th century. Beautifully displayed here from

1983, the gallery reopened in 2022 after major upgrading and enlarging. Overnight Glasgow.

Day 3: Glasgow, Dundee. Drive to some key sights before visiting the arts section of The Hunterian, a wide-ranging university museum: James McNeill Whistler, the Glasgow Boys, Scottish Colourists and – famously – Margaret MacDonald and Charles Rennie Mackintosh, including the interiors of their Glasgow home. Travel in the afternoon by train to Dundee (80 mins), most likeable of Victorian cities, now transitioning from its industrial origins into a cultural hub. First of three nights in Dundee.

Day 4: Dundee. The core of the McManus Art Gallery and Museum is a building by George Gilbert Scott (1865), but it has several times been extended. Here is the best collection of Victorian Scottish painting, good English works, 20th-century art and contemporary ceramics. Opened in 2018, Kengo Kuma's V&A Dundee has an excellent display of Scottish arts and crafts and changing exhibitions – during the tour there is one on the fascinating history of tartan. Some free time – and plenty to see.

Day 5: Aberdeen. Day trip by rail to Aberdeen, a striking city of silver-grey granite. Opened in 1885 and re-opened in 2019 after refurbishment by Hopkins Architects, the Art Gallery is one of the best in regional Britain. The painting

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continued

collection includes Old Masters, French Impressionists and historic British works, and is particularly strong on Scottish 20th-century and contemporary. King's College in Old Aberdeen was founded in 1495, and the chapel has medieval wood carving and Art Nouveau stained glass. Overnight Dundee.

Day 6: Edinburgh. By train from Dundee (80 minutes). Luggage is taken to the hotel while you walk to the nearby Scottish National Gallery. Within the British Isles this is second only to its counterpart in London for the richness, range and quality of its collection of European paintings from the Renaissance onwards. Settle into the hotel mid-afternoon before a walk through streets and squares in one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. First of two nights in Edinburgh.

Day 7: Edinburgh. See first a former Victorian church with spectacular Arts and Crafts murals by Phoebe Anna Traquair. By the same architect, Sir Robert Rowland Anderson, the Scottish National Portrait Gallery is a splendid building with a magnificent collection, the history of Scotland through personalities and great art. Free afternoon – possibilities include the Georgian House in Charlotte Square, Holyroodhouse and the Queen's Gallery, and, depending on exhibitions, the Royal Scottish Academy or City Art Centre.

Day 8: Edinburgh. The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art is home to an outstanding collection of modern and contemporary art. In the surrounding park are sculptures by Miró, Moore, Hepworth and Whiteread, and the indoor collections include works by Matisse, Picasso and Dix, a world-famous collection of Surrealism and Dada and a rollcall of the leading Scottish artists. The tour finishes by lunchtime.

Speaker

Christopher Baker. Now dedicated to research, writing and lecturing, Christopher Baker was until recently Director of European and Scottish Art and Portraiture at the National Galleries of Scotland, responsible for the collections at both the National and Portrait Galleries in Edinburgh. He previously worked at Christ Church in Oxford and the National Gallery in London. He has curated numerous exhibitions of British and European art in the UK and internationally. His publications include *J.M.W. Turner: The Vaughan Bequest* (2019), *Landseer: The Monarch of the Glen* (2017) and *Catalogue of English Drawings and Watercolours*, National Gallery of Scotland (2011). He co-edited *Collecting Prints and Drawings in Europe c.1500–1800* (2003) and co-authored *The National Gallery Complete Illustrated Catalogue* (1995).

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £2,470.

Single occupancy: £2,960.

Included: accommodation in three good hotels; travel by train, private coach and occasionally taxi; breakfasts and five dinners with drinks; all admissions; all tips; the services of the speaker and tour manager.

Accommodation. Glasgow Grosvenor Hotel (gghotel.co.uk): installed in a fine classical terrace, now a Hilton. **Apex City Quay Hotel & Spa, Dundee** (apexhotels.co.uk/destinations/dundee/): comfortable hotel and spa in a modern building in the rehabilitated docklands, walking distance to the city centre and galleries. **InterContinental Edinburgh** (edinburgh.intercontinental.com): formerly The George, excellently located in George Street. All hotels are within walking distance of at least some of the galleries visited. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use throughout.*

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking and standing around in galleries. You should be able to walk at three miles an hour for at least half an hour.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.