

INTIMATE FRIENDS

Scottish Colourists from The Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow &
The Fleming-Wyfold Art Foundation

9th September - 20th December 2003

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Intimate Friends is a joint collaboration between The Fleming Collection, London, and The Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, bringing together one of the largest exhibitions of the Scottish Colourists ever to go on public display.

Samuel John Peploe (1871-1935), Francis Campbell Boileau Cadell (1883-1937), George Leslie Hunter (1877-1931) and John Duncan Fergusson (1874-1961) comprise the group known as the Scottish Colourists. Their painting was developed in an artistic environment dominated at home by William McTaggart and the Glasgow School and abroad by the French Impressionists and Post-Impressionists.

Intimate Friends highlights the Colourists' achievements as key players in the introduction of modern art in Britain, and among the most forward thinking British artists of the early 20th century. The show includes a group of the brilliant pictures that Cadell and Peploe painted in Iona, and other beautiful landscapes; some of the still-lives that made the Colourists famous, such as Still-Life and Rosechatel by Cadell with its flat, bright colours or Still-Life with a half peeled lemon by Hunter, which looks back to 17th century Dutch paintings and Chardin; and an outstanding collection of works by Fergusson including Les Eus, with its naked figures dancing in a paradise of fruits and flowers.

The Colourists did not develop as a group, but pursued independent careers; indeed, the descriptive name was not coined until 1948, when only Fergusson was still alive. All were noted for their use of colour in a high key. Individually encouraged in their early careers by dealers in Edinburgh and Glasgow, it was not until 1923 that Peploe, Cadell and Hunter had a joint exhibition in London, followed by a group exhibition in Paris in 1924. France figured largely in their lives. All were attracted by the lively artistic life of Paris, spending varying periods in that city. For Peploe, Cadell and Fergusson it must have been a revelation indeed to experience Parisian life and art after the staid, Calvinistic atmosphere of Edinburgh. At the time the Post-Impressionism of Cézanne and Van Gogh was giving way to Matisse and the Fauves, only to be followed by Picasso and the Cubists. The Paris of the Third Republic acted as a magnet for artists from many countries, thronging the studios, streets and cafés of Montparnasse and the Colourists must have met Matisse, Derain, Bonnard, Vuillard, Modigliani, Picasso and Chagall. All of them at one time or another were attracted by the brilliant light of the South of France and spent some time painting on the Côte d'Azur and further West at Cassis.