

discover **newsworks.org** | **FACEBOOK SWEEPSTAKES**
 smart. local. news. "Like" Us on Facebook. Enter to win great prizes.
 Weekly February 13 to May 6.

Sign In | Learn about NewsWorks

Listen to WHYY | Latest Newscast search... go

Sweeps
Sweepstakes prize
 Win Starr gift card,
 theater tickets
 6:02 pm

Cheese recall
 N.J. company recalls three
 products
 4:50 pm

Nurses arrested
 Charged in \$9 million
 Medicare fraud
 4:24 pm


**THE FEED:
 BREAKING
 NEWS BLOG**
**SUPPORT
 NEWSWORKS
 TODAY!**

newsworks NEW JERSEY
 Powered by WHYY and You

- [Arts + Culture](#)
- [Blogs](#)
- [New Jersey](#)
- [Delaware](#)
- [NW Philadelphia](#)
 - [Roxborough/Manayunk/East Falls](#)
 - [Mt. Airy/Chestnut Hill](#)
 - [Germantown/West Oak Lane](#)

- [Home](#)
- [Speak Easy](#)
- [Health + Science](#)

"NewsWorks is simply the only place I need to go for smart local news and opinion." -Tom Wyatt



The 'sparkling' work of John Constable on view in rare Princeton University exhibit

March 22, 2012
By Bonnie Schultz, for NewsWorks

Like { 2 } Rate This: (7 votes) [Ask a question](#)




1/6

Years after beloved English painter John Constable's death, his daughter Isabella donated many of his oil sketches directly to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Constable never meant for them to be shown, but his paintings have now made it to the United States and are featured in a rare exhibit at the Princeton University Art Museum, the first of only two galleries in

The context of Constable's art came at the end of the British Age of Enlightenment, a period of scientific discovery which saw an explosion in the understanding of natural sciences based on field observation rather than academic principle, with the beginnings

© 2012



CLICK HERE to find peace of mind at the area's most luxurious independent lifestyle community.



PRINCETON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
 PRINCETONSYPHONY.ORG

Top Stories

North America to show them.

The museum's "John Constable: Oil Sketches from the Victoria and Albert Museum" features 85 oil sketches in an exhibit on view until June 10.

Through a partnership with the Victoria and Albert Museum, the exhibit highlights the artist's major contribution to the art world. It's the second exhibition in which the Princeton University Art Museum has partnered with the Victoria and Albert Museum to present art that American museumgoers would not typically be able to see.

Full-sized oil sketches for famous paintings such as "The Hay Wain," which now resides at The National Gallery, and "The Leaping Horse," are now on exhibit for the first time in the United States.

These two oil sketches have been at the Victoria and Albert museum for over 150 years. They were cleaned for the first time, revealing the subtlety of their tonalities and color.

"They just sparkle," said Calvin Brown, Associate Curator for the Princeton University Art Museum.

Brown says that Sir Kenneth Clark, renowned British art historian, called "The Hay Wain" and "The Leaping Horse" oil sketches "the finest paintings ever made in England."

When painting his landscapes, Constable applied vivid, open brushwork to capture natural impressions of his native countryside.

"His method of painting strongly resembles what French artists would be painting in the 1870s," Brown said, and therefore many consider Constable, although he is an English painter, to have been the predecessor of the French Impressionist movement.

Brown says Constable would go out to paint in the fields, creating oil sketches to acquire a sense for the overall light and balance he would employ in the finished picture. He was one of the first artists to paint exclusively in the fields, en plein air, to concentrate so heavily on painting directly from nature.

As his expertise grew, Constable devised a rapid-fire style of painting short, intensely colored brushstrokes to capture the effect of changing light and movement in his landscapes and to paint the atmospheric effects as he saw them.

Thomas Gainsborough and Claude Lorrain, who were also landscape painters, were considered to be Constable's major influences. But unlike Lorrain, Constable wanted to paint the world as he knew it from his childhood.

"The context of Constable's art came at the end of the British Age of Enlightenment," said Brown, "a period of scientific discovery which saw an explosion in the understanding of natural sciences based on field observation rather than academic principle, with the beginnings of geology and cataloging of birds and plants as they exist in nature."

Constable lived in the same period as Darwin, at a time when Joseph Priestly had just discovered oxygen and its essential role in supporting life. Constable's intense belief in observing nature was born out of this branch of natural philosophy and study of the environment.

In 1824, when "The Hay Wain" was shown at the Paris Salon, winning a gold medal, Constable's style excited young French artists such as Eugène Delacroix, who later visited him in London. With his unique painting method and naturalist themes, Constable was crucial to the Romantic Movement as it grew in France.

His influence extended to the Barbizon school, which included Jean François Millet, Constant Troyon, and Theodore Rousseau, inspiring young French artists to start painting en plein air in the Fontainebleau forest. In turn, the Impressionists built their foundation upon the Barbizon school, providing a connection from Constable to Monet some 50 to 60 years later.

The exhibition even includes Monet's "Houses of Parliament" to highlight the Impressionists' debt to Constable.

His impact was profound for an artist who never left England and painted the minutiae of nature. As Constable himself put it, "I associate my 'careless boyhood' to all that lies on the banks of the Stour. They made me a painter, and I am grateful."

[« More from New Jersey](#)

[Support local journalism. Make your gift today. Become a member.](#)

Comments

Gainsborough and the Stour Valley — David Holland 2012-03-22 16:31
The Stour Valley in eastern England was also immortalised by Gainsborough though he was not so helpful in naming his landscape paintings to show where the view can be found as was the case with Constable. A

of geology and cataloging of birds and plants as they exist in nature.

-- Calvin Brown, Associate Curator for the Princeton Art Museum



Valley of Stour: John Constable, British, 1776–1837: The valley of the Stour, ca. 1805-09. Oil on canvas, 49.8 x 60 cm. The Victoria and Albert Museum. (Photo courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum/V&A images)

Philadelphia arts group runs out of funds

March 23 - Peter Crimmins

One of Philadelphia's art organizations is close to broke. Philagrafika, which held a huge, citywide festival in 2010 called "The Graphic Unconscious," has laid off its entire staff of three. The notion of "The Graphic Unconscious" developing [More »](#)

Pa. Sen. Toomey defends Romney as 'conservative,' but withholds endorsement

March 23 - Mary Wilson

Pennsylvania's junior U.S. senator isn't endorsing Mitt Romney, but he's vouching for the GOP presidential candidate's conservative principles. Republican Pat Toomey says the pushback Romney's received for passing a health insurance mandate as governor of Massachusetts, [More »](#)

Quest for political balance figured in rejection of N.J. Supreme Court nominee

March 23 - Eugene Sonn

Political balance was a major reason the New Jersey Senate Judiciary Committee on Thursday night rejected the nomination of Phillip Kwon to the state Supreme Court. Kwon, who is not registered with a political party, was [More »](#)

Hundreds of Philly area residents protest contraception coverage

March 23 - Taunya English

NOW HEAR THIS.
NEWSWORKS TONIGHT.
WEEKDAYS AT 6 PM ON WHYY-FM.

BLOGS

DAVE DAVIES OFF MIC

Dave Davies



Schwartz increasingly a player in national Democratic Party:
Look at congressional contests in the region this year, and [More »](#)

very recent discovery has shown that the subject of one of Gainsborough's landscapes (yes he did paint in the field) still exists. Even more exciting, we know why he painted it. He saw the natural beauty of the countryside as threatened by agricultural technology. The famous portrait Mr & Mrs Andrews (National Gallery, London) includes a detailed representation of a corn field sown with a seed plough. Gainsborough realised that this technology along with ploughing would change the countryside for ever and so he painted "Wooded Landscape with Herdsman Seated (on display at Gainsborough's House Museum, Sudbury, UK) to immortalise the landscape before it changed forever. So 264 years ago Gainsborough was responding to a technological threat. Today, we in the same place are doing the same. One of your major electricity transmission companies, National Grid propose to blight the view Gainsborough painted with lines of pylons. The painting and the view can be seen now, within 3 miles of each other. But you had better visit soon, before National Grid despoil this important cultural heritage asset for generations. More at www.stourvalleyunderground.org.uk

Reply

Refresh comments list

Your comment

Name (required)
 E-mail (required, but will not display)
 Subject (required)

2000 characters left



To prove you're a person, enter this string of characters below before clicking Submit.

Can't read it? [Click Here to Refresh](#)

NewsWorks has discussion guidelines to foster lively, civil dialogue. Please [read them](#). By entering a comment, you agree to observe the guidelines.

If you register or log in to NewsWorks, you won't need to fill in your name and email address each time you comment--and you'll earn [Ben Bucks](#).

Submit

PARTNERS

- [theArtblog.org](#)
- [Azavea](#)
- [Committee of Seventy](#)
- [DVAEYC](#)
- [The Fallser](#)
- [G-town Radio](#)
- [LaSalle University - GermantownBeat](#)
- [Leadership Philadelphia](#)
- [NBC10 Philadelphia](#)
- [NEastPhilly.com](#)

- [NewCORE](#)
- [NJ Spotlight](#)
- [Penn Project for Civic Engagement](#)
- [Philadelphia Business Journal](#)
- [Philadelphia Daily News](#)
- [Philadelphia Weekly](#)
- [The Philadelphia Public School Notebook](#)
- [PhilaPlace.org](#)
- [PlanPhilly.com](#)
- [Technically Philly](#)
- [Temple Multimedia Urban Reporting Lab](#)
- [University of the Arts](#)
- [WURD Radio](#)

WHYY - [Email NewsWorks](#)

Built by [Delmarva Group, LLC.](#)

NOTES FROM HEL

Helen Ubiñas



Good morning Philly: Did you hear all those "Good Mornings?" For all those and [More »](#)

NATIONAL INTEREST

Dick Polman



Short cuts: Since I plan to write Sunday morning on the results [More »](#)

CENTRE SQUARE

Chris Satullo



Ensuring more Philly youth graduate high school: It's a goal that's simple to say, but mighty hard [More »](#)

GROUND LEVEL

Nicole Juday



Spring fever: The trill of the American toad stopped me in my [More »](#)

BRANDYWINE TO BROAD

Jan C. Ting



Is Mitt Romney a Conehead? : The Coneheads were a comedy sketch on Saturday Night Live [More »](#)

MOM & POPAHOLIC

Erica David



Sweet dreams and adaptation served up by family owned bakery in West Oak Lane: West Oak Lane bakery and café Sweets by Sonya is [More »](#)

[More Blogs »](#)

WHYY

- [Home page](#)
- [Audio](#)
- [Video](#)



NEWSWORKS

- [About Us](#)
- [How We're Funded](#)
- [Terms of Service](#)
- [Advertise](#)
- [Privacy Statement](#)
- [Jobs at NewsWorks](#)
- [Discussion Rules](#)
- [RSS Feeds](#)
- [Podcasts](#)
- [Membership](#)