

THE REAL FACE OF BURNS? - A NEW EXHIBITION FOR ROBERT BURNS BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM

21 FEBRUARY – 14 JUNE 2015

Next February, in the wake of Hogmanay and a month of Burns suppers, when there is such a strong emphasis on tradition and the poetry of Burns, we aim to shift the focus. From February to June 2015, we will show an exhibition which explores his appearance.

We all think we know what he looked like, primarily because of the ubiquitous Nasmyth portrait – and even the derivative Archibald Skirving portrait which was drawn well after Burns died. Less well publicised is the fact that Robert Burns himself believed that a miniature executed by Alexander Reid, an unknown local artist, offered the best likeness. We are very fortunate that, courtesy of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, this work will be on display at the Museum for the duration of the exhibition.

Also on display will be a life sized model of Burns's head, reconstructed by forensic scientists from the University of Dundee using Burns's skull as well as the few portraits and a silhouette from his lifetime.

Several invited artists will be contributing to this multi-media exhibition– full list below.

Artists will be submitting work in a variety of media including the more traditional oil paint and bronze as well as, perhaps more surprisingly, Lego and mass produced plastic headed pins from China.

Many of the works on display will be available for sale, with a proportion of all sales going towards caring for the nation's premier Burns collection.

Programme curator and manager Sheilagh Tennant says: "Burns's appearance continues to fascinate even now. Visitors to the exhibition will be able to see for themselves the remarkable range of interpretations of the real face of Burns".

Museum Director David Hopes says: "This exhibition is a rare chance to reflect on the personality of Burns through portraiture from the life and by some of Scotland's greatest living artists. Images of the Poet say as much about us as they do about Burns. The Real Face is therefore an opportunity to see Burns and to see ourselves - and our relationship with him - in entirely new ways."

This programme is part of a new project, "Burn Bridges: New Perspectives on Robert Burns" which is supported by a recent award from Museums Galleries Scotland

There will be a public opening for the exhibition on Saturday 21 February, from 11.00 am – 1.00pm, to which all are welcome.

LIST OF ARTISTS

David Begbie
Calum Colvin
Rosie Dahlstrom
Graham Fagen
Nina Fowler
Tom Gallant
Shannon Laing
The Little Artists

David Mach
Robert Mach
Harland Miller
Paul Morrison
Alexander Newley
Deirdre Nicholls
Mark Powell
Adrian Wiszniewski

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LISTING INFO

Venue: Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, Murdoch's Lone, Alloway KA7 4PQ

Date: 21.2.15 – 14.6.15

Times: Every Day 10am – 5pm

Telephone: 0844 493 2601

Notes to editors:

Along with the Auld Kirk and Brig o' Doon, the cottage where Burns was born has been combined with the Burns Monument and the new award-winning museum building to form the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum. Generously supported by the Scottish Government and the Heritage Lottery Fund, the museum commemorates the life and works of Robert Burns.

Since opening to the public in December 2010, the museum has welcomed over a million visitors and has won a series of accolades including being selected as a finalist for the prestigious Art Fund prize, securing a five star rating from VisitScotland and being named as Horace Broom's 'new favourite place in Scotland'.