TURNER AND CONSTABLE RIVALS AND ORIGINALS

27 NOVEMBER 2025 – 12 APRIL 2026

LARGE PRINT GUIDE SECTION 8–12

Please return after use

CONTENTS

All information is correct at the time of publication

8. FIRE AND WATER

CLOCKWISE FROM SECTION'S ENTRANCE

John Constable

Sketch for 'Hadleigh Castle'

c.1828–9
Oil paint on canvas

It was unusual for an artist to make sketches so large as this. Yet Constable did so for most of his six-footers. This is a particularly energetic example. The scene emerges from vigorous dashes and swirls of paint. In some areas, paint is thickly applied with a palette knife so that the surface appears sculpted. Choosing this ruin as a subject has long been understood as a response the death of Constable's wife, Maria, in 1828. He had visited Hadleigh in Essex in 1814, writing to Maria of its 'melancholy grandeur'.

Tate. Purchased 1935
N04810

[QUOTATION ON THE WALL]

'Mr. Constable's works present no stronger contrast … than they do with Mr. Turner's …The first is all truth, the last all poetry: the one is silver, the other gold'.
London Magazine, June 1829
John Constable

Hadleigh Castle, The Mouth of the Thames – Morning after a Stormy Night

exhibited 1829
Oil paint on canvas

This was the first major painting Constable showed after his long-awaited acceptance as a Member of the Royal Academy. He accompanied it with lines from a poem which describe the 'glitter' of ruins. Constable became particularly concerned with the effect of glittering light in his late works. Turner is said to have commented sarcastically about Constable's use of white, but the painting was generally well received.

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection
X11140

[WALL TEXT]

8. FIRE AND WATER

In the mid-1820s, Constable referred to Turner in a letter as ‘he who would be lord of all’. Turner was certainly the biggest name in landscape of all media – oil painting, watercolour and print. At this point, Constable had enjoyed great success in France but acceptance by British artists eluded him. Constable’s day finally came in 1829. Royal Academicians voted him into full membership. Turner paid a visit especially to congratulate him.

Two years later, they came to blows. Artists hated being hung next to Turner in the Royal Academy’s annual exhibition because his paintings ‘caught your eye the instant you entered the room’. In 1831, Constable took up the challenge. As a member of the committee responsible for placement of works in the exhibition, he hung his Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows next to Turner’s Caligula’s Palace and Bridge. The arrangement gave Constable’s own painting prime position.

At a dinner party, Turner apparently came ‘down upon him like a sledge-hammer’. One onlooker recalled dramatically that Constable ‘wriggled … like a detected criminal’.

The art critics delighted in the contrast. Perhaps this was part of Constable's plan. They cast the pair as opposing natural forces: 'fire and water', Turner 'all heat' to Constable's 'humidity'. Acknowledging the power of their paintings, reviewers also complained that both artists' techniques were excessively bold.

John Constable

Watermeadows at Salisbury

1820
Oil paint on canvas

All works submitted for exhibition at the Academy by Academicians were automatically accepted. In 1830, Constable was on the exhibition committee. His colleagues accidentally assessed this painting. They condemned it as ‘a poor thing’ that was ‘very green’. Perhaps out of embarrassment, Constable stayed quiet rather than defend his right to have all his works shown.

Victoria and Albert Museum. Given by
John Sheepshanks, 1857
X91638

[VITRINE BY THE WALL]

John Constable

Letter to John Smith, 137 New Bond Street, London

4 April 1831
Ink on paper

In this letter to art dealer John Smith, Constable alluded to the connection in his mind between a work by celebrated Dutch landscape painter, Jacob van Ruisdael (1629–1682), and his **Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows** (hanging nearby). He wrote: 'pray let me know when you have the large Ruisdael – again "of the Church." My large Church will leave me tomorrow'. Constable's **Salisbury Cathedral** was about to be displayed at the Royal Academy exhibition. We think the painting he was so keen to see was Ruisdael's **Jewish Cemetery** (pictured).

Private collection
X101368

Jacob Isaaksz van Ruisdael, **The Jewish Cemetery** 1654 or 1655, Detroit Institute of Arts

[QUOTATION ON THE WALL]

'Turner's fire and Constable's rain'.
Englishman's Magazine, 1 June 1831

John Constable

Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows

exhibited 1831
Oil paint on canvas

This painting of 'the church under a cloud' is thought to reflect Constable's worries that political reform would harm the Anglican Church. Laid on with brush and palette knife, the paint ranges from thick and three-dimensional in the brambles, to thin and almost translucent in the rainbow. The rainbow is impossible in the weather conditions depicted. Constable probably added it after exhibiting the painting. This perhaps reflects the fact that, after 1832, the storm of reform was receding.

Tate. Purchased by Tate with assistance from the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund, The Manton Foundation, Art Fund (with a contribution from the Wolfson

Foundation) and Tate Members in partnership with Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales, Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service, National Galleries of Scotland, and The Salisbury Museum 2013
T13896

[QUOTATION ON THE WALL]

'Fire and water … the one all heat, the other all humidity, – who will deny that they both exhibit, each in its own way, some of the highest qualities of Art? None but the envious and ignorant.'
Literary Gazette, 14 May 1831

JMW Turner

Caligula's Palace and Bridge

exhibited 1831
Oil paint on canvas

The Roman emperor Caligula is said to have ordered an enormous floating bridge to be built across a bay near Naples. Turner reimagined the wooden bridge as a crumbling, overgrown stone ruin. In the hazy afternoon light, labourers work and relax amid the remains of a former empire. At the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1831, Turner's feat of imagination hung next to Constable's **Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows**, a landscape based on close observation. Viewers couldn't miss the contrast.

Tate. Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00512

9. LATE CONSTABLE: BEYOND ‘CONSTABLE COUNTRY’

CLOCKWISE FROM SECTION'S ENTRANCE

John Constable

Somerset House

c.1819
Oil paint on paper laid on canvas

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London
X91622

John Constable

Somerset House Terrace from Waterloo Bridge

c.1819
Oil paint on panel

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection
X99991

John Constable

Sir Richard Steele's Cottage, Hampstead

exhibited 1832
Oil paint on canvas

Constable would see this view most mornings on his commute to his central London studio from Hampstead, then a semi-rural suburb of the capital. The vantage point is Haverstock Hill. The painting's title refers to the building on the right, the former home of 18th-century writer Richard Steele. In the middle distance are Kentish Town and St Pancras and beyond, St Paul's Cathedral. A black plume of smoke rises up before the cathedral from a large bulky building, possibly a gasworks by Regents Canal: a meeting of old and new.

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection
X91830

John Constable

Brighton Beach

12 June 1824
Oil paint on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum. Given by Isabel Constable
X91890

John Constable

Brighton Beach

22 July 1824
Oil paint on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum. Given by Isabel Constable
X91891

Top row

John Constable

A Windmill near Brighton

1824
Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Bequeathed by George Salting 1910
N02657

John Constable

Rainstorm over the Sea

c.1824–8
Oil paint on paper laid on canvas

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London
X91624

John Constable

Coast Scene at Brighton, Evening

1828
Oil paint on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum. Given by Isabel Constable
X91641

John Constable

Seascape Study: Boat and Stormy Sky

23 July 1828
Oil paint on paper laid on board

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London
X91625

Bottom row

John Constable

Chain Pier, Brighton

exhibited 1827
Oil paint on canvas

Brighton was Britain's most fashionable and fastest growing town, a former fishing village transformed by tourism. Constable spent several summers there, hoping sea air would improve his wife Maria's health. Here he plays on the town's contrast between old and new. We travel forwards in time as our eye follows the shoreline – from traditional fishing equipment in the foreground to the new Chain Pier in the distance. Constable referred to it disdainfully as the 'dandy jetty' and the whole town as 'Piccadilly by the sea-side'.

Tate. Purchased 1950
N05957

John Constable

The Opening of Waterloo Bridge ('Whitehall Stairs, June 18th, 1817')

exhibited 1832
Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Purchased with assistance from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Clore Foundation, the Art Fund, the Friends of the Tate Gallery and others 1987
T04904

[EXTENDED CAPTION]

The last time this sketch and the resulting six-footer were side-by-side was in Constable's studio. He made the lively sketch on a professional high, newly elected as an Associate Member of the Royal Academy. Looking for a new subject to keep up the momentum, he chose this central London vista. When another artist criticised its aerial vantage point, Constable lost confidence in the composition.

He finally committed to exhibiting it in 1832. He was now disillusioned enough to call the painting 'the devil'. But the composition caught Turner's eye, prompting him to add an attention-grabbing red brushstroke to a work of his own that hung close to Constable's. Turner later began his own version of the same subject, displayed nearby.

John Constable

The Opening of Waterloo Bridge, seen from Whitehall Stairs, London, 18 June 1817

c.1819–20
Oil paint on canvas

Daniel Katz Gallery, London
X92114

[FILM]

Mr. Turner

Directed by Mike Leigh
ThinMan Films, 2014
Extract, running time: 2 min 35 sec

This scene from Mike Leigh's feature film about Turner's life dramatises a real event that took place in 1832. Once the annual Royal Academy exhibition was hung, artists were allowed to repair any damage their work had suffered during installation. In 1832, Turner used the opportunity to add a single red brushstroke to his work which hung close to Constable's **The Opening of Waterloo Bridge** (on display in this room).

[WALL TEXT]

9. LATE CONSTABLE: BEYOND 'CONSTABLE COUNTRY'

The late 1820s was a time of personal loss and professional gain for Constable. His wife Maria died in 1828, leaving him a widowed father to their seven children. The following year, he was elected as a Royal Academician. He was finally

receiving official recognition from his artist peers.

Determined to prove his versatility and ambition, Constable varied the subjects of his six-footers. Choosing settings in Brighton and London, away from his home turf in the Stour Valley, he tackled coastal storms and grand neoclassical architecture. By now, most critics recognised his uniqueness. They called his work ‘vigorous’ and ‘free and bold’. With his profile raised, detractors fixated on his use of white highlights, known derisively as Constable’s ‘snow’.

Turner became alert to the competition. Just before the 1832 Royal Academy annual exhibition opened, he added an attention-grabbing red brushstroke to his own work hanging close to Constable’s The Opening of Waterloo Bridge. Constable retorted: ‘[Turner] has been here and fired a gun’. But was it an act of artistic aggression? Turner’s red daub might have been a gesture of both rivalry and kinship – perhaps the biggest compliment and expression of acceptance Constable could have received. And, as the intensity of his later works shows, Constable committed to a bolder, more daring way of painting.

10. AIRY VISIONS: TURNER'S LATE WORK

CLOCKWISE FROM SECTION'S ENTRANCE

JMW Turner

The Thames above Waterloo Bridge

c.1830–5
Oil paint on canvas

We can barely make out Waterloo Bridge through the heavy atmosphere. By the early 1830s, Parliament was discussing air pollution. Operators of traditional barges were complaining about the dirt and disruption of the new steamboats. In 1834, a steamboat service began taking passengers from this very spot. Turner shows a large duel-funnelled steamer belching smoke. He may have had in mind Constable's depiction of the same view (hanging nearby) when he began this painting. Perhaps he took up this subject to show how London *really* looked in the 1830s, hidden in a cloud of fumes.

Tate. Accepted by the nation as part of the
Turner Bequest 1856
N01992

[VITRINE BY THE WALL]

Charles West Cope (1811–1890)

JMW Turner

c.1828
Oil paint on card

This portrait points to some of Turner's complexities. Secretive about his methods, he was also comfortable painting in front of an audience. Exhibitors at the Royal Academy could finish their works on the wall, before the official opening. When there was talk of ending these 'Varnishing Days', he objected: 'you will do away with the only social meetings we have … on which we all come together in an easy unrestrained manner'. He valued the chance not just to size up the competition but to enjoy the camaraderie of fellow artists.

Lent by the National Portrait Gallery, London
X91720

JMW Turner

Snow Storm - Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth

exhibited 1842
Oil paint on canvas

This is one of Turner's most daring paintings. In a battle between modern machine and nature, a steamboat faces a blizzard. Its black fumes join the whirling vortex of snow and sea. Turner claimed he was lashed to a mast so that he could observe this storm. This and the detailed title tell us that Turner wanted viewers to see this dizzying scene as an authentic record – just as Constable wished for his own work.

Tate. Accepted by the nation as part of the
Turner Bequest 1856
N00530

JMW Turner

The Burning of the Houses of Lords and Commons, 16 October, 1834

exhibited 1835
Oil paint on canvas

The Houses of Parliament burned down on the night of 16 October, 1834. The fire carried a powerful symbolism. After intense parliamentary debate, the right to vote had recently been extended to a greater number of people. It was as if the old order had self-combusted and a new political age was dawning. Turner clearly revelled in depicting the towering flames (which he may well have exaggerated) and their reflection against the deep blue of night.

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Bequest of
John L. Severance 1942.647
X76495

JMW Turner

Keelmen Heaving in Coals by Moonlight

exhibited 1835
Oil paint on canvas

The setting is Shields, the port on the River Tyne near Newcastle. This area was Britain's main supplier of coal. On the right, men shovel it from barges, or keels, into larger boats which will transport it around the country. The moon has a double symbolism, suggesting on the one hand an industry that never sleeps. But new railways were making coal barges obsolete. Turner, with his eye for a poignant narrative, shows that the sun has set on
the keelman's traditional occupation.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Widener Collection, 1942.9.86
X91684

JMW Turner

Ancient Italy: Ovid banished from Rome

exhibited 1838
Oil paint on canvas

A fantastical vision of ancient Rome, its monuments arranged in an impossible configuration, frames the setting sun. The poet Ovid was banished from Rome in 8 CE. The group of figures on the left shows his arrest. In front might be the chaos of his ransacked belongings. On the right, two men push out a boat with a cage-like enclosure that will take him away.

Turner's love of yellow inspired a later caricature (pictured). It shows him at an easel, dipping a mop into a bucket labelled 'yellow'.

Lent in honour of Richard Feigen by his children and grandchildren (in memoriam)
X18080

Richard Doyle, **JMW Turner** 1846 © National Portrait Gallery, London

JMW Turner

Light and Colour (Goethe's Theory) - the Morning after the Deluge - Moses Writing the Book of Genesis

exhibited 1843
Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Accepted by the nation as part of the
Turner Bequest 1856
N00532

[EXTENDED CAPTION]
Compelling vortexes characterise this pair. Their whirlpools of paint pull our gaze into their spinning course. Combining biblical imagery and colour theory, their meanings are as complex as their atmospheres are electrifying.

Noah's ark is at the centre of **Shade and Darkness**, with animals gathered in the foreground. The figure in the sky of **Light and Colour** is Moses. The pair was universally panned. Their obscure narratives frustrated critics who found their 'prismatic chaos' to be a 'flagrant abuse of [Turner's] genius'. Given Constable's passion for the rendering of light and shade, it is tempting to wonder what he would have made of these paintings had he lived to see them.
JMW Turner

Shade and Darkness – the Evening of the Deluge

exhibited 1843
Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Accepted by the nation as part of the
Turner Bequest 1856
N00531

JMW Turner

Juliet and her Nurse

exhibited 1836
Oil paint on canvas

Turner moves characters from Shakespeare's **Romeo and Juliet** from Verona to Venice. It seems to be a modern-day carnival, complete with fireworks and a Punch and Judy show. Both this setting and the painting's execution were controversial. One review described it as a 'strange jumble … streaked blue and pink and thrown into a flour tub'. John Ruskin, who would become Turner's most important champion, saw it as a teenager. He wrote to Turner, offering to publish a defence. Turner replied, 'I never move in these matters. They are of no import save mischief'.

Private collection
X03542

JMW Turner

St Benedetto, Looking towards Fusina

exhibited 1843
Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Accepted by the nation as part of the
Turner Bequest 1856
N00534

Top to bottom

JMW Turner

The Lagoon near Venice, at Sunset

1840
Watercolour on paper

The Rooftops of Venice, with the Campanile of San Marco (St Mark's) and San Giorgio Maggiore, from the Hotel Europa Palazzo Giustinian at Sunrise

1840
Watercolour on paper

In 1840, Turner made the last and longest of his visits to Venice. From a room high up in his hotel, he painted the morning sun. Molten dabs of yellow, orange and red watercolour bleed seamlessly into one another, capturing the vivid early light.

Tate. Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D32162, D35949

JMW Turner

Lake Lucerne: The Bay of Uri, from Brunnen

c.1841–2
Watercolour on paper

Storm in the St Gotthard Pass. The First Bridge above Altdorf: Sample Study

c.1844–5
Graphite, watercolour and pen on paper

Turner made the lower watercolour to show prospective buyers. In the 1840s he began working with an agent who shared samples like this with a small circle of loyal buyers. Turner was initially disappointed with the price of 80 guineas that his agent set for finished watercolours like **The Blue Rigi** (hanging nearby). 'Ain't they worth more?', he apparently demanded.

Tate. Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D36202, D36135

JMW Turner

The Blue Rigi, Sunrise

1842
Watercolour on paper

Robed in mist, the majestic mountain on Switzerland's Lake Lucerne is silhouetted against the cool light of dawn. It emerges from veils of transparent washes and an intricate tapestry of effects. Paint has been dabbed away to create mist, while highlights on the lake and the morning star of Venus above have been scraped out. Perhaps Turner used the fingernail he was said to have kept long for this purpose.

Tate. Purchased with assistance from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Art Fund (with a contribution from the Wolfson Foundation and including generous support from David and Susan Gradel, and from other members of the public through the Save the Blue Rigi appeal)

Tate Members and other donors 2007
T12336

JMW Turner

Dudley, Worcestershire for **Picturesque Views in England and Wales**

c.1832
Watercolour and bodycolour on paper

Turner visited Dudley in the West Midlands in 1830. We are looking down the canal – flanked by barges, furnaces and chimneys – to the town. Looming above is the ruin of Dudley Castle, the old overlooking the new. But most striking is the thick veil of smoke. Turner conjured it using a combination of techniques: pigment applied with a drier brush, scrubbing at the surface and thousands of stippled marks. Capturing the changes brought by the industrial revolution, he demonstrates the pictorial potential of modern Britain, smog and all.

National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery
X76503

JMW Turner

Mussooree and the Dhoon from Landour

1835
Watercolour and gouache, over graphite, on wove paper, edge mounted on wove card.

Turner never went to India, but he depicted the country several times. He based these watercolours on drawings by British military personnel. This source of imagery reflects the growing British occupation of India at that time.

The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Dorothy Braude Edinburg to the Harry B. and Bessie K. Braude Memorial Collection, 2013.1039
X91872

JMW Turner

Rocks at Colgong (Kahalgaon) on the Ganges, Bihar, India

c.1835
Pencil and watercolour heightened with bodycolour and stopping out

Turner based this picture of Kahalgaon (known during British rule of India as Colgong) on a sketch by a young British army officer. He dramatised the view, raising our vantage point over the River Ganges, and exaggerating the height of the rocky island. He also added several boats and figures, bathing the scene in a warm hazy light.

Taimur Hassan Collection
X101086

[WALL TEXT]

10. AIRY VISIONS: TURNER'S LATE WORK

Turning 60 in 1835, Turner could have rested on his financial position and standing then slowed down. He did no such thing. Instead, he continued innovating and astonishing his viewers with the same unwavering energy as always. 1835 saw him take one of his most extensive and taxing European sketching tours. He continued to travel abroad for another decade.

Turner remained highly engaged in the art world of the 1830s and 40s. He made topical paintings of present-day subjects, including a fire that destroyed the Houses of Parliament. Keeping up his links with the print trade, he was commissioned by publishers to make watercolours of places he had not visited, including India. Favourite locations like Venice and the Swiss Alps came back into focus with repeat visits.

His work continued to attract both ferocious ridicule and profound appreciation. Rival or not, Constable was among those who admired Turner's 1836 Royal Academy exhibits. That year he wrote, 'Turner has outdone himself – he seems to paint with tinted steam, so evanescent, and so airy.'
In 1842, Turner made two works that encapsulate the

breadth of his late vision. In the oil painting Snow Storm - Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth we experience his intensifying fascination with both the sea and modern technology. The Blue Rigi sees Turner scale new technical heights in watercolour, the medium that launched his career. Both continue his lifelong exploration of nature's power, be that its terrifying force or awesome beauty.

11. LANDSCAPE AND MEMORY

CLOCKWISE FROM SECTION'S ENTRANCE

John Constable

Stonehenge

1835, exhibited 1836
Watercolour on paper

This expressive sky is reminiscent of those in Constable's oil sketches. Swept and dragged, the deep purple pigment radiates energy. Constable wrote that any representation of the famous Neolithic site had to be a 'poetical one' to avoid it looking like a 'stone quarry'. His choice of angle foregrounds the most irregular, tilted and fallen stones. Above, he includes a spectacular double version of a favourite atmospheric phenomenon, the rainbow.

Victoria and Albert Museum. Bequeathed by Isabel Constable, daughter of the artist
X10459

John Constable

Old Sarum

exhibited 1834
Watercolour on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum. Bequeathed by Isabel Constable, daughter of the artist
X91647

JMW Turner

A Beach ?near the Tour de Croy, Wimereux

1845
Graphite and watercolour on paper

Turner made this watercolour in France on his penultimate trip abroad. He wrote of being unwell and needing ‘a little change of fresh air’. The sea had always been a magnet for him. The meditative watercolours of sea and sky he made on this trip show Turner’s compulsion to make images, and that doing so was in itself a form of respite. They are freely and quickly painted, no doubt using his pocket watercolour kit. This example might even have been worked with his fingers, bearing signs of paint being dragged across the sky.

Tate. Accepted by the nation as part of the
Turner Bequest 1856
D35387

[WALL TEXT]

11. LANDSCAPE AND MEMORY

Constable died in 1837, aged 60, and Turner in 1851, aged 76. Both remained intellectually and artistically active in their last years, though illness became a more frequent obstacle.

The intense atmosphere of Constable's late work reflects his inclination to melancholy. In 1835, he received the warmest critical reception of his career, calling it 'the best year of my life – as to my being "liked"'. But, he added, the 'happy years are gone'. He found solace in painting: 'my canvas soothes me'. The results are often far from peaceful, reverberating with restless energy.

After years of showing reworked canvases, in 1850 Turner exhibited new paintings. Their subjects, drawn from classical mythology, were now unfashionable, but his way of painting was unparalleled. Critics acknowledged him as a 'great master' while remarking on the 'eccentricities' of his old age: 'it would seem as if Mr. Turner had possessed in youth all the dignity of age to exchange it in age for the effervescence of youth'.

The artists both looked backwards to create new works out of old. Two unfinished paintings are prime examples

of this tendency. Both are based on earlier compositions they had shared in printed manifestos on the possibilities of landscape painting. Stoke-By-Nayland is a last investigation of light and shade in nature, Constable's lifelong preoccupation. Norham Castle shows the evolution of Turner's vision for landscape. Despite their apparent differences, these late works reflect their makers' drive to convey the spirit of a place and their fascination with painting light.

JMW Turner

Mercury Sent to Admonish Aeneas

exhibited 1850
Oil paint on canvas

In 1850, Turner exhibited at the Royal Academy for the final time. Critics were both impressed and puzzled. Revisiting a subject that had inspired him as a young artist, his last exhibits told the story of Trojan hero Aeneas, by Roman poet Virgil. The poem describes the winged messenger Mercury melting into the air. As if inspired by these words, Turner painted a veil of mist glittering in the rising sun.

Tate. Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00553

JMW Turner

Landscape with Walton Bridges

c.1830–40
Oil paint on canvas

Like **Norham Castle** c.1845 (also in this room), Turner based this luminous unfinished canvas on a print series he began deacdes earlier, **Liber Studiorum** (1807–1819). You can see the related prints in the nearby showcase. Turner left no record of why he chose to return to these scenes late in his career.

Private collection
X101038

JMW Turner

Norham Castle, Sunrise

c.1845
Oil paint on canvas

Turner was 22 when he first saw Norham Castle in Northumbria. Painted five decades later, when Turner was in his 70s, this is his last depiction of this favourite subject. Now the scene is filtered through his memory and imagination. Even in its unfinished state, Turner's delight in his materials is obvious. Painted with thin glazes of colour that in places trickle down the canvas in rivulets, the castle seems to melt in the sun's rays.

Tate. Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N01981

John Constable

Stoke-by-Nayland

c.1835–7
Oil paint on canvas

'What say you to a summer morning? July or August, at eight or nine o'clock, after a slight shower during the night', Constable asked a friend in 1835. Such a picture, he went on, would contain 'plough, cart, horse, gate, cows, donkey … all good paintable material'. Constable was describing this, the canvas that would become his last full-scale six-foot sketch. He had not made a painting of Suffolk at this scale for a decade. Working this subject up for exhibition may have been in Constable's mind before he died in March, 1837.

The Art Institute of Chicago, Mr. and Mrs. W.W. Kimball Collection, 1922.4453
X11150

John Constable

On the River Stour

c.1834–7
Oil paint on canvas

The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C. Acquired 1925
X91718

John Constable

A Cottage at East Bergholt

c.1836
Oil paint on canvas

National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery
X12580
John Constable

Hampstead Heath with a Rainbow

1836
Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Bequeathed by Miss Isabel Constable as the gift of Maria Louisa, Isabel and Lionel Bicknell Constable 1888
N01275

John Constable

Fir Trees at Hampstead

c.1833
?exhibited 1834
Graphite on paper

Constable was clearly attracted to the contrasting forms of the two central firs – one growing straight, the other with a more sinuous trunk that splits and twists around itself as it reaches up to the sky. He began this on a large sheet of paper then added a strip along the bottom. This allowed him to continue the trunks down to the ground and show the trees in their context, including the buildings glimpsed through the branches at bottom right. He exhibited this drawing at the Royal Academy one year when ill health prevented progress on oil paintings.

Trustees of the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery (The Higgins Bedford)
X27755

[VITRINE BY THE WALL]
John Constable

Letter to Miss Mary Atkinson

14 May 1835
Ink on paper

In this letter to a family friend, Constable reflected on recent reviews of his paintings. 1835 was, he said, 'the best year of my life' apart from 'the days of my youth'. This was in spite of continued criticism of his white highlights – 'my "hail and snow" at Midsummer'. Perhaps he had come to accept such jibes as something any original painter had to endure. Poignantly, the letter conveys a moment of pride in a career which would be cut short by his death just two years later.

Private collection
X101369

[VITRINE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM]
Left to right

JMW Turner (1775–1851) and JC Easling (active 1815–1833)

Frontispiece published in **Liber Studiorum**

1812
Etching and mezzotint on paper

Tate. Presented by A. Acland Allen through the Art Fund 1925
A00912

Charles Turner (1774–1857) after JMW Turner (1775–1851)

Norham Castle on the Tweed, from **Liber Studiorum,**
engraver's proof annotated by the artist

c.1815
Etching and mezzotint on paper

Turner had issued a series of prints between 1807 and 1819 setting out his ideas about landscape. You can see his detailed handwritten feedback to his engraver here. In 1845, perhaps with an eye on his artistic legacy, he was preparing a reprint. It was probably then that he hatched the idea of painting scenes from the print series afresh, including **Norham Castle, Sunrise** (displayed nearby).

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London
X91627

[EXTENDED CAPTION]

Turner had issued a series of prints between 1807 and 1819 setting out his ideas about landscape. Its title was **Liber Studiorum** ('Book of Studies'). You can see his detailed handwritten feedback to his engraver here. In 1845, perhaps with an eye on his artistic legacy, he was preparing a reprint. It was probably then that he hatched the idea of painting scenes from the series afresh, including **Norham Castle, Sunrise** (displayed nearby). Returning to these earlier subjects must have been an opportunity to reflect on his vision for landscape, and how it had evolved.

David Lucas (1802–1881) after John Constable (1776–1837)

Frontispiece: East Bergholt, Suffolk published in **English Landscape Scenery**

1830–2
Mezzotint on paper

In the early 1830s, Constable collaborated with mezzotint engraver David Lucas to publish a series of prints. Mirroring Turner's **Liber Studiorum**, it allowed Constable to set out his ideas about landscape art. He gave the volume a subtitle which explained that its purpose was to 'Mark the Phenomena of the Chiar'Oscuro of Nature'. In a lecture given the year before he died, Constable spoke of chiaroscuro – the representation of light and shade – as the 'soul and medium of art'.

Tate. Purchased 1985
T03985

David Lucas (1802–1881) after John Constable (1776–1837)

Stoke by Neyland, Suffolk published in **English Landscape Scenery**

1830
Mezzotint on paper.

Constable had spent time in the Suffolk village of Stoke-by-Nayland in 1810 and referred to sketches he made then for this plate. In his late large-scale oil sketch returning to the same subject – on the wall nearby – he began evolving the composition further, inspired by his work on the print.

Tate. Purchased 1985
T04040

12. LEGACY: ARTISTS TODAY

CLOCKWISE FROM WALL TEXT

[WALL TEXT]]

12. LEGACY: ARTISTS TODAY

In this film, artists explain how Turner and Constable have guided their own artistic journeys.

Bridget Riley on Constable:
'He's one of my heroes. He made nature a real subject, which it had not been before. The light in Constable's paintings is right – it doesn't feel artificial. His painting has broken colour, broken marks, it's not smooth. This gives it an immediacy and brings it closer to our own experience of being outside in the country.'

Frank Bowling on Turner:
'The abstraction you get in Turner, the tumultuousness of the paint handling, that's what particularly excites me about it still. It went through his body, a real feeling for paint. The magic, the tumoil in the work, it's attracted me for a long, long time.'

Emma Stibbon on Turner:
‘I feel a real affinity to Turner’s impulse to travel and truly experience the dynamics of nature. I love the spontaneity and power of Turner’s sketchbook drawings. You can absolutely feel the weather.’

George Shaw on Constable:
‘His paintings seem very solid, made of the same stuff of the earth, and of my life. I find him constantly on my shoulder telling me to be not so fanciful, not such a berk, not such an artist really. But to be a person or a thing of the world.’

[FILM]

CREDITS

[WALL TEXT]

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